

JOSEPH ZALMONAH

A Novel

BY

EDWARD KING

AUTHOR OF "THE GENTLE SAVAGE" "THE GOLDEN SPIKE" "MY PARIS"
"A VENETIAN LOVER" ETC.

*"And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage,
and they cried, and their cry came up unto God."*

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Joseph Zalmonah

Edward King

It was not to be expected that Massachusetts-born Edward King (1848–1896) would produce so good a novel about immigrant Jewish life in late nineteenth-century New York City. Joseph Zalmonah (1893) was not King's first "Jewish" novel. He had written two others—The Gentle Savage (1883) and The Golden Spike (1885)—neither of them notable for art or for Judeophilia.¹ But the Yankee gentile was apparently very much taken with the Ukrainian Jewish immigrant Joseph Barondess (1867–1928). King's Zalmonah is modelled on Barondess, who arrived in the United States in 1888, made a name for himself as a labor activist, and went on, after the novelist's death, to abandon the cause of labor and to embark on a career as insurance executive, Jewish communal leader, and Zionist spokesman. The poet "Mordecai Menzer" in Joseph Zalmonah is probably inspired by Morris Rosenfeld (1862–1923), the Yiddish poet who came to New York from Russian Poland in the mid-1880's, eked out a living as a sweatshop presser, and began publishing Yiddish poems of social protest in 1888. King depicts Menzer-Rosenfeld as author of "a bitterly satirical ballad tinged with socialism, in which he ridiculed the United States as a land of promise, but not one of performance."²

King knew immigrant life from his vantage point as a teacher at the celebrated Educational Alliance in the Lower East Side. Whatever his earlier literary gaffes, he was able in Joseph Zalmonah to write a novel that, as Louis Harap has observed, "may still be read with interest today, especially for the flavor it conveys of the ghetto community of its time."³

1. Louis Harap, *The Image of the Jew in American Literature* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 480–481.

2. *Joseph Zalmonah* (Boston, 1894), p. 115.

3. Harap, p. 481.

The Pig Market

It was a hot and airless afternoon. The sun beat down with terrific force on the push-carts piled high with unripe or half-decayed fruit—with strawberries which had lingered too long in transit, and melons which had not seen enough of the sun. Sickening exhalations arose. The voices of the men chanting the attractions of their wares sank to a sickly wail. The old women squatted on the pavement, drooped their scrawny necks, and seemed ready to faint.

Round the corner, into the most crowded section of the "Pig Market," probably so called because everything but pig is sold there, came Ben Zion, languidly pushing his cart, which was heaped high with mottled strawberries. Behind him was a bevy of young girls, dark-haired and graceful, but with the fatal pallor of the sweaters' dens [sweatshops] upon their faces.

"If you go a step farther, Ben Zion," cried the tallest of the girls, "you lose our patronage. Do you think we want to walk all the way to Jerusalem just to accommodate you?"

Ben Zion halted and backed his cart against the curb. The girls crowded around him. But he did not seem inclined to begin trading at once. He held up one hand, and bent his head in the attitude of listening.

"This is the place," he said. "Now hark, and you will hear something curious. Open your ears, you silly girls, and tell me what you hear."

The girls listened, and presently perceived, above the clatter and hum of the street, the clicking of thousands of sewing-machines, over which, in front and back garrets, men and women were bending and working furiously, without thought or hope of rest.

Click-click-click-click-click! went the machines, until the brain was possessed with the burden of their chorus, and seemed to dance to the rude and lilting rhythm into which they gradually swung.

There was something almost sinister in the energy and tirelessness with which the click-click went on, as if behind it were a tireless and unbending will, disdaining fatigue, scorning unhappiness, and toiling forward to some obscure vengeance in the future.

“You hear it!” said Ben Zion, shaking his hand impressively. “Well, if the Czar who kicked us out of the Pale could hear it, he would tremble and feel faint. Why? because every one of those clicks means that one of his enemies—you know—one of those enemies that never pardon, is moving on to independence, and to a position where he or she can strike back! I like to listen to the merry chant! It does my heart good.”

“It sounds more to me,” said one of the girls, across whose pallid face a heavy shadow swept, “like infernal music, to which the sweaters love to dance on our graves, when we are used up, and can work no more, and they throw us out!”

“What a horrid fancy!” said a little brunette. “And what do you think such cattle as we are could ever do to the Czar, Ben Zion? One wag of his beard, and you would run all the way to Siberia!”

“Do you think that I would run?” said the little pedler angrily. “If you had seen me and Joseph [Zalmonah] when we took landlord Simon by the beard”—

“What did you do, Ben Zion?” said one of the girls breathlessly.

“I marshalled the army,” said the pedler, brandishing the three-cornered horn of coarse paper into which he was presently to pour three cents’ worth of damaged strawberries. “I was the grand marshal! If you had seen me then, you would not dare to accuse Ben Zion of running away!”

At this moment there was a hubbub at the street corner a short distance above them. The shuffling and the patter of hundreds of feet were heard. Then there were angry discussions, oaths, plaintive protests, shrieks, and maledictions.

A huge lumber wagon, drawn by smart horses, stood in the middle of the street. Several resolute men were advancing beside it, peering at the contents of each push-cart, and if the inspection disappointed them, they ordered the suspected articles to be thrown into the wagon. Policemen at front and back were ready to enforce the order.

Ben Zion understood the situation at a glance. He whirled his little cart around, and was off, at the top of his speed, down the street, and away from the Health Board’s Inspectors, without stopping to consider the total contradiction afforded by his act to the brave words which had just left his lips.

As he sped along, his decaying merchandise strewing the pavement

on either side of the cart, the inspectors bawled after him, but no one ventured to stop him, for Ben Zion had a ready hand and a still more ready tongue.

The three girls laughed the hoarse, ghastly laugh of their overworked class as they saw the pedler so belying his courageous declaration, and they followed him as fast as they could, around a corner and into a narrow alley beyond the precincts of the "Pig Market."

"There, my lambs!" said Ben Zion, puffing and blowing and fanning himself with a red bandanna pocket-handkerchief. "I ought to have told you that the only thing I am bound to run from is the nasty, prying American Health Board. We poor pedlers never have a minute's rest when those fellows have a working fit on. Down they pounce on us, like eagles; and if there is a fish in the neighborhood that smells as if it had outlived its usefulness, bang! they seize up all the fish within a square mile around! It is the same with fruit! What is an honest fellow to do in the midst of such persecutions? And that reminds me, Esther, that you are waiting for your lunch. Did you say three cents' worth of these very nice berries, my little dear?"

Esther, the brunette, had been ferreting among the berries while the pedler was talking. "Why, Ben Zion, this fruit is not good," she said. "It has been kept too long. You were right to run away from the Health Board."

Ben Zion threw down the horn of paper, and, raising his hands, shook them furiously in the air. Then he folded his arms across his breast, stood back, and gazed at Esther with an air of deep disdain.

"Not good, you say, not good, my berries! The little witch has the courage to say that to me—to me, Ben Zion!" Then suddenly taking a "five-cent paper," he filled it to the brim with mouldy fruit, and pushing it into Esther's hands, said,—

"There's double measure for you! Give me the three cents. Now run home, and don't try to cheapen my fruit any more!"

This master-stroke of impudence had precisely the effect contemplated by Ben Zion. It brought the other two girls to terms. They each left three cents in Ben Zion's coffers, and carried away an invitation to cholera. But they were wise enough not to eat the fruit when they saw how bad it was. The commercial instinct was strong in them, and in a few minutes they had exchanged the berries for a small loaf of the wretched bread for sale on every corner of the Pig Market.

The baker dressed up the berries in a little basket, and shortly afterwards avenged himself on the tribe of sweaters by selling them to a contractor for twenty-five cents. And thus was the transaction ended.

"The girls are right!" said Ben Zion when left alone. "There's too much richness and ripeness in this cargo ever to pass the Health Board. So here goes!" And he emptied the mass of fruit into the gutter, after which, producing from an inner pocket a worn leather cigarette case, he lighted a fragrant roll of tobacco, and, lazily propelling the cart before him, he returned into the market.

The tumult was now greater than ever. Choosing a spot directly in the path of the advancing inspectors, Ben Zion tilted up his cart, stretched himself luxuriously in it, and began to sing in a high falsetto voice one of the comic folk-songs which he had learned in David's theatre.

"We shall have rare sport now, as the bear said when he hugged the hunter," remarked Ben Zion, looking up with eager interest as the sound of a fresh scuffle and a woman's piercing cries greeted his ears.

The scene was as un-American as possible. There was nothing but a fat policeman to remind one that he was in the largest city of the United States. Even the narrow brick houses, belettered as they were with signs in Hebrew characters, had a strangely foreign air. But more foreign of aspect than anything else was an old man in a long caftan and a skull-cap much frayed at the edges, who sat on the curbstone with both his wrinkled and knotted hands folded over his knees, and with an air of saddened resignation upon his yellow face, on either side of which hung a small curl of iron-gray hair.

"Why, how goes it, Father Manasseh?" said Ben Zion, as his gaze fell upon this pitiable figure. "You don't look over gay, because you don't feel so, as the fox said when they were skinning him, I suppose. Any new trouble?"

"Ho! I can't complain," said the old man. "The society gave me three dollars a week when I was ill, and I saved something out of that. So that I still have the crust, you know, and might die happy if I could only get Shiphrah back."

He sighed deeply, and a tear rolled down his withered cheek, and took refuge in his whitening beard, as if it knew itself to be a luxury of which the old man would be ashamed.

"Oh, yes! Shiphrah!" said Ben Zion reflectively. "She ran away, didn't she? Or what was it?"

“Worse than that—worse!” said the old man, unfolding his hands and rising painfully. “But don’t ask me the story now. It makes my heart bleed. I sit here every day, hoping that I may see her again before I die; but she seems to keep clear of the market. I shall find her yet; but I won’t ask the police; no, I won’t ask the police!”

Suddenly the old man looked up at the pedler, with a gleam of hope in his countenance. “Ah, I remember!” he said, “you know Joseph—young Zalmonah—who is at the head of the Cloakmakers’ Union, don’t you?”

Ben Zion arose, and assumed an air of quiet dignity.

“I perceive,” he said, “that you have heard how Joseph and I led the cloakmakers the other night. Do I know him? It is a vain question, old man. We are hand and glove. Well, and if I do know him, what then?”

“Why, then I would ask you to tell me the way to his house. I would like to see his wife, I hear she has just come over. She knew Shiphrah. They were from the same town. Perhaps she may have been to see her. Will you not tell me where I can find Joseph’s wife?” he said in querulous, piping tones, and laying hold of the frayed and soiled skirt of Ben Zion’s coat.

Ben Zion gave the lachrymose patriarch the desired information, and looked after him thoughtfully, as he hobbled away. “Well, well,” he said, “that will be a search. It is hard work looking for acorns after snow falls, as the bear with the frozen paw said.”

Some hundreds of “push-carts” like Ben Zion’s were ranged within the narrow limits of Hester Street, and were laden with every conceivable kind of merchandise. Behind the carts stood the black brigade of misery, the great unwashed and saucy pedler’s company, ready to starve, fight, or suffer tortures in order to turn the nimble penny.

There were no ragged or crippled people in this company of hucksters, and yet they produced upon the spectator the impression of profound poverty. Old women in disordered wigs and tarnished caps, and in petticoats which seemed to have come from the junk man, squeaked out, in cracked voices, the value of their wares.

Cunning-faced boys, already bent and faded like men of fifty, laughed and told jokes, as they dispensed infinitesimal portions of rancid fish and huge pieces of half-baked bread to the pale-faced operatives from some adjacent garret.

At a street corner a shaky and greasy flight of steps led down to a

basement in which an old Jew in a green coat sold mouldy-looking meat, while the steps were occupied by a starving book-worm, who had a meagre array of Hebrew literature displayed on a dirty shelf. In a little recess half a dozen old men, leaning on their carts, furiously discussed some knotty point, making the air vibrate with their sonorous jargon [Yiddish]. Small slips of girls, barefoot and haggard, went by like rays of moonshine, seeming as noiseless and unreal. They were the messengers despatched by the toiling employees in adjacent sweating-shops to procure them a little food for keeping soul and body in company. There were bands of dirty-faced men who recklessly sold green fruit, all the time shouting at the top of their voices, "Sweet! Oh, sweet!" And here and there was a pale, proud face with genteel lines in it—a face which spoke of refined life and comfortable position in the past—bent over the merchandise on a cart, as if afraid or ashamed to look the world in the eye.

Such a face Ben Zion now saw close to him, and he studied it with his quick eye, making up his mind meantime how he should address its owner. It was the face of a scholar, a thinker, who was reduced to the extreme of misery.

The man halted at Ben Zion's side, and, spreading a clean white handkerchief, sat down and leaned his handsome head against the little cart's side. For stock-in-trade he had only a few yellow bound pamphlets containing popular ballads written in jargon. And from the goodly number of them it was pretty evident that he had done but small business that morning.

"Well, comrade," said Ben Zion good-naturedly, "you haven't sold more than a thousand volumes this morning, I'll be bound. People don't want to read when they can't eat."

"I have sold nothing," said the man in a husky voice, and with an accent of profound despair. He spoke in the jargon, yet there was refinement in his speech. "Nothing. And I have eaten nothing since yesterday. If this existence is to go on day after day, in this terrible heat and in this turmoil, I will throw myself in the river over yonder, rather than endure it! This is the land of plenty, indeed! Why, I am starving!"

"Yes," said Ben Zion, getting out of his cart briskly, and beginning to examine the new-comer's books, "that's all very fine; but drinking too much river water will not cure you of starvation, nor give you back the fine position and the money which the Russians robbed you of. We

must work our brains, man! Work our brains! Stand up here by me a minute, and see how I will drag you out of the bog into which you have floundered.”

The man obeyed feebly, doubtless feeling that anything, no matter how grotesque or humiliating it might prove, would be better than his own lack of success.

Ben Zion was bent on killing two birds with one stone. He saw the inspectors rapidly approaching (the Health Board cart was but two blocks away now), and he wished to appear before them as a seller of something besides fruit. At the same time he was sincerely anxious to rescue the poor man—a scholarly refugee who had been expelled from Moscow at four days’ notice, losing property worth forty thousand roubles—from his peril of starvation.

So without any explanation he snatched two or three dozen of the little volumes from the other cart, and with them completely covered the floor of his own. Then he set up a shrill yell, “Books! books! cheaper than dirt! Wiser than Solomon, more venerable than Moses, because of the wisdom that is in ‘em! Books—books! at—(How much do you sell ‘em for?).”

“Ten cents.”

“At ten cents apiece—here they are—the wonderful songs and ballads of Mordecai, the poet of the people! Just the things to sing now, my friends, now that the day of reckoning with the sweaters is at hand! Ten cents apiece! Who’ll buy?”

A silver coin fell into Ben Zion’s ready palm. One of the little books vanished into the capacious pocket of a greasy-looking contractor, who was anxious to see what the “poet of the people” had said of his class. Then came a rabbi in a huge silk hat and a stained linen coat, who also purchased. He was followed by an asthmatic tailor, and next by a landlord.

“Take these coins and run and get your breakfast,” said Ben Zion, thrusting the money into his pale companion’s hand. “If you want to sell, you must shout! If you keep still in your corner, you will starve! Run! Trust me to make money while you are gone. I will look after your cart.”

The man obeyed; and so it happened that when the inspectors came up with Ben Zion, whom they had plainly discerned running away a few minutes before, he thrust a book under their noses, and urged

them to buy.

“Surely this is the man,” said one of the inspectors. “He is one of the worst sinners in the business. He would peddle decayed vegetables by the ton, if we came around less often.”

“Shall I run him in?” said a policeman.

Ben Zion flourished one of the books under the officer’s nose. “Have a book?” he said. “Only ten cents.”

“Yes, he’s peddling books now,” said the inspector; “but there are the stains of the fruit on the sides of his barrow. This fellow will poison the city some day. Can’t you talk United States?” he said angrily to Ben Zion.

The pedler only flourished his books more lustily, and proclaimed its virtues more loudly in his copious jargon vocabulary; but, finally, placing the book again close to the officer’s face, he said dryly,—

“Zehn cents. You better buy von.”

“I’ll pound your red head off, if you say that again,” cried the exasperated officer; and the inspection procession rolled along. Before it swept a wave of lamentation from the old women, who saw their stock-in-trade seized and thrown into the hated wagon. An aged hag, sorting buttons in a heap on a push-cart, assailed one of the officers tooth and nail, and was carried off screaming, her whole family following her to rescue her if possible from the grip of the law.

“That was a narrow escape!” said Ben Zion. “I think I will stick to the side streets hereafter. Unless I sell pants again! People must have pants, even when they can’t get bread.”

And he was lost in thought on this important matter when the grateful man returned to thank him for intervening to preserve him from the pangs of hunger.

“Let me sell you a few more books,” said Ben Zion. And he addressed himself so deftly to his task, that in half an hour the refugee was insured against want for several days. He at first refused to accept any commission for his labors; but when pressed he accepted a quarter. “It’ll come handy to buy shoe-laces with,” he thought. “But ought I to sell shoe-laces and suspenders now that I am a leader of revolutions?”

While meditating on this momentous problem, Ben Zion found the three girls to whom he had sold the berries standing near him again.

It suddenly occurred to him that they might have heard something

about the lost Shiphrah. He began questioning them, and in a few minutes he was in possession of the information which old Manasseh had so long sought in vain.

Chapter X

With the Poet of the People

“Come, Joseph,” said Miryam, with a faint trace of petulance in her sweet voice, “if you drag along behind that way we shall be too late. When Mordecai has a singing fit upon him, he wouldn’t wait for King Solomon.”

“King Solomon has been dead for thousands of years,” answered Joseph wearily, as he quickened his pace. “You live so much among those old historical personages in your theatrical world, that you get to think they are real.”

“Ah! Joseph, Joseph!” said the girl-woman, turning her head and looking archly at him, “I know you well enough to feel sure that when you try the comical vein, you are worried about something. And why shouldn’t you be worried, after all?” she mused with a sudden change of manner.

“There’s nothing very humorous in my situation,” sighed Joseph. “Thirty to forty thousand starving people ready to break into riot, if I can’t invent some pretence for keeping them still! What would you do in my place, Miryam?”

The pair stopped in the shadow of a tall tenement house, as if the weight of Joseph’s responsibility were pressing upon them both.

“I don’t know,” said Miryam simply, raising her beautiful eyes, and looking at Joseph with an expression of perfect trustfulness. “But I always feel sure that you will succeed—that you will do the right thing. It is as if—as if something were leading you on.”

Joseph winced. There were times when he felt the unseen guidance, and when he would gladly have acknowledged it. But for the moment he seemed to have lost the touch of the guiding hand.

Since his stormy interview with Freier he had felt half stunned and helpless. The slave-drivers had shown a firm front against the revolt of the slaves. It was even evident that they coveted open riot, that they might have an excuse for harsher measures.

Surrounded by snares and pitfalls, friendless in a foreign land, with the laws and the very Constitution of which he was unfamiliar, and with a great army of desperate men and women urging him to lead it on to reckless and lawless deeds, unless he could find bread and work for it, he began to feel appalled at the immensity of his task.

His senses swam when he tried to think steadily upon the dangers and trials close at hand.

They were standing in Henry Street, that comfortable old region of quaint Dutch-looking houses which was once a fashionable promenade for New Yorkers, in those faraway days when a cow-pound stood on the site of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and when a journey to Harlem was an event. Henry Street has still kept much of its ancient trimness and neatness, although tall tenement houses have thrust their ugly and angular forms in among the little mansions and have brought with them troops of dark-visaged folk, who seem as alien to America as if they had never heard of it.

"I wish I could help you, Joseph," said Miryam; "I do with all my heart! I—I never saw you look as if you needed help before."

The mists arose, quite unbidden, in Joseph's eyes. His helplessness was, then, apparent even to this unworldly little waif? He must make an effort, and he did, taking Miryam's hands, and saying kindly—

"It will all come out right. Let us go on."

A few steps more brought them to the entrance of a gray brick tenement house, which towered dizzily into air, as if it were not at all certain of its footing, and might at any time topple over. Miryam made her way among the sprawling groups of olive-faced babies, tended by little damsels with very womanly heads of hair, and with eyes which sparkled with curiosity and good-humor.

"This is it. Come up," said the girl, pointing to the annunciator, on which a small tablet bore the name in Germanic script:—

MORDECAI MENZER

A little pang of envy shot through Joseph's breast, but was gone in an instant. He wondered if he could ever attain to the dignity of a plate with his name upon it, as Mordecai, "the poet of the people," had done. At present, in his shabby lodgings in a frowzy quarter, he was far enough from any such style.

They climbed flight after flight of poorly lighted stairs hearing the click of sewing-machines and the droning voices of actors and actresses rehearsing their rôles in jargon, and a woman singing shrilly to the music of a cracked piano.

Through an open door they had a glimpse of a veritable "sweater's hell," where girls were toiling at the needle in the immediate vicinity of a red-hot stove, on which the pressing irons were heating.

The blast of fetid air which came from the room as a pallid employee hastened to shut the door, was what one might imagine a puff from the cavernous mouth of hell to be.

On the fourth floor Mordecai Menzer's name again confronted them on a soiled and splintered door. Miryam rang, and a moment later she and her companion were standing in the presence of "the poet of the people."

He was a small man, on the borders of fifty, with a thin, sharp face, and a bushy beard which he had evidently dyed to conceal the snows of time upon it. He had a curious way of gazing out from under his brows which at first was rather startling; but one soon discovered that it was only a manner. Mordecai Menzer was a man of intense nature, and he showed it even in his ordinary speeches and gestures.

His greeting of Joseph was so deferential that it confused the young leader, who was prepared to compliment the poet on his wonderful power over the hearts of the Jewish people. But Mordecai at first would hear little about himself; his talk was of Joseph and his plans,—the lock-out, the labor revolution in progress.

The poet's domicile consisted of three diminutive rooms and a rather dark kitchen. In the tiny dining-room his rotund little wife and two modest and pretty daughters were busy with household cares. Here the poet had received his visitors. He now conducted them into the next room, a Liliputian *salon* in which some old faded tapestry-backed chairs looked as if they felt crowded and out of place. In one of these chairs sat a little nervous man with a dark face, holding a violin in his lap. And on a low stool behind one of the chairs, intently looking out of the window, was the beautiful Bathsheba.

Joseph's heart gave a curious throb as he saw her, and he could not refrain from gazing at her, until she slowly turned her queenly head, and seemed to take possession of him with her eyes. He looked confused; and although Miryam rushed to Bathsheba, and engaged in a

lively conversation with her, he thought of nothing but Bathsheba and her eyes, while the poet Mordecai finally intoned his history, bestowing various picturesque maledictions upon the government which had expelled him from his native Russia, and had compelled him to begin his career anew in a faraway land.

Mordecai had much to tell, and in an ordinary frame of mind it all would have been intensely interesting to Joseph. The poet told how, when a child at the carpenter's bench in his father's shop, he had begun to compose ballads telling the story of his people's joys and sorrows. As he grew up he found that his singing was nearly all sorrowful, and he learned that his people were oppressed and down-trodden.

Then came the magic and never-to-be-forgotten moment when the spirit of revolt and the spirit of poesy moved within him, and in a few tremendous verses, into which he had condensed the anguish of a whole race, he had struck out at white heat the ballads which had won for him the name of the "Poet of the people."

As a youth, and finally as a man, he had wandered up and down the Russian land, wherever those of his race were to be found, and he had sung to them the songs which gave them life and hope, and also the spirit of vengeance.

He created the cradle-songs to which Jewish mothers have for more than thirty years rocked their babes to sleep, and in each and all of these songs there is a plaint or a wail.

In the villages and at the country fairs the women and children flocked to hear him sing his own songs; and, when the Russian officials found that they often went away weeping, they began to spy upon Mordecai. Sometimes they sent stenographers to take down his words; at another time they gave him twenty-four hours in which to leave the locality. And at last they became so threatening that Mordecai, who supported his family by singing in public and by selling reprints of his own songs, felt constrained to give up his little home and to migrate over seas to "the golden land" which he had already celebrated in his verse—the golden sunset land of free and untrammelled America.

Arriving here in the thick of the labor troubles, and finding his hapless countrymen and women starving by regiments, victimized in brigades, slave-driven in armies, his sensitive nature had received a severe shock.

He no longer believed in "the golden land," and had written, since his arrival, a bitterly satirical ballad tinged with socialism, in which he ridiculed the United States as a land of promise, but not one of performance.

Without being himself what the masses call a Socialist, he had leanings in that direction, and was easily persuaded to enter into friendly relations with Baumeister, and with others who professed to believe in what they called "the policy of force."

And it so happened that Mordecai, although he had been but a few months in America, had sung at several socialistic gatherings, and had composed one or two rhymed invectives against "capitalistic legislatures" and other institutions of the present order of society, which quite delighted Baumeister and his colleagues.

Therefore, when he was urged to bring his influence to bear upon Joseph, he resolved to do it as a kind of duty, and was readily persuaded by Baumeister to give the young leader a rendezvous in his humble abode.

Baumeister, meantime, took excellent care not to appear in the matter. He was acting by deputy, and, in this case, he had chosen with great adroitness, and had decided confidence in the result.

For Bathsheba was his deputy.

Baumeister was a man of talent, of comprehensive vision, and great audacity. Bathsheba was a new convert, and converts are always more zealous than those born in the faith.

If she had remained in her native province of Russia, and had never been moved from the calm conventionality of middle-class life, she would have been the most exemplary of matrons, the coldest and most statuesque of beauties. It is doubtful if she would even have descended to the commonplace level of a flirtation with a provincial landowner, or a passing officer in some crack regiment.

But destiny had thrust her forth upon the world by filling her head with a caprice for this dark-faced fiddler, who had won her heart by playing gypsy melodies at a festival in her father's house one summer moonlight night. She had run away to marry him, leaving home and fortune behind her; and when she had come to the end of the few thousand roubles which her mother had sent her, out of sheer pity for the daughter whose erratic conduct she condemned, she saw that there was no new fortune to replace the old one.

She had married a man who, in the cold sunlight of every-day life, turned out to be nothing but an ordinary musician. In America he found crushing competition awaiting him in the very specialties in which he had hoped to succeed.

If this had not soured his happy-go-lucky temper, not so much could be said of Bathsheba. With the loss of her illusions had come an immense and overpowering disgust, which gradually transformed itself into a fixed hatred for Society and all its institutions.

The transfer of her existence from Russia to America, the keen shock of disappointment experienced on finding that the conditions of life, especially for the refugees,—victims of the labor glut which they themselves created,—were so hard and forbidding, and the contrast—so appalling in New York—between the extreme of want and abject misery and the topmost height of luxury and abounding prosperity, gave the finishing stroke to the slender framework of piety and tradition which at home would have sufficed to keep her from Socialism.

A few words from Baumeister at the opportune moment, and Bathsheba was an active worker in the cause of the “force party,” which she and her companions called “Socialistic” when they wished to be mild, and which they glorified by its real and more repulsive name when they were determined to speak out. The exalted, almost frenzied fervor of Bathsheba’s work in “the cause” had led Baumeister to believe that he could trust her to do anything. Himself firmly convinced that a “campaign of force” was near at hand, he rejoiced at having within call a woman who would recoil at nothing, who would even undertake the mission of the assassin should he confide it to her.

She found in the keen intellectual delights of this conspiracy, hopeless and foolish as its aims and undertakings in reality were, a charming relief from the deadly monotony of life in a dreary street in an obscure quarter, surrounded by her inferiors, and sometimes in doubt where the next day’s food was to come from.

She had early acquired an ascendancy over her husband; and she made liberal use of it, converting him to the new doctrine, and persuading him that by means of it they might both yet attain to consideration and worldly success. Her beauty and strength of mind argued more for her doctrine than her rather wild words could have done; and the husband seemed, under Bathsheba’s direction, as clay in the hands of the potter.

It was Bathsheba whom Baumeister had chosen as the instrument for the conversion of Joseph to his doctrine. When the leader of revolt against society in the metropolis had first had Joseph pointed out to him as one who worked steadily against the inroads of Socialism in the ranks of the oppressed people, he had fancied that he could sweep him out of the way by some adroit manoeuvre.

But when he discovered that Joseph was his equal in sagacity and prudence, and his superior as a popular leader, he made up his mind that Bathsheba alone could operate the conversion. He proposed to her the mission of bringing the young leader over to the "school of force," and after some hesitation she consented.

At that time she had never seen Joseph, and supposed him to be some greasy cloakmaker, the very odor of whose garments would offend her nostrils. When she learned that he was a man of rare power, and that he impressed all who saw him with the idea that he had a mission, she found means frequently to see him without being herself observed. This careful espionage had begun weeks before the lock-out was started. At first she found it a task, then, suddenly, it became a pleasure, and she discovered that the pale face of Joseph, with its patient weariness, had left its impress on her heart.

Thenceforward she watched him with keen and unflagging interest. She had not seemed to notice the young leader that evening when with David he had seen her in the lodge-room in Grand Street. But her eyes had followed his every movement, and it was with a rapturous joy which thrilled her that she noticed the profound impression made upon him by her beauty.

The next day she found herself possessed of a strange, almost uncontrollable desire to see Joseph at once. If she had been tardy before in approaching her mission, she now sped to it with a willing foot.

She had gone to the theatre because she had felt the mad wish to see him that very night. Amazed at this new manifestation in her nature, which she had supposed to be no longer susceptible to romance, she began to analyze her emotions.

At the end of a few hours she had made up her mind that her position was singular and embarrassing, even for a disciple of Baumeister, and a revolutionist who believed but little in the sacredness of the marriage-tie, or any other of the social conventions.

Had she loved Joseph at first sight? Certainly she had felt the dawn-

ing of a passionate devotion to the leader whom she had sworn to seduce from his allegiance to order.

Bathsheba knew that she was well watched, and she concealed her new secret with all the skill of an accomplished conspirator. She wished to see Joseph face to face again, to hear him talk, to touch his hand, before she decided on her future course.

She was a woman of more than ordinary courage and resources. She realized fully what this new love, if indeed it were love, was likely to mean for her—all the possibilities of tragedy, humiliation, suffering, contained in it; and she felt that she must bring the fate closer to her, where she could inspect it narrowly, without delay.

So she had profited by her acquaintance with David and Miryam, and with Mordecai, the people's poet, to lead Joseph to her side. After she had heard his voice, had looked into his eyes, she would decide—she would decide.

But as she looked languidly out at the window, while Joseph listened to Mordecai's monologue, she betrayed by no sign the anxiety and commotion which reigned within her breast.

It seemed to her that she feared to hear Joseph speak, lest something which he might say should force her to overturn the idol which she had erected in the innermost sanctuary of her heart.

Miryam rattled on about the expedition of the night before, unconsciously throwing into it, with her theatrical training, a certain dramatic force, especially when she spoke of Joseph. To her surprise Bathsheba seemed to know many of the details, but scrutinized her with wild, widely opened, almost tearful eyes every time she alluded to Joseph's part in the night-drama. As yet it did not enter Miryam's innocent heart that Bathsheba might dare to love him, nor did she dream that the beautiful woman in whose lap she laid her head was a conspirator commissioned to convert or ruin Joseph.

Suddenly the girl caught her breath, and said, "Oh, I am so afraid that something will happen to Joseph! Do remember your promise to warn him!"

A wave of ashy pallor swept into Bathsheba's face and out again in an instant. "You may be sure that I shall do my very best," she said, and her voice had a curious tremor in it.

At this juncture Mordecai's round little wife appeared in the doorway with one of her husband's presentation silver salvers laden with

peaches, grapes, and a dark-looking wine which they had brought over seas with them.

“May I join the worthy company?” she said in her quaint jargon; and Joseph was glad to get free from Mordecai’s monologue, and to see a little movement in the room.

The company collected about the wine. The dark-faced fiddler smiled pleasantly at Joseph, smacked his lips, and said,—

“You don’t get that every day, hey—you other cloakmakers—do you?”

“Ho!” said Joseph, “wine to drink! That would be luxury indeed! Why, we are happy when we can get water enough. I know a sweater who allowed the company to cut off the water in his place. He declared that he wasn’t going to be taxed to furnish water for a crowd of thirsty workers! ‘Let each man bring his own drinking-water,’ he said. ‘And if he can’t do that, let him choke.’”

“Good subject for a little ballad,” said the dark-faced fiddler to the poet.

“There are so many that father doesn’t know which to choose first, does one, father?” said the small wife, holding her wineglass with both hands, and looking up at her husband with a proud and pleased expression.

And now Joseph became conscious that Bathsheba was near him, and the little fiddler was introducing him in a few well-chosen words, and with an air which showed that he was very proud of her.

“It was so kind of you to spare a few moments from your poor people!” said a melodious voice, and Joseph looked up in surprise.

Could it be the voice of Bathsheba, the “Socialist,” which had spoken thus considerately of his mission? He was prepared to hear her sneer at his down-trodden cloakmakers, but not to sympathize with them.

He gazed at Bathsheba, as if waiting for her to explain herself. The sincerity in his questioning eyes both pleased and startled Bathsheba. She lowered her gaze.

“So good of you,” she continued, “to give us a chance of seeing you. Mordecai has been inspired by what he has heard—and seen—of your work, to write a little song about the sweaters. He was good enough to sing it to me—and I thought—I thought,” here she raised her eyes and flashed their light upon Joseph’s face for a moment, then swiftly low-

ered them again, "that you ought to hear it. Certainly it will be an engine to help you in your work."

Joseph was surprised that he did not readily find words to thank Bathsheba for what seemed such purely disinterested kindness. He was usually ready enough with his tongue, but now he dreaded to open his lips, lest he should say something foolish.

He felt deliciously flattered by Bathsheba's interest in him. It seemed to make his work larger, finer in his own estimation. At last he realized that he must speak, so he stammered,—

"I have heard it said that songs often make revolutions. Why, then, shouldn't they aid strikes? And Heaven knows that we have bitter need of aid! I am sure that if the poor cloakmakers now starving in Hester Street could see the impression their misery has made on you, they would be more courageous than ever."

But while he was speaking he felt like crying out to Bathsheba, "Woman! Woman! these are not the words I want to say to you. I want to ask you why your eyes burn so strangely into my being; why the touch of your hand on mine thrills me with a strange delight; why the little room seems full of a glory which emanates from you!"

Did his eyes ask these questions? He did not mean that they should do so. He meant to conceal the delirious disturbance which Bathsheba had wrought in his soul, and the purport of which he but vaguely understood.

They talked for some minutes, while Miryam aided the housewife and her daughters in cleaning the room, so that Mordecai might have a little stage for action.

"When he is excited in singing," said the small wife, "he walks up and down; and if he should happen to knock his shin against a chair, it would spoil the whole effect of his song."

"Not because he has a bad temper, I hope, Frau Menzer," said a cheerful voice at the door, "because you know the proverb, 'The sins of the bad-tempered are greater than his merits.'"

"Here is Reb David!" cried Miryam, "with his mouth full of wisdom, as usual. May he come in?"

"He must," said the little wife with effusive hospitality. "And as proverbs are dry eating, and leave a bitter taste in the mouth, he shall have a glass of wine."

David accepted the proffered glass, and went with it in his hand to

join Bathsheba and Joseph, who were conversing in low tones.

"Now," said Mordecai, springing into the middle of the floor and addressing the dark-faced fiddler, "get your violin. I feel the inspiration bubbling up! Come! I will sing you the song which I have put into the mouths of the victims of the sweaters."

The fiddler gently refused the written music which the little wife handed to him. "I know the song by heart," he said, "and so will every cloakmaker and operator in New York before we have done with them."

Bathsheba and Joseph sat down, and listened.

Chapter XI

The Object-Lesson

A hush fell on the little company. The sacramental touch of art was upon it. Mordecai began to sing.

He stood in the middle of the floor, holding his verses, written in fine Hebrew script upon note-paper, in one hand, and nervously beating the air with the other, as if he were trying to catch flying words and phrases, and fit them to his song. Thus he seemed for a few moments irresolute, and a trifle ridiculous.

But most of his auditors knew that Mordecai was awaiting the exact moment when the inspiration would reach its height, and that, when it came, he would startle them with the wild beauty and eloquence of his rhymed composition.

Joseph studied him with all his might. He could hear, close beside him, the rustling of Bathsheba's dress, and her short, sharp breathing, as if she were painfully excited.

Suddenly the dark-faced fiddler struck a wailing chord on his violin, and instantly ceased to play. It was like the cry of a woman in distress and despair—a heart-broken wail which made the flesh creep.

Then came Mordecai's voice, and Joseph felt his heart hot within him, as, in a stern recitative, rhymed, yet roughly carven (such as an ancient Hebrew prophet might have sung before an erring king), the poet of the people told of the cloakmakers' torture.

And now the music of the violin accompanied the singer. At first it

was in a soft and brooding undertone, like the sobbing of hungry children in the dark.

Presently it became stronger—less plaintive—fiercer—menacing—as the poet, in the homely jargon which was his native tongue, catalogued the sorrows and sufferings of his oppressed countrymen and countrywomen.

At last it burst out into a tone of triumphant irony—like that of a prophet who, despairing of remedy for a hopeless situation, calls on those who created it to look on their wretched work. This ironical vein was maddening. It made Joseph long to arise, to go down into the street, and, taking the first capitalist whom he might meet by the throat, to knock out his brains with a stone.

It made Miryam weep; and as she wept, the image of her dead mother lying on the trestles in the little room, with the flies buzzing curiously about her peaceful and worn face, arose before her.

It recalled to Joseph the day when he saw his young “partner” falling face downward on his machine, with his mouth distorted, and his poor lean cheeks withered with hunger. And with his brow aflame, Joseph started up, making wild and convulsive movements with his hands, and crying,—

“Stop! Stop! I can’t bear it!”

But Mordecai motioned him imperiously to his seat, and went on, with a proud smile for a moment wreathing his thin lips, as a ray of sunshine sometimes plays about the crater of a volcano. “The fit was on him,” as Miryam had aptly phrased it, and nothing but death could stay the current of his splenetic and vindictive singing.

There was a curious refrain to the eight-line verses, containing a passionate appeal to the workers, so terribly oppressed, to arise and strike down the tyrants. Into this refrain Baumeister and his band had wrought all the venom of their cunning; and, as delivered by Mordecai, it was a startling incentive to violence.

The last verse, which compared the young girls, fading so quickly in the noisome atmosphere of the sweaters’ dens, to the flowers cut down by the mowers, and withering speedily in the harsh, sharp sunlight, was irresistibly moving. Bathsheba veiled her face, and great sobs shook her broad bosom. Then came anew the ironical refrain, with the mournful undertone of music. Mordecai’s intense, vibrating tones died away.

He sank down into a chair, looking white and old.

The dark-faced fiddler hugged his violin, and gazed out at [the] window, as if he saw there all the horrors mentioned in the song.

A new Marseillaise of the poor had been born in that humble apartment; and now that the singing was over, it seemed almost as if the palpitating listeners could hear the beating of the wings of the great angels of War and Revolution, as they receded to the spaces from which they had come down to infuse their spirit into this group of mortals.

David was the first to speak. He knew that the tension could be relieved only by a practical remark. So he said,—

“I will give you twenty dollars to sing that song as well as that on the stage of our theatre next Saturday afternoon, Herr Mordecai.”

“Oh, father sings just as well one time as another,” said the rotund little wife, who was jealous of her husband’s reputation. “That is, you know, after the first inspiration has come to him. For he gets a fresh inspiration with every new song; don’t you, father?”

Mordecai ignored his wife’s loving, although clumsy, efforts to aid him, and after one or two weak protests he closed with David’s offer. “Such chances are not to be neglected,” he said. “And if the cloakmakers were there to hear they might be influenced.”

“They shall be there,” said David, “for I will invite them. I can’t feed the poor creatures, but I can point out the way”—

“For them to help themselves,” said Bathsheba, arising with her cheeks aglow. “That is it! That is what your song will do, Mordecai. It will teach the starving people to ask in such a way that they cannot be refused. Do you not think so?” she asked Joseph, turning suddenly to him.

Joseph hesitated. It seemed to him that he was in a boat which had drifted loose from its moorings, and was at the mercy of tide and wind. For weeks he had fought the Socialists; had rebelled against the doctrine of Force; had stigmatized it as silly and criminal. And now here, after a breath of song, and under the influence of this woman Bathsheba’s eyes, he was almost ready to admit that the true way to solve the cloakmakers’ situation was to strike up Mordecai’s song, and to march upon Freier and Monach and all the other tyrants, at the head of a legion or two of the starving people.

“I think that the poet of the people has sung us a great song,” he

answered, trying to cast off the influence which seemed mastering him. "And I am glad the men in our Union are to have a chance to hear it at the theatre. But I should not like to see them aroused to any deeds of violence, because I am afraid that—well, I feel certain that it would ruin the cause."

"Oh, yes, yes," said Mordecai in a bitter tone; "yield, yield, always yield, in the hope of concessions which never come! It is the story of our people"—

"Well, as to that," said Joseph, beginning to rally, "I don't think I can quite agree with you. We have already secured a good many concessions from the sweaters—and who says that we shall not win the final battle? It seems to me that it is not so very far off, and sometimes I feel confident of victory. But what has the party of force ever done? I certainly never heard of its doing anything practical."

"There I think you misjudge it," said Mordecai uneasily, and looking at Bathsheba, as if he read his lesson in her eyes. "The party of force is preparing the grand revolution. If it were not for the partial revolutions of leaders like yourself—men whom everybody respects, and whose courage nobody doubts, but who are unwilling to admit that Society is rotten, and must be swept away by complete revolution—we, that is, the force party, would be much further advanced than at present."

Joseph listened attentively, but with the air of one far from convinced.

"And are those your sentiments also?" he said to Bathsheba, turning round to her so sharply that she started and lowered her eyes.

"They are," she said almost humbly. "Not that I would presume to criticise you or your work, which is so grand, so self-sacrificing" (the blood stole into Joseph's cheeks), "but because I feel that nothing can be done without a complete social revolution. I should like—be glad to see you associated in such work."

"How long have you been in America?" said Joseph, keeping his gaze steadfastly on Bathsheba.

"Long enough to learn that poverty is as bitter and terrible here as anywhere else," she answered hotly.

She began to rebel at Joseph's catechising mood. She had fancied that she would be able more quickly to establish her influence over him.

But the man seemed to have two natures, quite different, yet each in some respects completing the other. One was sensuous, passionate, sympathetic, yielding; the other, cool, practical, unyielding as steel, and capable of leading him straight to martyrdom.

With woman's unerring intuition she made sure of these things, and decided to accommodate her campaign to the newly acquired knowledge of his traits.

But Joseph was gaining ground every instant now.

"Poverty is hard enough to bear anywhere," he said; "but the remedy for it is not revolution in this country, I am sure. It would be poor policy to undermine and blow up a magnificent mansion because one could afford to live nowhere in it except in the basement."

Bathsheba's eyes flashed. She liked Joseph all the better for standing to his guns.

"Perhaps it is as you think," she said sweetly. "But I believe that you are mistaken; that here in this big city there are tens—yes hundreds of thousands who long for the Social Revolution—for the *régime* under which every one will do just as he or she pleases, and when there will be no inequalities of fortunes."

"Oh, dear, dear!" sighed Mordecai's round little wife, "what a blessed day that would be! No more click-clack of sewing-machines night and day, I should think, in those times!" And she took a huge pinch of snuff as fiercely as if she had been strangling a millionaire, or helping to hang a manufacturer.

"It may come to-day, to-morrow, in a week, in a month—this Social Revolution," said Bathsheba, lowering her voice, and looking around, for she had not yet learned that America is a free country, where one may speak without danger of spies. "How did you know that you were not in the van of the Social Revolution when you were leading the cloakmakers to Simon's house the other night?"

Joseph was startled. How little, indeed, it would have taken to send the mad mob of hungry men and women into the rich quarters, burning and sacking and ravaging!

He had thought that often enough since.

"But it could only have ended in disaster and despair," he said. A sudden vertigo seized him; he staggered and would have fallen, had not Bathsheba stepped forward, caught him in her strong arms, and gently lowered him into a chair.

The little wife came bustling with a glass of wine. But the touch of Bathsheba's arms had electrified Joseph; he sat up, feeling a little ashamed, and holding one hand to his head.

"You must excuse me," he said, looking around. "I have been up so much nights lately that I am a little top-heavy." He took the glass of wine, drank sparingly, and professed himself as well as ever. But the mortal pallor on his brow belied him.

"Fresh air is what Joseph needs," said David. "Instead of bothering him with your socialistic notions, all of which, I believe, will come to naught" (here Bathsheba flashed a keenly reproachful glance upon David), "if you would take him up to Central Park, or out on the river, you would be doing the cause of united labor a real service. And you, Joseph, be more careful of your health. Remember the proverb, 'Our days pass quickly over us, even as the shadow of a flying bird.' "

"I should be glad, for one!" said Bathsheba quickly, addressing Joseph, "if you would take David's advice, and if we might all go together into the upper quarters of New York. It would give us a chance to teach the labor leader an object-lesson."

"Yes," said Mordecai; "he would certainly feel the bitterness of poverty more keenly when we came back."

"Then why go?" queried Joseph. "No, I must go home to my wife and little one. I have left them too much alone since they arrived."

A shadow so imperceptible that no one save Miryam, who was opening her eyes now, observed it, passed over Bathsheba's face.

"Oh, it was only in the hope of justifying ourselves in your eyes," she said coquettishly.

"I have just come from your house, Joseph," said David, coming up and putting his hand on the young labor leader's shoulder, "and I met Malcha going out with the child. I told her I should see you this afternoon, and she wished me to tell you that she had found Shiphrah, and was going to stop with her until evening." He lowered his voice. "You know the poor Shiphrah whom you pitied so much. It seems that she is from the same village as Malcha, and Malcha asked me to implore you not to be angry."

"No," said Joseph, his brow clearing, "it is an errand of mercy. It is like Malcha."

"She told me to tell you another thing," said David in a whisper. "A letter has come from her mother, and in it were a hundred roubles,

which the good woman sent just about the right time, didn't she? Now, don't be proud because of this good news. Remember what [the talmudic sage] Rabbi Ashi said: 'He who hardens his heart with pride softens his brains with the same.' "

"There really is nothing to be proud of, unless it is Malcha's good sense," answered Joseph. But he felt immensely relieved even at this momentary cessation from grinding want. A sudden hunger for rest and fresh air, for the odor of trees and flowers, for contemplation of the calm of nature and the beauty of summer, seized upon him, and would not be appeased. The battle in his nature, caused by the intoxicating song, by the presence of Bathsheba, by the knowledge that he was treading on dangerous ground, had aroused new desires, new passions, of the existence of which he had never before dreamed. The spirit of resignation was dying away in him, and in its stead arose an intense longing for the riches and luxury of the world. To his inward shame and sorrow, he found that he was forgetting the poor cloakmakers, and thinking only of himself.

They lingered some time in conversation, while the little wife pressed the simple refreshments upon all. Then Mordecai sang once more—one or two comic folk-songs, which yet had in them the rebellious and menacing spirit; and it was almost six o'clock before they started on their stroll up-town. David and Miryam, rejoicing that there was no theatre for them that evening, led the way, and it seemed natural that Joseph should escort Bathsheba down the narrow and ill-lighted stairs, Mordecai and his wife, very quaint in their provincial Russian Sunday best hats and cloaks, bringing up the rear.

As they were descending the last flight of stairs, Bathsheba turned to Joseph, with her hand gracefully raised, and said with an arch smile,—

"Will you promise to confess if the object-lesson convinces you?"

"I hope I shall be frank," he said, his heart leaping as he gazed down into the beautiful face, with its deep mysterious eyes, from which Will-o'-the-wisp fires seemed to dart into the air.

At David's suggestion they went down to the East River, and there, at a pier below the bridge, they embarked on a diminutive white steamer, which went coughing and wheezing and blowing in and out among the statelier craft, and carried them rapidly up stream.

The sunlight lay in great gleaming masses on the water; it seemed as if one might cut out pieces of it, and take them home.

In the west there was a great bank of golden haze, which would have delighted the soul of [the English painter Joseph] Turner, could he have seen it, and which might have interested some of our American painters, had they not all been too busy interpreting the misty blues and pearly grays of England and Northern France.

Against this sumptuous background arose the lines of graceful masts and spars; and now and then across it moved the symmetrical mass of a huge Sound steamer, its white sides glistening and its bows throwing up fountain jets of diamond foam. Here fluttered gently down a group of white sails, capriciously hovering at the black sides of a battered ocean liner, drawn by two quarrelsome and aggressive tugs. The sunshine cast its glory over the long lines of red brick warehouses, on the tottering and dirty docks, and on the hundreds of bare-headed mothers with children in their arms, seated at the dock's ends, in the hope of securing a few breaths of fresh air. The vast current, swirling around the piers and boiling and eddying about the great vessels at anchor, caught the thousand points of darting light, and reflected them in a million ways and in infinitesimal variations.

A cool breeze fanned the heated brows of the poor refugees, and lent a sudden animation to their spirits, which for a time had suffered relapse from the tension caused by Mordecai's song.

Now the steamer began to dart along the upper reaches of the immense tidal stream: past sugar refineries, with little fleets of steamships lying at their wharves; past the low shores crowded with evidences of abundant wealth and of the tremendous inland commerce of the nation; past the "Island," with its pretty lawns and grim penal institutions and asylums; and presently it skirted the wooded shore of a smaller island, dashed in and out among a multitude of yachts lying peacefully at anchor, shot through a drawbridge which opened obediently at its approach, and pushed up to the entrance of the Harlem.

Here, at a rambling and crazy old dock (like all the docks in the metropolis) the friends disembarked.

Miryam was in an ecstatic mood. She ran and gambolled like a child of six, and rallied "Reb Joseph" and Bathsheba on their solemn and careworn look. It was all that David could do to subdue her gayety so that it should not attract the notice of the passers by.

"Well," said Joseph, who had never seen so much of New York before, "thus far we have set eyes on nothing but the activity of people

working hard for their daily bread. And I must say that it would seem very hard to upset all this energy and industry by a revolution, just because there is trouble in a few trades like ours, and one or two hundred rascals refuse to pay decent wages for honest labor.”

Bathsheba did not answer, and her silence impressed Joseph more than any voluble defence of her doctrines could have done. Gradually she assumed guidance of the party, and, just as the soft summer darkness was stealing over earth and sky, they came out upon Fifth Avenue, in front of the Vanderbilt mansions. They had been walking for a long distance, having taken the elevated road at One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street, and then left the train at the wrong station and got lost; and Joseph's thin cheeks were aglow with fatigue, and with the unwonted fresh air, when they halted, and stood in mute contemplation of the line of palaces, churches, and hotels stretching away on either side, as David expressed it, “like the Devil's wheat-field, which was bounded on one side by the North Pole and on the other by the South Pole.”

Now that they were beyond the familiar neighborhood of the East Side, the little company began to feel strangely out of place, and each gazed at the other as if challenging criticism on their respective shabbiness. Bathsheba glanced down at her worn and frayed dress, which was not in the prevailing fashion. She caught at the edges of her jacket, much too heavy for the season, and the collar of which was of decidedly antiquated design. She glanced from time to time at Joseph, and was ill at ease.

Joseph tugged at his frayed wristbands, and silently regretted that he had not been allowed to go home and don his one good coat. He took off his hat and gave it a surreptitious look. The band was stained, and the sunlight of two seasons had taken much of the color out of it. Even Mordecai, usually draped with effective majesty in his own dignity, seemed dimly conscious that his attire was not in harmony with that of the trim ladies and gentlemen who sauntered lazily by with the apologetic air of well-to-do New Yorkers detained in town in summer.

But they walked on, trying to be gay, and gazing at mansion after mansion without the remotest idea who inhabited any of them. Joseph had never been in Fifth Avenue before, nor had he ever set foot in the Park. Like tens of thousands of the inhabitants of the East Side of the narrow and crowded island, he had rarely been very far west of the

Bowery, or north of Twenty-Third Street.

Up-town was unknown land to him. He now gazed at the acres of palaces, the majestic entrances, the noble basements well protected with railings of wrought iron, the exquisite windows overlooking vast expanses of ornate architecture, with astonishment.

He had never been in a large city in Russia; and nowhere before had he seen so much splendor. "Why are the houses all so quiet? many of them seem deserted," he ventured to say.

"O Reb Joseph!" said Miryam, "haven't you heard that all the rich people leave New York in the summer, and go to beautiful places in the woods and at the seaside, and only come back when there is no more hot weather?"

"While we sweat sixteen hours over our flat-irons and our sewing-machines, even when the thermometer is at ninety," said Bathsheba in a low voice in which concentrated passion seethed like lava at a volcano's mouth. "God! God! How can it be right that some should be so happy and fortunate through life, while others toil and struggle in torment, and die without leaving enough to bury themselves decently?"

The intensity of Bathsheba's utterance, and the bitterness of her words, seemed to touch a hidden chord in Joseph's heart.

He turned to her with the tears standing in his eyes, and murmured brokenly,—

"That is a terrible question. Don't ask it again; it stings me—here," and he touched his breast.

A baleful fire flashed from Bathsheba's splendid eyes. With a tragic gesture she pointed to the scene on the broad stone steps of a great mansion a little beyond where they were standing.

Two beautiful girls, in elegant dinner costume, had ventured out upon the steps in the warm darkness, and around them were gathered three or four young gentlemen, in evening dress, who paid assiduous court to the beauties.

In the doorway a majestic mamma was enthroned in an easy-chair, and two liveried servants were just bringing out a tiny Turkish table, beautifully inlaid with ivory and precious woods, and with a costly coffee service and *liqueur* cellaret arrayed upon it. One of the young girls was stripping flowers from her corsage, and distributing them with playful gestures to the courtiers at her feet.

Here were evidently some New Yorkers who had lingered in town in defiance of the conventionalities, and who were enjoying an after-dinner chat under cover of the friendly dusk without any fear of scrutiny.

Bathsheba clutched Joseph by the arm, and pointed to the comfortable group, the members of which had little idea that Misery at that moment had her envious eyes upon them.

“Do you see that, Joseph Zalmonah?” she hissed. “What more convincing than that do you want for an object-lesson? What do you think of the society that can permit such insolent luxury as that, and at the same time insist on such humble slavery as that of your poor cloakmakers? Do you think that you can ever reason with those people there?” pointing to the steps of the mansion. “Not much. And if you beg of them, they will put you in prison, or in an asylum.” Her voice sank to a husky whisper. “Why, what is left, then, but to rise up and compel them—by force—to be just—to give a reasonable share of the world’s joys and abundance to those who are starving for them? Why don’t you answer me, Joseph Zalmonah?” and she shook his arm furiously.

“What is Bathsheba doing and saying?” cried little Miryam, running up with a protecting air to Joseph, who was staring at the group on the mansion’s steps as if he meant that the memory of it should be graven on his heart.