cents a week he owed her for the use of her garret, and also redeemed his overcoat, which Elzbieta had put in pawn when he was in jail.

This last was a great blessing. A man cannot go about in midwinter in Chicago with no overcoat and not pay for it, and Jurgis had to walk or ride five or six miles back and forth to his work. It so happened that half of this was in one direction and half in another, necessitating a change of cars; the law required that transfers be given at all intersecting points, but the railway corporation had gotten round this by arranging a pretense at separate ownership. So whenever he wished to ride, he had to pay ten cents each way, or over ten per cent of his income to this power, which had gotten its franchises long ago by buying up the city council, in the face of popular clamor amounting almost to a rebellion. Tired as he felt at night, and dark and bitter cold as it was in the morning, Jurgis generally chose to walk; at the hours other workmen were traveling, the streetcar monopoly saw fit to put on so few cars that there would be men hanging to every foot of the backs of them and often crouching upon the snow-covered roof. Of course the doors could never be closed, and so the cars were as cold as outdoors; Jurgis, like many others, found it better to spend his fare for a drink and a free lunch, to give him strength to walk.

These, however, were all slight matters to a man who had escaped from Durham's fertilizer mill. Jurgis began to pick up heart again and to make plans. He had lost his house, but then the awful load of the rent and interest was off his shoulders, and when Marija was well again they could start over and save. In the shop where he worked was a man, a Lithuanian like himself, whom the others spoke of in admiring whispers, because of the mighty feats he was performing. All day he sat at a machine turning bolts; and then in the evening he went to the public school to study English and learn to read. In addition, because he had a family of eight children to support and his earnings were not enough, on Saturdays and Sundays he served as a watchman; he was required to press two buttons at opposite ends of a building every five minutes, and as the walk only took him two minutes, he had three minutes to study between each trip. Jurgis felt jealous of this fellow; for that was the sort of thing he himself had dreamed of, two or three years ago. He might do it even yet, if he had a fair chance—he might attract attention and



become a skilled man or a boss, as some had done in this place. Suppose that Marija could get a job in the big mill where they made binder twine—then they would move into this neighborhood, and he would really have a chance. With a hope like that, there was some use in living; to find a place where you were treated like a human being—by God! he would show them how he could appreciate it. He laughed to himself as he thought how he would hang on to this job!

And then one afternoon, the ninth of his work in the place, when he went to get his overcoat he saw a group of men crowded before a placard on the door, and when he went over and asked what it was, they told him that beginning with the morrow his department of the harvester works would be closed until further notice!

## *Chapter 21*

That was the way they did it! There was not half an hour's warning—the works were closed! It had happened that way before, said the men, and it would happen that way forever. They had made all the harvesting machines that the world needed, and now they had to wait till some wore out! It was nobody's fault—that was the way of it; and thousands of men and women were turned out in the dead of winter, to live upon their savings if they had any, and otherwise to die. So many tens of thousands already in the city, homeless and begging for work, and now several thousand more added to them!

Jurgis walked home with his pittance of pay in his pocket, heartbroken, overwhelmed. One more bandage had been torn from his eyes, one more pitfall was revealed to him! Of what help was kindness and decency on the part of employers—when they could not keep a job for him, when there were more

harvesting machines made than the world was able to buy! What a hellish mockery it was, anyway, that a man should slave to make harvesting machines for the country, only to be turned out to starve for doing his duty too well!

It took him two days to get over this heartsickening disappointment. He did not drink anything, because Elzbieta got his money for safekeeping, and knew him too well to be in the least frightened by his angry demands. He stayed up in the garret, however, and sulked—what was the use of a man's hunting a job when it was taken from him before he had time to learn the work? But then their money was going again, and little Antanas was hungry, and crying with the bitter cold of the garret. Also Madame Haupt, the midwife, was after him for some money. So he went out once more.

For another ten days he roamed the streets and alleys of the huge city, sick and hungry, begging for any work. He tried in stores and offices, in restaurants and hotels, along the docks and in the railroad yards, in warehouses and mills and factories where they made products that went to every corner of the world. There were often one or two chances—but there were always a hundred men for every chance, and his turn would not come. At night he crept into sheds and cellars and doorways—until there came a spell of belated winter weather, with a raging gale, and the thermometer five degrees below zero at sundown and falling all night. Then Jurgis fought like a wild beast to get into the big Harrison Street police station, and slept down in a corridor, crowded with two other men upon a single step.

He had to fight often in these days—to fight for a place near the factory gates, and now and again with gangs on the street. He found, for instance, that the business of carrying satchels for railroad passengers was a pre-empted one—whenever he essayed it, eight or ten men and boys would fall upon him and force him to run for his life. They always had the policeman "squared," and so there was no use in expecting protection.

That Jurgis did not starve to death was due solely to the pittance the children brought him. And even this was never certain. For one thing the cold was almost more than the children could bear; and then they, too, were in perpetual peril from rivals who plundered and beat them. The law was against them, too—little Vilimas, who was really eleven, but did not look to be



eight, was stopped on the streets by a severe old lady in spectacles, who told him that he was too young to be working and that if he did not stop selling papers she would send a truant officer after him. Also one night a strange man caught little Kotrina by the arm and tried to persuade her into a dark cellarway, an experience which filled her with such terror that she was hardly to be kept at work.

At last, on a Sunday, as there was no use looking for work, Jurgis went home by stealing rides on the cars. He found that they had been waiting for him for three days—there was a chance of a job for him.

It was quite a story. Little Juozapas, who was near crazy with hunger these days, had gone out on the street to beg for himself. Juozapas had only one leg, having been run over by a wagon when a little child, but he had got himself a broomstick, which he put under his arm for a crutch. He had fallen in with some other children and found the way to Mike Scully's dump, which lay three or four blocks away. To this place there came every day many hundreds of wagonloads of garbage and trash from the lake front, where the rich people lived; and in the heaps the children raked for food—there were hunks of bread and potato peelings and apple cores and meat bones, all of it half frozen and quite unspoiled. Little Juozapas gorged himself, and came home with a newspaper full, which he was feeding to Antanas when his mother came in. Elzbieta was horrified, for she did not believe that the food out of the dumps was fit to eat. The next day, however, when no harm came of it and Juozapas began to cry with hunger, she gave in and said that he might go again. And that afternoon he came home with a story of how while he had been digging away with a stick, a lady upon the street had called him. A real fine lady, the little boy explained, a beautiful lady; and she wanted to know all about him, and whether he got the garbage for chickens, and why he walked with a broomstick, and why Ona had died, and how Jurgis had come to go to jail, and what was the matter with Marija, and everything. In the end she had asked where he lived, and said that she was coming to see him, and bring him a new crutch to walk with. She had on a hat with a bird upon it, Juozapas added, and a long fur snake around her neck.

She really came, the very next morning, and climbed the

ladder to the garret, and stood and stared about her, turning pale at the sight of the blood stains on the floor where Ona had died. She was a "settlement worker," she explained to Elzbieta—she lived around on Ashland Avenue. Elzbieta knew the place, over a feed store; somebody had wanted her to go there, but she had not cared to, for she thought that it must have something to do with religion, and the priest did not like her to have anything to do with strange religions. They were rich people who came to live there to find out about the poor people; but what good they expected it would do them to know, one could not imagine. So spoke Elzbieta, naïvely, and the young lady laughed and was rather at a loss for an answer—she stood and gazed about her, and thought of a cynical remark that had been made to her, that she was standing upon the brink of the pit of hell and throwing in snowballs to lower the temperature.

Elzbieta was glad to have somebody to listen, and she told all their woes—what had happened to Ona, and the jail, and the loss of their home, and Marija's accident, and how Ona had died, and how Jurgis could get no work. As she listened the pretty young lady's eyes filled with tears, and in the midst of it she burst into weeping and hid her face on Elzbieta's shoulder, quite regardless of the fact that the woman had on a dirty old wrapper and that the garret was full of fleas. Poor Elzbieta was ashamed of herself for having told so woeful a tale, and the other had to beg and plead with her to get her to go on. The end of it was that the young lady sent them a basket of things to eat, and left a letter that Jurgis was to take to a gentleman who was superintendent in one of the mills of the great steelworks in South Chicago. "He will get Jurgis something to do," the young lady had said, and added, smiling through her tears—"If he doesn't, he will never marry me."

The steelworks were fifteen miles away, and as usual it was so contrived that one had to pay two fares to get there. Far and wide the sky was flaring with the red glare that leaped from rows of towering chimneys—for it was pitch dark when Jurgis arrived. The vast works, a city in themselves, were surrounded by a stockade; and already a full hundred men were waiting at the gate where new hands were taken on. Soon after daybreak whistles began to blow, and then suddenly thousands of men appeared, streaming from saloons and boardinghouses across the



way, leaping from trolley cars that passed—it seemed as if they rose out of the ground, in the dim gray light. A river of them poured in through the gate—and then gradually ebbed away again, until there were only a few late ones running, and the watchman pacing up and down, and the hungry strangers stamping and shivering.

Jurgis presented his precious letter. The gatekeeper was surly, and put him through a catechism, but he insisted that he knew nothing, and as he had taken the precaution to seal his letter, there was nothing for the gatekeeper to do but send it to the person to whom it was addressed. A messenger came back to say that Jurgis should wait, and so he came inside of the gate, perhaps not sorry enough that there were others less fortunate watching him with greedy eyes.

The great mills were getting under way—one could hear a vast stirring, a rolling and rumbling and hammering. Little by little the scene grew plain: towering, black buildings here and there, long rows of shops and sheds, little railways branching everywhere, bare gray cinders underfoot and oceans of billowing black smoke above. On one side of the grounds ran a railroad with a dozen tracks, and on the other side lay the lake, where steamers came to load.

Jurgis had time enough to stare and speculate, for it was two hours before he was summoned. He went into the office building, where a company timekeeper interviewed him. The superintendent was busy, he said, but he (the timekeeper) would try to find Jurgis a job. He had never worked in a steel mill before? But he was ready for anything? Well, then, they would go and see.

So they began a tour, among sights that made Jurgis stare amazed. He wondered if ever he could get used to working in a place like this, where the air shook with deafening thunder, and whistles shrieked warnings on all sides of him at once; where miniature steam engines came rushing upon him, and sizzling, quivering, white-hot masses of metal sped past him, and explosions of fire and flaming sparks dazzled him and scorched his face. Then men in these mills were all black with soot, and hollow-eyed and gaunt; they worked with fierce intensity, rushing here and there, and never lifting their eyes from their tasks. Jurgis clung to his guide like a scared child to its nurse, and

while the latter hailed one foreman after another to ask if they could use another unskilled man, he stared about him and marveled.

He was taken to the Bessemer furnace, where they made billets of steel—a domelike building, the size of a big theater. Jurgis stood where the balcony of the theater would have been, and opposite, by the stage, he saw three giant caldrons, big enough for all the devils of hell to brew their broth in, full of something white and blinding, bubbling and splashing, roaring as if volcanoes were blowing through it—one had to shout to be heard in the place. Liquid fire would leap from these caldrons and scatter like bombs below—and men were working there, seeming careless, so that Jurgis caught his breath with fright. Then a whistle would toot, and across the curtain of the theater would come a little engine with a carload of something to be dumped into one of the receptacles; and then another whistle would toot, down by the stage, and another train would back up—and suddenly, without an instant's warning, one of the giant kettles began to tilt and topple, flinging out a jet of hissing, roaring flame. Jurgis shrank back appalled, for he thought it was an accident; there fell a pillar of white flame, dazzling as the sun, swishing like a huge tree falling in the forest. A torrent of sparks swept all the way across the building, overwhelming everything, hiding it from sight; and then Jurgis looked through the fingers of his hands, and saw pouring out of the caldron a cascade of living, leaping fire, white with a whiteness not of earth, scorching the eyeballs. Incandescent rainbows shone above it, blue, red, and golden lights played about it; but the stream itself was white, ineffable. Out of regions of wonder it streamed, the very river of life; and the soul leaped up at the sight of it, fled back upon it, swift and resistless, back into far-off lands, where beauty and terror dwell. Then the great caldron tilted back again, empty, and Jurgis saw to his relief that no one was hurt, and turned and followed his guide out into the sunlight.

They went through the blast furnaces, through rolling mills where bars of steel were tossed about and chopped like bits of cheese. All around and above giant machine arms were flying, giant wheels were turning, great hammers crashing; traveling cranes creaked and groaned overhead, reaching down iron hands and seizing iron prey—it was like standing in the center of the earth, where the machinery of time was revolving.



By and by they came to the place where steel rails were made; and Jurgis heard a toot behind him, and jumped out of the way of a car with a white-hot ingot upon it, the size of a man's body. There was a sudden crash and the car came to a halt, and the ingot toppled out upon a moving platform, where steel fingers and arms seized hold of it, punching it and prodding it into place, and hurrying it into the grip of huge rollers. Then it came out upon the other side, and there were more crashings and clatterings, and over it was flopped, like a pancake on a gridiron, and seized again and rushed back at you through another squeezer. So amid deafening uproar it clattered to and fro, growing thinner and flatter and longer. The ingot seemed almost a living thing; it did not want to run this mad course, but it was in the grip of fate, it was tumbled on, screeching and clanking and shivering in protest. By and by it was long and thin, a great red snake escaped from purgatory; and then, as it slid through the rollers, you would have sworn that it was alive—it writhed and squirmed, and wriggles and shudders passed out through its tail, all but flinging it off by their violence. There was no rest for it until it was cold and black—and then it needed only to be cut and straightened to be ready for a railroad.

It was at the end of this rail's progress that Jurgis got his chance. They had to be moved by men with crowbars, and the boss here could use another man. So he took off his coat and set to work on the spot.

It took him two hours to get to this place every day and cost him a dollar and twenty cents a week. As this was out of the question, he wrapped his bedding in a bundle and took it with him, and one of his fellow workingmen introduced him to a Polish lodginghouse, where he might have the privilege of sleeping upon the floor for ten cents a night. He got his meals at free-lunch counters, and every Saturday night he went home—bedding and all—and took the greater part of his money to the family. Elzbieta was sorry for this arrangement, for she feared that it would get him into the habit of living without them, and once a week was not very often for him to see his baby; but there was no other way of arranging it. There was no chance for a woman at the steelworks, and Marija was now ready for work again, and lured on from day to day by the hope of finding it at the yards.

In a week Jurgis got over his sense of helplessness and bewilderment in the rail mill. He learned to find his way about and to take all the miracles and terrors for granted, to work without hearing the rumbling and crashing. From blind fear he went to the other extreme; he became reckless and indifferent, like all the rest of the men, who took but little thought of themselves in the ardor of their work. It was wonderful, when one came to think of it, that these men should have taken an interest in the work they did; they had no share in it—they were paid by the hour, and paid no more for being interested. Also they knew that if they were hurt they would be flung aside and forgotten—and still they would hurry to their task by dangerous short cuts, would use methods that were quicker and more effective in spite of the fact that they were also risky. His fourth day at his work Jurgis saw a man stumble while running in front of a car, and have his foot mashed off; and before he had been there three weeks he was witness of a yet more dreadful accident. There was a row of brick furnaces, shining white through every crack with the molten steel inside. Some of these were bulging dangerously, yet men worked before them, wearing blue glasses when they opened and shut the doors. One morning as Jurgis was passing, a furnace blew out, spraying two men with a shower of liquid fire. As they lay screaming and rolling upon the ground in agony, Jurgis rushed to help them, and as a result he lost a good part of the skin from the inside of one of his hands. The company doctor bandaged it up, but he got no other thanks from any one, and was laid up for eight working days without any pay.

Most fortunately, at this juncture, Elzbieta got the long-awaited chance to go at five o'clock in the morning and help scrub the office floors of one of the packers. Jurgis came home and covered himself with blankets to keep warm, and divided his time between sleeping and playing with little Antanas. Juozapas was away raking in the dump a good part of the time, and Elzbieta and Marija were hunting for more work.

Antanas was now over a year and a half old, and was a perfect talking machine. He learned so fast that every week when Jurgis came home it seemed to him as if he had a new child. He would sit down and listen and stare at him, and give vent to delighted exclamations—*"Palauk! Muma! Tu mano szirdele!"* The little fellow was now really the one delight that Jurgis had in the world—his one hope, his one victory. Thank God, Antanas was



a boy! And he was as tough as a pine knot, and with the appetite of a wolf. Nothing had hurt him, and nothing could hurt him; he had come through all the suffering and deprivation unscathed—only shriller-voiced and more determined in his grip upon life. He was a terrible child to manage, was Antanas, but his father did not mind that—he would watch him and smile to himself with satisfaction. The more of a fighter he was the better—he would need to fight before he got through.

Jurgis had got the habit of buying the Sunday paper whenever he had the money; a most wonderful paper could be had for only five cents, a whole armful, with all the news of the world set forth in big headlines, that Jurgis could spell out slowly, with the children to help him at the long words. There was battle and murder and sudden death—it was marvelous how they ever heard about so many entertaining and thrilling happenings; the stories must be all true, for surely no man could have made such things up, and besides, there were pictures of them all, as real as life. One of these papers was as good as a circus, and nearly as good as a spree—certainly a most wonderful treat for a workingman, who was tired out and stupefied, and had never had any education, and whose work was one dull, sordid grind, day after day, and year after year, with never a sight of a green field nor an hour's entertainment, nor anything but liquor to stimulate his imagination. Among other things, these papers had pages full of comical pictures, and these were the main joy in life to little Antanas. He treasured them up, and would drag them out and make his father tell him about them; there were all sorts of animals among them, and Antanas could tell the names of all of them, lying upon the floor for hours and pointing them out with his chubby little fingers. Whenever the story was plain enough for Jurgis to make out, Antanas would have it repeated to him, and then he would remember it, prattling funny little sentences and mixing it up with other stories in an irresistible fashion. Also his quaint pronunciation of words was such a delight—and the phrases he would pick up and remember, the most outlandish and impossible things! The first time that the little rascal burst out with "God damn," his father nearly rolled off the chair with glee; but in the end he was sorry for this, for Antanas was soon "God damning" everything and everybody.

* * *

And then, when he was able to use his hands, Jurgis took his bedding again and went back to his task of shifting rails. It was now April, and the snow had given place to cold rains, and the unpaved street in front of Aniele's house was turned into a canal. Jurgis would have to wade through it to get home, and if it was late he might easily get stuck to his waist in the mire. But he did not mind this much—it was a promise that summer was coming. Marija had now gotten a place as beef-trimmer in one of the smaller packing plants; and he told himself that he had learned his lesson now, and would meet with no more accidents—so that at last there was prospect of an end to their long agony. They could save money again, and when another winter came they would have a comfortable place; and the children would be off the streets and in school again, and they might set to work to nurse back into life their habits of decency and kindness. So once more Jurgis began to make plans and dream dreams.

And then one Saturday night he jumped off the car and started home, with the sun shining low under the edge of a bank of clouds that had been pouring floods of water into the mud-soaked street. There was a rainbow in the sky, and another in his breast—for he had thirty-six hours' rest before him, and a chance to see his family. Then suddenly he came in sight of the house, and noticed that there was a crowd before the door. He ran up the steps and pushed his way in, and saw Aniele's kitchen crowded with excited women. It reminded him so vividly of the time when he had come home from jail and found Ona dying, that his heart almost stood still. "What's the matter?" he cried.

A dead silence had fallen in the room, and he saw that every one was staring at him. "What's the matter?" he exclaimed again.

And then, up in the garret, he heard sounds of wailing, in Marija's voice. He started for the ladder—and Aniele seized him by the arm. "No, no!" she exclaimed. "Don't go up there!"

"What is it?" he shouted.

And the old woman answered him weakly: "It's Antanas. He's dead. He was drowned out in the street!"

## *Chapter 22*

Jurgis took the news in a peculiar way. He turned deadly pale, but he caught himself, and for half a minute stood in the middle of the room, clenching his hands tightly and setting his teeth. Then he pushed Aniele aside and strode into the next room and climbed the ladder.

In the corner was a blanket, with a form half showing beneath it; and beside it lay Elzbieta, whether crying or in a faint, Jurgis could not tell. Marija was pacing the room, screaming and wringing her hands. He clenched his hands tighter yet, and his voice was hard as he spoke.

"How did it happen?" he asked.

Marija scarcely heard him in her agony. He repeated the question, louder and yet more harshly. "He fell off the sidewalk!" she wailed. The sidewalk in front of the house was a platform made of half-rotten boards, about five feet above the level of the sunken street.

"How did he come to be there?" he demanded.

"He went—he went out to play," Marija sobbed, her voice choking her. "We couldn't make him stay in. He must have got caught in the mud!"

"Are you sure that he is dead?" he demanded.

"Ai! ai!" she wailed. "Yes; we had the doctor."

Then Jurgis stood a few seconds, wavering. He did not shed a tear. He took one glance more at the blanket with the little form beneath it, and then turned suddenly to the ladder and climbed down again. A silence fell once more in the room as he entered. He went straight to the door, passed out, and started down the street.

* * *

When his wife had died, Jurgis made for the nearest saloon, but he did not do that now, though he had his week's wages in his pocket. He walked and walked, seeing nothing, splashing through mud and water. Later on he sat down upon a step and hid his face in his hands and for half an hour or so he did not move. Now and then he would whisper to himself: "Dead! *Dead!*"

Finally, he got up and walked on again. It was about sunset, and he went on and on until it was dark, when he was stopped by a railroad crossing. The gates were down, and a long train of freight cars was thundering by. He stood and watched it; and all at once a wild impulse seized him, a thought that had been lurking within him, unspoken, unrecognized, leaped into sudden life. He started down the track, and when he was past the gatekeeper's shanty he sprang forward and swung himself on to one of the cars.

By and by the train stopped again, and Jurgis sprang down and ran under the car, and hid himself upon the truck. Here he sat, and when the train started again, he fought a battle with his soul. He gripped his hands and set his teeth together—he had not wept, and he would not—not a tear! It was past and over, and he was done with it—he would fling it off his shoulders, be free of it, the whole business, that night. It should go like a black, hateful nightmare, and in the morning he would be a new man. And every time that a thought of it assailed him—a tender memory, a trace of a tear—he rose up, cursing with rage, and pounded it down.

He was fighting for his life; he gnashed his teeth together in his desperation. He had been a fool, a fool! He had wasted his life, he had wrecked himself, with his accursed weakness; and now he was done with it—he would tear it out of him, root and branch! There should be no more tears and no more tenderness; he had had enough of them—they had sold him into slavery! Now he was going to be free, to tear off his shackles, to rise up and fight. He was glad that the end had come—it had to come some time, and it was just as well now. This was no world for women and children, and the sooner they got out of it the better for them. Whatever Antanas might suffer where he was, he could suffer no more than he would have had he stayed upon earth. And meantime his father had thought the last thought about him that he meant to; he was going to think of himself, he



was going to fight for himself, against the world that had baffled him and tortured him!

So he went on, tearing up all the flowers from the garden of his soul, and setting his heel upon them. The train thundered deafeningly, and a storm of dust blew in his face; but though it stopped now and then through the night, he clung where he was—he would cling there until he was driven off, for every mile that he got from Packingtown meant another load from his mind.

Whenever the cars stopped a warm breeze blew upon him, a breeze laden with the perfume of fresh fields, of honeysuckle and clover. He snuffed it, and it made his heart beat wildly—he was out in the country again! He was going to *live* in the country! When the dawn came he was peering out with hungry eyes, getting glimpses of meadows and woods and rivers. At last he could stand it no longer, and when the train stopped again he crawled out. Upon the top of the car was a brakeman, who shook his fist and swore; Jurgis waved his hand derisively, and started across the country.

Only think that he had been a countryman all his life; and for three long years he had never seen a country sight nor heard a country sound! Excepting for that one walk when he left jail, when he was too much worried to notice anything, and for a few times that he had rested in the city parks in the winter time when he was out of work, he had literally never seen a tree! And now he felt like a bird lifted up and borne away upon a gale; he stopped and stared at each new sight of wonder—at a herd of cows, and a meadow full of daisies, at hedgerows set thick with June roses, at little birds singing in the trees.

Then he came to a farmhouse, and after getting himself a stick for protection, he approached it. The farmer was greasing a wagon in front of the barn, and Jurgis went to him. "I would like to get some breakfast, please," he said.

"Do you want to work?" said the farmer.

"No," said Jurgis. "I don't."

"Then you can't get anything here," snapped the other.

"I meant to pay for it," said Jurgis.

"Oh," said the farmer; and then added sarcastically, "We don't serve breakfast after 7 A.M."

"I am very hungry," said Jurgis gravely; "I would like to buy some food."

"Ask the woman," said the farmer, nodding over his shoulder. The "woman" was more tractable, and for a dime Jurgis secured two thick sandwiches and a piece of pie and two apples. He walked off eating the pie, as the least convenient thing to carry. In a few minutes he came to a stream, and he climbed a fence and walked down the bank, along a woodland path. By and by he found a comfortable spot, and there he devoured his meal, slaking his thirst at the stream. Then he lay for hours, just gazing and drinking in joy; until at last he felt sleepy, and lay down in the shade of a bush.

When he awoke the sun was shining hot in his face. He sat up and stretched his arms, and then gazed at the water sliding by. There was a deep pool, sheltered and silent, below him, and a sudden wonderful idea rushed upon him. He might have a bath! The water was free, and he might get into it—all the way into it! It would be the first time that he had been all the way into the water since he left Lithuania!

When Jurgis had first come to the stockyards he had been as clean as any workingman could well be. But later on, what with sickness and cold and hunger and discouragement, and the filthiness of his work, and the vermin in his home, he had given up washing in winter, and in summer only as much of him as would go into a basin. He had had a shower bath in jail, but nothing since—and now he would have a swim!

The water was warm, and he splashed about like a very boy in his glee. Afterward he sat down in the water near the bank, and proceeded to scrub himself—soberly and methodically, scouring every inch of him with sand. While he was doing it he would do it thoroughly, and see how it felt to be clean. He even scrubbed his head with sand, and combed what the men called "crumbs" out of his long, black hair, holding his head under water as long as he could, to see if he could not kill them all. Then, seeing that the sun was still hot, he took his clothes from the bank and proceeded to wash them, piece by piece; as the dirt and grease went floating off downstream he grunted with satisfaction and soused the clothes again, venturing even to dream that he might get rid of the fertilizer.

He hung them all up, and while they were drying he lay down in the sun and had another long sleep. They were hot and stiff as boards on top, and a little damp on the underside, when he awakened; but being hungry, he put them on and set out again. He had no knife, but with some labor he broke himself a good stout club, and, armed with this, he marched down the road again.



Before long he came to a big farmhouse, and turned up the lane that led to it. It was just suppertime, and the farmer was washing his hands at the kitchen door. "Please, sir," said Jurgis, "can I have something to eat? I can pay." To which the farmer responded promptly, "We don't feed tramps here. Get out!"

Jurgis went without a word; but as he passed round the barn he came to a freshly ploughed and harrowed field, in which the farmer had set out some young peach trees; and as he walked he jerked up a row of them by the roots, more than a hundred trees in all, before he reached the end of the field. That was his answer, and it showed his mood; from now on he was fighting, and the man who hit him would get all that he gave, every time.

Beyond the orchard Jurgis struck through a patch of woods, and then a field of winter grain, and came at last to another road. Before long he saw another farmhouse, and, as it was beginning to cloud over a little, he asked here for shelter as well as food. Seeing the farmer eying him dubiously, he added, "I'll be glad to sleep in the barn."

"Well, I dunno," said the other. "Do you smoke?"

"Sometimes," said Jurgis, "but I'll do it out of doors." When the man had assented, he inquired, "How much will it cost me? I haven't very much money."

"I reckon about twenty cents for supper," replied the farmer. "I won't charge ye for the barn."

So Jurgis went in, and sat down at the table with the farmer's wife and half a dozen children. It was a bountiful meal—there were baked beans and mashed potatoes and asparagus chopped and stewed, and a dish of strawberries, and great, thick slices of bread, and a pitcher of milk. Jurgis had not had such a feast since his wedding day, and he made a mighty effort to put in his twenty cents' worth.

They were all of them too hungry to talk; but afterward they sat upon the steps and smoked, and the farmer questioned his guest. When Jurgis had explained that he was a workingman from Chicago, and that he did not know just whither he was

bound, the other said, "Why don't you stay here and work for me?"

"I'm not looking for work just now," Jurgis answered.

"I'll pay ye good," said the other, eying his big form—"a dollar a day and board ye. Help's terrible scarce round here."

"Is that winter as well as summer?" Jurgis demanded quickly.

"N—no," said the farmer; "I couldn't keep ye after November—I ain't got a big enough place for that."

"I see," said the other, "that's what I thought. When you get through working your horses this fall, will you turn them out in the snow?" (Jurgis was beginning to think for himself nowadays.)

"It ain't quite the same," the farmer answered, seeing the point. "There ought to be work a strong fellow like you can find to do, in the cities, or some place, in the winter time."

"Yes," said Jurgis, "that's what they all think; and so they crowd into the cities, and when they have to beg or steal to live, then people ask 'em why they don't go into the country, where help is scarce."

The farmer meditated awhile.

"How about when your money's gone?" he inquired, finally. "You'll have to, then, won't you?"

"Wait till she's gone," said Jurgis; "then I'll see."

He had a long sleep in the barn and then a big breakfast of coffee and bread and oatmeal and stewed cherries, for which the man charged him only fifteen cents, perhaps having been influenced by his arguments. Then Jurgis bade farewell, and went on his way.

Such was the beginning of his life as a tramp. It was seldom he got as fair treatment as from this last farmer, and so as time went on he learned to shun the houses and to prefer sleeping in the fields. When it rained he would find a deserted building, if he could, and if not, he would wait until after dark and then, with his stick ready, begin a stealthy approach upon a barn. Generally he could get in before the dog got scent of him, and then he would hide in the hay and be safe until morning; if not, and the dog attacked him, he would rise up and make a retreat in battle order. Jurgis was not the mighty man he had once been, but his arms were still good, and there were few farm dogs he needed to hit more than once.



Before long there came raspberries, and then blackberries, to help him save his money; and there were apples in the orchards and potatoes in the ground—he learned to note the places and fill his pockets after dark. Twice he even managed to capture a chicken, and had a feast, once in a deserted barn and the other time in a lonely spot alongside of a stream. When all of these things failed him he used his money carefully, but without worry—for he saw that he could earn more whenever he chose. Half an hour's chopping wood in his lively fashion was enough to bring him a meal, and when the farmer had seen him working he would sometimes try to bribe him to stay.

But Jurgis was not staying. He was a free man now, a buccaneer. The old *wanderlust* had got into his blood, the joy of the unbound life, the joy of seeking, of hoping without limit. There were mishaps and discomforts—but at least there was always something new; and only think what it meant to a man who for years had been penned up in one place, seeing nothing but one dreary prospect of shanties and factories, to be suddenly set loose beneath the open sky, to behold new landscapes, new places, and new people every hour! To a man whose whole life had consisted of doing one certain thing all day, until he was so exhausted that he could only lie down and sleep until the next day—and to be now his own master, working as he pleased and when he pleased, and facing a new adventure every hour!

Then, too, his health came back to him, all his lost youthful vigor, his joy and power that he had mourned and forgotten! It came with a sudden rush, bewildering him, startling him; it was as if his dead childhood had come back to him, laughing and calling! What with plenty to eat and fresh air and exercise that was taken as it pleased him, he would waken from his sleep and start off not knowing what to do with his energy, stretching his arms, laughing, singing old songs of home that came back to him. Now and then, of course, he could not help but think of little Antanas, whom he should never see again, whose little voice he should never hear; and then he would have to battle with himself. Sometimes at night he would waken dreaming of Ona, and stretch out his arms to her, and wet the ground with his tears. But in the morning he would get up and shake himself, and stride away again to battle with the world.

He never asked where he was nor where he was going; the country was big enough, he knew, and there was no danger of his coming to the end of it. And of course he could always have company for the asking—everywhere he went there were men living just as he lived, and whom he was welcome to join. He was a stranger at the business, but they were not clannish, and they taught him all their tricks—what towns and villages it was best to keep away from, and how to read the secret signs upon the fences, and when to beg and when to steal, and just how to do both. They laughed at his ideas of paying for anything with money or with work—for they got all they wanted without either. Now and then Jurgis camped out with a gang of them in some woodland haunt, and foraged with them in the neighborhood at night. And then among them some one would "take a shine" to him, and they would go off together and travel for a week, exchanging reminiscences.

Of these professional tramps a great many had, of course, been shiftless and vicious all their lives. But the vast majority of them had been workingmen, had fought the long fight as Jurgis had, and found that it was a losing fight, and given up. Later on he encountered yet another sort of men, those from whose ranks the tramps were recruited, men who were homeless and wandering, but still seeking work—seeking it in the harvest fields. Of these there was an army, the huge surplus labor army of society; called into being under the stern system of nature, to do the casual work of the world, the tasks which were transient and irregular, and yet which had to be done. They did not know that they were such, of course; they only knew that they sought the job, and that the job was fleeting. In the early summer they would be in Texas, and as the crops were ready they would follow north with the season, ending with the fall in Manitoba. Then they would seek out the big lumber camps, where there was winter work; or failing in this, would drift to the cities, and live upon what they had managed to save, with the help of such transient work as was there—the loading and unloading of steamships and drays, the digging of ditches and the shoveling of snow. If there were more of them on hand than chanced to be needed, the weaker ones died off of cold and hunger, again according to the stern system of nature.

It was in the latter part of July, when Jurgis was in Missouri, that he came upon the harvest work. Here were crops that men had worked for three or four months to prepare, and of which they would lose nearly all unless they could find others to help them for a week or two. So all over the land there was a cry for labor—agencies were set up and all the cities were drained of men, even college boys were brought by the carload, and hordes of frantic farmers would hold up trains and carry off wagonloads of men by main force. Not that they did not pay them well—any man could get two dollars a day and his board, and the best men could get two dollars and a half or three.



The harvest fever was in the very air, and no man with any spirit in him could be in that region and not catch it. Jurgis joined a gang and worked from dawn till dark, eighteen hours a day, for two weeks without a break. Then he had a sum of money that would have been a fortune to him in the old days of misery—but what could he do with it now? To be sure he might have put it in a bank, and, if he were fortunate, get it back again when he wanted it. But Jurgis was now a homeless man, wandering over a continent; and what did he know about banking and drafts and letters of credit? If he carried the money about with him, he would surely be robbed in the end; and so what was there for him to do but enjoy it while he could? On a Saturday night he drifted into a town with his fellows; and because it was raining, and there was no other place provided for him, he went to a saloon. And there were some who treated him and whom he had to treat, and there was laughter and singing and good cheer; and then out of the rear part of the saloon a girl's face, red-cheeked and merry, smiled at Jurgis, and his heart thumped suddenly in his throat. He nodded to her, and she came and sat by him, and they had more drink, and then he went upstairs into a room with her, and the wild beast rose up within him and screamed, as it has screamed in the jungle from the dawn of time. And then because of his memories and his shame, he was glad when others joined them, men and women; and they had more drink and spent the night in wild rioting and debauchery. In the van of the surplus-labor army, there followed another, an army of women, they also struggling for life under the stern system of nature. Because there were rich men who sought pleasure, there had been ease and plenty for them so long as they were young and beautiful; and later on, when they were crowded out by others younger and more beautiful, they went out to

follow upon the trail of the workingmen. Sometimes they came of themselves, and the saloonkeepers shared with them; or sometimes they were handled by agencies, the same as the labor army. They were in the towns in harvest time, near the lumber camps in the winter, in the cities when the men came there; if a regiment were encamped, or a railroad or canal being made, or a great exposition getting ready, the crowd of women were on hand, living in shanties or saloons or tenement rooms, sometimes eight or ten of them together.

In the morning Jurgis had not a cent, and he went out upon the road again. He was sick and disgusted, but after the new plan of his life, he crushed his feelings down. He had made a fool of himself, but he could not help it now—all he could do was to see that it did not happen again. So he tramped on until exercise and fresh air banished his headache, and his strength and joy returned. This happened to him every time, for Jurgis was still a creature of impulse, and his pleasures had not yet become business. It would be a long time before he could be like the majority of these men of the road, who roamed until the hunger for drink and for women mastered them, and then went to work with a purpose in mind, and stopped when they had the price of a spree.

On the contrary, try as he would, Jurgis could not help being made miserable by his conscience. It was the ghost that would not down. It would come upon him in the most unexpected places—sometimes it fairly drove him to drink.

One night he was caught by a thunderstorm, and he sought shelter in a little house just outside of a town. It was a workingman's home, and the owner was a Slav like himself, a new emigrant from White Russia; he bade Jurgis welcome in his home language, and told him to come to the kitchen fire and dry himself. He had no bed for him, but there was straw in the garret, and he could make out. The man's wife was cooking the supper, and their children were playing about on the floor. Jurgis sat and exchanged thoughts with him about the old country, and the places where they had been and the work they had done. Then they ate, and afterward sat and smoked and talked more about America, and how they found it. In the middle of a sentence, however, Jurgis stopped, seeing that the woman had brought a big basin of water and was proceeding to undress her



youngest baby. The rest had crawled into the closet where they slept, but the baby was to have a bath, the workingman explained. The nights had begun to be chilly, and his mother, ignorant as to the climate in America, had sewed him up for the winter; then it had turned warm again, and some kind of a rash had broken out on the child. The doctor had said she must bathe him every night, and she, foolish woman, believed him.

Jurgis scarcely heard the explanation; he was watching the baby. He was about a year old, and a sturdy little fellow, with soft fat legs, and a round ball of a stomach, and eyes as black as coals. His pimples did not seem to bother him much, and he was wild with glee over the bath, kicking and squirming and chuckling with delight, pulling at his mother's face and then at his own little toes. When she put him into the basin he sat in the midst of it and grinned, splashing the water over himself and squealing like a little pig. He spoke in Russian, of which Jurgis knew some; he spoke it with the quaintest of baby accents—and every word of it brought back to Jurgis some word of his own dead little one, and stabbed him like a knife. He sat perfectly motionless, silent, but gripping his hands tightly, while a storm gathered in his bosom and a flood heaped itself up behind his eyes. And in the end he could bear it no more, but buried his face in his hands and burst into tears, to the alarm and amazement of his hosts. Between the shame of this and his woe Jurgis could not stand it, and got up and rushed out into the rain.

He went on and on down the road, finally coming to a black woods, where he hid and wept as if his heart would break. Ah, what agony was that, what despair, when the tomb of memory was rent open and the ghosts of his old life came forth to scourge him! What terror to see what he had been and now could never be—to see Ona and his child and his own dead self stretching out their arms to him, calling to him across a bottomless abyss—and to know that they were gone from him forever, and he writhing and suffocating in the mire of his own vileness!