The Jungle

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It was four o'clock when the ceremony was over and the carriages began to arrive. There had been a crowd following all the way, owing to the exuberance of Marija Berczynskas. The occasion rested heavily upon Marija's broad shoulders—it was her task to see that all things went in due form, and after the best home traditions; and, flying wildly hither and thither, bowling every one out of the way, and scolding and exhorting all day with her tremendous voice, Marija was too eager to see that others conformed to the proprieties to consider them herself. She had left the church last of all, and, desiring to arrive first at the hall, had issued orders to the coachman to drive faster. When that personage had developed a will of his own in the matter, Marija had flung up the window of the carriage, and, leaning out, proceeded to tell him her opinion of him, first in Lithuanian, which he did not understand, and then in Polish, which he did. Having the advantage of her in altitude, the driver had stood his ground and even ventured to attempt to speak; and the result had been a furious altercation, which, continuing all the way down Ashland Avenue, had added a new swarm of urchins to the cortege at each side street for half a mile.

This was unfortunate, for already there was a throng before the door. The music had started up, and half a block away you could hear the dull "broom, broom" of a cello, with the squeaking of two fiddles which vied with each other in intricate and altitudinous gymnastics. Seeing the throng, Marija abandoned precipitately the debate concerning the ancestors of her coachman, and, springing from the moving carriage, plunged in and proceeded to clear a way to the hall. Once within, she turned and began to push the other way, roaring, meantime, "Eik! Eik! Uzdaryk-duris!" in tones which made the orchestral uproar sound like fairy music.

"Z. Graiczunas, Pasilinksminimams darzas. Vynas. Sznapsas. Wines and Liquors. Union Headquarters"—that was the way the signs ran. The reader, who perhaps has never held much converse in the language of far-off Lithuania, will be glad of the explanation that the place was the rear room of a saloon in that part of Chicago known as "back of the yards." This information is definite and suited to the matter of fact; but how pitifully inadequate it would have seemed to one who understood that it was also the supreme hour of ecstasy in the life of one of God's gentlest creatures, the scene of the wedding feast and the joy-transfiguration of little Ona Lukoszaite!

She stood in the doorway, shepherded by Cousin Marija, breathless from pushing through the crowd, and in her happiness painful to look upon. There was a light of wonder in her eyes and her lids trembled, and her otherwise wan little face was flushed. She wore a muslin dress, conspicuously white, and a stiff little veil coming to her shoulders. There were five pink paper roses twisted in the veil, and eleven bright green rose leaves. There were new white cotton gloves upon her hands, and as she stood staring about her she twisted them together feverishly. It was almost too much for her—you could see the pain of too great emotion in her face, and all the tremor of her form. She was so young—not quite sixteen—and small for her age, a mere child; and she had just been married—and married to Jurgis,[1] of all men, to Jurgis Rudkus, he with the white flower in the buttonhole of his new black suit, he with the mighty shoulders and the giant hands.

Ona was blue-eyed and fair, while Jurgis had great black eyes with beetling brows, and thick black hair that curled in waves about his ears—in short, they were one of those incongruous and impossible married couples with which Mother Nature so often wills to confound all prophets, before and after. Jurgis could take up a two-hundred-and-fifty-pound quarter of beef and carry it into a car without a stagger, or even a thought; and now he stood in a far corner, frightened as a hunted animal, and obliged to moisten his lips with his tongue each time before he could answer the congratulations of his friends.

Gradually there was effected a separation between the spectators and the guests—a separation at least sufficiently complete for working purposes. There was no time during the festivities which ensued when there were not groups of onlookers in the doorways and the corners; and if any one of these onlookers came sufficiently close, or looked sufficiently hungry, a chair was offered him, and he was invited to the feast. It was one of the laws of the veselija that no one goes hungry; and, while a rule made in the forests of Lithuania is hard to apply in the stockyards district of Chicago, with its quarter of a million inhabitants, still they did their best, and the children who ran in from the street, and even the dogs, went out again happier. A charming informality was one of the characteristics of this celebration. The men wore their hats, or, if they wished, they took them off, and their coats with them; they ate when and where they pleased, and moved as often as they pleased. There were to be speeches and singing, but no one had to listen who did not care to; if he wished, meantime, to speak or sing himself, he was perfectly free. The resulting medley of sound distracted no one, save possibly alone the babies, of which there were present a number equal to the total possessed by all the guests invited. There was no other place for the babies to be, and so part of the preparations for the evening consisted of a collection of cribs and carriages in one corner. In these the babies slept, three or four together, or wakened together, as the case might be. Those who were still older, and could reach the tables, marched about munching contentedly at meat bones and bologna sausages.

The room is about thirty feet square, with whitewashed walls, bare save for a calendar, a picture of a race horse, and a family tree in a gilded frame. To the right there is a door from the saloon, with a few loafers in the doorway, and in the corner beyond it a bar, with a presiding genius clad in soiled white, with waxed black mustaches and a carefully oiled curl plastered against one side of his forehead. In the opposite corner are two tables, filling a third of the room and laden with dishes and cold viands, which a few of the hungrier guests are already munching. At the head, where sits the bride, is a snow-white cake, with an Eiffel tower of constructed decoration, with sugar roses and two angels upon it, and a generous sprinkling of pink and green and yellow candies. Beyond opens a door into the kitchen, where there is a glimpse to be had of a range with much steam ascending from it, and many women, old and young, rushing hither and thither. In the corner to the left are the three musicians, upon a little platform, toiling heroically to make some impression upon the hubbub; also the babies, similarly occupied, and an open window whence the populace imbibes the sights and sounds and odors.

Suddenly some of the steam begins to advance, and, peering through it, you discern Aunt Elizabeth, Ona's stepmother—Teta Elzbieta, as they call her—bearing aloft a great platter of stewed duck. Behind her is Kotrina, making her way cautiously, staggering beneath a similar burden; and half a minute later there appears old Grandmother Majauszkiene, with a big yellow bowl of smoking potatoes, nearly as big as herself. So, bit by bit, the feast takes form—there is a ham and a dish of sauerkraut, boiled rice, macaroni, bologna sausages, great piles of penny buns, bowls of milk, and foaming pitchers of beer. There is also, not six feet from your back, the bar, where you may order all you please and do not have to pay for it. "Eiksz! Graicziau!" screams Marija Berczynskas, and falls to work herself—for there is more upon the stove inside that will be spoiled if it be not eaten.

So, with laughter and shouts and endless badinage and merriment, the guests take their places. The young men, who for the most part have been huddled near the door, summon their resolution and advance; and the shrinking Jurgis is poked and scolded by the old folks until he consents to seat himself at the right hand of the bride. The two bridesmaids, whose insignia of office are paper wreaths, come next, and after them the rest of the guests, old and young, boys and girls. The spirit of the occasion takes hold of the stately bartender, who condescends to a plate of stewed duck; even the fat policeman—whose duty it will be, later in the evening, to break up the fights—draws up a chair to the foot of the table. And the children shout and the babies yell, and every one laughs and sings and chatters—while above all the deafening clamor Cousin Marija shouts orders to the musicians.

The musicians—how shall one begin to describe them? All this time they have been there, playing in a mad frenzy—all of this scene must be read, or said, or sung, to music. It is the music which makes it what it is; it is the music which changes the place from the rear room of a saloon in back of the yards to a fairy place, a wonderland, a little corner of the high mansions of the sky.

The little person who leads this trio is an inspired man. His fiddle is out of tune, and there is no rosin on his bow, but still he is an inspired man—the hands of the muses have been laid upon him. He plays like one possessed by a demon, by a whole horde of demons. You can feel them in the air round about him, capering frenetically; with their invisible feet they set the pace, and the hair of the leader of the orchestra rises on end, and his eyeballs start from their sockets, as he toils to keep up with them.

Tamoszius Kuszleika is his name, and he has taught himself to play the violin by practicing all night, after working all day on the "killing beds." He is in his shirt sleeves, with a vest figured with faded gold horseshoes, and a pink-striped shirt, suggestive of peppermint candy. A pair of military trousers, light blue with a yellow stripe, serve to give that suggestion of authority proper to the leader of a band. He is only about five feet high, but even so these trousers are about eight inches short of the ground. You wonder where he can have gotten them or rather you would wonder, if the excitement of being in his presence left you time to think of such things.

For he is an inspired man. Every inch of him is inspired—you might almost say inspired separately. He stamps with his feet, he tosses his head, he sways and swings to and fro; he has a wizened-up little face, irresistibly comical; and, when he executes a turn or a flourish, his brows knit and his lips work and his eyelids wink—the very ends of his necktie bristle out. And every now and then he turns upon his companions, nodding, signaling, beckoning frantically—with every inch of him appealing, imploring, in behalf of the muses and their call.

For they are hardly worthy of Tamoszius, the other two members of the orchestra. The second violin is a Slovak, a tall, gaunt man with black-rimmed spectacles and the mute and patient look of an overdriven mule; he responds to the whip but feebly, and then always falls back into his old rut. The third man is very fat, with a round, red, sentimental nose, and he plays with his eyes turned up to the sky and a look of infinite yearning. He is playing a bass part upon his cello, and so the excitement is nothing to him; no matter what happens in the treble, it is his task to saw out one long-drawn and lugubrious note after another, from four o'clock in the afternoon until nearly the same hour next morning, for his third of the total income of one dollar per hour.

Before the feast has been five minutes under way, Tamoszius Kuszleika has risen in his excitement; a minute or two more and you see that he is beginning to edge over toward the tables. His nostrils are dilated and his breath comes fast—his demons are driving him. He nods and shakes his head at his companions, jerking at them with his violin, until at last the long form of the second violinist also rises up. In the end all three of them begin advancing, step by step, upon the banqueters, Valentinavyczia, the cellist, bumping along with his instrument between notes. Finally all three are gathered at the foot of the tables, and there Tamoszius mounts upon a stool.

Now he is in his glory, dominating the scene. Some of the people are eating, some are laughing and talking—but you will make a great mistake if you think there is one of them who does not hear him. His notes are never true, and his fiddle buzzes on the low ones and squeaks and scratches on the high; but these things they heed no more than they heed the dirt and noise and squalor about them—it is out of this material that they have to build their lives, with it that they have to utter their souls. And this is their utterance; merry

and boisterous, or mournful and wailing, or passionate and rebellious, this music is their music, music of home. It stretches out its arms to them, they have only to give themselves up. Chicago and its saloons and its slums fade away—there are green meadows and sunlit rivers, mighty forests and snow-clad hills. They behold home landscapes and childhood scenes returning; old loves and friendships begin to waken, old joys and griefs to laugh and weep. Some fall back and close their eyes, some beat upon the table. Now and then one leaps up with a cry and calls for this song or that; and then the fire leaps brighter in Tamoszius' eyes, and he flings up his fiddle and shouts to his companions, and away they go in mad career. The company takes up the choruses, and men and women cry out like all possessed; some leap to their feet and stamp upon the floor, lifting their glasses and pledging each other. Before long it occurs to some one to demand an old wedding song, which celebrates the beauty of the bride and the joys of love. In the excitement of this masterpiece Tamoszius Kuszleika begins to edge in between the tables, making his way toward the head, where sits the bride. There is not a foot of space between the chairs of the guests, and Tamoszius is so short that he pokes them with his bow whenever he reaches over for the low notes; but still he presses in, and insists relentlessly that his companions must follow. During their progress, needless to say, the sounds of the cello are pretty well extinguished; but at last the three are at the head, and Tamoszius takes his station at the right hand of the bride and begins to pour out his soul in melting strains.

Little Ona is too excited to eat. Once in a while she tastes a little something, when Cousin Marija pinches her elbow and reminds her; but, for the most part, she sits gazing with the same fearful eyes of wonder. Teta Elzbieta is all in a flutter, like a hummingbird; her sisters, too, keep running up behind her, whispering, breathless. But Ona seems scarcely to hear them—the music keeps calling, and the far-off look comes back, and she sits with her hands pressed together over her heart. Then the tears begin to come into her eyes; and as she is ashamed to wipe them away, and ashamed to let them run down her cheeks, she turns and shakes her head a little, and then flushes red when she sees that Jurgis is watching her. When in the end Tamoszius Kuszleika has reached her side, and is waving his magic wand above her, Ona's cheeks are scarlet, and she looks as if she would have to get up and run away.

In this crisis, however, she is saved by Marija Berczynskas, whom the muses suddenly visit. Marija is fond of a song, a song of lovers' parting; she wishes to hear it, and, as the musicians do not know it, she has risen, and is proceeding to teach them. Marija is short, but powerful in build. She works in a canning factory, and all day long she handles cans of beef that weigh fourteen pounds. She has a broad Slavic face, with prominent red cheeks. When she opens her mouth, it is tragical, but you cannot help thinking of a horse. She wears a blue flannel shirt-waist, which is now rolled up at the sleeves, disclosing her brawny arms; she has a carving fork in her hand, with which she pounds on the table to mark the time. As she roars her song, in a voice of which it is enough to say that it leaves no portion of the room vacant, the three musicians follow her, laboriously and note by note, but averaging one note behind; thus they toil through stanza after stanza of a lovesick swain's lamentation:—

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"Sudiev' kvietkeli, tu brangiausis;
Sudiev' ir laime, man biednam,
Matau-paskyre teip Aukszcziausis,
Jog vargt ant svieto reik vienam!"
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When the song is over, it is time for the speech, and old Dede Antanas rises to his feet. Grandfather Anthony, Jurgis' father, is not more than sixty years of age, but you would think that he was eighty. He has been only six months in America, and the change has not done him good. In his manhood he worked in a cotton mill, but then a coughing fell upon him, and he had to leave; out in the country the trouble disappeared, but he has been working in the pickle rooms at Durham's, and the breathing of the cold, damp air all day has brought it back. Now as he rises he is seized with a coughing fit, and holds himself by his chair and turns away his wan and battered face until it passes.

Generally it is the custom for the speech at a veselija to be taken out of one of the books and learned by heart; but in his youthful days Dede Antanas used to be a scholar, and really make up all the love letters of his friends. Now it is understood that he has composed an original speech of congratulation and benediction, and this is one of the events of the day. Even the boys, who are romping about the room, draw near and

listen, and some of the women sob and wipe their aprons in their eyes. It is very solemn, for Antanas Rudkus has become possessed of the idea that he has not much longer to stay with his children. His speech leaves them all so tearful that one of the guests, Jokubas Szedvilas, who keeps a delicatessen store on Halsted Street, and is fat and hearty, is moved to rise and say that things may not be as bad as that, and then to go on and make a little speech of his own, in which he showers congratulations and prophecies of happiness upon the bride and groom, proceeding to particulars which greatly delight the young men, but which cause Ona to blush more furiously than ever. Jokubas possesses what his wife complacently describes as "poetiszka vaidintuve"—a poetical imagination.

Now a good many of the guests have finished, and, since there is no pretense of ceremony, the banquet begins to break up. Some of the men gather about the bar; some wander about, laughing and singing; here and there will be a little group, chanting merrily, and in sublime indifference to the others and to the orchestra as well. Everybody is more or less restless—one would guess that something is on their minds. And so it proves. The last tardy diners are scarcely given time to finish, before the tables and the debris are shoved into the corner, and the chairs and the babies piled out of the way, and the real celebration of the evening begins. Then Tamoszius Kuszleika, after replenishing himself with a pot of beer, returns to his platform, and, standing up, reviews the scene; he taps authoritatively upon the side of his violin, then tucks it carefully under his chin, then waves his bow in an elaborate flourish, and finally smites the sounding strings and closes his eyes, and floats away in spirit upon the wings of a dreamy waltz. His companion follows, but with his eyes open, watching where he treads, so to speak; and finally Valentinavyczia, after waiting for a little and beating with his foot to get the time, casts up his eyes to the ceiling and begins to saw—"Broom! broom! broom!"

The company pairs off quickly, and the whole room is soon in motion. Apparently nobody knows how to waltz, but that is nothing of any consequence—there is music, and they dance, each as he pleases, just as before they sang. Most of them prefer the "two-step," especially the young, with whom it is the fashion. The older people have dances from home, strange and complicated steps which they execute with grave solemnity. Some do not dance anything at all, but simply hold each other's hands and allow the undisciplined joy of motion to express itself with their feet. Among these are Jokubas Szedvilas and his wife, Lucija, who together keep the delicatessen store, and consume nearly as much as they sell; they are too fat to dance, but they stand in the middle of the floor, holding each other fast in their arms, rocking slowly from side to side and grinning seraphically, a picture of toothless and perspiring ecstasy.

Of these older people many wear clothing reminiscent in some detail of home—an embroidered waistcoat or stomacher, or a gaily colored handkerchief, or a coat with large cuffs and fancy buttons. All these things are carefully avoided by the young, most of whom have learned to speak English and to affect the latest style of clothing. The girls wear ready-made dresses or shirt waists, and some of them look quite pretty. Some of the young men you would take to be Americans, of the type of clerks, but for the fact that they wear their hats in the room. Each of these younger couples affects a style of its own in dancing. Some hold each other tightly, some at a cautious distance. Some hold their hands out stiffly, some drop them loosely at their sides. Some dance springily, some glide softly, some move with grave dignity. There are boisterous couples, who tear wildly about the room, knocking every one out of their way. There are nervous couples, whom these frighten, and who cry, "Nusfok! Kas yra?" at them as they pass. Each couple is paired for the evening—you will never see them change about. There is Alena Jasaityte, for instance, who has danced unending hours with Juozas Raczius, to whom she is engaged. Alena is the beauty of the evening, and she would be really beautiful if she were not so proud. She wears a white shirtwaist, which represents, perhaps, half a week's labor painting cans. She holds her skirt with her hand as she dances, with stately precision, after the manner of the grandes dames. Juozas is driving one of Durham's wagons, and is making big wages. He affects a "tough" aspect, wearing his hat on one side and keeping a cigarette in his mouth all the evening. Then there is Jadvyga Marcinkus, who is also beautiful, but humble. Jadvyga likewise paints cans, but then she has an invalid mother and three little sisters to support by it, and so she does not spend her wages for shirtwaists. Jadvyga is small and delicate, with jet-black eyes and hair, the latter twisted into a little knot and tied on the top of her head. She wears an old white dress which she has made herself and worn to parties for the past five years; it is high-waisted—almost under her arms, and not very becoming,—but that does not trouble Jadvyga, who is dancing with her Mikolas. She is small, while he is big and powerful; she nestles in his arms as if she would hide herself from view, and leans her head upon his shoulder. He in turn has clasped his arms

tightly around her, as if he would carry her away; and so she dances, and will dance the entire evening, and would dance forever, in ecstasy of bliss. You would smile, perhaps, to see them—but you would not smile if you knew all the story. This is the fifth year, now, that Jadvyga has been engaged to Mikolas, and her heart is sick. They would have been married in the beginning, only Mikolas has a father who is drunk all day, and he is the only other man in a large family. Even so they might have managed it (for Mikolas is a skilled man) but for cruel accidents which have almost taken the heart out of them. He is a beef-boner, and that is a dangerous trade, especially when you are on piecework and trying to earn a bride. Your hands are slippery, and your knife is slippery, and you are toiling like mad, when somebody happens to speak to you, or you strike a bone. Then your hand slips up on the blade, and there is a fearful gash. And that would not be so bad, only for the deadly contagion. The cut may heal, but you never can tell. Twice now; within the last three years, Mikolas has been lying at home with blood poisoning—once for three months and once for nearly seven. The last time, too, he lost his job, and that meant six weeks more of standing at the doors of the packing houses, at six o'clock on bitter winter mornings, with a foot of snow on the ground and more in the air. There are learned people who can tell you out of the statistics that beef-boners make forty cents an hour, but, perhaps, these people have never looked into a beef-boner's hands.

When Tamoszius and his companions stop for a rest, as perforce they must, now and then, the dancers halt where they are and wait patiently. They never seem to tire; and there is no place for them to sit down if they did. It is only for a minute, anyway, for the leader starts up again, in spite of all the protests of the other two. This time it is another sort of a dance, a Lithuanian dance. Those who prefer to, go on with the two-step, but the majority go through an intricate series of motions, resembling more fancy skating than a dance. The climax of it is a furious prestissimo, at which the couples seize hands and begin a mad whirling. This is quite irresistible, and every one in the room joins in, until the place becomes a maze of flying skirts and bodies quite dazzling to look upon. But the sight of sights at this moment is Tamoszius Kuszleika. The old fiddle squeaks and shrieks in protest, but Tamoszius has no mercy. The sweat starts out on his forehead, and he bends over like a cyclist on the last lap of a race. His body shakes and throbs like a runaway steam engine, and the ear cannot follow the flying showers of notes—there is a pale blue mist where you look to see his bowing arm. With a most wonderful rush he comes to the end of the tune, and flings up his hands and staggers back exhausted; and with a final shout of delight the dancers fly apart, reeling here and there, bringing up against the walls of the room.

After this there is beer for every one, the musicians included, and the revelers take a long breath and prepare for the great event of the evening, which is the acziavimas. The acziavimas is a ceremony which, once begun, will continue for three or four hours, and it involves one uninterrupted dance. The guests form a great ring, locking hands, and, when the music starts up, begin to move around in a circle. In the center stands the bride, and, one by one, the men step into the enclosure and dance with her. Each dances for several minutes—as long as he pleases; it is a very merry proceeding, with laughter and singing, and when the guest has finished, he finds himself face to face with Teta Elzbieta, who holds the hat. Into it he drops a sum of money—a dollar, or perhaps five dollars, according to his power, and his estimate of the value of the privilege. The guests are expected to pay for this entertainment; if they be proper guests, they will see that there is a neat sum left over for the bride and bridegroom to start life upon.

Most fearful they are to contemplate, the expenses of this entertainment. They will certainly be over two hundred dollars and maybe three hundred; and three hundred dollars is more than the year's income of many a person in this room. There are able-bodied men here who work from early morning until late at night, in ice-cold cellars with a quarter of an inch of water on the floor—men who for six or seven months in the year never see the sunlight from Sunday afternoon till the next Sunday morning—and who cannot earn three hundred dollars in a year. There are little children here, scarce in their teens, who can hardly see the top of the work benches—whose parents have lied to get them their places—and who do not make the half of three hundred dollars a year, and perhaps not even the third of it. And then to spend such a sum, all in a single day of your life, at a wedding feast! (For obviously it is the same thing, whether you spend it at once for your own wedding, or in a long time, at the weddings of all your friends.)

It is very imprudent, it is tragic—but, ah, it is so beautiful! Bit by bit these poor people have given up everything else; but to this they cling with all the power of their souls—they cannot give up the veselija! To do that would mean, not merely to be defeated, but to acknowledge defeat—and the difference between

these two things is what keeps the world going. The veselija has come down to them from a far-off time; and the meaning of it was that one might dwell within the cave and gaze upon shadows, provided only that once in his lifetime he could break his chains, and feel his wings, and behold the sun; provided that once in his lifetime he might testify to the fact that life, with all its cares and its terrors, is no such great thing after all, but merely a bubble upon the surface of a river, a thing that one may toss about and play with as a juggler tosses his golden balls, a thing that one may quaff, like a goblet of rare red wine. Thus having known himself for the master of things, a man could go back to his toil and live upon the memory all his days.

Endlessly the dancers swung round and round—when they were dizzy they swung the other way. Hour after hour this had continued—the darkness had fallen and the room was dim from the light of two smoky oil lamps. The musicians had spent all their fine frenzy by now, and played only one tune, wearily, ploddingly. There were twenty bars or so of it, and when they came to the end they began again. Once every ten minutes or so they would fail to begin again, but instead would sink back exhausted; a circumstance which invariably brought on a painful and terrifying scene, that made the fat policeman stir uneasily in his sleeping place behind the door.

It was all Marija Berczynskas. Marija was one of those hungry souls who cling with desperation to the skirts of the retreating muse. All day long she had been in a state of wonderful exaltation; and now it was leaving—and she would not let it go. Her soul cried out in the words of Faust, "Stay, thou art fair!" Whether it was by beer, or by shouting, or by music, or by motion, she meant that it should not go. And she would go back to the chase of it—and no sooner be fairly started than her chariot would be thrown off the track, so to speak, by the stupidity of those thrice accursed musicians. Each time, Marija would emit a howl and fly at them, shaking her fists in their faces, stamping upon the floor, purple and incoherent with rage. In vain the frightened Tamoszius would attempt to speak, to plead the limitations of the flesh; in vain would the puffing and breathless ponas Jokubas insist, in vain would Teta Elzbieta implore. "Szalin!" Marija would scream. "Palauk! isz kelio! What are you paid for, children of hell?" And so, in sheer terror, the orchestra would strike up again, and Marija would return to her place and take up her task.

She bore all the burden of the festivities now. Ona was kept up by her excitement, but all of the women and most of the men were tired—the soul of Marija was alone unconquered. She drove on the dancers—what had once been the ring had now the shape of a pear, with Marija at the stem, pulling one way and pushing the other, shouting, stamping, singing, a very volcano of energy. Now and then some one coming in or out would leave the door open, and the night air was chill; Marija as she passed would stretch out her foot and kick the doorknob, and slam would go the door! Once this procedure was the cause of a calamity of which Sebastijonas Szedvilas was the hapless victim. Little Sebastijonas, aged three, had been wandering about oblivious to all things, holding turned up over his mouth a bottle of liquid known as "pop," pink-colored, ice-cold, and delicious. Passing through the doorway the door smote him full, and the shriek which followed brought the dancing to a halt. Marija, who threatened horrid murder a hundred times a day, and would weep over the injury of a fly, seized little Sebastijonas in her arms and bid fair to smother him with kisses. There was a long rest for the orchestra, and plenty of refreshments, while Marija was making her peace with her victim, seating him upon the bar, and standing beside him and holding to his lips a foaming schooner of beer.

In the meantime there was going on in another corner of the room an anxious conference between Teta Elzbieta and Dede Antanas, and a few of the more intimate friends of the family. A trouble was come upon them. The veselija is a compact, a compact not expressed, but therefore only the more binding upon all. Every one's share was different—and yet every one knew perfectly well what his share was, and strove to give a little more. Now, however, since they had come to the new country, all this was changing; it seemed as if there must be some subtle poison in the air that one breathed here—it was affecting all the young men at once. They would come in crowds and fill themselves with a fine dinner, and then sneak off. One would throw another's hat out of the window, and both would go out to get it, and neither could be seen again. Or now and then half a dozen of them would get together and march out openly, staring at you, and making fun of you to your face. Still others, worse yet, would crowd about the bar, and at the expense of the host drink themselves sodden, paying not the least attention to any one, and leaving it to be thought that either they had danced with the bride already, or meant to later on.

All these things were going on now, and the family was helpless with dismay. So long they had toiled, and such an outlay they had made! Ona stood by, her eyes wide with terror. Those frightful bills—how they had haunted her, each item gnawing at her soul all day and spoiling her rest at night. How often she had named them over one by one and figured on them as she went to work—fifteen dollars for the hall, twenty-two dollars and a quarter for the ducks, twelve dollars for the musicians, five dollars at the church, and a blessing of the Virgin besides—and so on without an end! Worst of all was the frightful bill that was still to come from Graiczunas for the beer and liquor that might be consumed. One could never get in advance more than a guess as to this from a saloon-keeper—and then, when the time came he always came to you scratching his head and saying that he had guessed too low, but that he had done his best—your guests had gotten so very drunk. By him you were sure to be cheated unmercifully, and that even though you thought yourself the dearest of the hundreds of friends he had. He would begin to serve your guests out of a keg that was half full, and finish with one that was half empty, and then you would be charged for two kegs of beer. He would agree to serve a certain quality at a certain price, and when the time came you and your friends would be drinking some horrible poison that could not be described. You might complain, but you would get nothing for your pains but a ruined evening; while, as for going to law about it, you might as well go to heaven at once. The saloon-keeper stood in with all the big politics men in the district; and when you had once found out what it meant to get into trouble with such people, you would know enough to pay what you were told to pay and shut up.

What made all this the more painful was that it was so hard on the few that had really done their best. There was poor old ponas Jokubas, for instance—he had already given five dollars, and did not every one know that Jokubas Szedvilas had just mortgaged his delicatessen store for two hundred dollars to meet several months' overdue rent? And then there was withered old poni Aniele—who was a widow, and had three children, and the rheumatism besides, and did washing for the tradespeople on Halsted Street at prices it would break your heart to hear named. Aniele had given the entire profit of her chickens for several months. Eight of them she owned, and she kept them in a little place fenced around on her backstairs. All day long the children of Aniele were raking in the dump for food for these chickens; and sometimes, when the competition there was too fierce, you might see them on Halsted Street walking close to the gutters, and with their mother following to see that no one robbed them of their finds. Money could not tell the value of these chickens to old Mrs. Jukniene—she valued them differently, for she had a feeling that she was getting something for nothing by means of them—that with them she was getting the better of a world that was getting the better of her in so many other ways. So she watched them every hour of the day, and had learned to see like an owl at night to watch them then. One of them had been stolen long ago, and not a month passed that some one did not try to steal another. As the frustrating of this one attempt involved a score of false alarms, it will be understood what a tribute old Mrs. Jukniene brought, just because Teta Elzbieta had once loaned her some money for a few days and saved her from being turned out of her house.

More and more friends gathered round while the lamentation about these things was going on. Some drew nearer, hoping to overhear the conversation, who were themselves among the guilty—and surely that was a thing to try the patience of a saint. Finally there came Jurgis, urged by some one, and the story was retold to him. Jurgis listened in silence, with his great black eyebrows knitted. Now and then there would come a gleam underneath them and he would glance about the room. Perhaps he would have liked to go at some of those fellows with his big clenched fists; but then, doubtless, he realized how little good it would do him. No bill would be any less for turning out any one at this time; and then there would be the scandal—and Jurgis wanted nothing except to get away with Ona and to let the world go its own way. So his hands relaxed and he merely said quietly: "It is done, and there is no use in weeping, Teta Elzbieta." Then his look turned toward Ona, who stood close to his side, and he saw the wide look of terror in her eyes. "Little one," he said, in a low voice, "do not worry—it will not matter to us. We will pay them all somehow. I will work harder." That was always what Jurgis said. Ona had grown used to it as the solution of all difficulties—"I will work harder!" He had said that in Lithuania when one official had taken his passport from him, and another had arrested him for being without it, and the two had divided a third of his belongings. He had said it again in New York, when the smooth-spoken agent had taken them in hand and made them pay such high prices, and almost prevented their leaving his place, in spite of their paying. Now he said it a third time, and Ona drew a deep breath; it was so wonderful to have a husband, just like a grown woman—and a husband who could solve all problems, and who was so big and strong!

The last sob of little Sebastijonas has been stifled, and the orchestra has once more been reminded of its duty. The ceremony begins again—but there are few now left to dance with, and so very soon the collection is over and promiscuous dances once more begin. It is now after midnight, however, and things are not as they were before. The dancers are dull and heavy—most of them have been drinking hard, and have long ago passed the stage of exhilaration. They dance in monotonous measure, round after round, hour after hour, with eyes fixed upon vacancy, as if they were only half conscious, in a constantly growing stupor. The men grasp the women very tightly, but there will be half an hour together when neither will see the other's face. Some couples do not care to dance, and have retired to the corners, where they sit with their arms enlaced. Others, who have been drinking still more, wander about the room, bumping into everything; some are in groups of two or three, singing, each group its own song. As time goes on there is a variety of drunkenness, among the younger men especially. Some stagger about in each other's arms, whispering maudlin words—others start quarrels upon the slightest pretext, and come to blows and have to be pulled apart. Now the fat policeman wakens definitely, and feels of his club to see that it is ready for business. He has to be prompt—for these two-o'clock-in-the-morning fights, if they once get out of hand, are like a forest fire, and may mean the whole reserves at the station. The thing to do is to crack every fighting head that you see, before there are so many fighting heads that you cannot crack any of them. There is but scant account kept of cracked heads in back of the yards, for men who have to crack the heads of animals all day seem to get into the habit, and to practice on their friends, and even on their families, between times. This makes it a cause for congratulation that by modern methods a very few men can do the painfully necessary work of head-cracking for the whole of the cultured world.

There is no fight that night—perhaps because Jurgis, too, is watchful—even more so than the policeman. Jurgis has drunk a great deal, as any one naturally would on an occasion when it all has to be paid for, whether it is drunk or not; but he is a very steady man, and does not easily lose his temper. Only once there is a tight shave—and that is the fault of Marija Berczynskas. Marija has apparently concluded about two hours ago that if the altar in the corner, with the deity in soiled white, be not the true home of the muses, it is, at any rate, the nearest substitute on earth attainable. And Marija is just fighting drunk when there come to her ears the facts about the villains who have not paid that night. Marija goes on the warpath straight off, without even the preliminary of a good cursing, and when she is pulled off it is with the coat collars of two villains in her hands. Fortunately, the policeman is disposed to be reasonable, and so it is not Marija who is flung out of the place.

All this interrupts the music for not more than a minute or two. Then again the merciless tune begins—the tune that has been played for the last half-hour without one single change. It is an American tune this time, one which they have picked up on the streets; all seem to know the words of it—or, at any rate, the first line of it, which they hum to themselves, over and over again without rest: "In the good old summertime—in the good old summertime! In the good old summertime—in the good old summertime!" There seems to be something hypnotic about this, with its endlessly recurring dominant. It has put a stupor upon every one who hears it, as well as upon the men who are playing it. No one can get away from it, or even think of getting away from it; it is three o'clock in the morning, and they have danced out all their joy, and danced out all their strength, and all the strength that unlimited drink can lend them—and still there is no one among them who has the power to think of stopping. Promptly at seven o'clock this same Monday morning they will every one of them have to be in their places at Durham's or Brown's or Jones's, each in his working clothes. If one of them be a minute late, he will be docked an hour's pay, and if he be many minutes late, he will be apt to find his brass check turned to the wall, which will send him out to join the hungry mob that waits every morning at the gates of the packing houses, from six o'clock until nearly half-past eight. There is no exception to this rule, not even little Ona—who has asked for a holiday the day after her wedding day, a holiday without pay, and been refused. While there are so many who are anxious to work as you wish, there is no occasion for incommoding yourself with those who must work otherwise.

Little Ona is nearly ready to faint—and half in a stupor herself, because of the heavy scent in the room. She has not taken a drop, but every one else there is literally burning alcohol, as the lamps are burning oil; some of the men who are sound asleep in their chairs or on the floor are reeking of it so that you cannot go near them. Now and then Jurgis gazes at her hungrily—he has long since forgotten his shyness; but then the crowd is there, and he still waits and watches the door, where a carriage is supposed to come. It does not, and finally he will wait no longer, but comes up to Ona, who turns white and trembles. He puts her

shawl about her and then his own coat. They live only two blocks away, and Jurgis does not care about the carriage.

There is almost no farewell—the dancers do not notice them, and all of the children and many of the old folks have fallen asleep of sheer exhaustion. Dede Antanas is asleep, and so are the Szedvilases, husband and wife, the former snoring in octaves. There is Teta Elzbieta, and Marija, sobbing loudly; and then there is only the silent night, with the stars beginning to pale a little in the east. Jurgis, without a word, lifts Ona in his arms, and strides out with her, and she sinks her head upon his shoulder with a moan. When he reaches home he is not sure whether she has fainted or is asleep, but when he has to hold her with one hand while he unlocks the door, he sees that she has opened her eyes.

"You shall not go to Brown's today, little one," he whispers, as he climbs the stairs; and she catches his arm in terror, gasping: "No! No! I dare not! It will ruin us!"

But he answers her again: "Leave it to me; leave it to me. I will earn more money—I will work harder."

2

Jurgis talked lightly about work, because he was young. They told him stories about the breaking down of men, there in the stockyards of Chicago, and of what had happened to them afterward—stories to make your flesh creep, but Jurgis would only laugh. He had only been there four months, and he was young, and a giant besides. There was too much health in him. He could not even imagine how it would feel to be beaten. "That is well enough for men like you," he would say, "silpnas, puny fellows—but my back is broad."

Jurgis was like a boy, a boy from the country. He was the sort of man the bosses like to get hold of, the sort they make it a grievance they cannot get hold of. When he was told to go to a certain place, he would go there on the run. When he had nothing to do for the moment, he would stand round fidgeting, dancing, with the overflow of energy that was in him. If he were working in a line of men, the line always moved too slowly for him, and you could pick him out by his impatience and restlessness. That was why he had been picked out on one important occasion; for Jurgis had stood outside of Brown and Company's "Central Time Station" not more than half an hour, the second day of his arrival in Chicago, before he had been beckoned by one of the bosses. Of this he was very proud, and it made him more disposed than ever to laugh at the pessimists. In vain would they all tell him that there were men in that crowd from which he had been chosen who had stood there a month—yes, many months—and not been chosen yet. "Yes," he would say, "but what sort of men? Broken-down tramps and good-for-nothings, fellows who have spent all their money drinking, and want to get more for it. Do you want me to believe that with these arms"—and he would clench his fists and hold them up in the air, so that you might see the rolling muscles—"that with these arms people will ever let me starve?"

"It is plain," they would answer to this, "that you have come from the country, and from very far in the country." And this was the fact, for Jurgis had never seen a city, and scarcely even a fair-sized town, until he had set out to make his fortune in the world and earn his right to Ona. His father, and his father's father before him, and as many ancestors back as legend could go, had lived in that part of Lithuania known as Brelovicz, the Imperial Forest. This is a great tract of a hundred thousand acres, which from time immemorial has been a hunting preserve of the nobility. There are a very few peasants settled in it, holding title from ancient times; and one of these was Antanas Rudkus, who had been reared himself, and had reared his children in turn, upon half a dozen acres of cleared land in the midst of a wilderness. There had been one son besides Jurgis, and one sister. The former had been drafted into the army; that had been over ten years ago, but since that day nothing had ever been heard of him. The sister was married, and her husband had bought the place when old Antanas had decided to go with his son.

It was nearly a year and a half ago that Jurgis had met Ona, at a horse fair a hundred miles from home. Jurgis had never expected to get married—he had laughed at it as a foolish trap for a man to walk into; but here, without ever having spoken a word to her, with no more than the exchange of half a dozen smiles, he found himself, purple in the face with embarrassment and terror, asking her parents to sell her to him for his wife—and offering his father's two horses he had been sent to the fair to sell. But Ona's father proved

as a rock—the girl was yet a child, and he was a rich man, and his daughter was not to be had in that way. So Jurgis went home with a heavy heart, and that spring and summer toiled and tried hard to forget. In the fall, after the harvest was over, he saw that it would not do, and tramped the full fortnight's journey that lay between him and Ona.

He found an unexpected state of affairs—for the girl's father had died, and his estate was tied up with creditors; Jurgis' heart leaped as he realized that now the prize was within his reach. There was Elzbieta Lukoszaite, Teta, or Aunt, as they called her, Ona's stepmother, and there were her six children, of all ages. There was also her brother Jonas, a dried-up little man who had worked upon the farm. They were people of great consequence, as it seemed to Jurgis, fresh out of the woods; Ona knew how to read, and knew many other things that he did not know, and now the farm had been sold, and the whole family was adrift—all they owned in the world being about seven hundred rubles which is half as many dollars. They would have had three times that, but it had gone to court, and the judge had decided against them, and it had cost the balance to get him to change his decision.

Ona might have married and left them, but she would not, for she loved Teta Elzbieta. It was Jonas who suggested that they all go to America, where a friend of his had gotten rich. He would work, for his part, and the women would work, and some of the children, doubtless—they would live somehow. Jurgis, too, had heard of America. That was a country where, they said, a man might earn three rubles a day; and Jurgis figured what three rubles a day would mean, with prices as they were where he lived, and decided forthwith that he would go to America and marry, and be a rich man in the bargain. In that country, rich or poor, a man was free, it was said; he did not have to go into the army, he did not have to pay out his money to rascally officials—he might do as he pleased, and count himself as good as any other man. So America was a place of which lovers and young people dreamed. If one could only manage to get the price of a passage, he could count his troubles at an end.

It was arranged that they should leave the following spring, and meantime Jurgis sold himself to a contractor for a certain time, and tramped nearly four hundred miles from home with a gang of men to work upon a railroad in Smolensk. This was a fearful experience, with filth and bad food and cruelty and overwork; but Jurgis stood it and came out in fine trim, and with eighty rubles sewed up in his coat. He did not drink or fight, because he was thinking all the time of Ona; and for the rest, he was a quiet, steady man, who did what he was told to, did not lose his temper often, and when he did lose it made the offender anxious that he should not lose it again. When they paid him off he dodged the company gamblers and dramshops, and so they tried to kill him; but he escaped, and tramped it home, working at odd jobs, and sleeping always with one eye open.

So in the summer time they had all set out for America. At the last moment there joined them Marija Berczynskas, who was a cousin of Ona's. Marija was an orphan, and had worked since childhood for a rich farmer of Vilna, who beat her regularly. It was only at the age of twenty that it had occurred to Marija to try her strength, when she had risen up and nearly murdered the man, and then come away.

There were twelve in all in the party, five adults and six children—and Ona, who was a little of both. They had a hard time on the passage; there was an agent who helped them, but he proved a scoundrel, and got them into a trap with some officials, and cost them a good deal of their precious money, which they clung to with such horrible fear. This happened to them again in New York—for, of course, they knew nothing about the country, and had no one to tell them, and it was easy for a man in a blue uniform to lead them away, and to take them to a hotel and keep them there, and make them pay enormous charges to get away. The law says that the rate card shall be on the door of a hotel, but it does not say that it shall be in Lithuanian.

It was in the stockyards that Jonas' friend had gotten rich, and so to Chicago the party was bound. They knew that one word, Chicago and that was all they needed to know, at least, until they reached the city. Then, tumbled out of the cars without ceremony, they were no better off than before; they stood staring down the vista of Dearborn Street, with its big black buildings towering in the distance, unable to realize that they had arrived, and why, when they said "Chicago," people no longer pointed in some direction, but instead looked perplexed, or laughed, or went on without paying any attention. They were pitiable in their helplessness; above all things they stood in deadly terror of any sort of person in official uniform, and so whenever they saw a policeman they would cross the street and hurry by. For the whole of the first day they

wandered about in the midst of deafening confusion, utterly lost; and it was only at night that, cowering in the doorway of a house, they were finally discovered and taken by a policeman to the station. In the morning an interpreter was found, and they were taken and put upon a car, and taught a new word—"stockyards." Their delight at discovering that they were to get out of this adventure without losing another share of their possessions it would not be possible to describe.

They sat and stared out of the window. They were on a street which seemed to run on forever, mile after mile—thirty-four of them, if they had known it—and each side of it one uninterrupted row of wretched little two-story frame buildings. Down every side street they could see, it was the same—never a hill and never a hollow, but always the same endless vista of ugly and dirty little wooden buildings. Here and there would be a bridge crossing a filthy creek, with hard-baked mud shores and dingy sheds and docks along it; here and there would be a railroad crossing, with a tangle of switches, and locomotives puffing, and rattling freight cars filing by; here and there would be a great factory, a dingy building with innumerable windows in it, and immense volumes of smoke pouring from the chimneys, darkening the air above and making filthy the earth beneath. But after each of these interruptions, the desolate procession would begin again—the procession of dreary little buildings.

A full hour before the party reached the city they had begun to note the perplexing changes in the atmosphere. It grew darker all the time, and upon the earth the grass seemed to grow less green. Every minute, as the train sped on, the colors of things became dingier; the fields were grown parched and yellow, the landscape hideous and bare. And along with the thickening smoke they began to notice another circumstance, a strange, pungent odor. They were not sure that it was unpleasant, this odor; some might have called it sickening, but their taste in odors was not developed, and they were only sure that it was curious. Now, sitting in the trolley car, they realized that they were on their way to the home of it—that they had traveled all the way from Lithuania to it. It was now no longer something far off and faint, that you caught in whiffs; you could literally taste it, as well as smell it—you could take hold of it, almost, and examine it at your leisure. They were divided in their opinions about it. It was an elemental odor, raw and crude; it was rich, almost rancid, sensual, and strong. There were some who drank it in as if it were an intoxicant; there were others who put their handkerchiefs to their faces. The new emigrants were still tasting it, lost in wonder, when suddenly the car came to a halt, and the door was flung open, and a voice shouted—"Stockyards!"

They were left standing upon the corner, staring; down a side street there were two rows of brick houses, and between them a vista: half a dozen chimneys, tall as the tallest of buildings, touching the very sky—and leaping from them half a dozen columns of smoke, thick, oily, and black as night. It might have come from the center of the world, this smoke, where the fires of the ages still smolder. It came as if self-impelled, driving all before it, a perpetual explosion. It was inexhaustible; one stared, waiting to see it stop, but still the great streams rolled out. They spread in vast clouds overhead, writhing, curling; then, uniting in one giant river, they streamed away down the sky, stretching a black pall as far as the eye could reach.

Then the party became aware of another strange thing. This, too, like the color, was a thing elemental; it was a sound, a sound made up of ten thousand little sounds. You scarcely noticed it at first—it sunk into your consciousness, a vague disturbance, a trouble. It was like the murmuring of the bees in the spring, the whisperings of the forest; it suggested endless activity, the rumblings of a world in motion. It was only by an effort that one could realize that it was made by animals, that it was the distant lowing of ten thousand cattle, the distant grunting of ten thousand swine.

They would have liked to follow it up, but, alas, they had no time for adventures just then. The policeman on the corner was beginning to watch them; and so, as usual, they started up the street. Scarcely had they gone a block, however, before Jonas was heard to give a cry, and began pointing excitedly across the street. Before they could gather the meaning of his breathless ejaculations he had bounded away, and they saw him enter a shop, over which was a sign: "J. Szedvilas, Delicatessen." When he came out again it was in company with a very stout gentleman in shirt sleeves and an apron, clasping Jonas by both hands and laughing hilariously. Then Teta Elzbieta recollected suddenly that Szedvilas had been the name of the mythical friend who had made his fortune in America. To find that he had been making it in the delicatessen business was an extraordinary piece of good fortune at this juncture; though it was well on in the morning, they had not breakfasted, and the children were beginning to whimper.

Thus was the happy ending to a woeful voyage. The two families literally fell upon each other's necks—for it had been years since Jokubas Szedvilas had met a man from his part of Lithuania. Before half the day they were lifelong friends. Jokubas understood all the pitfalls of this new world, and could explain all of its mysteries; he could tell them the things they ought to have done in the different emergencies—and what was still more to the point, he could tell them what to do now. He would take them to poni Aniele, who kept a boardinghouse the other side of the yards; old Mrs. Jukniene, he explained, had not what one would call choice accommodations, but they might do for the moment. To this Teta Elzbieta hastened to respond that nothing could be too cheap to suit them just then; for they were quite terrified over the sums they had had to expend. A very few days of practical experience in this land of high wages had been sufficient to make clear to them the cruel fact that it was also a land of high prices, and that in it the poor man was almost as poor as in any other corner of the earth; and so there vanished in a night all the wonderful dreams of wealth that had been haunting Jurgis. What had made the discovery all the more painful was that they were spending, at American prices, money which they had earned at home rates of wages—and so were really being cheated by the world! The last two days they had all but starved themselves—it made them quite sick to pay the prices that the railroad people asked them for food.

Yet, when they saw the home of the Widow Jukniene they could not but recoil, even so, in all their journey they had seen nothing so bad as this. Poni Aniele had a four-room flat in one of that wilderness of two-story frame tenements that lie "back of the yards." There were four such flats in each building, and each of the four was a "boardinghouse" for the occupancy of foreigners—Lithuanians, Poles, Slovaks, or Bohemians. Some of these places were kept by private persons, some were cooperative. There would be an average of half a dozen boarders to each room—sometimes there were thirteen or fourteen to one room, fifty or sixty to a flat. Each one of the occupants furnished his own accommodations—that is, a mattress and some bedding. The mattresses would be spread upon the floor in rows—and there would be nothing else in the place except a stove. It was by no means unusual for two men to own the same mattress in common, one working by day and using it by night, and the other working at night and using it in the daytime. Very frequently a lodging house keeper would rent the same beds to double shifts of men.

Mrs. Jukniene was a wizened-up little woman, with a wrinkled face. Her home was unthinkably filthy; you could not enter by the front door at all, owing to the mattresses, and when you tried to go up the backstairs you found that she had walled up most of the porch with old boards to make a place to keep her chickens. It was a standing jest of the boarders that Aniele cleaned house by letting the chickens loose in the rooms. Undoubtedly this did keep down the vermin, but it seemed probable, in view of all the circumstances, that the old lady regarded it rather as feeding the chickens than as cleaning the rooms. The truth was that she had definitely given up the idea of cleaning anything, under pressure of an attack of rheumatism, which had kept her doubled up in one corner of her room for over a week; during which time eleven of her boarders, heavily in her debt, had concluded to try their chances of employment in Kansas City. This was July, and the fields were green. One never saw the fields, nor any green thing whatever, in Packingtown; but one could go out on the road and "hobo it," as the men phrased it, and see the country, and have a long rest, and an easy time riding on the freight cars.

Such was the home to which the new arrivals were welcomed. There was nothing better to be had—they might not do so well by looking further, for Mrs. Jukniene had at least kept one room for herself and her three little children, and now offered to share this with the women and the girls of the party. They could get bedding at a secondhand store, she explained; and they would not need any, while the weather was so hot—doubtless they would all sleep on the sidewalk such nights as this, as did nearly all of her guests. "Tomorrow," Jurgis said, when they were left alone, "tomorrow I will get a job, and perhaps Jonas will get one also; and then we can get a place of our own."

Later that afternoon he and Ona went out to take a walk and look about them, to see more of this district which was to be their home. In back of the yards the dreary two-story frame houses were scattered farther apart, and there were great spaces bare—that seemingly had been overlooked by the great sore of a city as it spread itself over the surface of the prairie. These bare places were grown up with dingy, yellow weeds, hiding innumerable tomato cans; innumerable children played upon them, chasing one another here and there, screaming and fighting. The most uncanny thing about this neighborhood was the number of the children; you thought there must be a school just out, and it was only after long acquaintance that you were

able to realize that there was no school, but that these were the children of the neighborhood—that there were so many children to the block in Packingtown that nowhere on its streets could a horse and buggy move faster than a walk!

It could not move faster anyhow, on account of the state of the streets. Those through which Jurgis and Ona were walking resembled streets less than they did a miniature topographical map. The roadway was commonly several feet lower than the level of the houses, which were sometimes joined by high board walks; there were no pavements—there were mountains and valleys and rivers, gullies and ditches, and great hollows full of stinking green water. In these pools the children played, and rolled about in the mud of the streets; here and there one noticed them digging in it, after trophies which they had stumbled on. One wondered about this, as also about the swarms of flies which hung about the scene, literally blackening the air, and the strange, fetid odor which assailed one's nostrils, a ghastly odor, of all the dead things of the universe. It impelled the visitor to questions and then the residents would explain, quietly, that all this was "made" land, and that it had been "made" by using it as a dumping ground for the city garbage. After a few years the unpleasant effect of this would pass away, it was said; but meantime, in hot weather—and especially when it rained—the flies were apt to be annoying. Was it not unhealthful? the stranger would ask, and the residents would answer, "Perhaps; but there is no telling."

A little way farther on, and Jurgis and Ona, staring open-eyed and wondering, came to the place where this "made" ground was in process of making. Here was a great hole, perhaps two city blocks square, and with long files of garbage wagons creeping into it. The place had an odor for which there are no polite words; and it was sprinkled over with children, who raked in it from dawn till dark. Sometimes visitors from the packing houses would wander out to see this "dump," and they would stand by and debate as to whether the children were eating the food they got, or merely collecting it for the chickens at home. Apparently none of them ever went down to find out.

Beyond this dump there stood a great brickyard, with smoking chimneys. First they took out the soil to make bricks, and then they filled it up again with garbage, which seemed to Jurgis and Ona a felicitous arrangement, characteristic of an enterprising country like America. A little way beyond was another great hole, which they had emptied and not yet filled up. This held water, and all summer it stood there, with the near-by soil draining into it, festering and stewing in the sun; and then, when winter came, somebody cut the ice on it, and sold it to the people of the city. This, too, seemed to the newcomers an economical arrangement; for they did not read the newspapers, and their heads were not full of troublesome thoughts about "germs."

They stood there while the sun went down upon this scene, and the sky in the west turned blood-red, and the tops of the houses shone like fire. Jurgis and Ona were not thinking of the sunset, however—their backs were turned to it, and all their thoughts were of Packingtown, which they could see so plainly in the distance. The line of the buildings stood clear-cut and black against the sky; here and there out of the mass rose the great chimneys, with the river of smoke streaming away to the end of the world. It was a study in colors now, this smoke; in the sunset light it was black and brown and gray and purple. All the sordid suggestions of the place were gone—in the twilight it was a vision of power. To the two who stood watching while the darkness swallowed it up, it seemed a dream of wonder, with its talc of human energy, of things being done, of employment for thousands upon thousands of men, of opportunity and freedom, of life and love and joy. When they came away, arm in arm, Jurgis was saying, "Tomorrow I shall go there and get a job!"

3

In his capacity as delicatessen vender, Jokubas Szedvilas had many acquaintances. Among these was one of the special policemen employed by Durham, whose duty it frequently was to pick out men for employment. Jokubas had never tried it, but he expressed a certainty that he could get some of his friends a job through this man. It was agreed, after consultation, that he should make the effort with old Antanas and with Jonas. Jurgis was confident of his ability to get work for himself, unassisted by any one. As we have said before, he was not mistaken in this. He had gone to Brown's and stood there not more than half an hour before one of

the bosses noticed his form towering above the rest, and signaled to him. The colloquy which followed was brief and to the point:

"Speak English?"

"No; Lit-uanian." (Jurgis had studied this word carefully.)

"Job?"

"Je." (A nod.)

"Worked here before?"

"No 'stand."

(Signals and gesticulations on the part of the boss. Vigorous shakes of the head by Jurgis.)

"Shovel guts?"

"No 'stand." (More shakes of the head.)

"Zarnos. Pagaiksztis. Szluofa!" (Imitative motions.)

"Je."

"See door. Durys?" (Pointing.)

"Je."

"To-morrow, seven o'clock. Understand? Rytoj! Prieszpietys! Septyni!"

"Dekui, tamistai!" (Thank you, sir.) And that was all. Jurgis turned away, and then in a sudden rush the full realization of his triumph swept over him, and he gave a yell and a jump, and started off on a run. He had a job! He had a job! And he went all the way home as if upon wings, and burst into the house like a cyclone, to the rage of the numerous lodgers who had just turned in for their daily sleep.

Meantime Jokubas had been to see his friend the policeman, and received encouragement, so it was a happy party. There being no more to be done that day, the shop was left under the care of Lucija, and her husband sallied forth to show his friends the sights of Packingtown. Jokubas did this with the air of a country gentleman escorting a party of visitors over his estate; he was an old-time resident, and all these wonders had grown up under his eyes, and he had a personal pride in them. The packers might own the land, but he claimed the landscape, and there was no one to say nay to this.

They passed down the busy street that led to the yards. It was still early morning, and everything was at its high tide of activity. A steady stream of employees was pouring through the gate—employees of the higher sort, at this hour, clerks and stenographers and such. For the women there were waiting big two-horse wagons, which set off at a gallop as fast as they were filled. In the distance there was heard again the lowing of the cattle, a sound as of a far-off ocean calling. They followed it, this time, as eager as children in sight of a circus menagerie—which, indeed, the scene a good deal resembled. They crossed the railroad tracks, and then on each side of the street were the pens full of cattle; they would have stopped to look, but Jokubas hurried them on, to where there was a stairway and a raised gallery, from which everything could be seen. Here they stood, staring, breathless with wonder.

There is over a square mile of space in the yards, and more than half of it is occupied by cattle pens; north and south as far as the eye can reach there stretches a sea of pens. And they were all filled—so many cattle no one had ever dreamed existed in the world. Red cattle, black, white, and yellow cattle; old cattle and young cattle; great bellowing bulls and little calves not an hour born; meek-eyed milch cows and fierce, long-horned Texas steers. The sound of them here was as of all the barnyards of the universe; and as for counting them—it would have taken all day simply to count the pens. Here and there ran long alleys, blocked at intervals by gates; and Jokubas told them that the number of these gates was twenty-five thousand. Jokubas had recently been reading a newspaper article which was full of statistics such as that, and he was very proud as he repeated them and made his guests cry out with wonder. Jurgis too had a little of this sense of pride. Had he not just gotten a job, and become a sharer in all this activity, a cog in this marvelous machine? Here

and there about the alleys galloped men upon horseback, booted, and carrying long whips; they were very busy, calling to each other, and to those who were driving the cattle. They were drovers and stock raisers, who had come from far states, and brokers and commission merchants, and buyers for all the big packing houses.

Here and there they would stop to inspect a bunch of cattle, and there would be a parley, brief and businesslike. The buyer would nod or drop his whip, and that would mean a bargain; and he would note it in his little book, along with hundreds of others he had made that morning. Then Jokubas pointed out the place where the cattle were driven to be weighed, upon a great scale that would weigh a hundred thousand pounds at once and record it automatically. It was near to the east entrance that they stood, and all along this east side of the yards ran the railroad tracks, into which the cars were run, loaded with cattle. All night long this had been going on, and now the pens were full; by tonight they would all be empty, and the same thing would be done again.

"And what will become of all these creatures?" cried Teta Elzbieta.

"By tonight," Jokubas answered, "they will all be killed and cut up; and over there on the other side of the packing houses are more railroad tracks, where the cars come to take them away."

There were two hundred and fifty miles of track within the yards, their guide went on to tell them. They brought about ten thousand head of cattle every day, and as many hogs, and half as many sheep—which meant some eight or ten million live creatures turned into food every year. One stood and watched, and little by little caught the drift of the tide, as it set in the direction of the packing houses. There were groups of cattle being driven to the chutes, which were roadways about fifteen feet wide, raised high above the pens. In these chutes the stream of animals was continuous; it was quite uncanny to watch them, pressing on to their fate, all unsuspicious a very river of death. Our friends were not poetical, and the sight suggested to them no metaphors of human destiny; they thought only of the wonderful efficiency of it all. The chutes into which the hogs went climbed high up—to the very top of the distant buildings; and Jokubas explained that the hogs went up by the power of their own legs, and then their weight carried them back through all the processes necessary to make them into pork.

"They don't waste anything here," said the guide, and then he laughed and added a witticism, which he was pleased that his unsophisticated friends should take to be his own: "They use everything about the hog except the squeal." In front of Brown's General Office building there grows a tiny plot of grass, and this, you may learn, is the only bit of green thing in Packingtown; likewise this jest about the hog and his squeal, the stock in trade of all the guides, is the one gleam of humor that you will find there.

After they had seen enough of the pens, the party went up the street, to the mass of buildings which occupy the center of the yards. These buildings, made of brick and stained with innumerable layers of Packingtown smoke, were painted all over with advertising signs, from which the visitor realized suddenly that he had come to the home of many of the torments of his life. It was here that they made those products with the wonders of which they pestered him so—by placards that defaced the landscape when he traveled, and by staring advertisements in the newspapers and magazines—by silly little jingles that he could not get out of his mind, and gaudy pictures that lurked for him around every street corner. Here was where they made Brown's Imperial Hams and Bacon, Brown's Dressed Beef, Brown's Excelsior Sausages! Here was the headquarters of Durham's Pure Leaf Lard, of Durham's Breakfast Bacon, Durham's Canned Beef, Potted Ham, Deviled Chicken, Peerless Fertilizer!

Entering one of the Durham buildings, they found a number of other visitors waiting; and before long there came a guide, to escort them through the place. They make a great feature of showing strangers through the packing plants, for it is a good advertisement. But Ponas Jokubas whispered maliciously that the visitors did not see any more than the packers wanted them to. They climbed a long series of stairways outside of the building, to the top of its five or six stories. Here was the chute, with its river of hogs, all patiently toiling upward; there was a place for them to rest to cool off, and then through another passageway they went into a room from which there is no returning for hogs.

It was a long, narrow room, with a gallery along it for visitors. At the head there was a great iron wheel, about twenty feet in circumference, with rings here and there along its edge. Upon both sides of this wheel

there was a narrow space, into which came the hogs at the end of their journey; in the midst of them stood a great burly Negro, bare-armed and bare-chested. He was resting for the moment, for the wheel had stopped while men were cleaning up. In a minute or two, however, it began slowly to revolve, and then the men upon each side of it sprang to work. They had chains which they fastened about the leg of the nearest hog, and the other end of the chain they hooked into one of the rings upon the wheel. So, as the wheel turned, a hog was suddenly jerked off his feet and borne aloft.

At the same instant the car was assailed by a most terrifying shriek; the visitors started in alarm, the women turned pale and shrank back. The shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing—for once started upon that journey, the hog never came back; at the top of the wheel he was shunted off upon a trolley, and went sailing down the room. And meantime another was swung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in frenzy—and squealing. The uproar was appalling, perilous to the eardrums; one feared there was too much sound for the room to hold—that the walls must give way or the ceiling crack. There were high squeals and low squeals, grunts, and wails of agony; there would come a momentary lull, and then a fresh outburst, louder than ever, surging up to a deafening climax. It was too much for some of the visitors—the men would look at each other, laughing nervously, and the women would stand with hands clenched, and the blood rushing to their faces, and the tears starting in their eyes.

Meantime, heedless of all these things, the men upon the floor were going about their work. Neither squeals of hogs nor tears of visitors made any difference to them; one by one they hooked up the hogs, and one by one with a swift stroke they slit their throats. There was a long line of hogs, with squeals and lifeblood ebbing away together; until at last each started again, and vanished with a splash into a huge vat of boiling water.

It was all so very businesslike that one watched it fascinated. It was porkmaking by machinery, porkmaking by applied mathematics. And yet somehow the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking of the hogs; they were so innocent, they came so very trustingly; and they were so very human in their protests—and so perfectly within their rights! They had done nothing to deserve it; and it was adding insult to injury, as the thing was done here, swinging them up in this cold-blooded, impersonal way, without a pretense of apology, without the homage of a tear. Now and then a visitor wept, to be sure; but this slaughtering machine ran on, visitors or no visitors. It was like some horrible crime committed in a dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and of memory.

One could not stand and watch very long without becoming philosophical, without beginning to deal in symbols and similes, and to hear the hog squeal of the universe. Was it permitted to believe that there was nowhere upon the earth, or above the earth, a heaven for hogs, where they were requited for all this suffering? Each one of these hogs was a separate creature. Some were white hogs, some were black; some were brown, some were spotted; some were old, some young; some were long and lean, some were monstrous. And each of them had an individuality of his own, a will of his own, a hope and a heart's desire; each was full of self-confidence, of self-importance, and a sense of dignity. And trusting and strong in faith he had gone about his business, the while a black shadow hung over him and a horrid Fate waited in his pathway. Now suddenly it had swooped upon him, and had seized him by the leg. Relentless, remorseless, it was; all his protests, his screams, were nothing to it—it did its cruel will with him, as if his wishes, his feelings, had simply no existence at all; it cut his throat and watched him gasp out his life. And now was one to believe that there was nowhere a god of hogs, to whom this hog personality was precious, to whom these hog squeals and agonies had a meaning? Who would take this hog into his arms and comfort him, reward him for his work well done, and show him the meaning of his sacrifice? Perhaps some glimpse of all this was in the thoughts of our humble-minded Jurgis, as he turned to go on with the rest of the party, and muttered: "Dieve—but I'm glad I'm not a hog!"

The carcass hog was scooped out of the vat by machinery, and then it fell to the second floor, passing on the way through a wonderful machine with numerous scrapers, which adjusted themselves to the size and shape of the animal, and sent it out at the other end with nearly all of its bristles removed. It was then again strung up by machinery, and sent upon another trolley ride; this time passing between two lines of men, who sat upon a raised platform, each doing a certain single thing to the carcass as it came to him. One scraped the outside of a leg; another scraped the inside of the same leg. One with a swift stroke cut

the throat; another with two swift strokes severed the head, which fell to the floor and vanished through a hole. Another made a slit down the body; a second opened the body wider; a third with a saw cut the breastbone; a fourth loosened the entrails; a fifth pulled them out—and they also slid through a hole in the floor. There were men to scrape each side and men to scrape the back; there were men to clean the carcass inside, to trim it and wash it. Looking down this room, one saw, creeping slowly, a line of dangling hogs a hundred yards in length; and for every yard there was a man, working as if a demon were after him. At the end of this hog's progress every inch of the carcass had been gone over several times; and then it was rolled into the chilling room, where it stayed for twenty-four hours, and where a stranger might lose himself in a forest of freezing hogs.

Before the carcass was admitted here, however, it had to pass a government inspector, who sat in the doorway and felt of the glands in the neck for tuberculosis. This government inspector did not have the manner of a man who was worked to death; he was apparently not haunted by a fear that the hog might get by him before he had finished his testing. If you were a sociable person, he was quite willing to enter into conversation with you, and to explain to you the deadly nature of the ptomaines which are found in tubercular pork; and while he was talking with you you could hardly be so ungrateful as to notice that a dozen carcasses were passing him untouched. This inspector wore a blue uniform, with brass buttons, and he gave an atmosphere of authority to the scene, and, as it were, put the stamp of official approval upon the things which were done in Durham's.

Jurgis went down the line with the rest of the visitors, staring open-mouthed, lost in wonder. He had dressed hogs himself in the forest of Lithuania; but he had never expected to live to see one hog dressed by several hundred men. It was like a wonderful poem to him, and he took it all in guilelessly—even to the conspicuous signs demanding immaculate cleanliness of the employees. Jurgis was vexed when the cynical Jokubas translated these signs with sarcastic comments, offering to take them to the secret rooms where the spoiled meats went to be doctored.

The party descended to the next floor, where the various waste materials were treated. Here came the entrails, to be scraped and washed clean for sausage casings; men and women worked here in the midst of a sickening stench, which caused the visitors to hasten by, gasping. To another room came all the scraps to be "tanked," which meant boiling and pumping off the grease to make soap and lard; below they took out the refuse, and this, too, was a region in which the visitors did not linger. In still other places men were engaged in cutting up the carcasses that had been through the chilling rooms. First there were the "splitters," the most expert workmen in the plant, who earned as high as fifty cents an hour, and did not a thing all day except chop hogs down the middle. Then there were "cleaver men," great giants with muscles of iron; each had two men to attend him—to slide the half carcass in front of him on the table, and hold it while he chopped it, and then turn each piece so that he might chop it once more. His cleaver had a blade about two feet long, and he never made but one cut; he made it so neatly, too, that his implement did not smite through and dull itself—there was just enough force for a perfect cut, and no more. So through various yawning holes there slipped to the floor below—to one room hams, to another forequarters, to another sides of pork. One might go down to this floor and see the pickling rooms, where the hams were put into vats, and the great smoke rooms, with their airtight iron doors. In other rooms they prepared salt pork—there were whole cellars full of it, built up in great towers to the ceiling. In yet other rooms they were putting up meats in boxes and barrels, and wrapping hams and bacon in oiled paper, sealing and labeling and sewing them. From the doors of these rooms went men with loaded trucks, to the platform where freight cars were waiting to be filled; and one went out there and realized with a start that he had come at last to the ground floor of this enormous building.

Then the party went across the street to where they did the killing of beef—where every hour they turned four or five hundred cattle into meat. Unlike the place they had left, all this work was done on one floor; and instead of there being one line of carcasses which moved to the workmen, there were fifteen or twenty lines, and the men moved from one to another of these. This made a scene of intense activity, a picture of human power wonderful to watch. It was all in one great room, like a circus amphitheater, with a gallery for visitors running over the center.

Along one side of the room ran a narrow gallery, a few feet from the floor; into which gallery the cattle were driven by men with goads which gave them electric shocks. Once crowded in here, the creatures were

prisoned, each in a separate pen, by gates that shut, leaving them no room to turn around; and while they stood bellowing and plunging, over the top of the pen there leaned one of the "knockers," armed with a sledge hammer, and watching for a chance to deal a blow. The room echoed with the thuds in quick succession, and the stamping and kicking of the steers. The instant the animal had fallen, the "knocker" passed on to another; while a second man raised a lever, and the side of the pen was raised, and the animal, still kicking and struggling, slid out to the "killing bed." Here a man put shackles about one leg, and pressed another lever, and the body was jerked up into the air. There were fifteen or twenty such pens, and it was a matter of only a couple of minutes to knock fifteen or twenty cattle and roll them out. Then once more the gates were opened, and another lot rushed in; and so out of each pen there rolled a steady stream of carcasses, which the men upon the killing beds had to get out of the way.

The manner in which they did this was something to be seen and never forgotten. They worked with furious intensity, literally upon the run—at a pace with which there is nothing to be compared except a football game. It was all highly specialized labor, each man having his task to do; generally this would consist of only two or three specific cuts, and he would pass down the line of fifteen or twenty carcasses, making these cuts upon each. First there came the "butcher," to bleed them; this meant one swift stroke, so swift that you could not see it—only the flash of the knife; and before you could realize it, the man had darted on to the next line, and a stream of bright red was pouring out upon the floor. This floor was half an inch deep with blood, in spite of the best efforts of men who kept shoveling it through holes; it must have made the floor slippery, but no one could have guessed this by watching the men at work.

The carcass hung for a few minutes to bleed; there was no time lost, however, for there were several hanging in each line, and one was always ready. It was let down to the ground, and there came the "headsman," whose task it was to sever the head, with two or three swift strokes. Then came the "floorsman," to make the first cut in the skin; and then another to finish ripping the skin down the center; and then half a dozen more in swift succession, to finish the skinning. After they were through, the carcass was again swung up; and while a man with a stick examined the skin, to make sure that it had not been cut, and another rolled it up and tumbled it through one of the inevitable holes in the floor, the beef proceeded on its journey. There were men to cut it, and men to split it, and men to gut it and scrape it clean inside. There were some with hose which threw jets of boiling water upon it, and others who removed the feet and added the final touches. In the end, as with the hogs, the finished beef was run into the chilling room, to hang its appointed time.

The visitors were taken there and shown them, all neatly hung in rows, labeled conspicuously with the tags of the government inspectors—and some, which had been killed by a special process, marked with the sign of the kosher rabbi, certifying that it was fit for sale to the orthodox. And then the visitors were taken to the other parts of the building, to see what became of each particle of the waste material that had vanished through the floor; and to the pickling rooms, and the salting rooms, the canning rooms, and the packing rooms, where choice meat was prepared for shipping in refrigerator cars, destined to be eaten in all the four corners of civilization. Afterward they went outside, wandering about among the mazes of buildings in which was done the work auxiliary to this great industry. There was scarcely a thing needed in the business that Durham and Company did not make for themselves. There was a great steam power plant and an electricity plant. There was a barrel factory, and a boiler-repair shop. There was a building to which the grease was piped, and made into soap and lard; and then there was a factory for making lard cans, and another for making soap boxes. There was a building in which the bristles were cleaned and dried, for the making of hair cushions and such things; there was a building where the skins were dried and tanned, there was another where heads and feet were made into glue, and another where bones were made into fertilizer. No tiniest particle of organic matter was wasted in Durham's. Out of the horns of the cattle they made combs, buttons, hairpins, and imitation ivory; out of the shinbones and other big bones they cut knife and toothbrush handles, and mouthpieces for pipes; out of the hoofs they cut hairpins and buttons, before they made the rest into glue. From such things as feet, knuckles, hide clippings, and sinews came such strange and unlikely products as gelatin, isinglass, and phosphorus, bone black, shoe blacking, and bone oil. They had curled-hair works for the cattle tails, and a "wool pullery" for the sheepskins; they made pepsin from the stomachs of the pigs, and albumen from the blood, and violin strings from the ill-smelling entrails. When there was nothing else to be done with a thing, they first put it into a tank and got out of it all the tallow and grease, and then they made it into fertilizer. All these industries were gathered into buildings near by, connected by galleries and railroads with the main establishment; and it was estimated that they had handled nearly a quarter of

a billion of animals since the founding of the plant by the elder Durham a generation and more ago. If you counted with it the other big plants—and they were now really all one—it was, so Jokubas informed them, the greatest aggregation of labor and capital ever gathered in one place. It employed thirty thousand men; it supported directly two hundred and fifty thousand people in its neighborhood, and indirectly it supported half a million. It sent its products to every country in the civilized world, and it furnished the food for no less than thirty million people!

To all of these things our friends would listen open-mouthed—it seemed to them impossible of belief that anything so stupendous could have been devised by mortal man. That was why to Jurgis it seemed almost profanity to speak about the place as did Jokubas, skeptically; it was a thing as tremendous as the universe—the laws and ways of its working no more than the universe to be questioned or understood. All that a mere man could do, it seemed to Jurgis, was to take a thing like this as he found it, and do as he was told; to be given a place in it and a share in its wonderful activities was a blessing to be grateful for, as one was grateful for the sunshine and the rain. Jurgis was even glad that he had not seen the place before meeting with his triumph, for he felt that the size of it would have overwhelmed him. But now he had been admitted—he was a part of it all! He had the feeling that this whole huge establishment had taken him under its protection, and had become responsible for his welfare. So guileless was he, and ignorant of the nature of business, that he did not even realize that he had become an employee of Brown's, and that Brown and Durham were supposed by all the world to be deadly rivals—were even required to be deadly rivals by the law of the land, and ordered to try to ruin each other under penalty of fine and imprisonment!

4

Promptly at seven the next morning Jurgis reported for work. He came to the door that had been pointed out to him, and there he waited for nearly two hours. The boss had meant for him to enter, but had not said this, and so it was only when on his way out to hire another man that he came upon Jurgis. He gave him a good cursing, but as Jurgis did not understand a word of it he did not object. He followed the boss, who showed him where to put his street clothes, and waited while he donned the working clothes he had bought in a secondhand shop and brought with him in a bundle; then he led him to the "killing beds." The work which Jurgis was to do here was very simple, and it took him but a few minutes to learn it. He was provided with a stiff besom, such as is used by street sweepers, and it was his place to follow down the line the man who drew out the smoking entrails from the carcass of the steer; this mass was to be swept into a trap, which was then closed, so that no one might slip into it. As Jurgis came in, the first cattle of the morning were just making their appearance; and so, with scarcely time to look about him, and none to speak to any one, he fell to work. It was a sweltering day in July, and the place ran with steaming hot blood—one waded in it on the floor. The stench was almost overpowering, but to Jurgis it was nothing. His whole soul was dancing with joy—he was at work at last! He was at work and earning money! All day long he was figuring to himself. He was paid the fabulous sum of seventeen and a half cents an hour; and as it proved a rush day and he worked until nearly seven o'clock in the evening, he went home to the family with the tidings that he had earned more than a dollar and a half in a single day!

At home, also, there was more good news; so much of it at once that there was quite a celebration in Aniele's hall bedroom. Jonas had been to have an interview with the special policeman to whom Szedvilas had introduced him, and had been taken to see several of the bosses, with the result that one had promised him a job the beginning of the next week. And then there was Marija Berczynskas, who, fired with jealousy by the success of Jurgis, had set out upon her own responsibility to get a place. Marija had nothing to take with her save her two brawny arms and the word "job," laboriously learned; but with these she had marched about Packingtown all day, entering every door where there were signs of activity. Out of some she had been ordered with curses; but Marija was not afraid of man or devil, and asked every one she saw—visitors and strangers, or work-people like herself, and once or twice even high and lofty office personages, who stared at her as if they thought she was crazy. In the end, however, she had reaped her reward. In one of the smaller plants she had stumbled upon a room where scores of women and girls were sitting at long tables preparing smoked beef in cans; and wandering through room after room, Marija came at last to the place where the sealed cans were being painted and labeled, and here she had the good fortune to encounter the "forelady."

Marija did not understand then, as she was destined to understand later, what there was attractive to a "forelady" about the combination of a face full of boundless good nature and the muscles of a dray horse; but the woman had told her to come the next day and she would perhaps give her a chance to learn the trade of painting cans. The painting of cans being skilled piecework, and paying as much as two dollars a day, Marija burst in upon the family with the yell of a Comanche Indian, and fell to capering about the room so as to frighten the baby almost into convulsions.

Better luck than all this could hardly have been hoped for; there was only one of them left to seek a place. Jurgis was determined that Teta Elzbieta should stay at home to keep house, and that Ona should help her. He would not have Ona working—he was not that sort of a man, he said, and she was not that sort of a woman. It would be a strange thing if a man like him could not support the family, with the help of the board of Jonas and Marija. He would not even hear of letting the children go to work—there were schools here in America for children, Jurgis had heard, to which they could go for nothing. That the priest would object to these schools was something of which he had as yet no idea, and for the present his mind was made up that the children of Teta Elzbieta should have as fair a chance as any other children. The oldest of them, little Stanislovas, was but thirteen, and small for his age at that; and while the oldest son of Szedvilas was only twelve, and had worked for over a year at Jones's, Jurgis would have it that Stanislovas should learn to speak English, and grow up to be a skilled man.

So there was only old Dede Antanas; Jurgis would have had him rest too, but he was forced to acknowledge that this was not possible, and, besides, the old man would not hear it spoken of—it was his whim to insist that he was as lively as any boy. He had come to America as full of hope as the best of them; and now he was the chief problem that worried his son. For every one that Jurgis spoke to assured him that it was a waste of time to seek employment for the old man in Packingtown. Szedvilas told him that the packers did not even keep the men who had grown old in their own service—to say nothing of taking on new ones. And not only was it the rule here, it was the rule everywhere in America, so far as he knew. To satisfy Jurgis he had asked the policeman, and brought back the message that the thing was not to be thought of. They had not told this to old Anthony, who had consequently spent the two days wandering about from one part of the yards to another, and had now come home to hear about the triumph of the others, smiling bravely and saying that it would be his turn another day.

Their good luck, they felt, had given them the right to think about a home; and sitting out on the doorstep that summer evening, they held consultation about it, and Jurgis took occasion to broach a weighty subject. Passing down the avenue to work that morning he had seen two boys leaving an advertisement from house to house; and seeing that there were pictures upon it, Jurgis had asked for one, and had rolled it up and tucked it into his shirt. At noontime a man with whom he had been talking had read it to him and told him a little about it, with the result that Jurgis had conceived a wild idea.

He brought out the placard, which was quite a work of art. It was nearly two feet long, printed on calendered paper, with a selection of colors so bright that they shone even in the moonlight. The center of the placard was occupied by a house, brilliantly painted, new, and dazzling. The roof of it was of a purple hue, and trimmed with gold; the house itself was silvery, and the doors and windows red. It was a two-story building, with a porch in front, and a very fancy scrollwork around the edges; it was complete in every tiniest detail, even the doorknob, and there was a hammock on the porch and white lace curtains in the windows. Underneath this, in one corner, was a picture of a husband and wife in loving embrace; in the opposite corner was a cradle, with fluffy curtains drawn over it, and a smiling cherub hovering upon silver-colored wings. For fear that the significance of all this should be lost, there was a label, in Polish, Lithuanian, and German—"Dom. Namai. Heim." "Why pay rent?" the linguistic circular went on to demand. "Why not own your own home? Do you know that you can buy one for less than your rent? We have built thousands of homes which are now occupied by happy families."—So it became eloquent, picturing the blissfulness of married life in a house with nothing to pay. It even quoted "Home, Sweet Home," and made bold to translate it into Polish—though for some reason it omitted the Lithuanian of this. Perhaps the translator found it a difficult matter to be sentimental in a language in which a sob is known as a gukcziojimas and a smile as a nusiszypsojimas.

Over this document the family pored long, while Ona spelled out its contents. It appeared that this house contained four rooms, besides a basement, and that it might be bought for fifteen hundred dollars, the lot and all. Of this, only three hundred dollars had to be paid down, the balance being paid at the rate of twelve

dollars a month. These were frightful sums, but then they were in America, where people talked about such without fear. They had learned that they would have to pay a rent of nine dollars a month for a flat, and there was no way of doing better, unless the family of twelve was to exist in one or two rooms, as at present. If they paid rent, of course, they might pay forever, and be no better off; whereas, if they could only meet the extra expense in the beginning, there would at last come a time when they would not have any rent to pay for the rest of their lives.

They figured it up. There was a little left of the money belonging to Teta Elzbieta, and there was a little left to Jurgis. Marija had about fifty dollars pinned up somewhere in her stockings, and Grandfather Anthony had part of the money he had gotten for his farm. If they all combined, they would have enough to make the first payment; and if they had employment, so that they could be sure of the future, it might really prove the best plan. It was, of course, not a thing even to be talked of lightly; it was a thing they would have to sift to the bottom. And yet, on the other hand, if they were going to make the venture, the sooner they did it the better, for were they not paying rent all the time, and living in a most horrible way besides? Jurgis was used to dirt—there was nothing could scare a man who had been with a railroad gang, where one could gather up the fleas off the floor of the sleeping room by the handful. But that sort of thing would not do for Ona. They must have a better place of some sort soon—Jurgis said it with all the assurance of a man who had just made a dollar and fifty-seven cents in a single day. Jurgis was at a loss to understand why, with wages as they were, so many of the people of this district should live the way they did.

The next day Marija went to see her "forelady," and was told to report the first of the week, and learn the business of can-painter. Marija went home, singing out loud all the way, and was just in time to join Ona and her stepmother as they were setting out to go and make inquiry concerning the house. That evening the three made their report to the men—the thing was altogether as represented in the circular, or at any rate so the agent had said. The houses lay to the south, about a mile and a half from the yards; they were wonderful bargains, the gentleman had assured them—personally, and for their own good. He could do this, so he explained to them, for the reason that he had himself no interest in their sale—he was merely the agent for a company that had built them. These were the last, and the company was going out of business, so if any one wished to take advantage of this wonderful no-rent plan, he would have to be very quick. As a matter of fact there was just a little uncertainty as to whether there was a single house left; for the agent had taken so many people to see them, and for all he knew the company might have parted with the last. Seeing Teta Elzbieta's evident grief at this news, he added, after some hesitation, that if they really intended to make a purchase, he would send a telephone message at his own expense, and have one of the houses kept. So it had finally been arranged—and they were to go and make an inspection the following Sunday morning.

That was Thursday; and all the rest of the week the killing gang at Brown's worked at full pressure, and Jurgis cleared a dollar seventy-five every day. That was at the rate of ten and one-half dollars a week, or forty-five a month. Jurgis was not able to figure, except it was a very simple sum, but Ona was like lightning at such things, and she worked out the problem for the family. Marija and Jonas were each to pay sixteen dollars a month board, and the old man insisted that he could do the same as soon as he got a place—which might be any day now. That would make ninety-three dollars. Then Marija and Jonas were between them to take a third share in the house, which would leave only eight dollars a month for Jurgis to contribute to the payment. So they would have eighty-five dollars a month—or, supposing that Dede Antanas did not get work at once, seventy dollars a month—which ought surely to be sufficient for the support of a family of twelve.

An hour before the time on Sunday morning the entire party set out. They had the address written on a piece of paper, which they showed to some one now and then. It proved to be a long mile and a half, but they walked it, and half an hour or so later the agent put in an appearance. He was a smooth and florid personage, elegantly dressed, and he spoke their language freely, which gave him a great advantage in dealing with them. He escorted them to the house, which was one of a long row of the typical frame dwellings of the neighborhood, where architecture is a luxury that is dispensed with. Ona's heart sank, for the house was not as it was shown in the picture; the color scheme was different, for one thing, and then it did not seem quite so big. Still, it was freshly painted, and made a considerable show. It was all brand-new, so the agent told them, but he talked so incessantly that they were quite confused, and did not have time to ask many questions. There were all sorts of things they had made up their minds to inquire about, but when the time

came, they either forgot them or lacked the courage. The other houses in the row did not seem to be new, and few of them seemed to be occupied. When they ventured to hint at this, the agent's reply was that the purchasers would be moving in shortly. To press the matter would have seemed to be doubting his word, and never in their lives had any one of them ever spoken to a person of the class called "gentleman" except with deference and humility.

The house had a basement, about two feet below the street line, and a single story, about six feet above it, reached by a flight of steps. In addition there was an attic, made by the peak of the roof, and having one small window in each end. The street in front of the house was unpaved and unlighted, and the view from it consisted of a few exactly similar houses, scattered here and there upon lots grown up with dingy brown weeds. The house inside contained four rooms, plastered white; the basement was but a frame, the walls being unplastered and the floor not laid. The agent explained that the houses were built that way, as the purchasers generally preferred to finish the basements to suit their own taste. The attic was also unfinished—the family had been figuring that in case of an emergency they could rent this attic, but they found that there was not even a floor, nothing but joists, and beneath them the lath and plaster of the ceiling below. All of this, however, did not chill their ardor as much as might have been expected, because of the volubility of the agent. There was no end to the advantages of the house, as he set them forth, and he was not silent for an instant; he showed them everything, down to the locks on the doors and the catches on the windows, and how to work them. He showed them the sink in the kitchen, with running water and a faucet, something which Teta Elzbieta had never in her wildest dreams hoped to possess. After a discovery such as that it would have seemed ungrateful to find any fault, and so they tried to shut their eyes to other defects.

Still, they were peasant people, and they hung on to their money by instinct; it was quite in vain that the agent hinted at promptness—they would see, they would see, they told him, they could not decide until they had had more time. And so they went home again, and all day and evening there was figuring and debating. It was an agony to them to have to make up their minds in a matter such as this. They never could agree all together; there were so many arguments upon each side, and one would be obstinate, and no sooner would the rest have convinced him than it would transpire that his arguments had caused another to waver. Once, in the evening, when they were all in harmony, and the house was as good as bought, Szedvilas came in and upset them again. Szedvilas had no use for property owning. He told them cruel stories of people who had been done to death in this "buying a home" swindle. They would be almost sure to get into a tight place and lose all their money; and there was no end of expense that one could never foresee; and the house might be good-for-nothing from top to bottom—how was a poor man to know? Then, too, they would swindle you with the contract—and how was a poor man to understand anything about a contract? It was all nothing but robbery, and there was no safety but in keeping out of it. And pay rent? asked Jurgis. Ah, yes, to be sure, the other answered, that too was robbery. It was all robbery, for a poor man. After half an hour of such depressing conversation, they had their minds quite made up that they had been saved at the brink of a precipice; but then Szedvilas went away, and Jonas, who was a sharp little man, reminded them that the delicatessen business was a failure, according to its proprietor, and that this might account for his pessimistic views. Which, of course, reopened the subject!

The controlling factor was that they could not stay where they were—they had to go somewhere. And when they gave up the house plan and decided to rent, the prospect of paying out nine dollars a month forever they found just as hard to face. All day and all night for nearly a whole week they wrestled with the problem, and then in the end Jurgis took the responsibility. Brother Jonas had gotten his job, and was pushing a truck in Durham's; and the killing gang at Brown's continued to work early and late, so that Jurgis grew more confident every hour, more certain of his mastership. It was the kind of thing the man of the family had to decide and carry through, he told himself. Others might have failed at it, but he was not the failing kind—he would show them how to do it. He would work all day, and all night, too, if need be; he would never rest until the house was paid for and his people had a home. So he told them, and so in the end the decision was made.

They had talked about looking at more houses before they made the purchase; but then they did not know where any more were, and they did not know any way of finding out. The one they had seen held the sway in their thoughts; whenever they thought of themselves in a house, it was this house that they thought of. And

so they went and told the agent that they were ready to make the agreement. They knew, as an abstract proposition, that in matters of business all men are to be accounted liars; but they could not but have been influenced by all they had heard from the eloquent agent, and were quite persuaded that the house was something they had run a risk of losing by their delay. They drew a deep breath when he told them that they were still in time.

They were to come on the morrow, and he would have the papers all drawn up. This matter of papers was one in which Jurgis understood to the full the need of caution; yet he could not go himself—every one told him that he could not get a holiday, and that he might lose his job by asking. So there was nothing to be done but to trust it to the women, with Szedvilas, who promised to go with them. Jurgis spent a whole evening impressing upon them the seriousness of the occasion—and then finally, out of innumerable hiding places about their persons and in their baggage, came forth the precious wads of money, to be done up tightly in a little bag and sewed fast in the lining of Teta Elzbieta's dress.

Early in the morning they sallied forth. Jurgis had given them so many instructions and warned them against so many perils, that the women were quite pale with fright, and even the imperturbable delicatessen vender, who prided himself upon being a businessman, was ill at ease. The agent had the deed all ready, and invited them to sit down and read it; this Szedvilas proceeded to do—a painful and laborious process, during which the agent drummed upon the desk. Teta Elzbieta was so embarrassed that the perspiration came out upon her forehead in beads; for was not this reading as much as to say plainly to the gentleman's face that they doubted his honesty? Yet Jokubas Szedvilas read on and on; and presently there developed that he had good reason for doing so. For a horrible suspicion had begun dawning in his mind; he knitted his brows more and more as he read. This was not a deed of sale at all, so far as he could see—it provided only for the renting of the property! It was hard to tell, with all this strange legal jargon, words he had never heard before; but was not this plain—"the party of the first part hereby covenants and agrees to rent to the said party of the second part!" And then again—"a monthly rental of twelve dollars, for a period of eight years and four months!" Then Szedvilas took off his spectacles, and looked at the agent, and stammered a question.

The agent was most polite, and explained that that was the usual formula; that it was always arranged that the property should be merely rented. He kept trying to show them something in the next paragraph; but Szedvilas could not get by the word "rental"—and when he translated it to Teta Elzbieta, she too was thrown into a fright. They would not own the home at all, then, for nearly nine years! The agent, with infinite patience, began to explain again; but no explanation would do now. Elzbieta had firmly fixed in her mind the last solemn warning of Jurgis: "If there is anything wrong, do not give him the money, but go out and get a lawyer." It was an agonizing moment, but she sat in the chair, her hands clenched like death, and made a fearful effort, summoning all her powers, and gasped out her purpose.

Jokubas translated her words. She expected the agent to fly into a passion, but he was, to her bewilderment, as ever imperturbable; he even offered to go and get a lawyer for her, but she declined this. They went a long way, on purpose to find a man who would not be a confederate. Then let any one imagine their dismay, when, after half an hour, they came in with a lawyer, and heard him greet the agent by his first name! They felt that all was lost; they sat like prisoners summoned to hear the reading of their death warrant. There was nothing more that they could do—they were trapped! The lawyer read over the deed, and when he had read it he informed Szedvilas that it was all perfectly regular, that the deed was a blank deed such as was often used in these sales. And was the price as agreed? the old man asked—three hundred dollars down, and the balance at twelve dollars a month, till the total of fifteen hundred dollars had been paid? Yes, that was correct. And it was for the sale of such and such a house—the house and lot and everything? Yes,—and the lawyer showed him where that was all written. And it was all perfectly regular—there were no tricks about it of any sort? They were poor people, and this was all they had in the world, and if there was anything wrong they would be ruined. And so Szedvilas went on, asking one trembling question after another, while the eyes of the women folks were fixed upon him in mute agony. They could not understand what he was saying, but they knew that upon it their fate depended. And when at last he had questioned until there was no more questioning to be done, and the time came for them to make up their minds, and either close the bargain or reject it, it was all that poor Teta Elzbieta could do to keep from bursting into tears. Jokubas had asked her if she wished to sign; he had asked her twice—and what could she say? How

did she know if this lawyer were telling the truth—that he was not in the conspiracy? And yet, how could she say so—what excuse could she give? The eyes of every one in the room were upon her, awaiting her decision; and at last, half blind with her tears, she began fumbling in her jacket, where she had pinned the precious money. And she brought it out and unwrapped it before the men. All of this Ona sat watching, from a corner of the room, twisting her hands together, meantime, in a fever of fright. Ona longed to cry out and tell her stepmother to stop, that it was all a trap; but there seemed to be something clutching her by the throat, and she could not make a sound. And so Teta Elzbieta laid the money on the table, and the agent picked it up and counted it, and then wrote them a receipt for it and passed them the deed. Then he gave a sigh of satisfaction, and rose and shook hands with them all, still as smooth and polite as at the beginning. Ona had a dim recollection of the lawyer telling Szedvilas that his charge was a dollar, which occasioned some debate, and more agony; and then, after they had paid that, too, they went out into the street, her stepmother clutching the deed in her hand. They were so weak from fright that they could not walk, but had to sit down on the way.

So they went home, with a deadly terror gnawing at their souls; and that evening Jurgis came home and heard their story, and that was the end. Jurgis was sure that they had been swindled, and were ruined; and he tore his hair and cursed like a madman, swearing that he would kill the agent that very night. In the end he seized the paper and rushed out of the house, and all the way across the yards to Halsted Street. He dragged Szedvilas out from his supper, and together they rushed to consult another lawyer. When they entered his office the lawyer sprang up, for Jurgis looked like a crazy person, with flying hair and bloodshot eyes. His companion explained the situation, and the lawyer took the paper and began to read it, while Jurgis stood clutching the desk with knotted hands, trembling in every nerve.

Once or twice the lawyer looked up and asked a question of Szedvilas; the other did not know a word that he was saying, but his eyes were fixed upon the lawyer's face, striving in an agony of dread to read his mind. He saw the lawyer look up and laugh, and he gave a gasp; the man said something to Szedvilas, and Jurgis turned upon his friend, his heart almost stopping.

"Well?" he panted.

"He says it is all right," said Szedvilas.

"All right!"

"Yes, he says it is just as it should be." And Jurgis, in his relief, sank down into a chair.

"Are you sure of it?" he gasped, and made Szedvilas translate question after question. He could not hear it often enough; he could not ask with enough variations. Yes, they had bought the house, they had really bought it. It belonged to them, they had only to pay the money and it would be all right. Then Jurgis covered his face with his hands, for there were tears in his eyes, and he felt like a fool. But he had had such a horrible fright; strong man as he was, it left him almost too weak to stand up.

The lawyer explained that the rental was a form—the property was said to be merely rented until the last payment had been made, the purpose being to make it easier to turn the party out if he did not make the payments. So long as they paid, however, they had nothing to fear, the house was all theirs.

Jurgis was so grateful that he paid the half dollar the lawyer asked without winking an eyelash, and then rushed home to tell the news to the family. He found Ona in a faint and the babies screaming, and the whole house in an uproar—for it had been believed by all that he had gone to murder the agent. It was hours before the excitement could be calmed; and all through that cruel night Jurgis would wake up now and then and hear Ona and her stepmother in the next room, sobbing softly to themselves.