

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Old legends tell us of a golden age,
When earth was guiltless—gods the guests
of men,
Ere sin had dimmed the heart's illumined page—
And prophet-voices say 'twill come again.—

THE DISCIPLE OF TRUTH long had pondered deeply upon the innumerable phases presented by his fellows. His soul had been sustained by beautiful visions of justice, peace, tolerance and love among the children of men. He had pleaded with the heedless and had reasoned with the scholarly for a higher philosophy, by which Happiness might walk with men all through life instead of being pursued to the end.

His was Democracy's own teaching—the greatest good to the greatest number—that no man had the right to pursue a course which might seem to him to be leading toward what he thought was happiness, without considering whether or not it would make an hundred of his fellowmen miserable. He did not believe that happiness was like the statue of Isis, whose veil no man had lifted, but that Heaven and Happiness were one and the same on earth, in the heavens, and through all the vast stretch we term eternity.

Exceeding grace, gained through long years of reflection and reasoning, and communing with Nature in her various forms, had brought to him—not the power to pierce the veil of death and converse with the spirits of men who have passed the bourne of Mortality, through only a board or a table-tipping, but to him had come the power to behold Truth in that mirror of the soul, the human countenance—Truth stripped of all the drapery of deception and all vestige of camouflage—Truth as she had engraved upon soul and mind the record of the Past, and the reflection of hopes of the Future.

Coming to the city from a long sojourn on the mountain, he found the people more agitated than they had been even during the period of war. He paused to mark the surging throng at the intersection of crowded thoroughfares, and was much moved at what he saw. To the ordinary vision there was no great change from yesterday or yesteryear, but Truth's disciple beheld an agitation such as he had never seen before. It was the old pursuit of Happiness, but with a new tenseness. There was a sweep of recklessness in the minds of many that held little consideration for their fellows, and in the minds of others there was utter ruthlessness.

Here passed a man with his wife and little daughter. Their attire marked them as very scantily prosperous. They paused before the place of amusement, brilliantly lighted, but passed on. No word had been spoken, but the decision had been telepathically made. They could ill spare the slight sum involving admission from the funds required to maintain the household. The man occupied a position of the greatest responsibility. He was a teacher, and his work was shaping the welfare of the nation's tomorrow, when the children should succeed to the directorate.

Across the man's soul was a scar showing that he had passed through the hell of conflict far astray from the path of Happiness. Fond parents had given him what they conceived to be a good education, but when he emerged from the temple of learning he found himself equipped to play the part of a gentleman of the century before,

without the weapons in the way of knowledge to make his way on his own resources. His pursuit of Happiness had led through the ditches and camps of manual labor, hard to him because his early vision had been fixed on the seeming ease of other places, but it had brought him understanding. In his struggle upward he had reached the place he now held, but his work was handicapped by the seeming indifference of the public to the needs of the hour, and the tendency to cling to ancient customs and ideas of the musty past. In the daily press that morning he had read that one hundred and seventy-seven thousand 100-pound bags of sugar was being held by a single concern in a western city while a so-called "sugar shortage" prevailed, and he wondered why others wondered that the spirit of Radicalism and Bolshevism stalked through the land.

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ANOTHER MAN, pausing under the glare of light, attracted the attention of the disciple of Truth. He was elderly and of somewhat haughty mien. His apparel stamped him as possessing means—a ship chandler puffed with the pride of great profits reaped through all the devious ways of his trade through forty years of grasping. Times of stress to the nation had to him been periods of rich harvest. He looked upon himself as a link of importance in the chain of business, representing a number of presumably reputable firms in various lines of industry. That morning he had vaingloriously proclaimed himself one hundred percent American in a letter over his own signature. That was his own assay attested by himself. The reflection from the mirror of Truth showed only a faint trace. There was not a true American hair in his head, and his soul was too small to entertain a genuine American thought. But he did not hesitate to place himself on a pedestal with Washington and Lincoln.

Two score years before the ship chandler who looked upon himself as a model of American citizenship, had come from a foreign shore to the city and founded his establishment. In his line he was perhaps a fair average—some better than the worst, and somewhat worse than the best. Plucking profits from both ends of the trade with indefatigable industry he mounted a few rounds on the ladder of prosperity. He had lived, reared a family, and was now descending the western slope with the gray chill of a mean disposition to comfort him.

In all the years of his residence what had he done for his country that made him feel that he assayed one hundred percent. He had become a citizen and sworn allegiance, but never for a moment had the welfare of his country weighed a grain in the balance against self-interest. True, he had paid what taxes he could not evade, but with the grudging spirit the victim of a highwayman hands over his purse. As a citizen he had done absolutely nothing for the betterment of the community in which he lived or the country at-large. He had contributed no thought that might light the way to better things in any direction. He had made use of the courts, but only as they might aid his material interests. He did not hesitate to sacrifice trusting friends; he could not, in strict judgment, number himself even with the

law-abiding; he had been guilty of things which men who lay no claim to more than ordinarily decent citizenship would not do, and yet, with the egregious audacity of ignorance he proclaimed himself one hundred percent American.

If this man represents the standard of American citizenship, and in the pursuit of Happiness has traversed the way that should be pointed out to the children of Today as the way to the glorious Tomorrow, let the multitudes turn their faces to the East to see the stone statue of the Goddess of Liberty Enlightening the World, shriek in despair and sink beneath the circling waves.

(To be continued.)

AMERICA, MY AMERICA

America, thou art more blest
Than this old continent of ours!
No castle ruins load thy breast,
Thou darest no volcanic powers.
By old tradition undisturbed
Or useless strife,
Thy ardent life
Flows on uncurbed.

Enjoy thy present happiness!
And when thou canst of poets boast,
All tales may kindly fate suppress
Of knight or robber or of ghost!
—Goethe.

OLE O. OLSON SAYS

"There are a whole lot of people born in this country who need Americanizing just as bad, or worse, than the furriners."

THE CRY OF THE DISPOSSESSED

(Henry Victor Morgan.)

"There comes to my ears," the Lord God said,
"From the earth a sound of woe;
Now, Gabriel, fly to the earth away
On the wings of the morning, go!"

And the strong-winged angel earthward sped
And traveled the whole world o'er.
Then swift to the heavens again he rose
And stood God's throne before.

"Now, tell me the cause," the Lord said,
"Of the woe that I hear expressed."
And the angel covered his face and said,
"Tis the cry of the dispossessed."

"As I neared the earth, on your errand sent,
I saw the world blood-red,
In awful heaps your children lay
On the sad earth, cold and dead."

"And I asked the wise of the earth, my Lord,
"What means this thing I see?"
And they blindly answered my quest and said,
"They died for democracy."

But where is the thing for which they died?
And what has their shed blood brought?
Then the rulers of men, O Lord, were dumb,
And their cold lips answered naught.

Then I asked the workers of earth the same,
And they scarce would speak for pain,
But the answer came, "For what we fought
Is lost in the strife for gain."

We gave our all, and our loved ones died
For the vision of the earth made free
Till the tyrant fell, then back we came
To the same old misery.

No spot on earth can we call our own,
No hope our hearts to cheer,
Our backs are bent and our spirits rent
To fatten the profiteer.

But deep in our hearts there burns a fire
That never can be suppressed,
For we believe that God is a righteous God
And the hope of the dispossessed!"

And the Lord God said, "My Spirit still
Lives deep in men's hearts, I see;
And they who would crush the weak will find
They are fighting even Me."