

GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

"Moreover, one does want to obey his conscience now and then; and that's a bother to a thorough-going politician. So, Grubbins, I don't envy you, though you march into the White House. Pilkins, Judge Pilkins, I hope you'll keep the place. All you have to do is to sit down on the law-breaker, and he will succumb. Tim, I want a little of your best old rye before I go. It will remind me of Gooch, who, as you remember, was very fond of that article. Jennie, be good to yourself; and the rest of you, farewell."

"Charlie is my spokesman, I join in," said Bill.

"Of course, you'll come back again," said Pilkins. "Golden Throne will be the hub of the universe. I shall issue my new paper, The Golden Eagle, next week. We'll have a railroad next year, and a big hotel. You won't know the place when you return."

Charlie was full of hope as he set his face toward the great city. He had worked with steady purpose for the last few months, and now he had accumulated what might be termed a small fortune. His determination was to remain in the city. He was still haunted by the lovely face of the unknown woman. He wanted to find her; and he meant to, if she was anywhere in San Francisco.

Will Burnham was full of the same adventurous and restless spirit. He was also desirous of a change. He wished to see more of the great world, and try his luck in the crowded thoroughfare. He had for the present experienced enough of solitude. He wanted now to plunge into life.

Paddie John leaped out of his chair almost as they clattered into his sanctum sanctorum, where he was busily engaged in writing.

"Come for good? Hurrah! I've been homesick for you. I'm on the rack all the time, work day and night, can't stop. I sometimes think I'll be a pauper again, and loaf and dream and meditate. This tussle don't give me any chance to be a philosopher."

"You grow fat on it, at any rate," said Will: "you are as round and rosy as a bishop."

"Oh, yes! it agrees with me carnally speaking," said Paddie, "and so I can stand it. I eat a porter-house steak every day, and spend a couple of hours digesting it with a bottle of wine. If I didn't do that, I should certainly die."

"What do you do, anyway," said Charlie.

"I write the London and Paris and New York correspondence, and review all the books, no matter in what language they are written, and the less I know of them the better. I criticise to suit the

public; and I study the public, not the book. I write the news of the day, tell what is going on in matters of science, and announce every new discovery. I keep people informed of the movements of society, post them in the latest fashion, and describe every new dress that is worn. I write articles on history, painting, sculpture, sociology, biology, physiology, and psychology, as they are demanded. Luckily, people don't want to know anything about theology, so I let that alone."

"How do you find time for all this?"

"I don't know. It has to be done, I do it, and that's the end of it. If an editor doesn't know everything, he must give up."

"I should think you'd be a ghost."

"On the contrary, the only way to acquire universal knowledge is to be fat, and there is no subject that I am not at home with. By the way, did you know that Jimmy was in the city, or, to speak more respectfully, the Rev. James Demorest?"

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, and he's the most popular minister in the city. He draws crowds. I go to hear him, and report him now and then. He does it up in style, I assure you. He preaches right to the heart. He makes 'em weep and sometimes laugh; and sometimes they almost applaud, he's so eloquent. You must see him."

"Perhaps he won't want to see us, now that he's respectable."

"Yes, he will. He's an honest fellow, and don't put on airs. I don't understand how he can preach the nonsense he does; but that's his business, not mine. He's a man, anyway; and he has the loveliest wife in the world. She's a gem of a woman."

"We must see him, sure. And how's Big Dick?"

"Come along and call with me. I promised to go down there this evening. He's doing splendidly in the fire department. He's the boss hero, isn't afraid of anything. He's married too, and to the littlest bit of a woman; but she's spunky. She's cute about it though, always smiling and sweet; but she never backs down."

In a few moments, they were in the nice, cosy home of Big Dick.

"Why, partners, how are you?" he cried. "Just from the mines? All right, I hope. I heard good news from your way. Lots of gold."

"Enough," said Charlie, to speculate with. By the way, what did you do with the thousand I sent you? You said you were going to try your luck on 'change'."

"I did and lost every cent," said Big Dick. "I expected a turn, and we all expected a turn; but it came the other way, and so

I went under. Good enough for me! I was a fool. We are nothing but flies. The spiders spread their nets, and we tumble in. Here's my wife, Polly. She's going to take care of the cash after this. I'm going to stick to work."

Polly was a smart little woman, no mistake. She kept the house as neat as a pin. She could talk well, and was full of fun. She loved Big Dick, and he fairly worshiped her. She had the better head of the two, and it was but natural that she should rule.

The moments flew by while the company talked of many an exciting adventure.

"By the way," said Charlie, "have you seen anything of little Pete?"

"No, I haven't," said Big Dick.

"Nor I," said Paddie. "I've looked for him, but never came across him. I wonder if he's vanished like a shadow, as he seemed to be."

"I must find him. He has an uncle in the city," said Charlie. "He had something in him, after all."

"I couldn't make him out," said Dick; "he was queer."

"We all of us would be queer, if we were placed in certain circumstances," said Charlie. "Our surroundings help to make us decent and agreeable. Little Pete wasn't where he belonged. Put him in the right place, and we might be surprised at the change."

Charlie spent the next day in search of his fanciful love. He roamed through almost every street and gazed at every passing countenance; but he did not see the woman of his dreams.

"I might as well search for a bubble in the ocean," said Charlie. "She has flashed away into the great deep, and I shall not see her again."

"Such is life," said Paddie, "and we are fools to bother about what is past."

"I suppose you were never in love," said Charlie.

"Oh, yes, a thousand times. I love a pretty face as well as I love the stars and the sea and the flowers. But I don't linger over one flower. Why should I, when there are millions in the world? I'm always in love, but not with the same face. Today it's a blonde, tomorrow it's a brunette. Now it's a blue eye, and then a black eye, and then a melancholy gray. Now I admire a fragile, delicate form, then I like a buxom lass. So the waves come and go, and the lights change, and the new continually attracts."

"That may suit you, but it doesn't me," said Charlie. "I like the old as I like an old song that, being sung a thousand times, is precious to my memory. So old friends grow sweet as day by day new associations cluster about

them. So, if I had a love, it seems to me that it would ever grow dearer. I could not change it for a new."

"Love," said Will, "dwells both in the new and old; and the old is as fresh as the new. Do we not live in the past as much as we do in the present, even as the tree lives not in the sky, but in the earth? He is not a man who does not live over and over again the precious moments that have fled, and take their sweetness as if they were immortal."

"We must live our nature," said Paddie. "I like to fly, to roam over new lands. I can't be bound."

"Nor I except by my own thoughts," said Charlie. "But what's the use? I can't evoke this lady by any magic, as she has, no doubt forgotten me. I presume it would be wise to forget her; but, alas! her image is as bright as on the evening that I first glanced at her, and when she almost smiled upon me, as I thought. Good-by for a spell, boys. I must hunt up little Pete this evening. I hope no ill has happened to him."

Charlie sauntered forth into the brilliantly lighted city. The strange and wonderful panorama of its life passed before him—so many happy, so many woful faces. He was not in a very hopeful mood. He was pressed upon by the infinite mystery of our human existence, by that deepest mystery of all, the mystery of love. Why did he care so passionately for this woman that had flashed but for an instant in his life? He could not banish her image. It was with him always, and touched him a marvelous reminiscence, like some strain of music that we think we have heard for the first time; and yet it vibrates through all the chambers of the memory like a familiar sound, and evokes many a forgotten dream, as if it and the dream were mingled in their birth, both bursting in the same happy moment of the long ago.

Charlie had a certain ideality in his disposition, and his scepticism was, to a certain extent, the result of his ideality; for his ideality broke in many waves of disappointment upon the rugged masses of real life, and fell back upon his heart with desolate reaction. He could not square his bright idealism with the world that was around about him. His early training had tended to disenchant the outward world, making it still more gloomy; and thus the discordance was far bitterer. Still, in any circumstances the most favorable, it is painful to surrender the ideal as we have it in our soul, and harmonize it with the law and the facts about us, finding eventually in these laws and facts a finer ideal than we had ever dreamed of. Charlie, through his hard and terrible experiences, had come to this wise