

## GOLDEN THRONE.

[A ROMANCE BY SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.]

"Is not contentment better than riches?"

"No, if we are contented simply because we are ignorant. True contentment can only come by possession, and riches are useful chiefly by increasing our wants. Wealth that merely crams and stupefies is a curse. True wealth is that which makes more of us, so that we seek for more. Wealth that does not create a new want is worse than poverty. It pampers us, and we die. He who creates a new want is a benefactor as much as he who gratifies a want. To be rich in knowledge and every art, to have accomplished many and beautiful things and yet to be unsatisfied, is the highest condition of humanity."

All departed at last save Will. He and Charlie sat together, and talked over their old-time friendship and adventures.

"How much I have learned," said Charlie, "since that sad and terrible day! Madeline has been to me a most noble influence. I feel that this is her precious gift. Through her purity and devotion, I learned to believe in the purity and devotion of others. It was her image glowing in my heart that sent me to the defence of little Pete, and made me strong. And, now, all this has come,—love, wealth, all that can make me happy."

"I rejoice with you indeed," said Will.

"I wonder that you have not found such happiness, Will. A man like you might love and win the brightest jewel."

"We cannot command love any more than we can command genius," said Will.

"So you have never felt the divine afflatus?"

"I did not say that."

"Is it possible that you have loved and been disappointed?"

"I do not say that either."

"You do not choose a solitary life?"

"I do not."

"You have had some strange experience and have not told me."

"Some things cannot be told."

"Yes, there are inaccessible places in every heart."

"I will unlock the door of mine," said Will. "It will do me good. In this hour of love's triumph, I can talk of love. I have loved deeply, passionately, and yet I have loved in vain. I must walk the earth alone. Listen."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

"I was in the army of the Cumberland just before the battle of Chickamauga. I had received a slight wound on picket duty. It was necessary for some of us to be quartered on the inhabitants of the neighborhood, and it fell to my lot to be taken to the house of Colonel

Peyton, a staunch Unionist. His home was one of the most beautiful in the state, situated on the banks of the river and embraced by lovely forests. I enjoyed the profound rest, and was really thankful for the little scratch that gave me cessation from the turmoil of war. For two years I had been in the rough and tumble of conflict, knocked here and there by an ungracious fate, and too often with the feeling that 'some one had blundered,' so that the greatest successes seemed to end in nothing. I was worn out, heart-sick with the terrible struggle. I needed for the time being to forget it, and bury myself from the world. I found some old books, which I read to my heart's content. They were translations mostly from the Greek classics. I had never come across them before, or, if I had, had passed them carelessly by. I was astonished to find these old authors so interesting, so true to nature, so full of noble poetry and philosophy. Colonel Peyton's daughter Lorena was in charge of the house, with a dozen or more servants. We now formed an acquaintance. In fact, I was deeply in love with her, almost at first sight. She was possessed of fine intelligence, and was ardently devoted to our cause. She was very reserved in her nature, and, while talkative, was at the same time incommunicative of her inner spirit. I had to return to the army in a few weeks and resume my duties, but I was so situated that I could occasionally visit her. How happy I was with this vision of love and peace in the midst of the conflict! It was a balm to my heart, and I yielded myself to it impetuously. I did not know whether to declare my passion; for she gave me nothing that seemed like encouragement, and I hardly dared to break the spell with what might be an unwelcome certainty. So I drifted along, the days went shining by, and I was on what appeared to be an endless stream of delight. Yet I was admonished that this would not do; for rumors began to multiply of the advance of the enemy's troops, and the concentration and forward push of our own. One night I determined to express myself frankly, and be secure for the impending changes. It was evening when I left my command. Behind me were the long lines of camp-fires stretching for miles. I cantered along the bank of the river, which was sparkling like a ribbon amid the hills beneath the lustrous stars. My heart was full of fluttering dreams. I believed that Lorena was mine, she had sent me so many nameless messages with her eyes. I longed for the turn in the road, whence, embowered in the groves, her noble residence could be seen. I reached it, and with the eagerness of a lover stuck

my spurs into the side of my horse,

that I might the sooner catch a glimpse of the temple of my soul. I looked, it was all in flames. The night was lurid with the glare. With reckless speed I plunged forward. I reached the burning mass, Lorena could not be found. Then, I heard afar the bugle call that summoned me to my post. I must return immediately. The whole camp was in motion, troops were gathering for the march, I had to plunge into the very midst of the preparation. By morning we were on our way to meet the enemy; soon, we were in the midst of the battle. It raged, and I was swept on, miles away from Lorena's home. Immediately after the victory I was ordered to Washington, and not until the war was over did I have a chance to see what was once to me the paradise of the world. I found it only ruins, and no trace of her I loved. The servants had gone, none knew whither. Colonel Peyton was dead and I could not receive the slightest clew to his daughter. It seemed as if the star of my life had set, only to rise in the eternities. I carried her image in my heart. She was the only woman I ever loved. I could love no other. I returned to my home. It was then broken up, only Madeline was left, and we prepared to take our departure for the distant West, each with a different sorrow and memory. That was before we came to Golden Throne. We located in several places, and changed about because of the restless spirit within.

"We took it into our heads at one time to go to Saratoga. We were eager for a change from the wild Western life, and yet we did not want to take up again with the quiet life of New England.

"Saratoga was indeed just what we wanted. It was full of the beauty of nature, and yet was alive with all that society can give. It was simply delightful to dwell amid those gorgeous hotels, those beautiful gardens, the lights, and the crowds of people, so gay and happy. We stayed there for a couple of months, and Madeline never seemed to be happier. The place was just what her nature demanded, and so we lingered until the season was over.

"The evening before we purposed to start, I strolled about the fountains, listening to the music and watching the people. I took up a glass of the sparkling water and drank in remembrance of the happy days now gone. A lady beside me was waiting for the cup. I filled and handed it to her; and, as I looked into her face, I recognized Lorena.

"I grasped her hand. She seemed to return the pressure somewhat coldly, yet her eyes showed that she was glad to meet me again. Her face flushed, and she stood

trembling.

"I have sought for you long and far," I said; "where have you been?"

"Almost everywhere," she said. "Since that dreadful night, I have not returned to Tennessee. I could not!"

"How did it happen? I came out to see you that very evening, for I had something to say. Your home was in ruins, and you gone."

"I fled before the enemy came. I had warning from a faithful servant. We were obliged to pass into the Confederate lines. We found our way eventually to Richmond. There my father died. We were treated with great kindness. After the war, I travelled abroad. Our home was in ruins, our property gone. I wished to escape the sad and terrible memory of all."

"I went back to your home. I wrote and sought in every way to find you. I was afraid that you were dead. Now, we are together again. How happy I am."

"There was a care-worn look in her eyes, and she seemed to shrink away from me. She replied, somewhat restrainedly:—

"I am happy too. I thought we should not meet again. I have often brought to mind those happy days in the sweet haunts of my childhood. How fast they went! How like jewels they were set in the dark bosom of war! How rudely they were torn, and the black cloud swept them from our sight!"

"They were precious days indeed," said I. "In them, my heart's blood flowed as never before. Do you know what I was going to say that evening, when, instead of your face, I met the awful flame? A greater flame than that was in my heart."

"I might perhaps guess, but I will not. Let those days rest."

"Can we not make them beautiful in the future? Do not the wings of hope hover over them?"

"Memory is better than hope. Memory always abides. Hope flees."

"O Lorena, how strangely you talk! You were always so reserved that I dared not speak the secret of my heart until it became like a volcanic fire that must burst forth. Listen to me now."

"Oh, do not," she said with a despairing expression. "You do not know the pain you give me."

"Pain? why talk of pain? Why should we not clasp hands and talk of joy?"

"Yes, we can be friends," she said quietly.

"Friends! That is not the music I would evoke. It is love. Oh, I loved you so deeply! Did you not know it then, could you not see it,—feel it? I worshipped you. I was your slave. Ever since, I have borne your image in my heart, I have bent my soul only to you. I can have no other devotion. I am yours; and if you re-