

Scarcely came over the small man were genuinely painful. He walked right up and held out his right hand. The white dog, at the same time, walked up to the man and sniffed, but it was only a perfunctory sniff. He, too, possessed the clairvoyance that could see through clothes and countenances and fair speech to the hearts of men.

"Howdy do!" observed young Mr Smith.

The big man took the extended hand very gravely.

"How do you do, sir?" he inquired, in turn. "Pleasant weather, isn't it?"

"Ya-a-a-a!" drawled the younger man; then training asserted itself, and he added, "Yes, sir," nodding his head with decision.

He did not quite understand the drift of the big man's remarks, but he was quite willing to say "Yes, sir," to anything he might observe. Besides, there were the peanuts, and a little extra courtesy might not come amiss. The big man slapped his hands on his knees and laughed heartily.

"You're all right!" he exclaimed. "I'll bet I can tell you a remarkable fact about yourself Tyke. You like peanuts!" and he picked up the sack from the bench where it had held the famished gaze of the young Mr Smith.

"Ya-a-a-a!" was the eager response, and this time the young Mr Smith forgot to add any additional courtesy. He was too busy.

"I am not surprised," said the elder man. "Not by any means. Help yourself."

III.

The young man promptly proceeded to fill both chubby hands. Peanuts stuck out from them in every direction, and one fell upon the ground. In trying to pick it up he dropped six. As has been heretofore remarked, Robert Walsingham Smith was a profound philosopher. He surveyed the six fallen peanuts in deep thought for a brief space.

The big man, profoundly interested, watched the process of intellect in the

clear-blue eyes and the puckered brow. Suddenly deciding, young Mr Smith placed the peanuts he still held in the man's broad palm; then he picked up those on the ground and put them in the same place.

"Fix the peanuts," he ordered confidently, and deep delight broke out all over the man's face.

Being a childless man, he had not reflected that those pink fingers were not capable of cracking peanuts, nor the sharp little white teeth capable of separating hull from nut; but the pleasure that this discovery awoke in him was nothing compared to the exquisite joy of shelling those peanuts and popping the kernels, one at a time, into that little red mouth, the lips of which were deliciously soft and warm, like the kiss of a sun-bathed rose.

"What is your name?" asked the big man in one of the intervals of shelling and feeding.

Robert Walsingham Smith waited until he had swallowed what was in his mouth, as he had been carefully taught to do, and then he replied clearly and concisely.

"Name, Wobbawassinmiss."  
"Exactly," agreed the man. "I thought it must be something like that. If you don't mind, however, I'll just call you Tyke. It comes handier. Will that do—Tyke?"

"Ya-a-a-a," replied Tyke, and opened his mouth for another peanut.

The man marvelled at Tyke's capacity. It had been a large sack of peanuts and the squirrels had not eaten so very many of them, but the sack was nearly empty before the youngster drew a satisfied sigh and observed:

"I tired."  
"Why, bless my soul, so you must be!" replied the man, becoming suddenly aware that the small morsel of humanity had been standing all this time on two amazingly small feet.

He glanced down at the dust-grimed little shoes and gathered the youngster compassionately in his big arms. Tyke rested his head contentedly back in the comfortable angle he found waiting for it. The dog inspected the group earn-

edly and then, satisfied, he curled up on the gravel close in front of them.

The big man started to talk about the birds and the squirrels and the other things that he judged might interest Tyke in general, glancing down every now and then and watching for the monosyllabic replies that came more and more slowly. In one of these glances he observed that the blue eyes were glazing and that the lids were drooping. Having had no experience, he was astounded at the suddenness with which the sandman was overtaking and claiming for his own this delightful new acquaintance of his, and it rather scared him.

"Here, Tyke," said he, hastily, "this won't do! Somebody will be looking for you."

But the sleep of tykehood knows no logic. It comes when it wills, as irresistible as doom itself, and the man suddenly found himself the possessor of a strange baby that was sound asleep. He ventured to shake his burden a little, but he might just as well have been rocking it gently into deeper sleep, and he had not the heart to use more vigorous measures.

"Here's a nice muddle," he speculated. "Now, what am I going to do with this?"

It was a puzzling question, and quite naturally he looked down at the cause of the puzzle as if to seek an answer there. In all his life the man had never before held a sleeping baby in his arms. He gazed in awe upon the thin eyelids with their delicate blue veining. How large the eyes beneath them were! What wonderful curving lashes were those that spread down their delicate arcs! What a marvellous complexion was this upon the rounded cheeks! How like fine-spun gold was that waving hair! What a beautiful thing, more wondrously beautiful than any other created object, was the curve of those little lips! What a warm, chubby, sturdy body was this that lay in his arms and against his breast!

The perspiration of summer sleep began to bead out upon the child's forehead, and, moving as gently as if he

feared that even a breath might disturb the harmony of this exquisite picture, the man drew his handkerchief from his pocket and gently wiped away the moisture.

The moment was a revelation to this man who had fought all his life. Really, there seemed, after all, something in the world besides business and competitors, besides money and stocks and bonds, besides the struggle for place and fame and riches. He was a man who, having attained his pinnacle, could look back upon the course over which he had come, and view now, with a trace of compassion, some of the rounds of the ladder that he had broken in his ascent. These things had never bothered him much, but just now they recurred to him and made him feel just a little bit as if he were almost unworthy to be the bearer of this beautiful little burden that seemed suddenly a holy and a sacred thing.

IV.

A sharp, clicking sound broke in upon his reverie, and then a rapid chugging. He looked around. His chauffeur had succeeded at last in fixing his automobile, and there it stood, whirring and trembling, eager to dash away. He arose and walked over to the machine. The dog had been asleep, but only in that light slumber that is permitted to those weighted with the sense of duty, and at the man's lightest movement he was on his feet. Now he followed at the man's heels.

"Huh!" said the man to his chauffeur. "I seem to 'ave picked up a responsibility here, Williams. I'll be hanged if I know what to do with it!"

Williams surveyed the youngster with a judicial eye. He had the antipathy of his profession against dogs, and he had never been close enough to a baby to have one appeal to him.

"I don't know, I'm sure, sir," he replied. "You might lay it on the bench where you found it. No doubt it lives around here somewhere, and its mother will doubtless come looking for it by and by."

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