

GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]
see the grand consummation," said Charlie to the doctor and Paddie. "The sinners have the best of it this time, haven't they? This is a kind of judgment scene that I believe in, where the goats have something to say in the matter and are not shoved unceremoniously off. The lamb-like deacon has played his trump card, and lost."

"We arrived this morning," said Paddie, "and came directly to the scene of battle. We wanted to be in on the home-stretch. It was nip and tuck with miracle and nature, but nature has the best of it. I rather think we surprised the deacon when we showed what really can be done, if we know how. I think for a moment he actually disbelieved the Scriptures."

"Only for a moment; for his belief is so inwrought with his selfishness that to lose his faith would be like losing his life. He will preach and pray as long as he lives, and at the same time be a damnable villain."

"I did want to give him a few parting words," said Blanche, "but he looked so crestfallen that I could say nothing. I must have seemed to him like a ghost. My presence was the greatest punishment he could have, and no words I could utter would have pierced him more. Yet it makes me indignant to feel that he justifies his crime to his own heart by the thought that he is doing it to the glory of God. This man will never feel that he has done wrong. You cannot penetrate his soul with remorse. He is only sorry because he has failed; and, if he had succeeded, how the world would have praised him! He would have been heralded as a saint. Justice has triumphed; and it will triumph again and again, but only through humanity and science. I will forget this merciless villain. I am free now, and love is in the air, and all the beauty of nature. How beautiful this world will be when freed from these horrid delusions, and we rejoice simply in one another; when we have no fear and are strong because we know and can use what really is! I have wealth now; and I will pour it forth for the benefit of a living humanity, to clothe and feed their bodies and give them true knowledge."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

All was merry as a marriage bell.

"The love knot is to be tied is it?"

"Indeed it is, so far as outward ceremony is concerned."

"What is the use of a ceremony, if the heart and mind are united?"

"That is a question. We are social beings, and must act as such, and to a certain extent there must be outward and public approval. We can't live to ourselves wholly. We are bound together like the

atoms in our own body."

"I see no minister, however."

"I want none. Marriage is a civil contract, and all I need is the civil officer, the representative of public order and decency."

"You don't believe in the words, 'What God hath joined together let not man put asunder?'"

"Assuredly not. It is the voice of tyranny. We marry for human happiness. We dissolve for the same reason."

"Is there not an ideal side to marriage? It is something more than a business arrangement. It is an act in which our whole being is included as in no other."

"Granted, and in a certain sense the clergy stand for this ideal side; but they represent so much that is false and monstrous that their presence is an injury. I prefer the coming together of those I most honor, with music and flowers to represent the high and noble quality of marriage."

It was a notable gathering. All our old acquaintances were present and they made a brilliant and happy company. The simple ceremony was performed, and then the welcome flowed from every heart.

How happy Blanche was in this bloom and splendor of her romantic life, so full of contrasts, and now stretching before her like a shining sea!

Jennie was one of the company. She had come on purpose from Golden Throne.

"How glad I am to see you!" said Blanche. "Wasn't that a queer life among the hills?"

"It must seem so to you. But so many things have happened in my lifetime that I am not at all astonished."

"I'm getting used to it myself," said Blanche. "Time is a magician. His wallet is full of surprises. Here is Mr. Baker. The last time I saw you, sir, was on the jury."

"I did my duty," said Tim, "though I went agin the evidence. You'll admit that things looked dark."

"I shudder when I think of that trial, and how fate seemed closing in on me. Alas, how much injustice there is, when we judge by outward circumstances alone!"

"I don't want to be obliged to judge again."

"We have to judge sometimes," said Charlie. "Crime must be punished, but the instruments we use are weak. I wonder if it would be better if there were no such thing as judge and jury."

"That's my impression," said Paddie; "that is, as soon as we are wise enough to substitute something more correct and humane. Judge and jury are a bungling and hazardous invention for the ends of justice, and quite too often insufficient for the cause they serve. What a mechanical appliance, indeed, to reach the conscience

of a case! It were almost as safe, so far as the principle depends, to try a man by the 'rule of three,' an unfortunate remedy to commit the life or honor of a man to the verdict of a jury. The question of guilt, or life or death, is so momentous, and demands such delicate and responsible treatment, that, even if circumstantial evidence were always complete and at hand, the jury applying it should be peerless in judgment and intelligence."

"We weren't bothered with criminal jurisprudence on the island," said the doctor. "We enjoyed the harmony of anarchy. Let people alone, and they will behave themselves."

"I think I should have enjoyed that island," said Milly, "the beautiful flowers that you speak of, and the wonderful curiosities. I could have roamed over that island forever, and listened to the music of its trees and the sea that broke upon it. I have always longed for the quiet of such a life, to be with nature in her secret haunts."

"You'd been delighted. I found something every day to astonish—strange animals and birds and wondrous landscapes, caves that seemed miles in length and covered with all sorts of gems, and marvelous ruins that carried you back to the very dawn of human life. We must picnic out there one of these days."

"I'm ready," said Milly; "I hope there won't be any ecclesiastical councils out there."

"Nothing of the sort," said the doctor, "no anathema, marantha, no Index Expurgatorius. We can take what we want, and leave what we like."

Dick and Polly were at the wedding of course, and Juneta Juvant in his exuberant glory.

"He's the lord of us all," said Paddie; "he's the only authority that I shall cave in to."

"You are right there, pard," said Dick; "I obey the baby."

"And me too," said Polly, with a sly little nod.

Bobbins and Jimmy were holding a rather iconoclastic revel over their old fields of labor and belief; while Paddie, animated by his own voluble exuberance, launched into one of his quaint and headlong speculations.

Said Paddie: "How much of the golden prime of this planet must be wasted before humanity will know how to value itself! What a stupendous thought that this earth has been working billions of ages to become the fair spot she now is for us, and yet her success has been as perfect as though all this immeasurable labor had been done for the delectation of my single self alone! Sublime coincidence! First, that a world is made; second, that I am made to fit this world and use it. Yes, glorious and wonderful coincidence! What if, after

all these elemental throes of nature man had never come forth from the mighty travail of her loins. But, oh, joy and wonder transcending time and space! The birth is safe, and mother Earth proclaims the miracle of man!" "Yet," pursued Paddie, with increasing ardor of delight, "it were not enough that all this myriad life was formed, if I had been left out. Although how easily could my little clod have been forgotten. There was enough without it, and I may never know if it is needed. But, zounds! here I am, with a quintillion chances against me. Wouldn't this be a big draw for a lottery? Even so I raffled for existence, and got it! So here is my fortune,—drink to it, folks,—and laugh and sing and dance; for this is the way to look at yourselves. Think how you slipped into life with the chances of countless unborn against you, think of the poor devils you beat, and see what a miracle it is that you are here."

"Here, then, is my toast to the paradox drawn from creation: 'The possible greater than the real, as germs exceed fruitage. Let it be the moral of life to make the real as great as the possible, and so justify our place in the real.' I tell you, life is no humbug."

"Hurrah for Paddie!" said Charlie, as all with one accord gave three cheers for Paddie and his eloquent effusion.

"Why, that's the best discourse you ever preached," said Jimmy. "It carried the seed all through it, and burst into the flower at the end. That's it, the very essence of morality and religion. You can't get above this 'Make the real as great as the possible, and so justify your place in the real.'"

"Don't be too sure of anything," said Grubbins; "When you think you have spoken the truth, you can't sit down on it comfortable but you generally find it stands for something on the other side that can speak for itself just about as well. So a truth is only half a truth, or one side of a many-sided truth, and you are never through with it. I tell you humbug has its place in life, at least we can make it useful."

"That is your fortune and ability. You bear your blushing honors thick upon you. Just elected to Congress, I congratulate you; and I guess that you will do as well as most of them."

"I take the world as it is," said Grubbins. "I am no reformer, I see no use in it."

"I do," said Sol Jones; "I expect to be made senator by it."

"Then I should stick to it," said Grubbins; "I shall take the other tack and be conservative."

"There's a chance for us both. The main thing is to be elected. I know that I can serve my country