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had doubted this man from the beginning, and had wanted to have nothing to do with him. There was nothing to do now but pay him—only Jurgis recouped himself by calling him names, and they all but had a fight. In truth it was not fair to describe him as a devourer of the poor, for he had troubles of his own. The saloons in Packingtown lie as thick as the leaves of Valambrosa, and the competition is deadly. The goods handed out over the counter have long since reached the limit of possibility of adulteration, and so no man can get the better of another that way; and half the saloon-keepers are in debt to the big brewers, who furnish them liquor on credit, and then when they cannot pay, take over their business. Thus again were the strong devouring the weak, according to the law which prevails in the city.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL summer long the family toiled, and in the fall they had money enough for Jurgis and Ona to be married according to home traditions of decency. In the latter part of November they hired a hall, and they invited, not only all their friends, but their friends' friends, and all others who might chance to hear of it. For a week or two there was preparation; it was necessary that Ona should have a white muslin dress and Jurgis a new suit of black; and then from Saturday morning till Sunday afternoon there was baking and boiling, and endless trips to everywhere to borrow knives and crockery. So at last the great hour arrived, and as we have seen, the guests came and showed them what becomes of honor and decency in the dominions of the self-made merchant.

They were over a hundred dollars in debt, and all things not yet counted. It was a bitter and cruel experience, and it left them plunged in an agony of despair. Such a time of all times for them to have it, when their hearts were made tender! Such a pitiful beginning it was for their married life; they loved each other so, and they could not have the briefest respite! It was a time when everything cried out to them that they ought to be happy; when wonder burned in their hearts, and leaped into flame at the slightest breath. They were shaken to the depths of them, with the awe of love realized; and as it so very weak of them that they cried out for a little peace? They had opened their hearts, like flowers to the springtime, and the merciless winter had fallen upon them. They wondered if any love that had blossomed in the world before, had been so crushed and trampled!

Over them, relentless and savage, there cracked the lash of want; the morning after the wedding it sought them as they slept, and drove them out before day-break to work. Ona was scarcely able to stand with exhaustion; but if she were to lose her place they would be ruined, and she would surely lose it if she were not on time that day. They all had to go, even little Stanislovas, who was so tired that he could scarcely stand, and ill besides from overindulgence in sausages and sarsaparilla. All that day he stood at his lard-machine, rocking unsteadily, his eyes closing in spite of him; and he all but lost his place even so, for the foreman booted him twice to waken him, and once more and he would have booted him out of the door. It was fully a week before they were all normal again, and meantime, with whining children and cross adults, the house was not a pleasant place to live in. Maria and Jonas would have to do without their savings till Jurgis could earn the money to pay them back; and though they did not say anything, they were naturally disconcerted at this. And then there came Grajeunas, the saloon-keeper, with his bill, nearly thirty dollars more than they had expected— he was demanding that it be paid upon the instant. There was some reason for dispute within the family, for Jurgis

wet with it and have to sit all day long in one of the cold cellars of Smith's was no laughing matter. Ona was a working girl, and did not own waterproofs and such things, and so Jurgis took her and put her on the street-car. Now it chanced that this car-line was owned by wealthy gentlemen who were trying to make money out of it; and the city having passed an ordinance requiring them to give transfers, they had fallen into a rage at this interference with the elemental right of business men to manage their own business in their own way, and were now trying to revenge themselves. First they had made a rule that transfers could be had only when the fare was paid, and later, growing still uglier, they made another—that the passenger must ask for the transfer, the conductor was not allowed to offer it. Now Ona had been told that she was to get a transfer; but it was not her way to speak up, and she merely waited, following the conductor about with her head wondering when he would think of her. When at last the time came for her to get out, she asked for the transfer, and was refused. Not knowing what to make of this, she began to argue with the conductor, in a language of which he did not understand a word. After warning her several times, he pulled the bell and the car went on—at which Ona burst into tears. At the next corner she got out, of course, and as she had no more money, she had to walk the rest of the way to the yards in the pouring rain. And so all day long she sat shivering, and came home at night with her teeth chattering and pains in her head and back. For two weeks afterwards she suffered cruelly—and yet every day she had to drag herself to her work. Twice during the time she swooned dead away, but the foreman would not let her come home, even so. Girls were all the time wanting to go home, and it made extra trouble keeping the records; so generally they are told to go home, or if they do not feel better. The foreman was especially severe with Ona, because she believed that she was obstinate on account of having been refused a holiday the day after her wedding. Ona had an idea that her "forelady" did not like to have her girls marry—perhaps because she was old and ugly and unmarried herself.

There were many such dangers, in which the odds were all against them. Their children were not as well as they had been at home; but how could they know that there was no sewer to their house, and that the drainage of fifteen years was in a cess-pool under it? How could they know that the pale blue milk that they bought around the corner was watered, and doctored with formaldehyde besides? When the children were not well at home, Teta Elzbieta would gather herbs and cure them; now she was obliged to go to the drug-store and buy extracts—and how was she to make a pure drug is not to be known by a poor man in the United States of America? How could they find out that their tea and coffee, their sugar and flour, had all been doctored; that their canned peas had been colored with copper-salts, and their fruit jams with aniline dyes? And even if they had known it, what good would it have done them, since there was no place within miles of them where any other sort was to be had? The bitter winter was coming, and they had to save money to get more clothing and bedding; but it would not matter in the least how much they saved, they could not get anything to keep them warm. All the clothing that was to be had in the stores was made of cotton and shoddy, which is made by tearing old clothes to pieces and weaving the fibre again. If they paid higher prices, they might get frills and fancy-ness, or be cheated; but genuine quality they could not obtain for love nor money. A young friend of Szadwilas's, recently come from abroad, had become a clerk in a store on Ashland avenue, and had taken quickly to the ways of the place; he had narrated with glee a trick he had played upon an unsuspecting countryman, thereby gaining great favor with his employer. The customer had desired to purchase an alarm-clock, and the clerk had shown him two exactly similar, telling him that the price of one was a dollar, and of the other a dollar seventy-five. Upon being asked what the difference was, the clerk had wound up the first half way, and the second all the way, and showed the customer how the latter made twice as much noise; upon which the customer remarked that he was a sound sleeper, and had better take the more expensive clock!

There is a poet who sings that "Deeper their heart grows and nobler their bearing,"

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Antanas Rudkos and his son had dwelt in the forest together, and it was hard to part in this way; perhaps it was just as well that Jurgis had to give all his attention to the task of having a funeral without being bankrupted, and so had no time to indulge in memories and grief.

Now the dreadful winter was come upon them. In the forests, all summer long, the branches of the trees do battle for light, and some of them lose and die; and then in the winter come the raging blasts, and the storms of snow and hail, and strew the ground with these weaker branches. Just so it was in Packingtown; the whole district braced itself for the struggle that was an agony, and those whose time was come, died off in hordes. All the year round they had been serving as cogs in the great packing-machine; and now was the time for the renovating of the machine, and the replacing of damaged parts. There came pneumonia and gripe, stalking among them, seeking for weakened constitutions; there was the annual harvest of those whom tuberculosis had been dragging down. There came cruel cold, and biting winds, and blizzards of snow, all testing relentlessly for failing muscles and impoverished blood. The packing-machines ground on remorselessly, and sooner or later came the day when the unit did not report for work; and then, with no time lost in waiting, and no inquiries or regrets, there was a chance for a new hand.

The new hands were here, by the thousands. All day long the gates of the packing-houses were besieged by starving and penniless men; they came, literally by the thousands every single morning, fighting with each other in mad frenzy for a chance for life. Blizzards and frightful cold made no difference to them, they were always on hand; they were on hand two hours before the sun rose, an hour before the work began. Sometimes they face froze, sometimes they feet and their hands were frozen from all together—but still they came for they had no other place to go. One day Anderson advertised in the paper for two hundred men to cut ice; and all that day the homeless and starving of the jungle came trudging through the snow from all over its two hundred square miles. That night forty score of them crowded into the station-house of the stock-yards district—they filled the rooms, sleeping in each others laps, toboggan-fashion, and they piled on top of each other in the corridors, till the police shut the doors, and left some to freeze to death outside. On the morning, before day-break, there were three thousand at Anderson's, and the police were had to be sent for to quell the riot. Then Anderson's bosses picked out twenty of the biggest, and the papers had it that the "two hundred" was a printer's error. Four or five miles to the eastward lay the lake, and over this the bitter winds came raging. Sometimes the thermometer would fall to ten or twenty degrees below zero at night, and in the morning the streets would be piled with snow-drifts up to the first floor windows. The streets through which our friends had to go to their work were all unpaved and full of deep holes and gullies; in summer, when it rained hard, a man might have to wade in his waist to get to his house; and now in winter it was no joke getting through these places, before light in the morning and after dark at night. They would wrap up in all they could get, but they could not wrap a man gave out in haustion; and many a man gave out in the battles with the snow-drifts, and lay down and fell asleep. And if it was bad for the men, one may imagine how the women and children fared. Some would ride in the cars, if the cars were running; but when you are making only five cents an hour, as was little Stanislovas, you do not like to spend that much to ride two miles. The children would come to the yards with great shawls about their ears, and so tied up that you could hardly find them—and still there would be accidents. One bitter morning in February the little boy Stanislovas came about an hour late, and seemed to be something that he could not control, and they feared sometimes that he would go into convulsions. In the end it had to be arranged that he always went with Jurgis, and came home with him again; often, when the snow was deep, the man would carry him the whole way on his shoulders. But sometimes Jurgis would be working until late at night, and then it was pitiful, for there was no place for the little fellow to go, or to stay in the night; and he would all but fall asleep there, and freeze to death.

There was no heat upon the killing-floor. The men might exactly as well have worked out of doors all winter. For that matter, there was very little heat anywhere in the building, except in the cooking-rooms and such places—and it was the men who worked in these who ran the most risk of all, because whenever they had to pass through the corridors, and sometimes with nothing on above the waist except a sleeveless undershirt. In summertime the chilling-rooms were counted deadly places, for rheumatism and such things; but when it came to winter the men envied those who worked there—at least the chilling-rooms were kept at a precise temperature, and one could not freeze to death. On the killing-floor you might easily get to work in the snow. You were apt to be covered with blood, and it would freeze solid; if you leaned against a pillar you would freeze to that, and if you put your hand upon the blade of your knife, you would run a chance of leaving your skin on it. The men would tie up their feet in newspapers and old sacks, and these would be soaked in blood and frozen, and then soaked again, and so on, until by night-time a man would be walking on great lumps the size of the feet of an elephant. Now and then when the bosses were not looking, you would see

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them plunging their feet and ankles into the steaming hot carcass of the steer, or darting across the room to the hot-water jets. The cruellest thing of all was that nearly all of them—all of those who used knives—were unable to wear gloves, and their hands would be white with frost and their hands would grow numb, and then of course there would be no oil. Also the air would be full of steam, from the hot water and the hot blood, so that you could not see five feet before you; then, with men rushing about at the speed they kept up on the killing-floor, and all with butcher-knives, like razors, in their hands—well, it was to be counted as a wonder that there were not more men slaughtered than cattle.

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