

## GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

"I suppose you mean to make Junc a college boy."

"Of course. He can take the higher branches at least, like rowing and football. I'm bound he shall know all about them. I hope he'll catch Latin enough to translate his own name, and I want he should figger; and I'm in hopes he can make a stump speech."

"Make a stump-speech? You want he should run for office?"

"That's kind of natural, you know. Every true American likes to run for office. It's in the blood. It don't hurt a man, unless he's whipped."

"Hurrah for democracy!" said Charlie. "That's what it means, that everybody shall run for office. Poor Junc, alas! you must be a typical American."

"I shan't insist upon it," said Dick. "Perhaps he'd rather work for a living."

"He may be lucky enough for that. I hope he will win his bread in the sweat of his face."

Junc seemed to take all these words in and understand their meaning. He was indeed a prodigious youth. Polly danced around as bright as a butterfly, and it is marvelous what heaps of work she did besides caring for the baby.

"How your fingers fly!" said Charlie, as he watched her sewing. "I should think you'd want a little rest."

"That's not our business," said Polly. "Men rest but we women have to keep on."

"That's not fair. I think we ought to change works."

"O," laughed Polly, "then we'd have to do it all. We'd finish your job in a jiffy. You'd bungle ours, and we'd have to do it over again."

"Women are a blessing, and no mistake. I begin to appreciate them."

"How fortunate—for you! We always have appreciated ourselves, and have had the fun of knowing that we were doing something."

"We don't have that enjoyment. Our general feeling is that we are in the way."

"Not so bad as that. You are slightly endurable," laughed Polly.

"Then I'll remain; and, if I can't be useful, I will try to be ornamental."

"A Japanese young man, I suppose, as I heard them sing the other night."

"So you have heard the new opera, then. What do you think of the 'aesthetic craze?'"

"It's sensible. I believe in looking well."

"That's woman's art; but how are knee-breeches for a man?"

"The knee-breeches are handsome, but the man doesn't seem to suit them. He's not handsome enough."

"That's the trouble. We can't

be æsthetic. Beauty is for woman."

"And we make the most of it, don't we?"

"That seems to be a woman's privilege, and I admit she has almost learned the art of transfiguration through her supreme art of dress; but I fear we may never know whether her art is true or false. The influence of adornment is so subtle that we cannot decide whether it is woman through her dress or dress through the woman that is delighting us. Moreover, we don't know why it is that a fashion accepted as artistic and graceful today is banished as awkward, uncouth, tomorrow. If there are absolute and eternal laws of beauty belonging to the art of apparel, the same as there are inherent principles of nature that work to the accomplishment of beauty, then alas! woman does not make the most of her divine prerogative, but is to often misled. How can a fashion which restrains or limits any freedom of movement have in it the principles of true art? Why are women not more ready to use what is comfortable in dress? Depend upon it, this is her only safe guide to the beautiful."

"Why bless you!" said Polly. "The women would change their dress in a minute, if the men would let them. There is nothing on earth a man likes to hate as he does a female dress reformer."

"I think that is because she does not understand her work. She must know how to be a reformer in her field and not a mere agitator. When woman will dress for health and utility as well as for grace and beauty, then woman will add another sceptre to her might by which she rules the world."

"They are coming to it. Woman will take care of herself," said Polly.

"I believe it, seeing that she takes care of us so well. She had a double duty."

"And half a reward," added Polly; "but she won't stop until she can make her own terms. As for me, I'm satisfied. Dick ain't very rich, but he has a way of giving me change that makes me feel independent as a queen; for he never seems to begrudge it,—acts as if I had as good right to it as he, and as though he would like to give me a heap more, if he had it to give. I tell you there's nothing like having a little money to call your own and spend as you like."

Juncta Juvant was asleep, softly smiling in his wonderous dreams. What an eternal blessing children are! It is for them we toil, and look beyond the burdens of today to their glad tomorrows. They ever come laden with measureless wealth. The jewels we place at their feet cannot equal the jewels which they flash over our arduous way. They are the royal meistersingers. With million voices, they sing the beau-

tiful chorus of the dawn,—the eternal dawn that ever mingles with the eternal night of life. So that, in the weariest way, we have something of brilliant cheer. Inevitable, they are both birth and death, and each renders to each its largest glory. Backward and forward, the resplendent lights come and go, from life's endless morning to its endless evening.

How beautiful is home in the midst of it all,—father and mother and the child! It is this which constantly elevates and refines. Dick had never been "regenerated." He was a rough child of the soil. He and Polly believed simply in this world, and the common life they lived; in the home where their affections gather, and the flowers bloom, and the fruit is garnered. It was a mater-of-fact world, but it was all they knew. Full of care and perplexities there was still in it many a silver thread of pure enjoyment. The home is not built upon dogma; it does not depend upon any system. It grew up out of the heart of man; and so long as the heart of man endures, so long as there are birth and death, so long will there be a home where the foot of man may rest. Here the rudest will find ennobling influence. Here will be touched the harp of the world's sweetest joy. The church may vanish, but the fireside endures. It sparkles with no supernatural light. It glows entirely from the bosom of the earth. It is the lustre of our humanity.

The wildest heart bends to its immortal shrine, and the bitterest wound is healed in its gracious shadow. It is founded on human love. It is the constant mediator between sorrow and joy, bringing to the former the undying impulse of the latter.

## CHAPTER XXX.

"So days of war are upon you," said Charlie to Jimmy.

"Indeed, they are, pell-mell. I have made up my mind not to run."

"That's right. You can't dodge 'em; you must meet them."

"My manhood is at stake, and that settles it. I thought I could stay in the church, and in a certain poetic way satisfy the wants of the people; but it's no use. There are heresy hunters, and they have brought me to bay. Either I must be cowed down or fight."

"Fight of course. It'll do you good. I have always thought your method wrong. Sooner or later there must be an issue; you cannot join the old and the new, they are radically different. Christianity has ceased to grow; there is no more evolution in it, no more blossom and fruit. It is in the stages of decay."

"I am afraid so. It is hard, however, to think it; for how much of the world's life has been wrapt up in Christianity! How dear it all

seems, the heroes and the martyrs of the church, the songs, the litanies, the once beautiful hopes and dreams! I was listening to Beethoven's symphony last evening. How wonderful it is, expressing depths of human passion, such glory of aspiration! It grew out of the soul of the church,—a marvelous harmony, sublime as the stars, and as immortal, too, I think."

"So say I! And, in my way, I can enjoy that music as deeply as if I bent at the shrine of the church. I grant that the church has been a form of human passion, and as such has expressed a real thing, a tremendous life; and the music of the church has thus been created like the ocean, and will go rolling on through the centuries. Music survives, while theology dies, for music was never born of theology, but of the human heart. Beethoven's music, like the winds and the waves, is a part of nature. We might as well expect the mountains to cease to be as these mighty strains. At the same time, the intellect utterly disproves the dogma through which this music assumed its form."

"I find it difficult to separate these things. I enjoy the past. 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view. Those old heroes and saints and even sinners seem grand in the mist of ages; and I love to think that their life is a part of ours. I love the church, the spire that points to the sky. Every time I look at the lofty emblem, I am filled with unutterable thoughts. The church was alive once, glorious, beautiful. Can it be that it is dead, and that we must bury it out of sight?"

"This is the sadness of destiny. There was a time when Christianity was new and buried the old."

"I see the necessity. I have allowed myself to drift. To a certain extent, I have confused my conscience, I have been sentimental. One must be true to the dictates of his own head, or he cannot be morally strong. The heart alone cannot be our guide, however beautiful the visions which it unfolds."

"How did this come upon you? Your congregation like you, don't they?"

"Yes, though as a matter of fact I have preached nothing but primitive paganism since I have been here, only I haven't called it by that name. The people are hungry for that sort of thing. I read the Greek poets more than I do the bible. The people want paganism, pure, sweet nature-worship, only you must call it Christianity. You must introduce it with a text of Scripture; but, after you are started, you will find that Seneca or Plato is much more delightful to the average Christian than St. Paul. I rather enjoy this sly preaching of the dear old Greek philosophy and poetry; I'm caught now, however.