

The Jungle

By

Upton Sinclair

Chapter 28

After breakfast Jurgis was driven to the court, which was crowded with the prisoners and those who had come out of curiosity or in the hope of recognizing one of the men and getting a case for blackmail. The men were called up first, and reprimanded in a bunch, and then dismissed; but, Jurgis to his terror, was called separately, as being a suspicious-looking case. It was in this very same court that he had been tried, that time when his sentence had been “suspended”; it was the same judge, and the same clerk. The latter now stared at Jurgis, as if he half thought that he knew him; but the judge had no suspicions—just then his thoughts were upon a telephone message he was expecting from a friend of the police captain of the district, telling what disposition he should make of the case of “Polly” Simpson, as the “madame” of the house was known. Meantime, he listened to the story of how Jurgis had been looking for his sister, and advised him dryly to keep his sister in a better place; then he let him go, and proceeded to fine each of the girls five dollars, which fines were paid in a bunch from a wad of bills which Madame Polly extracted from her stocking.

Jurgis waited outside and walked home with Marija. The police had left the house, and already there were a few visitors; by evening the place would be running again, exactly as if nothing had happened. Meantime, Marija took Jurgis upstairs to her room, and they sat and talked. By daylight, Jurgis was able to observe that the color on her cheeks was not

the old natural one of abounding health; her complexion was in reality a parchment yellow, and there were black rings under her eyes.

“Have you been sick?” he asked.

“Sick?” she said. “Hell!” (Marija had learned to scatter her conversation with as many oaths as a longshoreman or a mule driver.) “How can I ever be anything but sick, at this life?”

She fell silent for a moment, staring ahead of her gloomily. “It’s morphine,” she said, at last. “I seem to take more of it every day.”

“What’s that for?” he asked.

“It’s the way of it; I don’t know why. If it isn’t that, it’s drink. If the girls didn’t booze they couldn’t stand it any time at all. And the madame always gives them dope when they first come, and they learn to like it; or else they take it for headaches and such things, and get the habit that way. I’ve got it, I know; I’ve tried to quit, but I never will while I’m here.”

“How long are you going to stay?” he asked.

“I don’t know,” she said. “Always, I guess. What else could I do?”

“Don’t you save any money?”

“Save!” said Marija. “Good Lord, no! I get enough, I suppose, but it all goes. I get a half share, two dollars and a half for each customer, and sometimes I make twenty-five or thirty dollars a night, and you’d think I ought to save something out of that! But then I am charged for my room and my meals—and such prices as you never heard of; and then for extras, and drinks—for everything I get, and some I don’t. My laundry bill is nearly twenty dollars each week alone—think of that! Yet what

can I do? I either have to stand it or quit, and it would be the same anywhere else. It's all I can do to save the fifteen dollars I give Elzbieta each week, so the children can go to school."

Marija sat brooding in silence for a while; then, seeing that Jurgis was interested, she went on: "That's the way they keep the girls—they let them run up debts, so they can't get away. A young girl comes from abroad, and she doesn't know a word of English, and she gets into a place like this, and when she wants to go the madame shows her that she is a couple of hundred dollars in debt, and takes all her clothes away, and threatens to have her arrested if she doesn't stay and do as she's told. So she stays, and the longer she stays, the more in debt she gets. Often, too, they are girls that didn't know what they were coming to, that had hired out for housework. Did you notice that little French girl with the yellow hair, that stood next to me in the court?"

Jurgis answered in the affirmative.

"Well, she came to America about a year ago. She was a store clerk, and she hired herself to a man to be sent here to work in a factory. There were six of them, all together, and they were brought to a house just down the street from here, and this girl was put into a room alone, and they gave her some dope in her food, and when she came to she found that she had been ruined. She cried, and screamed, and tore her hair, but she had nothing but a wrapper, and couldn't get away, and they kept her half insensible with drugs all the time, until she gave up. She never got outside of that place for ten months, and then they sent her away, because she didn't suit. I guess they'll put her out of here, too—she's getting to have crazy fits, from drinking absinthe. Only one of the girls that came out with her got away, and she jumped out of a second-story window one night. There was a great fuss about that—maybe you heard of it."

“I did,” said Jurgis, “I heard of it afterward.” (It had happened in the place where he and Duane had taken refuge from their “country customer.” The girl had become insane, fortunately for the police.)

“There’s lots of money in it,” said Marija—“they get as much as forty dollars a head for girls, and they bring them from all over. There are seventeen in this place, and nine different countries among them. In some places you might find even more. We have half a dozen French girls—I suppose it’s because the madame speaks the language. French girls are bad, too, the worst of all, except for the Japanese. There’s a place next door that’s full of Japanese women, but I wouldn’t live in the same house with one of them.”

Marija paused for a moment or two, and then she added: “Most of the women here are pretty decent—you’d be surprised. I used to think they did it because they liked to; but fancy a woman selling herself to every kind of man that comes, old or young, black or white—and doing it because she likes to!”

“Some of them say they do,” said Jurgis.

“I know,” said she; “they say anything. They’re in, and they know they can’t get out. But they didn’t like it when they began—you’d find out—it’s always misery! There’s a little Jewish girl here who used to run errands for a milliner, and got sick and lost her place; and she was four days on the streets without a mouthful of food, and then she went to a place just around the corner and offered herself, and they made her give up her clothes before they would give her a bite to eat!”

Marija sat for a minute or two, brooding somberly. “Tell me about yourself, Jurgis,” she said, suddenly. “Where have you been?”

So he told her the long story of his adventures since his flight from home; his life as a tramp, and his work in the freight tunnels, and the

accident; and then of Jack Duane, and of his political career in the stockyards, and his downfall and subsequent failures. Marija listened with sympathy; it was easy to believe the tale of his late starvation, for his face showed it all. “You found me just in the nick of time,” she said. “I’ll stand by you—I’ll help you till you can get some work.”

“I don’t like to let you—” he began.

“Why not? Because I’m here?”

“No, not that,” he said. “But I went off and left you—”

“Nonsense!” said Marija. “Don’t think about it. I don’t blame you.”

“You must be hungry,” she said, after a minute or two. “You stay here to lunch—I’ll have something up in the room.”

She pressed a button, and a colored woman came to the door and took her order. “It’s nice to have somebody to wait on you,” she observed, with a laugh, as she lay back on the bed.

As the prison breakfast had not been liberal, Jurgis had a good appetite, and they had a little feast together, talking meanwhile of Elzbieta and the children and old times. Shortly before they were through, there came another colored girl, with the message that the “madame” wanted Marija—“Lithuanian Mary,” as they called her here.

“That means you have to go,” she said to Jurgis.

So he got up, and she gave him the new address of the family, a tenement over in the Ghetto district. “You go there,” she said. “They’ll be glad to see you.”

But Jurgis stood hesitating.

“I—I don’t like to,” he said. “Honest, Marija, why don’t you just give me a little money and let me look for work first?”

“How do you need money?” was her reply. “All you want is something to eat and a place to sleep, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” he said; “but then I don’t like to go there after I left them—and while I have nothing to do, and while you—you—”

“Go on!” said Marija, giving him a push. “What are you talking?—I won’t give you money,” she added, as she followed him to the door, “because you’ll drink it up, and do yourself harm. Here’s a quarter for you now, and go along, and they’ll be so glad to have you back, you won’t have time to feel ashamed. Good-by!”

So Jurgis went out, and walked down the street to think it over. He decided that he would first try to get work, and so he put in the rest of the day wandering here and there among factories and warehouses without success. Then, when it was nearly dark, he concluded to go home, and set out; but he came to a restaurant, and went in and spent his quarter for a meal; and when he came out he changed his mind—the night was pleasant, and he would sleep somewhere outside, and put in the morrow hunting, and so have one more chance of a job. So he started away again, when suddenly he chanced to look about him, and found that he was walking down the same street and past the same hall where he had listened to the political speech the night ‘before. There was no red fire and no band now, but there was a sign out, announcing a meeting, and a stream of people pouring in through the entrance. In a flash Jurgis had decided that he would chance it once more, and sit down and rest while making up his mind what to do. There was no one taking tickets, so it must be a free show again.

He entered. There were no decorations in the hall this time; but there was quite a crowd upon the platform, and almost every seat in the place was filled. He took one of the last, far in the rear, and straightway forgot all about his surroundings. Would Elzbieta think that he had come to sponge off her, or would she understand that he meant to get to work again and do his share? Would she be decent to him, or would she scold him? If only he could get some sort of a job before he went—if that last boss had only been willing to try him!

—Then suddenly Jurgis looked up. A tremendous roar had burst from the throats of the crowd, which by this time had packed the hall to the very doors. Men and women were standing up, waving handkerchiefs, shouting, yelling. Evidently the speaker had arrived, thought Jurgis; what fools they were making of themselves! What were they expecting to get out of it anyhow—what had they to do with elections, with governing the country? Jurgis had been behind the scenes in politics.

He went back to his thoughts, but with one further fact to reckon with—that he was caught here. The hall was now filled to the doors; and after the meeting it would be too late for him to go home, so he would have to make the best of it outside. Perhaps it would be better to go home in the morning, anyway, for the children would be at school, and he and Elzbieta could have a quiet explanation. She always had been a reasonable person; and he really did mean to do right. He would manage to persuade her of it—and besides, Marija was willing, and Marija was furnishing the money. If Elzbieta were ugly, he would tell her that in so many words.

So Jurgis went on meditating; until finally, when he had been an hour or two in the hall, there began to prepare itself a repetition of the dismal catastrophe of the night before. Speaking had been going on all the time, and the audience was clapping its hands and shouting, thrilling with excitement; and little by little the sounds were beginning to blur in Jurgis's ears, and his thoughts were beginning to run together, and his

head to wobble and nod. He caught himself many times, as usual, and made desperate resolutions; but the hall was hot and close, and his long walk and his dinner were too much for him—in the end his head sank forward and he went off again.

And then again someone nudged him, and he sat up with his old terrified start! He had been snoring again, of course! And now what? He fixed his eyes ahead of him, with painful intensity, staring at the platform as if nothing else ever had interested him, or ever could interest him, all his life. He imagined the angry exclamations, the hostile glances; he imagined the policeman striding toward him—reaching for his neck. Or was he to have one more chance? Were they going to let him alone this time? He sat trembling; waiting—

And then suddenly came a voice in his ear, a woman's voice, gentle and sweet, "If you would try to listen, comrade, perhaps you would be interested."

Jurgis was more startled by that than he would have been by the touch of a policeman. He still kept his eyes fixed ahead, and did not stir; but his heart gave a great leap. Comrade! Who was it that called him "comrade"?

He waited long, long; and at last, when he was sure that he was no longer watched, he stole a glance out of the corner of his eyes at the woman who sat beside him. She was young and beautiful; she wore fine clothes, and was what is called a "lady." And she called him "comrade"!

He turned a little, carefully, so that he could see her better; then he began to watch her, fascinated. She had apparently forgotten all about him, and was looking toward the platform. A man was speaking there—Jurgis heard his voice vaguely; but all his thoughts were for this woman's face. A feeling of alarm stole over him as he stared at her. It made his flesh creep. What was the matter with her, what could be going on, to affect

any one like that? She sat as one turned to stone, her hands clenched tightly in her lap, so tightly that he could see the cords standing out in her wrists. There was a look of excitement upon her face, of tense effort, as of one struggling mightily, or witnessing a struggle. There was a faint quivering of her nostrils; and now and then she would moisten her lips with feverish haste. Her bosom rose and fell as she breathed, and her excitement seemed to mount higher and higher, and then to sink away again, like a boat tossing upon ocean surges. What was it? What was the matter? It must be something that the man was saying, up there on the platform. What sort of a man was he? And what sort of thing was this, anyhow?"—So all at once it occurred to Jurgis to look at the speaker.

It was like coming suddenly upon some wild sight of nature—a mountain forest lashed by a tempest, a ship tossed about upon a stormy sea. Jurgis had an unpleasant sensation, a sense of confusion, of disorder, of wild and meaningless uproar. The man was tall and gaunt, as haggard as his auditor himself; a thin black beard covered half of his face, and one could see only two black hollows where the eyes were. He was speaking rapidly, in great excitement; he used many gestures—he spoke he moved here and there upon the stage, reaching with his long arms as if to seize each person in his audience. His voice was deep, like an organ; it was some time, however, before Jurgis thought of the voice—he was too much occupied with his eyes to think of what the man was saying. But suddenly it seemed as if the speaker had begun pointing straight at him, as if he had singled him out particularly for his remarks; and so Jurgis became suddenly aware of his voice, trembling, vibrant with emotion, with pain and longing, with a burden of things unutterable, not to be compassed by words. To hear it was to be suddenly arrested, to be gripped, transfixed.

"You listen to these things," the man was saying, "and you say, 'Yes, they are true, but they have been that way always.' Or you say, 'Maybe it will come, but not in my time—it will not help me.' And so you return to your daily round of toil, you go back to be ground up for profits in the

world-wide mill of economic might! To toil long hours for another's advantage; to live in mean and squalid homes, to work in dangerous and unhealthful places; to wrestle with the specters of hunger and privation, to take your chances of accident, disease, and death. And each day the struggle becomes fiercer, the pace more cruel; each day you have to toil a little harder, and feel the iron hand of circumstance close upon you a little tighter. Months pass, years maybe—and then you come again; and again I am here to plead with you, to know if want and misery have yet done their work with you, if injustice and oppression have yet opened your eyes! I shall still be waiting—there is nothing else that I can do. There is no wilderness where I can hide from these things, there is no haven where I can escape them; though I travel to the ends of the earth, I find the same accursed system—I find that all the fair and noble impulses of humanity, the dreams of poets and the agonies of martyrs, are shackled and bound in the service of organized and predatory Greed! And therefore I cannot rest, I cannot be silent; therefore I cast aside comfort and happiness, health and good repute—and go out into the world and cry out the pain of my spirit! Therefore I am not to be silenced by poverty and sickness, not by hatred and obloquy, by threats and ridicule—not by prison and persecution, if they should come—not by any power that is upon the earth or above the earth, that was, or is, or ever can be created. If I fail tonight, I can only try tomorrow; knowing that the fault must be mine—that if once the vision of my soul were spoken upon earth, if once the anguish of its defeat were uttered in human speech, it would break the stoutest barriers of prejudice, it would shake the most sluggish soul to action! It would abash the most cynical, it would terrify the most selfish; and the voice of mockery would be silenced, and fraud and falsehood would slink back into their dens, and the truth would stand forth alone! For I speak with the voice of the millions who are voiceless! Of them that are oppressed and have no comforter! Of the disinherited of life, for whom there is no respite and no deliverance, to whom the world is a prison, a dungeon of torture, a tomb! With the voice of the little child who toils tonight in a Southern cotton mill, staggering with exhaustion, numb with agony, and knowing

no hope but the grave! Of the mother who sews by candlelight in her tenement garret, weary and weeping, smitten with the mortal hunger of her babes! Of the man who lies upon a bed of rags, wrestling in his last sickness and leaving his loved ones to perish! Of the young girl who, somewhere at this moment, is walking the streets of this horrible city, beaten and starving, and making her choice between the brothel and the lake! With the voice of those, whoever and wherever they may be, who are caught beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of Greed! With the voice of humanity, calling for deliverance! Of the everlasting soul of Man, arising from the dust; breaking its way out of its prison—rending the bands of oppression and ignorance—groping its way to the light!”

The speaker paused. There was an instant of silence, while men caught their breaths, and then like a single sound there came a cry from a thousand people. Through it all Jurgis sat still, motionless and rigid, his eyes fixed upon the speaker; he was trembling, smitten with wonder.

Suddenly the man raised his hands, and silence fell, and he began again.

“I plead with you,” he said, “whoever you may be, provided that you care about the truth; but most of all I plead with working-man, with those to whom the evils I portray are not mere matters of sentiment, to be dallied and toyed with, and then perhaps put aside and forgotten—to whom they are the grim and relentless realities of the daily grind, the chains upon their limbs, the lash upon their backs, the iron in their souls. To you, working-men! To you, the toilers, who have made this land, and have no voice in its councils! To you, whose lot it is to sow that others may reap, to labor and obey, and ask no more than the wages of a beast of burden, the food and shelter to keep you alive from day to day. It is to you that I come with my message of salvation, it is to you that I appeal. I know how much it is to ask of you—I know, for I have been in your place, I have lived your life, and there is no man before me here tonight who knows it better. I have known what it is to be a street-waif, a bootblack, living upon a crust of bread and sleeping in cellar stairways

and under empty wagons. I have known what it is to dare and to aspire, to dream mighty dreams and to see them perish—to see all the fair flowers of my spirit trampled into the mire by the wild-beast powers of my life. I know what is the price that a working-man pays for knowledge—I have paid for it with food and sleep, with agony of body and mind, with health, almost with life itself; and so, when I come to you with a story of hope and freedom, with the vision of a new earth to be created, of a new labor to be dared, I am not surprised that I find you sordid and material, sluggish and incredulous. That I do not despair is because I know also the forces that are driving behind you—because I know the raging lash of poverty, the sting of contempt and mastership, ‘the insolence of office and the spurns.’ Because I feel sure that in the crowd that has come to me tonight, no matter how many may be dull and heedless, no matter how many may have come out of idle curiosity, or in order to ridicule—there will be some one man whom pain and suffering have made desperate, whom some chance vision of wrong and horror has startled and shocked into attention. And to him my words will come like a sudden flash of lightning to one who travels in darkness—revealing the way before him, the perils and the obstacles—solving all problems, making all difficulties clear! The scales will fall from his eyes, the shackles will be torn from his limbs—he will leap up with a cry of thankfulness, he will stride forth a free man at last! A man delivered from his self-created slavery! A man who will never more be trapped—whom no blandishments will cajole, whom no threats will frighten; who from tonight on will move forward, and not backward, who will study and understand, who will gird on his sword and take his place in the army of his comrades and brothers. Who will carry the good tidings to others, as I have carried them to him—priceless gift of liberty and light that is neither mine nor his, but is the heritage of the soul of man! Working-men, working-men—comrades! open your eyes and look about you! You have lived so long in the toil and heat that your senses are dulled, your souls are numbed; but realize once in your lives this world in which you dwell—tear off the rags of its customs and conventions—behold it as it is, in all its hideous nakedness! Realize it, realize it!

Realize that out upon the plains of Manchuria tonight two hostile armies are facing each other—that now, while we are seated here, a million human beings may be hurled at each other’s throats, striving with the fury of maniacs to tear each other to pieces! And this in the twentieth century, nineteen hundred years since the Prince of Peace was born on earth! Nineteen hundred years that his words have been preached as divine, and here two armies of men are rending and tearing each other like the wild beasts of the forest! Philosophers have reasoned, prophets have denounced, poets have wept and pleaded—and still this hideous Monster roams at large! We have schools and colleges, newspapers and books; we have searched the heavens and the earth, we have weighed and probed and reasoned—and all to equip men to destroy each other! We call it War, and pass it by—but do not put me off with platitudes and conventions—come with me, come with me—realize it! See the bodies of men pierced by bullets, blown into pieces by bursting shells! Hear the crunching of the bayonet, plunged into human flesh; hear the groans and shrieks of agony, see the faces of men crazed by pain, turned into fiends by fury and hate! Put your hand upon that piece of flesh—it is hot and quivering—just now it was a part of a man! This blood is still steaming—it was driven by a human heart! Almighty God! and this goes on—it is systematic, organized, premeditated! And we know it, and read of it, and take it for granted; our papers tell of it, and the presses are not stopped—our churches know of it, and do not close their doors—the people behold it, and do not rise up in horror and revolution!

“Or perhaps Manchuria is too far away for you—come home with me then, come here to Chicago. Here in this city to-night ten thousand women are shut up in foul pens, and driven by hunger to sell their bodies to live. And we know it, we make it a jest! And these women are made in the image of your mothers, they may be your sisters, your daughters; the child whom you left at home tonight, whose laughing eyes will greet you in the morning—that fate may be waiting for her! To-night in Chicago there are ten thousand men, homeless and wretched, willing to work and begging for a chance, yet starving, and fronting in terror the

awful winter cold! Tonight in Chicago there are a hundred thousand children wearing out their strength and blasting their lives in the effort to earn their bread! There are a hundred thousand mothers who are living in misery and squalor, struggling to earn enough to feed their little ones! There are a hundred thousand old people, cast off and helpless, waiting for death to take them from their torments! There are a million people, men and women and children, who share the curse of the wage-slave; who toil every hour they can stand and see, for just enough to keep them alive; who are condemned till the end of their days to monotony and weariness, to hunger and misery, to heat and cold, to dirt and disease, to ignorance and drunkenness and vice! And then turn over the page with me, and gaze upon the other side of the picture. There are a thousand—ten thousand, maybe—who are the masters of these slaves, who own their toil. They do nothing to earn what they receive, they do not even have to ask for it—it comes to them of itself, their only care is to dispose of it. They live in palaces, they riot in luxury and extravagance—such as no words can describe, as makes the imagination reel and stagger, makes the soul grow sick and faint. They spend hundreds of dollars for a pair of shoes, a handkerchief, a garter; they spend millions for horses and automobiles and yachts, for palaces and banquets, for little shiny stones with which to deck their bodies. Their life is a contest among themselves for supremacy in ostentation and recklessness, in the destroying of useful and necessary things, in the wasting of the labor and the lives of their fellow creatures, the toil and anguish of the nations, the sweat and tears and blood of the human race! It is all theirs—it comes to them; just as all the springs pour into streamlets, and the streamlets into rivers, and the rivers into the oceans—so, automatically and inevitably, all the wealth of society comes to them. The farmer tills the soil, the miner digs in the earth, the weaver tends the loom, the mason carves the stone; the clever man invents, the shrewd man directs, the wise man studies, the inspired man sings—and all the result, the products of the labor of brain and muscle, are gathered into one stupendous stream and poured into their laps! The whole of society is in their grip, the whole labor of the world lies at their mercy—and like fierce wolves they rend and destroy,

like ravening vultures they devour and tear! The whole power of mankind belongs to them, forever and beyond recall—do what it can, strive as it will, humanity lives for them and dies for them! They own not merely the labor of society, they have bought the governments; and everywhere they use their raped and stolen power to intrench themselves in their privileges, to dig wider and deeper the channels through which the river of profits flows to them!—And you, workingmen, workingmen! You have been brought up to it, you plod on like beasts of burden, thinking only of the day and its pain—yet is there a man among you who can believe that such a system will continue forever—is there a man here in this audience tonight so hardened and debased that he dare rise up before me and say that he believes it can continue forever; that the product of the labor of society, the means of existence of the human race, will always belong to idlers and parasites, to be spent for the gratification of vanity and lust—to be spent for any purpose whatever, to be at the disposal of any individual will whatever—that somehow, somewhere, the labor of humanity will not belong to humanity, to be used for the purposes of humanity, to be controlled by the will of humanity? And if this is ever to be, how is it to be—what power is there that will bring it about? Will it be the task of your masters, do you think—will they write the charter of your liberties? Will they forge you the sword of your deliverance, will they marshal you the army and lead it to the fray? Will their wealth be spent for the purpose—will they build colleges and churches to teach you, will they print papers to herald your progress, and organize political parties to guide and carry on the struggle? Can you not see that the task is your task—yours to dream, yours to resolve, yours to execute? That if ever it is carried out, it will be in the face of every obstacle that wealth and mastership can oppose—in the face of ridicule and slander, of hatred and persecution, of the bludgeon and the jail? That it will be by the power of your naked bosoms, opposed to the rage of oppression! By the grim and bitter teaching of blind and merciless affliction! By the painful gropings of the untutored mind, by the feeble stammerings of the uncultured voice! By the sad and lonely hunger of the spirit; by seeking and striving and

yearning, by heartache and despairing, by agony and sweat of blood! It will be by money paid for with hunger, by knowledge stolen from sleep, by thoughts communicated under the shadow of the gallows! It will be a movement beginning in the far-off past, a thing obscure and unhonored, a thing easy to ridicule, easy to despise; a thing unlovely, wearing the aspect of vengeance and hate—but to you, the working-man, the wage-slave, calling with a voice insistent, imperious—with a voice that you cannot escape, wherever upon the earth you may be! With the voice of all your wrongs, with the voice of all your desires; with the voice of your duty and your hope—of everything in the world that is worth while to you! The voice of the poor, demanding that poverty shall cease! The voice of the oppressed, pronouncing the doom of oppression! The voice of power, wrought out of suffering—of resolution, crushed out of weakness—of joy and courage, born in the bottomless pit of anguish and despair! The voice of Labor, despised and outraged; a mighty giant, lying prostrate—mountainous, colossal, but blinded, bound, and ignorant of his strength. And now a dream of resistance haunts him, hope battling with fear; until suddenly he stirs, and a fetter snaps—and a thrill shoots through him, to the farthest ends of his huge body, and in a flash the dream becomes an act! He starts, he lifts himself; and the bands are shattered, the burdens roll off him—he rises—towering, gigantic; he springs to his feet, he shouts in his newborn exultation—”

And the speaker’s voice broke suddenly, with the stress of his feelings; he stood with his arms stretched out above him, and the power of his vision seemed to lift him from the floor. The audience came to its feet with a yell; men waved their arms, laughing aloud in their excitement. And Jurgis was with them, he was shouting to tear his throat; shouting because he could not help it, because the stress of his feeling was more than he could bear. It was not merely the man’s words, the torrent of his eloquence. It was his presence, it was his voice: a voice with strange intonations that rang through the chambers of the soul like the clanging of a bell—that gripped the listener like a mighty hand about his body, that shook him and startled him with sudden fright, with a sense of

things not of earth, of mysteries never spoken before, of presences of awe and terror! There was an unfolding of vistas before him, a breaking of the ground beneath him, an upheaving, a stirring, a trembling; he felt himself suddenly a mere man no longer—there were powers within him undreamed of, there were demon forces contending, age-long wonders struggling to be born; and he sat oppressed with pain and joy, while a tingling stole down into his finger tips, and his breath came hard and fast. The sentences of this man were to Jurgis like the crashing of thunder in his soul; a flood of emotions surged up in him—all his old hopes and longings, his old griefs and rages and despairs. All that he had ever felt in his whole life seemed to come back to him at once, and with one new emotion, hardly to be described. That he should have suffered such oppressions and such horrors was bad enough; but that he should have been crushed and beaten by them, that he should have submitted, and forgotten, and lived in peace—ah, truly that was a thing not to be put into words, a thing not to be borne by a human creature, a thing of terror and madness! “What,” asks the prophet, “is the murder of them that kill the body, to the murder of them that kill the soul?” And Jurgis was a man whose soul had been murdered, who had ceased to hope and to struggle—who had made terms with degradation and despair; and now, suddenly, in one awful convulsion, the black and hideous fact was made plain to him! There was a falling in of all the pillars of his soul, the sky seemed to split above him—he stood there, with his clenched hands upraised, his eyes bloodshot, and the veins standing out purple in his face, roaring in the voice of a wild beast, frantic, incoherent, maniacal. And when he could shout no more he still stood there, gasping, and whispering hoarsely to himself: “By God! By God! By God!”