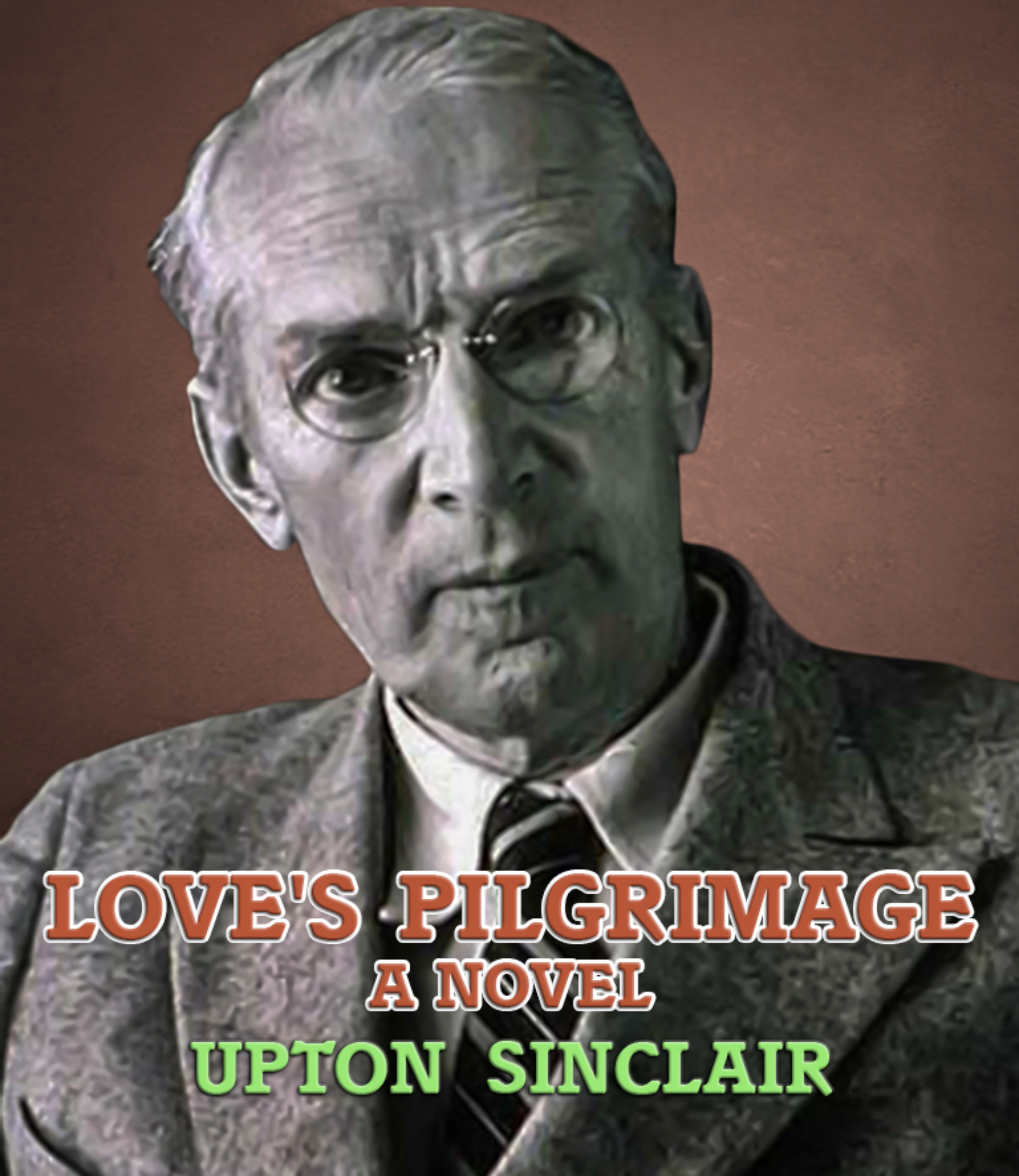


**CLASSICS TO GO**



**LOVE'S PILGRIMAGE**

**A NOVEL**

**UPTON SINCLAIR**

# **LOVE'S PILGRIMAGE**

**A NOVEL**

**Upton Sinclair**

# **PART I. Loves Entanglement**

## BOOK I. THE VICTIM

It was in a little woodland glen, with a streamlet tumbling through it. She sat with her back to a snowy birch-tree, gazing into the eddies of a pool below; and he lay beside her, upon the soft, mossy ground, reading out of a book of poems. Images of joy were passing before them; and there came four lines with a picture—

“Hard by, a cottage-chimney smokes,  
From betwixt two aged oaks,  
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,  
Are at their savory dinner set.”

“Ah!” said she. “I always loved that. Let us be Corydon and Thyrsis!”

He smiled. “They were both of them men,” he said.

“Let us change it,” she responded—“just between ourselves!”

“Very well—Corydon!” said he.

Then, after a moment’s thought, she added, “But we didn’t have the cottage.”

“No,” said he—“nor even the dinner!”

Section 1. It was the Highway of Lost Men. They shivered, and drew their shoulders together as they walked, for it was night, and a cold, sleety rain was falling. The lights from saloons and pawn-shops fell upon their faces—faces haggard and gaunt with misery, or bloated with disease and sin. Some stared before them fixedly; some gazed about with furtive and hungry eyes as they shuffled on. Here and there a policeman stood in the shelter, swinging his club and watching them as they passed. Music called to them from dives and dance-halls, and lighted signs and flaring-colored pictures tempted them in the entrances of cheap museums and theatres; they lingered before these, glad of

even a moment's shelter. Overhead the elevated trains pounded by; and from the windows one could see men crowded about the stoves in the rooms of lodging-houses, where the steam from their garments made a blur in the air.

Down this highway walked a lad, about fifteen years of age, pale of face, and with delicate and sensitive features. His overcoat was buttoned tightly about his neck, and his hands thrust into his pockets; he gazed around him swiftly as he walked. He came to this place every now and then, but he never grew used to what he saw.

He eyed the men who passed him; and when he came to a saloon he would push open the door and gaze about. Sometimes he would enter, and hurry through, to peer into the compartments in the back; and then go out again, giving a wide berth to the drinkers, and shrinking from their glances. Once a girl appeared in a doorway, and smiled and nodded to him; he started and hurried out, shuddering. Her wanton black eyes haunted him, hinting unimaginable things.

Then, on a corner, he stopped and spoke to a policeman. "Hello!" said the man, and shook his head—"No, not this time." So the boy went on; there were several miles of this Highway, and each block of it the same.

At last, in a dingy bar-room, with saw-dust strewn upon the floor, and the odor of stale beer and tobacco-smoke in the air—here suddenly the boy sprang forward, with a cry: "Father!" And a man who sat with bowed head in a corner gave a start, and lifted a white face and stared at him. He rose unsteadily to his feet, and staggered to the other, and fell upon his shoulder, sobbing, "My son! My son!"

How many times had Thyrsis heard those words—in how many hours of anguish! They sank into the deeps of him, waking echoes like the clang of a bell: they voiced all the terror and grief of defeated life—"My son! My son!"

The man clung to him, weeping, and pouring out the flood of his shame. "I have fallen again—I am lost—I am lost!"

The occupants of the place were watching the scene with dull curiosity; and the boy was trembling like a wild deer trapped.

"Yes, father, yes! Let us go home."

"Home—home, my son? Will you take me home? Oh, I couldn't bear to go!"

"But you must come home."

"Do you mean that you still love me, son?"

"Yes, father, I still love you. I want to try to help you. Come with me."

Then the boy would gaze about and ask, "Where is your hat?"

"Hat, my son? I don't know. I have lost it." The boy would see his torn and mud-stained clothing, and the poor old pitiful face, with the eyes blood-shot and swollen, and the skin, that had been rosy, and was now a ghastly, ashen gray. He would choke back his feelings, and grip his hands to keep himself together.

"Come, father, take my hat, and let us go."

"No, my son. I don't need any hat. Nothing can hurt me—I am lost! Lost!"

So they would go out, arm in arm; and while they made their progress up the Highway, the man would pour out his remorse, and tell the story of his weeks of horror.

Then, after a mile or so, he would halt.

"My son!"

"What is it, father?"

"I must stop here, son."

"Why, father?"

"I must have something to drink."

“*No, father!*”

“But, my boy, I can’t go on! I can’t walk! You don’t know what I’m suffering!”

“No, father!”

“I’ve got the money left—I’m not asking you. I’ll come right with you—on my word of honor I will!”

And so they would fight it out—all the way back to the lodging-house where they lived, and where the mother sat and wept. And here they would put him to bed, and lock up his clothing to keep him in; and here, with drugs and mineral-waters, and perhaps a doctor to help, they would struggle with him, and tend him until he was on his feet again. Then, with clothing newly-brushed and face newly-shaven he would go back to the world of men; and the boy would go back to his dreams.

Section 2. Such was the life of Thyrsis, from earliest childhood to maturity. His father’s was a heritage of gentle breeding and high traditions—his forefathers were cavaliers, and had served the State. And now it had come to this—to hall bedrooms in lodging-houses, and a life-and-death grapple with destruction! And when Thyrsis came to study the problem, he found that it was a struggle without hope; his father was a man in a trap.

He was what people called a “drummer”. He was dependent for his living upon the favor of certain merchants—men for the most part of low ideals, who came to the city in search of their low pleasures. One met them by waiting about in the lobbies of hotels, and in the bar-rooms which they frequented; and always the first sign of fellowship with them was to have a drink. And this was the field on which the battle had to be fought!

He would hold out for months—half a year, perhaps—drinking lemonade and putting up with their raillery. And then he would begin with ginger-ale; and then it would come

to beer; and then to whiskey. He was always devising new plans to control himself; always persuading himself that he had solved the problem. He would not drink in the morning; he would not drink until after dinner; he would not drink alone—and so on without end. His whole life was drink, and all his thoughts were of drink—the odor of it always in his nostrils, the image of it always before his eyes.

And the grimness of his fate lay here—that it was by his best qualities that he was betrayed. If he had been hard and mercenary, like some of those who preyed upon him, there might have been hope. But he was generous and free-hearted, a slave to his impulses of friendship. And this was what made the struggle such a cruel one to Thyrsis; it was like the sight of some noble animal basely snared.

From his earliest days the boy had watched these forces working themselves out. The gentleman and the “drummer” fought for supremacy, and step by step the soul of the man was fashioned to the work he did. To succeed with his customers he must share their ideas and their tastes; and so he was bitter against reformers, who interfered with the gaieties of the city, with no consideration for the tastes of “buyers.” But then, on the other hand, would come a time of renunciation, when he would be all enthusiasm for temperance.

He was full of old-fashioned ideas, which would take the quaintest turns of reactionism; his politics were summed up in the phrase that he “would rather vote for a nigger than a Republican”; but then, in the same breath, he would announce some fine and noble sentiment, out of the traditions of a forgotten past. He was the soul of courtesy to women, and of loyalty to friends. He worshipped General Lee and the old time “Virginia gentleman”; and those with whom he lived, and for whose unclean profits he sold himself, never guessed the depths of his contempt for all they stood for. They had the dollars, they were on top; but



some day the nemesis of Good-breeding would smite them—the army of the ghosts of Gentility would rise, and with “Marse Robert” and “Jeb” Stuart at their head, would sweep away the hordes of commercialism.

Thyrsis saw a great deal of this forgotten chivalry. His nursery had been haunted by such musty phantoms; and when he first came to the Northern city, he stayed at a hotel which was frequented by people who lived in this past—old ladies who were proud and prim, and old gentlemen who were quixotic and humorous, young ladies who were “belles,” and young gentlemen who aspired to be “blades”. It was a world that would have made happy the soul of any writer of romances; but to Thyrsis in earliest childhood the fates had given the gift of seeing beneath the shams of things, and to him this dead Aristocracy cried out loudly for burial. There was an incredible amount of drunkenness, and of debauchery scarcely hidden; there was pretense strutting like a peacock, and avarice skulking like a hound; there were jealousy, and base snobbery, and raging spite, and a breath of suspicion and scandal hanging like a poisonous cloud over everything. These people came and went, an endless procession of them; they laughed and danced and gossiped and drank their way through the boy’s life, and unconsciously he judged them, and hated them and feared them. It was not by such that his destiny was to be shaped.

Most of them were poor; not an honest poverty, but a sham and artificial poverty—the inability to dress as others did, and to lose money at “bridge” and “poker”, and to pay the costs of their self-indulgences. As for Thyrsis and his parents, they always paid what they owed; but they were not always able to pay it when they owed it, and they suffered all the agonies and humiliations of those who did not pay at all. There was scarcely ever a week when this canker of want did not gnaw at them; their life was one endless and sordid struggle to make last year’s clothing look

like new, and to find some boarding-house that was cheaper and yet respectable. There was endless wrangling and strife and worry over money; and every year the task was harder, the standards lower, the case more hopeless.

There were rich relatives, a world of real luxury up above—the thing that called itself “Society”. And Thyrsis was a student and a bright lad, and he was welcome there; he might have spread his wings and flown away from this sordidness. But duty held him, and love and memory held him still tighter. For his father worshipped him, and craved his help; to the last hour of his dreadful battle, he fought to keep his son’s regard—he prayed for it, with tears in his eyes and anguish in his voice. And so the boy had to stand by. And that meant that he grew up in a torture-house, he drank a cup of poison to its bitter dregs. To others his father was merely a gross little man, with sordid ideas and low tastes; but to Thyrsis he was a man with the terror of the hunted creatures in his soul, and the furies of madness cracking their whips about his ears.

There was only one ending possible—it worked itself out with the remorseless precision of a machine. The soul that fought was smothered and stifled, its voice grew fainter and feebler; the agony and the shame grew hotter, the suffering more cruel, the despair more black. Until at last they found him in a delirium, and took him to a private hospital; and thither went Thyrsis, now grown to be a man, and sat in a dingy reception-room, and a dingy doctor came to him and said, “Do you wish to see the body?” And Thyrsis answered, in a low voice, “No.”

Section 3. So it was that the soul of this lad had grown sombre, and taken to brooding upon the mysteries of fate. Life was no jest and no holiday, it was no place for shams and self-deceptions. It was a place where cruel enemies set traps for the unwary; a field where blind and merciless forces ranged, unhindered by man or God.

Thyrsis could not have told how soon in life this sense had come to him. In his earliest childhood he had known that his father was preyed upon, just as certainly as any wild thing in the forest. At first the enemies had been saloon-keepers, and wicked men who tempted him to drink with them. The names of these men were household words to him, portents of terror; they peopled his imagination as epic figures, such as Black Douglas must have been to the children of the Northern Border.

But then, with widening intelligence, it became certain social forces, at first dimly apprehended. It was the god of "business"—before which all things fair and noble went down. It was "business" that kept vice triumphant in the city; it was because of "business" that the saloons could not be closed even on Sunday, so that the father might be at home one day in seven. And was it not in search of "business" that he was driven forth to loaf in hotel-lobbies and bar-rooms?

Who was to blame for this, Thyrsis did not know; but certain men made profit of it—and these, too, were ignoble men. He knew this; for now and then his father's employers would honor the little family with some kind of an invitation, and they would have to swallow their pride and go. So Thyrsis grew up, with the sense of a great evil loose in the world; a wrong, of which the world did not know. And within him grew a passionate longing to cry aloud to others, to open their eyes to this truth!

Outwardly he was like other boys, eager and cheerful, even boisterous; but within was this hidden thing, which brooded and questioned. Life had made him into an ascetic. He must be stern, even merciless, with himself—because of the fear that was in him, and in his mother as well. The fear that self-indulgence might lay its grisly paws upon him! The fear that he, too, might fall into the trap!

It was not merely that he never touched stimulants; he had an instinct against all things that were softening and enervating, all things that tempted and enslaved. For him was the morning-air, and the shock of cold water, and the hardness of the wild things of the open. Other people did not feel this way; other people pampered themselves and defiled themselves—and so Thyrsis went apart. He lived quite alone with his thoughts, he had never a chum, scarcely even any friends. Where in the long procession of lodging and boarding-houses and summer-resorts should he meet people who knew what he knew about life? Where in all the world should he meet them, save in the books of great men in times past?

There was not much of what is called “culture” in his family; no music at all, and no poetry. But there were novels, and there were libraries where one could get more of these, so Thyrsis became a devourer of stories; he would disappear, and they would find him at meal-times, hidden in a clump of bushes, or in a corner behind a sofa—anywhere out of the world. He read whole libraries of adventure: Mayne-Reid and Henty, and then Cooper and Stevenson and Scott. And then came more serious novels—“Don Quixote” and “Les Misérables,” George Eliot, whom he loved, and Dickens, whose social protest thrilled him; and chiefest of all Thackeray, who moulded his thought. Thackeray knew the world that he knew, Thackeray saw to the heart of it; and no high-souled lad who had read him and worshipped him was ever after to be lured by the glamor of the “great” world—a world whose greatness was based upon selfishness and greed.

Thyrsis knew no foreign language, and fate or instinct kept him from those writers who jested with uncleanness; so he was virginal, and pure in all his imaginings. Other lads exchanged confidences in forbidden things, they broke down the barriers and tore away the veils; but Thyrsis had

never breathed a word about matters of sex to any living creature. He pondered and guessed, but no one knew his thoughts; and this was a crucial thing, the secret of much of his aloofness.

Section 4. In one of the early boarding-houses there had been a little girl, and the families had become intimate. But the two children disliked each other, and kept apart all they could. Thyrsis was domineering and imperious, and things must always be his way. He was given to rebellion, whereas Corydon was gentle and meek, and submitted to confinements and prohibitions in a quite disgraceful manner. She was a pretty little girl, with great black eyes; and because she was silent and shy, he set her down as “stupid”, and went his way.

They spent a summer in the country together, where Thyrsis possessed himself of a sling-shot, and took to collecting the skins of squirrels and chipmunks. Corydon was horrified at this; and by way of helping her to overcome her squeamishness he would make her carry home the bleeding corpses. He took to raising, young birds, also, and soon had quite an aviary—two robins, and a crow, and a survivor from a brood of “cherry-birds.” The feeding of these nestlings was no small task, but Thyrsis went fishing when the spirit moved him, secure in the certainty that the calls of the hungry creatures would keep Corydon at home.

This was the way of it, until Corydon began to blossom into a young lady, beautiful and tenderly-fashioned. Thyrsis still saw her now and then, and he made attempts to share his higher joys with her. He had become a lover of poetry; once they walked by the seashore, and he read her “Alexander’s Feast”, thrilling with delight in its resounding phrases:

“Break his bands of sleep asunder,  
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder!”

But Corydon had never heard of Timotheus, and she had not been taught to exploit her emotions. She could only say that she did not understand it very well.

And then, on another occasion, Thyrsis endeavored to tell her about Berkeley, whom he had been reading. But Corydon did not take to the sensational philosophy either; she would come back again and again to the evasion of old Dr. Johnson—"When I kick a stone, I know the stone is there!"

This girl was like a beautiful flower, Thyrsis told himself—like all the flowers that had gone before her, and all those that would come after, from generation to generation. She fitted so perfectly into her environment, she grew so calmly and serenely; she wore pretty dresses, and helped to serve tea, and was graceful and sweet—and with never an idea that there was anything in life beyond these things. So Thyrsis pondered as he went his way, complacent over his own perspicacity; and got not even a whiff of smoke from the volcano of rebellion and misery that was seething deep down in her soul!

The choosers of the unborn souls had played a strange fantasy here; they had stolen one of the daughters of ancient Greece, and set her down in this metropolis of commercialism. For Corydon might have been Nausikaa herself; she might have marched in the Panathenaic procession, with one of the sacred vessels in her hands; she might have run in the Attic games, bare-limbed and fearless. Hers was a soul that leaped to the call of joy, that thrilled at the faintest touch of beauty. Above all else, she was born for music—she could have sung so that the world would have remembered it. And she was pent in a dingy boarding-house, with no point of contact with anything about her—with no human soul to whom she could whisper her despair!

They sent her to a public-school, where the sad-eyed drudges of the traders came to be drilled for their tasks. They harrowed her with arithmetic and grammar, which she abhorred; they taught her patriotic songs, about a country to which she did not belong. And also, they sent her to Sunday-school, which was worse yet. She had the strangest, instinctive hatred of their religion, with all that it stood for. The sight of a clergyman with his vestments and his benedictions would make her fairly bristle with hostility. They talked to her about her sins, and she did not know what they meant; they pried into the state of her soul, and she shrunk from them as if they had been hairy spiders. Here, too, they taught her to sing—droning hymns that were a mockery of all the joys of life.

So Corydon devoured her own heart in secret; and in time a dreadful thing came to happen—the stagnant soul beginning to fester. One day the girl, whose heart was the quintessence of all innocence, happened to see a low word scribbled upon a fence. And now—they had urged her to discover sins, and she discovered them. Suppose that word were to stay in her mind and haunt her—suppose that she were not able to forget it, try as she would! And of course she tried; and the more she tried, the less she succeeded; and so came the discovery that she was a lost soul and a creature of depravity! The thought occurred to her, that she might go on to think of other words, and to think of images and actions as well; she might be unable to forget any of them—her mind might become a storehouse of such horrors! And so the maiden out of ancient Greece would lie awake all night and wrestle with fiends, until she was bathed in a perspiration.

Section 5. About this time Thyrsis was making his *début* as an author. He had discovered a curious knack in himself, a turn for making verses of a sort which were pleasing to children. They came from some little corner of his

consciousness, he scarcely knew how; but there was a paper that was willing to buy them, and to pay him the princely sum of five dollars a week! This would pay for his food and his hall bedroom, or for board at some farm in the summer; and so for several years Thyrsis was free.

He told a falsehood about his age, and entered college, and buried himself up to the eyes in work. This was a college in a city, and a poor college, where the students all lived at home, and had nothing to do but study; and so Thyrsis missed all that beneficent illumination known as "student-life." He never hurrahed at foot-ball contests, nor did he dress himself in honorific garments, nor stupify himself at "smokers." Being democratic, and without thought of setting himself up over others, he was unaware of his greatest opportunities, and when they invited him into a fraternity, he declined. Once or twice he found himself roaming the streets at night with a crowd of students, emitting barbaric screechings; but this made him feel silly, and so he lagged behind and went home.

The college served its purpose, in introducing him to the world of knowledge; but that did not take long, and afterwards it was all in his way. The mathematics were a discipline, and in them he rejoiced as a strong man to run a race; and this was true also of the sciences, and of history—the only trouble was that he would finish the text-books in the first few weeks, and after that there was nothing to do save to compose verses in class, and to make sketches of the professors. But as for the "languages" and the "literatures" they taught him—in the end Thyrsis came to forgive them, because he saw that they did not know what languages and literatures were. On this account he took to begging leave of absence on grounds of his poverty; and then he would go home and spend his days and nights in learning.



One could get so much for so little, in this wonderful world of mind! For eight cents he picked up a paper volume of Emerson's "Essays"; and in this shrewd and practical nobility was so much that he was seeking in life! And then he stumbled upon a fifteen-cent edition of "Sartor Resartus", and took that home and read it. It was like the clash of trumpets and cymbals to him; it made his whole being leap. Hour after hour he read, breathless, like a man bewitched, the whole night through. He would cry aloud with delight, or drop the book and pound his knee and laugh over the demoniac power of it. The next day he began the "French Revolution"; and after that, alas, he found there was no more—for Carlyle had turned his back upon democracy, and so Thyrsis turned his back upon Carlyle.

For this was one of the forces which had had to do with the shaping of his thought. Beginning in the public-schools he had learned about his country—the country which was his, if not Corydon's. He had read in its history—Irving's "Life of Washington," and ten great volumes about Lincoln; so he had come to understand that salvation is of the people, and that those things which the people do not do—those things have not yet been done. So no one could deceive him, or lead him astray; he might laugh with the Tories, and even love them for their foibles—quaint old Samuel Johnson, for instance, because he was poor and sturdy, and had stood by his trade of bookman; but at bottom Thyrsis knew that all these men were gilding a corpse. Wordsworth and Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne—he followed each one as far as their revolutionary impulse lasted; and after that there was no more in them for him. Even Ruskin, who taught him the possibilities of English prose, and opened his eyes to the form and color of the world of nature—even Ruskin he gave up, because he was a philanthropist and not a democrat.

Thyrsis had been brought up as a devout Episcopalian. They had dressed him in scarlet and white to carry the train of the bishop at confirmation, and had sent him to an afternoon service every day throughout Lent. Early in life he had stumbled on a paper copy of Paine's "Age of Reason," and he read it with horror, and then conducted a private *auto da fé*. But the questions of the book stayed with him, and as years passed they clamored more loudly. What would have happened, astronomically, if the sun had stood still? And how many different species would have had to go into the ark? And what was the size of a whale's gullet, and the probable digestive powers of a whale's stomach?

And then came more fundamental difficulties. Could there, after all, be such a duty as faith in any intellectual matter? Could there be any revelation superior to reason—must not reason have once decided that it was a revelation, or was not? And what of all the other "revelations", which all the other peoples of the world accepted? And then again, if Jesus had been God, could he really have been tempted? To be God and man at the same time—did that not mean both to know and not to know? And was there any way conceivable for anything to be God, in which everything else was not God?

These perplexities and many others the boy took to his clerical adviser, a man who loved him dearly, and who gave him some volumes of the "Bampton lectures" to read. Here was the defense of Christianity, conducted by authorities, and with scholarship and dignity; and Thyrsis found to his dismay that the only convincing parts of their books were where they gave a *résumé* of the arguments of their opponents. He learned in this way many difficulties that had not yet occurred to him; and when he had got through with the reading his mind was made up. If any man were to be damned for not believing such things, then it was his duty as a thinker to be damned; and so he bade farewell to the

Church—something which was sad, in a way, for his mother had been planning him for a bishop!

Section 6. But Thyrsis was throwing away many chances these days. He went into the higher regions to spend his Christmas holidays; and instead of being tactful and agreeable, he buried himself in a corner of the library all day long. For Thyrsis had made the greatest discovery yet—he had found out Shakespeare! At school they had taught him “English” by means of “to be or not to be”, and they had sought to trap him at examinations by means of “man’s first disobedience and the fruit”; and so for years they had held him back from the two great glories of our literature. But now, by accident, he stumbled into “The Tempest”; and after that he read every line of the plays in two weeks.

He lost his soul in that wonderland; he walked and thought no more like the men of earth—he dwelt with those lords and princes of the soul, and learned to speak their language. He would dodge among cable-cars and trucks with their heavenly melodies in his ears; and while he sung them his eyes flashed and his heart beat fast:

“Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!”

There were a few days left in those wondrous holidays; and these went to Milton. There was a set of his works, enormously expensive, which had been made and purchased with no idea that any human being would ever read them. But Thyrsis read them, and so all the beauty of the binding was justified. For hours, and hours upon hours, he drank in that thunderous music, crying it aloud with his hands clenched tightly, and stopping to laugh like a child with excitement:

“Th’imperial ensign, which full high advanced,  
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,  
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,  
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while  
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds!”

And afterwards, when he came to the palace that “rose like an exhalation”, all of Thyrsis’ soul rose with it. One summer’s day he stood on a high mountain with a railroad in the valley, and saw a great freight-engine stop still and pour out its masses of dense black smoke. It rose in the breathless air, straight as a column, high and majestic; and Thyrsis thought of that line. It carried him out into the heavens, and he knew that a flash of poetry such as that is the meeting of man’s groping hand with God’s.

It was about here that a strange adventure came to him. It was midwinter, and he went out, long after midnight, to walk in a beautiful garden. A dry powdery snow crunched beneath his feet, and overhead the stars gleamed and quivered, so bright that he felt like stretching out his hands to them. The world lay still, and awful in its beauty; and here suddenly, unsuspected—unheralded, and quite unsought—there came to Thyrsis a strange and portentous experience, the first of his ecstasies.

He could not have told whether he walked or sat down, whether he spoke or was silent; he lost all sense of his own existence—his consciousness was given up to the people of his dreams, the companions and lovers of his fancy. The cold and snow were gone, and there was a moonlit glade in a forest; and thither they came, one by one, friendly and human, yet in the full panoply of their splendor and grace. There were Shelley and Milton, and the gentle and troubled Hamlet, and the sorrowful knight of la Mancha, with the irrepressible Falstaff to hearten them all; a strangely-assorted company, yet royal spirits all of them, and no strangers to each other in their own world. And here they gathered and conversed, each in his own vein and from his own impulse, with gracious fancy and lofty vision and heart-easing mirth. And ah, how many miles would one have travelled to be with them!

That was the burden which this gift laid upon Thyrsis. He soon discovered that these visions of wonder came but once, and that when they were gone, they were gone forever. And he must learn to grapple with them as they fled, to labor with them and to hold them fast, at the cost of whatever heartbreaking strain. Thus alone could men have even the feeblest reflexion of their beauty—upon which to feed their souls forever after.

Section 7. These things came at the same time as another development in Thyrsis' life, likewise portentous and unexpected. Boyhood was gone, and manhood had come. There was a bodily change taking place in him—he became aware of it with a start, and with the strangest and most uncomfortable thrills. He did not know what to make of it, or what to do about it; nor did he know where to turn for advice.

He tried to put it aside, as a thing of no importance. But it would not be put aside—it was of vast importance. He discovered new desires in himself, impulses that dominated him in a most disturbing way. He found that he took a new interest in women and young girls; he wanted to linger near them, and their glances caused him strange emotions. He resented this, as an invasion of his privacy; it was inconsistent with his hermit-instinct. Thyrsis wished no women in his life save the muses with their star-sewn garments. He had been fond of a line from a sonnet to Milton:

*"Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart."*

But instead of this, what awful humiliations! In a summer-resort where he found himself, there was a girl of not very gentle breeding, somewhat pudgy and with a languishing air. She liked to have boys snuggle down by her; and so Thyrsis spent the whole of one evening, sitting in a summer-house with an arm about her waist, dissolved in a sort of moon-calf sentimentalism. And then he passed the rest of

the night wandering about in the forest cursing himself, with tears of shame and vexation in his eyes.

He was so ignorant about these matters that he did not even know if the changes that had taken place in him were normal, or whether they were doing him harm. He made up his mind that he must have advice; as it was unthinkable that he should speak about such shameful things with any grown person, he bethought himself of a classmate in college who was an earnest and sober man. This friend, much older than Thyrsis, was the son of an evangelical clergyman, and was headed for the ministry himself. His name was Warner, and Thyrsis had helped him in arranging for some religious meetings at the college. Warner had been shocked by his theological irregularities; but they were still friends, and now Thyrsis sought a chance to exchange confidences with him.

The opportunity came while they were strolling down an avenue near the college, and a woman passed them, a woman with bold and hard features, and obviously-painted cheeks. She smiled at a group of students just ahead, and one of them turned and walked off arm in arm with her.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Warner. “Did you see that?”

“Yes,” said Thyrsis. “Who is she?”

“She comes from a house just around the corner.”

“But who is she?”

“Why—she’s a street-walker.”

“A street-walker!”

This brought to Thyrsis’ mind a problem that had been haunting him for a year or two. Always when he walked about the streets at night there were women who smiled at him and whispered. And he knew that these were bad women, and shrunk from them. But just what did they mean?

“What does she do?” he asked again.

“Why, don’t you know what a street-walker is?”

“Not very well,” said Thyrsis.

It took some time for him to get the desired information, because the other could not realize the depths of his ignorance. “They sell themselves to men,” he said.

“But what for?” asked Thyrsis. “You don’t mean that they—they let them—-”

“They have intercourse together. Of course.”

Thyrsis was almost dumb with dismay. “But I should think they would have children!” he exclaimed.

“Good Lord, man!” laughed the other. “Where do you keep yourself, anyway?”

But Thyrsis was too much shaken to think of being ashamed. This was a most appalling revelation to him—it opened quite a new vista of life’s possibilities.

“But why should they do such things?” he cried.

“They earn their living that way,” said the other.

“But why *that way*?”

“I don’t know. They are that kind of women, I suppose.”

And so Warner went on to expound to him the facts of prostitution, and all the abysses of human depravity that lie thereabouts. And incidentally the boy got a chance to ask his questions, and to get a common-sense view of his perplexities. Also he got some understanding of human nature, and of the world in which he lived.

Here was Warner, a man of twenty-four, and of a devout, if somewhat dull and plodding conscientiousness; and the last eight or nine years of his’ life had been one torment because of the cravings of lust. He had never committed an act of unchastity—or at least he told Thyrsis that he had not. But he was never free from the impulse, and he had no conception of the possibility of being free. His desire was a

purely brute one—untouched by any intellectual or spiritual, or even any sentimental color. He desired woman, as woman—it mattered not what woman. How low his impulses took him Thyrsis realized with a shudder from one remark that he made—that his poverty did not help him to live virtuously, for about the docks and in the workingmen's quarters there were women who would sell themselves for fifty cents a night.

This man's whole life was determined by that craving; in fact it seemed to Thyrsis that his God had made the universe with relation to it—a heaven to reward him if he abstained, and a hell to punish him if he yielded. It was because of this that he clung to the church, and shrunk from any dallying with "rationalism". He disapproved of the theatre, because it appealed to these cravings; he disapproved of all pictures and statues of the nude human form, because the sight of them overmastered him. For the same reason he shrunk from all impassioned poetry, and from dancing, and even from non-religious music. He was rigid in his conformance to all the social conventions, because they served the purpose of saving him and his young women-friends from temptation; and he looked forward to the completion of a divinity-course as his goal, because then he would be able to settle down and marry, and so at last to gratify his desires. He stated this quite baldly, quoting the authority of St. Paul, that it was "better to marry than to burn."

This conversation brought Thyrsis to a realization that there was a great deal in the world that was not found in the poetry of Tennyson and Longfellow; and so he began to pry into the souls of others of his fellow-students.

Section 8. Warner had given him the religious attitude; and now he went after the scientific. There was a tall, eager-faced young man, who proclaimed himself a disciple of Haeckel and Herbert Spencer, and even went so far as to



quote Schopenhauer in class. Walking home together one day, these two fell to arguing the freedom of the will, and the nature of motives and desires, and what power one has over them; and so Thyrsis made the startling discovery that this young man, having accepted the doctrine of “determinism,” had drawn therefrom the corollary that he had to do what he wanted to do, and so was powerless to resist his sex-impulses. For the past year this youth, a fine, intellectual and honest student, had gone at regular intervals to visit a prostitute; and with entirely scientific and cold-blooded precision he outlined to Thyrsis the means he took to avoid contracting disease. Thyrsis listened, feeling as he might have felt in a slaughter-house; and when, returning to the deterministic hypothesis, he asked how it was that he had managed to escape this “necessity”, he was told that it must be because he was of a weaker and less manly constitution.

And there was yet another type: a man with whom there was no difficulty in bringing up the subject, for the reason that he was always bringing it up himself. Thyrsis sat next to him in a class in Latin, and noticed that whenever the text contained any hint at matters of sex—which was not infrequent in Juvenal and Horace—this man would look at him with a grin and a sly wink. And sometimes Thyrsis would make a casual remark in conversation, and the man would twist it out of its meaning, or make a pun out of it—to find some excuse for his satyr’s leer. So at last Thyrsis was moved to say to him—“Don’t you ever realize what a state you’ve got your mind into?”

“How do you mean?” asked the man.

“Why, everything in the world seems to suggest obscenity to you. You’re always looking for it and always finding it—you don’t seem to care about anything else.”

The other was interested in that view of it, and he acknowledged with mild amusement that it was true;

apparently it was a novelty to him to discuss such matters seriously. He told Thyrsis that he could not remember having ever restrained a sexual impulse in his life. He thought of lust in connection with every woman he met, and his mind was a storehouse of smut. And yet he was not a bad fellow, in other ways; he handsome, and a good deal of an athlete, and was planning to be a physician. "You'll find most all the fellows are the same," he said.

Not long after this, Thyrsis was selected to represent his college on a debating-team, and he went away to another city and was invited to a fraternity-house; and here, suddenly, he discovered how much of "college-life" he had been missing. This was a fashionable university, and he met the sons of wealthy parents. About a score of them lived in this fraternity-house, without any sort of supervision or restraint. They ate in a beautiful oak-panelled dining-room adorned with drinking-steins; and throughout the meal they treated their visitor to such an orgy of obscenity as he had never dreamed of in his life before. Thyrsis was trapped and could not get away; and it seemed to him when he rose from the table that there was nothing left clean in all God's universe. These boys appeared to vie with each other in blasphemous abandonment; and it was not simply wantonness—it was sprawling and disgusting filthiness.

One of this group took Thyrsis driving, and was led to talk. Here was a youth whose father was the president of a great manufacturing-enterprise, and supplied him with unlimited funds; which money the boy used to divert himself in the pursuit of young women. Sometimes he had stooped so low as manicure-girls and shop-clerks and stenographers; but for the most part he sought actresses and chorus-girls—they had more intelligence and spirit, he explained, they were harder to win. He had his way with them, partly because he was handsome and clever, but mainly because he was the keeper of the keys of opportunity. It was his to dispense

auto-rides and champagne-suppers, and flowers and jewels, and all things else that were desirable in life.

Thyrsis was appalled at the hardness and the utter ruthlessness of this man—he saw him as a young savage turned loose to prey in a civilized community. He had the most supreme contempt for his victims—that was what they were made for, and he paid them their price. Nor was this just because they were women, it was a matter of class; the young man had a mother and sisters, to whom he applied quite other standards. But Thyrsis found himself wondering how long, with this contagion raging among the fathers and the sons, it would be possible to keep the mothers and the daughters sterilized.

Section 9. These discoveries came one by one; but Thyrsis saw enough at the outset to make it clear that the time had come for him to gird up his loins. The choice of Hercules was before him; and he did not intend that the course of his life was to be decided by these cravings of the animal within him.

From the grosser sorts of temptation he was always saved by the fastidiousness of his temperament; the thought of a woman who sold herself for money could never bring him anything but shuddering. But all about his lodging-house lived the daughters of the poor, and these were a snare for his feet. It seemed to him as if this craving came to a man in regular pulses; he could go for weeks, serene and happy in his work—and then suddenly would come the restlessness, and he would go out into the night and wander about the streets for hours, impelled by a futile yearning for he knew not what—the hope of something clean in the midst of uncleanness, of some adventure that would be not quite shameful to a poet's fancy. And then, after midnight, he would steal home, baffled and sick at heart, and wet his pillow with hot and bitter tears!

So unbearable to him was the thought of such perils that he was impelled to seek his old friend the clergyman, who had lost him over the ancient Hebrew mythologies, and now won him back by his living moral force. With much embarrassment and stammering Thyrsis managed to give a hint of what troubled him; and the man, whose life was made wholly of love for others, opened his great heart and took Thyrsis in.

He told him of his own youthful struggle—a struggle which had resulted in victory, for he had never known a woman. And he put all the facts before the boy, made clear to him the all-determining importance of the issue:

“Choose well, your choice is  
Brief and yet endless!”

On the one hand was slavery and degradation and disease; and on the other were all the heights of the human spirit. For if one saved and stored this mighty sex-energy, it became transmuted to the gold of intellectual and emotional power. Such was the universal testimony of the masters of the higher life—

“My strength is as the strength of ten  
Because my heart is pure.”

And this was no blind asceticism; it was simply a choosing of the best. It was not a denial of love, but on the contrary a consecration of love. Some day Thyrsis would meet the woman he was to cleave to, and he would expect her to come to him a virgin; and he must honor her as much—he must save the fire and fervor of his young desire for his life’s great consummation.

Such was the ideal; and these two men made a compact between them, that once every month Thyrsis would write and tell of his success or failure. And this amateur confessional was a mighty motive to the lad—he knew that he could never tell a lie, and the thought of telling the truth was like a sword hanging over him. There were hours of

trial, when he stood so close to the edge of the precipice that this alone was what kept him clear.

Section 10. The summer had come, and Thyrsis had gone away to live in a country village, and was reading Keats and Shelley, and the narrative poems of Scott. There came a soft warm evening, when all the world seemed a-dream; and he had been working hard, and there came to him a yearning for the stars. He went out, and was strolling through the streets of the village, when he saw a girl come out of one of the houses. She was younger than he, graceful of form, and pretty. The lamp-light flashed on her bright cheeks, and she smiled at him as she passed. And Thyrsis' heart gave a great leap, and the blood surged to his face; he turned and looked, and saw that she was gazing over her shoulder at him.

He stopped, and turned to follow, his meditations all gone, and gone his resolutions. A trembling seized him, and every nerve of him tingled. He could feel his heart as if it were underneath his throat.

In a moment more he was beside the girl. "May I join you?" he asked, and she replied with a nod.

Thyrsis moved beside her and took her arm in his. A moment later they came to a place where the road was dark, and he put his arm about her waist; she made no resistance.

"I—I've seen you often before," she said.

"Yes," he replied, "I have seen you." And he suddenly remembered a remark that he had heard about her. There was a large summer-hotel in this neighborhood, which as usual had brought all the corruptions of the city in its train; and a youth whom Thyrsis had met there had pointed out the girl with the remark, "She's a little beast."

And this idea, as it came to him, swept him away in a fierce tide of madness; he bent suddenly down and

whispered into her ear. They were words that never in Thyrsis' life had passed his lips before.

The girl pushed him away; but she laughed.

"You don't mind, do you?" exclaimed Thyrsis, his heart thumping like a hammer.

"Listen," he whispered, bending towards her. "Let us go and take a walk. Let us go where no one will see us."

"Where?" she asked.

"Out into the country," he said.

"Not now," she replied. "Some other time."

"No, now!" exclaimed Thyrsis, desperately. "Now!"

They had been moving slowly; they came to a place where a great tree hung over the road, shadowing it; and there they stopped, as by one impulse.

"Listen to me," he whispered, swiftly. "Listen. You don't know how anxious I have been to meet you. It's true—indeed it's true!"

He paused. "Yes," said the girl, "and I have been wanting to meet you. Didn't you ever see me nod to you?"

And suddenly Thyrsis put his arms about her, and pressed her to him. The touch of her bosom sent the blood driving through his veins in torrents of fire; he no longer knew or cared what he said, or what he did.

"Listen to me," he raved on. "Listen to me! Nobody will know! And you are so beautiful, so beautiful! I love you!" The words burned his lips, but he forced himself to say them, again and again—"I love you!"

The girl was gazing around her nervously. "Not now," she exclaimed. "Not to-night. To-morrow I will meet you, to-morrow night, and go with you."

"No," cried Thyrsis, "not to-morrow night, but now!" And he clasped her yet more tightly, with all his strength. "Listen," he panted, his breath on her cheek. "I love you! I