

## GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

"I don't know about it," said Charlie. "I have a notion to start of tomorrow and sail around the world."

"That's a curious freak. What better can you do than stay here?"

"No better perhaps, but then I shall be wiser."

"Are you not wise enough now?"

"No, I'm a fool."

"A frank confession. I will never admit as much."

"That's kind of you; but, if I stay, I shall flutter like the moth about the candle, and then perish."

"You needn't fall into the flame."

"Of course not, but all the same I shall; and then you'll call me a fool."

That depends. I don't know just exactly what you mean."

"Yes, you do, begging your pardon: you know that I love you. And what's the use of my loving you? For my love is no mere stream: it's my whole being. I cannot play with you. I cannot flirt with you. I cannot touch you lightly, as I would the flower. I love you madly, deeply. You have conquered me, and I am your slave."

What hope is there for me? You are a queen, rich, honored, with genius to bless and the world at your feet. I am nothing but a poor miner. I cannot help you as I once did. I am glad that I had that chance, but it's over now. You are above me, beyond me, strong, beautiful as a star. Yet you burn me with your radiance. I feel that I must escape. When there is no hope in love, then all one can do is to flee."

"Why need you flee? Why not hope? True, I have many of the world's noblest at my feet, men that I admire; but can you not think that I look back into memory, that I see myself a poor, weak child in danger, ready to perish amid rude, rough men? Do I not see one at the risk of his life defend me, facing the imperious crowd alone? Do I not see him conquer that crowd and bring them to regard justice; and, when innocence is on trial, he alone still believes that innocence, and in the simple strength of his manhood pours forth the burning eloquence that takes captive every heart. And when that eloquence has done its work and the captive is for a moment free, like a fluttering bird, do I not see him still cling to that forsaken child, bearing it through night and day to a place of safety, and then, with the courage of a hero, facing death for the sake of that little one? Do you think amid all this gilded throng I can meet a more noble, a more gifted, a more heroic one? Do you think I worship wealth or position? Alas! I have seen too much misery to care for that. I want manhood, a strong spirit,

wherein my woman's soul can rest like the halcyon in the bosom of the summer's sea. And can you not see that this brave, strong man, that I have pictured out in my heart's memory, is perhaps a bit of a coward that he does not go forward and possess that which requires no wealth or power, but simply the dauntless soul; for, though woman may love, she will not speak her love, but waits for man to claim it, not as a slave but as a king? O what dunces men are! They don't understand anything."

Poor Charlie! Alternate hope and despair swept over him. He couldn't make out whether she was in earnest or not. He could not realize that she loved him. At length, with desperate resolution, he advanced and drew her to his bosom. She did not resist. She was folded in his warm embrace.

"It is possible?" said he, as he looked at her glowing face, as he kissed her beautiful eyes and cheeks and lustrous lips. "Do you love me?"

She placed her arms about his neck, stroked his brow and cheek, drew his face close to hers, and touched his mouth with the ruby fire of her own.

"I do love you dearly," she said. "You are my hero."

## CHAPTER XIX.

"How strange it seems," said Paddie, was Charlie had told the whole story, "that such a weird little fellow should turn out to be a brilliant woman! What a lucky man you are!"

"It makes me tremble, when I think it over," said Charlie. "I can hardly realize that she's safe now."

"To be sure that she is, we'll call over," said Will.

Blanche was glad to see them, and they talked over old times.

"Here are the tramp's papers that we found dead," said Charlie. "You may find them of worth."

"Oh, I don't want to look at them," said Blanche.

"Nevertheless, I would," said Charlie. They may reveal something."

"Then, of course, I must read them," said Blanche; "for I have a woman's curiosity. By the way, it's so funny. Gooch called this morning. He didn't know me, though—that is, he didn't seem to. He might have guessed it, and kept it to himself. He showed me a paper in which there was an advertisement of Ralph Kenneday or his heirs. It must mean my father or grandfather. Gooch said he'd look it up. I wonder why he takes so much interest."

The next day when Charlie called, Blanche burst excitedly forth:—

"I've found it out. It's wonderful and most wonderful. I've examined the papers left by—that

man," she said shuddering. "I see now why he married me and followed me to Golden Throne, and what his scheme was. I'm heir to some property in England—how much, I don't know. Gooch has got track of the same thing but we don't need his help. I wonder how he happened to know about it?"

"There's nothing in the money line but he'll find out, sooner or later," said Charlie. "No doubt he'll quote Scripture and try to get a hand in your fortune."

"His Scripture didn't save me from hanging, and I don't think it will give him any of my fortune."

The three friends were sauntering over the city, when all at once Paddy burst forth:—

"There's a familiar face. I wonder who it can be?"

It was a clean-looking and rotund grocery clerk that they saw, busy as a bee, keeping the store he tended in nice order, and apparently as happy as a lark. His hair was cut short, his cheeks were full and rosy. He looked at Paddy and Charlie and Will, his eyes twinkled, and then he burst into a merry laugh.

"By Jupiter!" said Paddy, "I can hardly believe my eyes; but that's the Rev. William Theophilus Pippins."

"I beg your pardon," said the jolly groceryman, with another cachinnation. "Not the Rev. William Theophilus Pippins, he's dead, but Billy Pippins, at your service. Will you take some cabbage, gentlemen,—the best in the market,—or beets or turnips?"

"Whence this transformation?" said Paddy. "The last time I saw you, you were as melancholy as a gip cat. Now, you are fat and fair. What in the name of nature has happened to you?"

"That's just what's happened, and nothing more," said Pippins, laughing harder than ever. "That last shot of Ingersoll tumbled us from grace to nature, and here I am, Billy Pippins Bobbins got converted, too, and weighs a couple of hundred pounds. He's a farmer now, getting on splendidly, and he swears by Ingersoll."

"Really, I congratulate you. Why, the last time I saw you, you were long-haired and lean, and looked as if you had gone to seed generally; and now you are fresh and happy and active, and doing the world some good."

"That's my honest purpose," said Pippins. "I was a fool to study that confounded theology, and starve myself almost to death. That was a square shot of Ingersoll. It just set us to thinking. Bobbins was raving for a while, but he couldn't get the ideas out of his head. Finally he caved in. Since then he's been happy. I followed suit. You ought to see Bobbins.

He'll give you a welcome grip."

"We must visit him," said Paddy. "Take a vacation, Billy, and we'll start to-morrow."

"I'll be ready," said Pippins, and with that he went gayly off to wait upon some new customer.

"I'll be blowed," said Paddie, "if this isn't about the funniest, to think that a lank theological student has turned out to be a decent grocery clerk. What a salvation for him! Hurrah for Bobbins!"

"Hurrah again!" said Charlie. "After the old style, we'll call him a 'miracle of grace,' 'snatched as a brand from the burning.' Once he was a poor devil of an elder, now he is a respectable digger of the soil. That kind of regeneration is good for something."

"By the way, we must drop in on Jimmy. Now's the time. I guess he's finished his morning devotions, and is ready for a little philosophy."

They found Jimmy, or Demorest, quietly smoking, having just waded through some ponderous commentaries.

"I can't find much sense in them," said he; "but I have to fix things up somehow, be reasonable, and at the same time Biblical, but I have to sweat to do it. We ministers who have a grain of sense have a hard time. We are continually bothered."

"I don't understand about your going into the ministry," said Charlie. "I thought you were as liberal as we."

"I am. I can't believe these old doctrines, but I must do something. I can't lie idle. I am so constituted that, if I don't express myself in the pulpit, I can't express myself anywhere. I must be dumb, and what talent I have goes to waste."

"Can't you write? Can't you go into literature, or lecture, or start a liberal church?"

"No. I should make a dismal failure of all these things. I haven't talent enough for literature, where the best minds in the world are engaged. Really, I haven't a particle of originality. I can't create. I can simply express. Lecturing is played out. Only the most powerful or fortunate men can succeed there. If I start a liberal church, I am just as much bound as I am now. I must satisfy all sorts of hobbies and whims, and make pretences and be hypocritical. I might just as well be a Methodist as undertake to do any of this half-way work. The fact is, I am a child of feeling; and the past has a wondrous power over my heart. I cannot tell you how I am thrilled by the old songs and ceremonies. They possess me like a spell. Don't blame me because I preach. I do it to find some expression for my passionate heart, to pour forth my longings, my hopes, my dreams, and thus, if possible, to serve men. Believe me, I do not do it with a