



Upton Sinclair's The Jungle

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.'

Chapter 2

JURGIS talked lightly about work, because he was young. They told him stories about the breaking-down of men, there in the dockyards of Chicago, and of what had happened to them afterwards - 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's heart leapt 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 roubles, 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 roubles a day; and Jurgis figured what three roubles 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 roubles 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's 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 the 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 for ever, mile after mile – thirty-four of them, if they had known it – and each side of it one uninterrupted row of wretched little two-storey 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 colours 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 odour. They were not sure that it was unpleasant, this odour; some might have called it sickening, but their taste in odours 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 travelled 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 odour, 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 centre of the world, this smoke, where the fires of the ages still smoulder. It came as if self-imperilled, 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 odour, 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 of 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 life-long 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 boarding-house the other side of the yards; old Mrs Jukniene, he explained, had not what one would call choice accommodations, but they

were whole cellars full of it, built up in great towers to the ceiling. In yet other rooms they were putting up meat in boxes and barrels, and wrapping hams and bacon in oiled paper, sealing and labelling 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 amphitheatre, with a gallery for visitors running over the centre.

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 labour, 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 shovelling 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 centre; 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 hoses 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, labelled 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 another where 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 shin bones 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 gelatine, 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 sheep skins; 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 labour and capital ever gathered in one place. It employed thirty thousand men; it supported directly two hundred and fifty thousand people in its neighbourhood, 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 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, sceptically; 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!

Chapter 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 anyone, 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

Chapter 7

ALL summer long the family toiled, and in the fall they had money enough for Jurgis and Ona to be married according to home traditions of decency. In the latter part of November they hired a hall, and invited all their new acquaintances, who came and left them over a hundred dollars in debt.

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

Over them, relentless and savage, there cracked the lash of want. The morning after the wedding it sought them as they slept, and drove them out before daybreak to work. Ona was scarcely able to stand with exhaustion; but if she were to lose her place they would be ruined, and she would surely lose it if she were not on time that day. They all had to go, even little Stanislovas, who was ill from over-indulgence in sausages and sarsaparilla. All that day he stood at his lard machine, rocking unsteadily, his eyes closing in spite of him; and he all but lost his place even so, for the foreman booted him twice to waken him.

It was fully a week before they were all normal again, and meantime, with whining children and cross adults,

the house was not a pleasant place to live in. Jurgis lost his temper very little, however, all things considered. It was because of Ona; the least glance at her was always enough to make him control himself. She was so sensitive – she was not fitted for such a life as this; and a hundred times a day, when he thought of her, he would clench his hands and fling himself again at the task before him. She was too good for him, he told himself, and he was afraid, because she was his. So long he had hungered to possess her, but now that the time had come he knew he had not earned the right; that she trusted him so was all her own simple goodness, and no virtue of his. But he was resolved that she should never find this out, and so was always on the watch to see that he did not betray any of his ugly self. He would take care even in little matters, such as his manners, and his habit of swearing when things went wrong. The tears came so easily into Ona's eyes, and she would look at him so appealingly – it kept Jurgis quite busy making resolutions, in addition to all the other things he had on his mind. It was true that more things were going on at this time in the mind of Jurgis than ever had in all his life before.

He had to protect her, to do battle for her against the horror he saw about them. He was all that she had to look to, and if he failed she would be lost; he would wrap his arms about her, and try to hide her from the world. He had learned the ways of things about him now. It was a war of each against all, and the devil take the hindmost. You did not give feasts to other people, you waited for them to give feasts to you. You went about with your soul full of suspicion and hatred; you understood that you were environed by hostile powers that were trying to get your money, and who used all the virtues to bait their traps with. The storekeepers plastered up their windows with all sorts of lies to entice you; the very fences by the wayside, the lamp posts and telegraph poles, were pasted over with lies. The great corporation which employed you lied to you, and lied to the whole country; from top to bottom it was nothing but one gigantic lie.

So Jurgis said that he understood it; and yet it was really pitiful, for the struggle was so unfair – some had so much the advantage! Here he was, for instance, vowing upon his knees that he would save Ona from harm, and only a week later she was suffering atrociously, and from the blow of an enemy that he could not possibly have thwarted. There came a day when the rain fell in torrents; and it being December, to be wet with it and have to sit all day long in one of the cold cellars of Brown's was no laughing matter. Ona was a working girl, and did not own waterproofs and such things, and so Jurgis took her and put her on the street car. Now, it chanced that this car-line was owned by gentlemen who were trying to make money. And the city having passed an ordinance requiring them to give transfers, they had fallen into a rage; and first they had made a rule that transfers could be had only when the fare was paid; and later, growing still uglier, they had made another – that the passenger must ask for the transfer, the conductor was not allowed to offer it. Now, Ona had been told that she was to get a transfer; but it was not her way to speak up, and so she merely waited, following the conductor about with her eyes, wondering when he would think of her. When at last the time came for her to get out, she asked for the transfer, and was refused. Not knowing what to make of this, she began to argue with the conductor in a language of which he did not understand a word. After warning her several times, he pulled the bell and the car went on – at which Ona burst into tears. At the next corner she got out, of course; and as she had no more money, she had to walk the rest of the way to the yards in the pouring rain. And so all day long she sat shivering, and came home at night with her teeth chattering and pains in her head and back. For two weeks afterward she suffered cruelly, and yet every day she had to drag herself to her work. The forewoman was especially severe with Ona, because she believed that she was obstinate on account of having been refused a holiday the day after her wedding. Ona had an idea that her 'forelady' did not like to have her girls marry –

perhaps because she was old and ugly and unmarried herself.

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

sleeper, and had better take the more expensive clock!

There is a poet who sings that

*Deeper their heart grows and nobler their bearing,
Whose youth in the fires of anguish hath died.*

But it is not likely that he had reference to the kind of anguish that comes with destitution, that is so endlessly bitter and cruel, and yet so sordid and petty, so ugly, so humiliating—unredeemed by the slightest touch of dignity or even of pathos. It is a kind of anguish that poets have not commonly dealt with; its very words are not admitted into the vocabulary of poets — the details of it cannot be told in polite society at all. How, for instance, could anyone expect to excite sympathy among lovers of good literature by telling how a family found their home alive with vermin, and of all the suffering and inconvenience and humiliation they were put to, and the hard-earned money they spent in efforts to get rid of them? After long hesitation and uncertainty they paid twenty-five cents for a big package of insect powder — a patent preparation which chanced to be ninety-five per cent gypsum, a harmless earth which had cost about two cents to prepare. Of course it had not the least effect, except upon a few roaches which had the misfortune to drink water after eating it, and so got their inwards set in a coating of Paris. The family, having no idea of this, and no more money to throw away, had nothing to do but give up and submit to one more misery for the rest of their days.

Then there was old Antanas. The winter came, and the place where he worked was a dark, unheated cellar, where you could see your breath all day, and where your fingers sometimes tried to freeze. So the old man's cough grew every day worse, until there came a time when it hardly ever stopped, and he had become a nuisance about the place. Then, too, a still more dreadful thing happened to him; he worked in a place where his feet were soaked in chemicals, and it was not long before they had eaten through his new boots. Then sores began to break out on

his feet, and grow worse and worse. Whether it was that his blood was bad, or there had been a cut, he could not say; but he asked the men about it, and learned that it was a regular thing — it was the saltpetre. Everyone felt it, sooner or later, and then it was all up with him, at least for that sort of work. The sores would never heal — in the end his toes would drop off if he did not quit. Yet old Antanas would not quit; he saw the suffering of his family, and he remembered what it had cost him to get a job. So he tied up his feet and went on limping about and coughing, until at last he fell to pieces, all at once and in a heap, like the One-Horse Shay. They carried him to a dry place and laid him on the floor, and that night two of the men helped him home. The poor old man was put to bed, and though he tried it every morning until the end, he never could get up again. He would lie there and cough and cough, day and night, wasting away to a mere skeleton. There came a time when there was so little flesh on him that the bones began to poke through — which was a horrible thing to see or even to think of. And one night he had a choking fit, and a little river of blood came out of his mouth. The family, wild with terror, sent for a doctor, and paid half a dollar to be told that there was nothing to be done. Mercifully the doctor did not say this so that the old man could hear, for he was still clinging to the faith that tomorrow or next day he would be better, and could go back to his job. The company had sent word to him that they would keep it for him — or, rather, Jurgis had bribed one of the men to come one Sunday afternoon and say they had. Dede Antanas continued to believe it, while three more haemorrhages came; and then at last one morning they found him stiff and cold. Things were not going well with them then, and though it nearly broke Teta Elzbieta's heart, they were forced to dispense with nearly all the decencies of a funeral: they had only a hearse, and one hack for the women and children; and Jurgis, who was learning things fast, spent all Sunday making a bargain for these, and he made it in the presence of witnesses, so that when the man tried to charge him

After that there was nothing for him to do but wait, pacing back and forth in the snow, meantime, to keep from freezing. Already the yards were full of activity; cattle were being unloaded from the cars in the distance, and across the way the 'beef-luggers' were toiling in the darkness, carrying two-hundred-pound quarters of bullocks into the refrigerator cars. Before the first streaks of daylight there came the crowding throngs of working men, shivering and swinging their dinner pails as they hurried by. Jurgis took up his stand by the time-office window, where alone there was light enough for him to see; the snow fell so thick that it was only by peering closely that he could make sure that Ona did not pass him.

Seven o'clock came – the hour when the great packing machine began to move. Jurgis ought to have been at his place in the fertilizer mill; but instead he was waiting in an agony of fear, for Ona. It was fifteen minutes after the hour when he saw a form emerge from the snow-mist, and sprang toward it with a cry. It was she, running swiftly; as she saw him, she staggered forward, and half fell into his outstretched arms.

'What has been the matter?' he cried anxiously. 'Where have you been?'

It was several seconds before she could get breath to answer him. 'I couldn't get home,' she exclaimed. 'The snow – the cars had stopped.'

'But where were you then?' he demanded.

'I had to go home with a friend,' she panted – 'with Jadvyga.'

Jurgis drew a deep breath; but then he noticed that she was sobbing and trembling, as if in one of those nervous crises that he dreaded so. 'But what's the matter?' he cried. 'What has happened?'

'Oh, Jurgis, I was so frightened!' she said, clinging to him wildly. 'I have been so worried!'

They were near the time-station window, and people were staring at them. Jurgis led her away. 'How do you mean?' he asked, in perplexity.

'I was afraid – I was just afraid!' sobbed Ona. 'I knew

you wouldn't know where I was, and I didn't know what you might do. I tried to get home, but I was so tired. Oh, Jurgis, Jurgis!'

He was so glad to get her back that he could not think clearly about anything else. It did not seem strange to him that she should be so very much upset; all her fright and incoherent protestations did not matter since he had her back. He let her cry away her fears; and then, because it was nearly eight o'clock, and they would lose another hour if they delayed, he left her at the packing-house door, with her ghastly white face and her haunted eyes of terror.

There was another brief interval. Christmas was almost come; and because the snow still held, and the searching cold, morning after morning Jurgis half carried his wife to her post, staggering with her through the darkness, until at last, one night, came the end.

It lacked but three days of the holidays. About midnight Marija and Elzbieta came home, exclaiming in alarm when they found that Ona had not come. The two had agreed to meet her; and, after waiting, had gone to the room where she worked, only to find that the ham-wrapping girls had quit work an hour before, and left. There was no snow that night, nor was it especially cold; and still Ona had not come! Something more serious must be wrong this time.

They aroused Jurgis, and he sat up and listened crossly to the story. She must have gone home again with Jadvyga, he said; Jadvyga lived only two blocks from the yards, and perhaps she had been tired. Nothing could have happened to her – and even if there had, there was nothing could be done about it until morning. Jurgis turned over in his bed, and was snoring again before the two had closed the door.

In the morning, however, he was up and out nearly an hour before the usual time. Jadvyga Marcinkus lived on the other side of the yards, beyond Halsted Street, with her mother and sisters, in a single basement room – for

Mikolas had recently lost one hand from blood-poisoning, and their marriage had been put off for ever. The door of the room was in the rear, reached by a narrow court, and Jurgis saw a light in the window and heard something frying as he passed; he knocked, half expecting that Ona would answer.

Instead there was one of Jadvyga's little sisters, who gazed at him through a crack in the door. 'Where's Ona?' he demanded; and the child looked at him in perplexity. 'Ona?' she asked.

'Yes,' said Jurgis; 'isn't she here?'

'No,' said the child, and Jurgis gave a start. A moment later came Jadvyga, peering over the child's head. When she saw who it was she slid around out of sight, for she was not quite dressed. Jurgis must excuse her, she began; her mother was very ill -

'Ona isn't here?' Jurgis demanded, too alarmed to wait for her to finish.

'Why, no,' said Jadvyga. 'What made you think she would be here? Had she said she was coming?'

'No,' he answered. 'But she hasn't come home, and I thought she would be here the same as before.'

'As before?' echoed Jadvyga, in perplexity.

'The time she spent the night here,' said Jurgis.

'There must be some mistake,' she answered quickly.

'Ona has never spent the night here.'

He was only half able to realize her words. 'Why - why!' he exclaimed. 'Two weeks ago, Jadvyga! She told me so - the night it snowed, and she could not get home.'

'There must be some mistake,' declared the girl again; 'she didn't come here.'

He steadied himself by the door-sill, and Jadvyga in her anxiety - for she was fond of Ona - opened the door wide, holding her jacket across her throat. 'Are you sure you didn't misunderstand her?' she cried. 'She must have meant somewhere else. She -'

'She said here,' insisted Jurgis. 'She told me all about you, and how you were, and what you said. Are you sure? You haven't forgotten? You weren't away?'

'No, no!' she exclaimed - and then came a peevish voice - 'Jadvyga, you are giving the baby a cold. Shut the door!' Jurgis stood for half a minute more, stammering his perplexity through an eighth of an inch of crack; and then, as there was really nothing more to be said, he excused himself and went away.

He walked on half dazed, without knowing where he went. Ona had deceived him! She had lied to him! And what could it mean? Where had she been? Where was she now? He could hardly grasp the thing - much less try to solve it; but a hundred wild surmises came to him, a sense of impending calamity overwhelmed him.

Because there was nothing else to do, he went back to the time office to watch again. He waited until nearly an hour after seven, and then went to the room where Ona worked to make inquiries of Ona's 'forelady'. The 'forelady', he found, had not yet come; all the lines of cars that came from downtown were stalled - there had been an accident in the power house, and no cars had been running since last night. Meantime, however, the ham-wrappers were working away, with someone else in charge of them. The girl who answered Jurgis was busy, and as she talked she looked to see if she were being watched. Then a man came up, wheeling a truck; he knew Jurgis for Ona's husband, and was curious about the mystery.

'Maybe the cars had something to do with it,' he suggested - 'maybe she had gone downtown.'

'No,' said Jurgis, 'she never went downtown.'

'Perhaps not,' said the man.

Jurgis thought he saw him exchange a swift glance with the girl as he spoke, and he demanded quickly, 'What do you know about it?'

But the man had seen that the boss was watching him; he started on again, pushing his truck. 'I don't know anything about it,' he said, over his shoulder. 'How should I know where your wife goes?'

Then Jurgis went out again, and paced up and down before the building. All the morning he stayed there, with no thought of his work. About noon he went to the police

station to make inquiries, and then came back again for another anxious vigil. Finally, toward the middle of the afternoon, he set out for home once more.

He was walking out Ashland Avenue. The streetcars had begun running again, and several passed him, packed to the steps with people. The sight of them set Jurgis to thinking again of the man's sarcastic remark; and half involuntarily he found himself watching the cars – with the result that he gave a sudden startled exclamation, and stopped short in his tracks.

Then he broke into a run. For a whole block he tore after the car, only a little way behind. That rusty black hat with the drooping red flower, it might not be Ona's, but there was very little likelihood of it. He would know for certain very soon, for she would get out two blocks ahead. He slowed down, and let the car go on.

She got out; and as soon as she was out of sight on the side-street Jurgis broke into a run. Suspicion was rife in him now, and he was not ashamed to shadow her; he saw her turn the corner near their home, and then he ran again, and saw her as she went up the porch steps of the house. After that he turned back, and for five minutes paced up and down, his hands clenched tightly and his lips set, his mind in a turmoil. Then he went home and entered.

As he opened the door he saw Elzbieta, who had also been looking for Ona, and had come home again. She was now on tiptoe, and had a finger on her lips. Jurgis waited until she was close to him.

'Don't make any noise,' she whispered hurriedly.

'What's the matter?' he asked.

'Ona is asleep,' she panted. 'She's been very ill. I'm afraid her mind's been wandering, Jurgis. She was lost on the street all night, and I've only just succeeded in getting her quiet.'

'When did she come in?' he asked.

'Soon after you left this morning,' said Elzbieta.

'And has she been out since?'

'No, of course not. She's so weak, Jurgis; she –'

And he set his teeth hard together. 'You are lying to me,' he said.

Elzbieta started and turned pale. 'Why!' she gasped. 'What do you mean?'

But Jurgis did not answer. He pushed her aside, and strode to the bedroom door and opened it.

Ona was sitting on the bed. She turned a startled look upon him as he entered. He closed the door in Elzbieta's face and went toward his wife. 'Where have you been?' he demanded.

She had her hands clasped tightly in her lap, and he saw that her face was as white as paper and drawn with pain. She gasped once or twice as she tried to answer him, and then began, speaking low and swiftly: 'Jurgis, I – I think I have been out of my mind. I started to come last night, and I could not find the way. I walked – I walked all night, I think, and – and I only got home – this morning.'

'You needed a rest,' he said in a hard tone. 'Why did you go out again?'

He was looking her fairly in the face, and he could read the sudden fear and wild uncertainty that leaped into her eyes. 'I – I had to go to – to the store,' she gasped, almost in a whisper, 'I had to go –'

'You are lying to me,' said Jurgis.

Then he clenched his hands and took a step toward her. 'Why do you lie to me?' he cried fiercely. 'What are you doing that you have to lie to me?'

'Jurgis!' she exclaimed, starting up in fright. 'Oh, Jurgis, how can you?'

'You have lied to me, I say!' he cried. 'You told me you had been to Jadvyga's house that other night, and you hadn't. You had been where you were last night – somewhere downtown, for I saw you get off the car. Where were you?'

It was as if he had struck a knife into her. She seemed to go all to pieces. For half a second she stood, reeling and swaying, staring at him with horror in her eyes; then, with a cry of anguish, she tottered forward, stretching out her arms to him.

But he stepped aside deliberately and let her fall. She caught herself at the side of the bed, and then sank down, burying her face in her hands and bursting into frantic weeping.

There came one of those hysterical crises that had so often dismayed him. Ona sobbed and wept, her fear and anguish building themselves up into long climaxes. Furious gusts of emotion would come sweeping over her, shaking her as the tempest shakes the trees upon the hills; all her frame would quiver and throb with them; it was as if some dreadful thing rose up within her and took possession of her, torturing her, tearing her. This thing had been wont to set Jurgis quite beside himself; but now he stood with his lips set tightly and his hands clenched. She might weep till she killed herself, but she should not move him this time – not an inch, not an inch. Because the sounds she made set his blood to running cold and his lips to quivering in spite of himself, he was glad of the diversion when Teta Elzbieta, pale with fright, opened the door and rushed in; yet he turned upon her with an oath. 'Go out!' he cried, 'go out!' And then, as she stood hesitating, about to speak, he seized her by the arm and half flung her from the room, slamming the door and barring it with a table. Then he turned again and faced Ona, crying: 'Now, answer me!'

Yet she did not hear him; she was still in the grip of the fiend. Jurgis could see her outstretched hands, shaking and twitching, roaming here and there over the bed as will like living things. He could see convulsive shudderings start in her body and run through her limbs. She was sobbing and choking; it was as if there were too many sounds for one throat; they came chasing each other like waves upon the sea. Then her voice would begin to rise into screams, louder and louder, until it broke in wild, horrible peals of laughter. Jurgis bore it until he could bear it no longer, and then he sprang at her, seizing her by the shoulders and shaking her, shouting into her ear:

'Stop it, I say! Stop it!'

She looked up at him out of her agony; then she fell

forward at his feet. She caught them in her hands, in spite of his efforts to step aside, and with her face upon the floor lay writhing. It made a choking in Jurgis's throat to hear her, and he cried again more savagely than before: 'Stop it, I say!'

This time she heeded him, and caught her breath and lay silent, save for the gasping sobs that wrenched all her frame. For a long minute she lay there, perfectly motionless, until a cold fear seized her husband, thinking that she was dying. Suddenly, however, he heard her voice faintly: 'Jurgis! Jurgis!'

'What is it?' he said.

He had to bend down to her, she was so weak. She was pleading with him in broken phrases, painfully uttered: 'Have faith in me! Believe me!'

'Believe what?' he cried.

'Believe that I – that I know best – that I love you! And do not ask me – what you did. Oh, Jurgis, please, please! It is for the best – it is –'

He started to speak again, but she rushed on frantically, heading him off. 'If you will only do it! If you will only – only believe me! It wasn't my fault – I couldn't help it – it will be all right – it is nothing – it is no harm. Oh, Jurgis – please, please!'

She had hold of him, and was trying to raise herself to look at him; he could feel the palsied shaking of her hands and the heaving of the bosom she pressed against him. She managed to catch one of his hands, and gripped it convulsively, drawing it to her face, and bathing it in her tears. 'Oh, believe me, believe me!' she wailed again; and he shouted in fury: 'I will not!'

But still she clung to him, wailing aloud in her despair: 'Oh, Jurgis, think what you are doing! It will ruin us – it will ruin us! Oh, no, you must not do it! No, don't, don't do it! You must not do it! It will drive me mad – it will kill me – no, no, Jurgis, I am crazy – it is nothing. You do not really need to know. We can be happy – we can love each other just the same. Oh, please, please, believe me!'

Her words fairly drove him wild. He tore his hands loose, and flung her off. 'Answer me,' he cried. 'God damn it, I say - answer me!'

She sank down upon the floor, beginning to cry again. It was like listening to the moan of a damned soul, and Jurgis could not stand it. He smote his fist upon the table by his side, and shouted again at her, 'Answer me!'

She began to scream aloud, her voice like the voice of some wild beast: 'Ah! Ah! I can't! I can't do it!'

'Why can't you do it?' he shouted.

'I don't know how!'

He sprang and caught her by the arm, lifting her up, and glaring into her face. 'Tell me where you were last night!' he panted. 'Quick, out with it!'

Then she began to whisper, one word at a time: 'I - was - in - a house - downtown -'

'What house? What do you mean?'

She tried to hide her eyes away, but he held her. 'Miss Henderson's house,' she gasped.

He did not understand at first. 'Miss Henderson's house,' he echoed. And then suddenly, as in an explosion, the horrible truth burst over him, and he reeled and staggered back with a scream. He caught himself against the wall, and put his hand to his forehead, staring about him, and whispering, 'Jesus! Jesus!'

An instant later he leaped at her, as she lay grovelling at his feet. He seized her by the throat. 'Tell me!' he gasped, hoarsely. 'Quick! Who took you to that place?'

She tried to get away, making him furious; he thought it was fear, or the pain of his clutch - he did not understand that it was the agony of her shame. Still she answered him, 'Connor.'

'Connor,' he gasped. 'Who is Connor?'

'The boss,' she answered. 'The man -'

He tightened his grip, in his frenzy, and only when he saw her eyes closing did he realize that he was choking her. Then he relaxed his fingers, and crouched, waiting, until she opened her lids again. His breath beat hot into her face.

'Tell me,' he whispered, at last. 'Tell me about it.'

She lay perfectly motionless, and he had to hold his breath to catch her words. 'I did not want - to do it,' she said; 'I tried - I tried not to do it. I only did it - to save us. It was our only chance.'

Again, for a space, there was no sound but his panting. Ona's eyes closed and when she spoke again she did not open them. 'He told me - he would have me turned off. He told me he would - we would all of us lose our places. We could never get anything to do - here - again. He - he meant it - he would have ruined us.'

Jurgis's arms were shaking so that he could scarcely hold himself up, and he lurched forward now and then as he listened. 'When - when did this begin?' he gasped.

'At the very first,' she said. She spoke as if in a trance. 'It was all - it was their plot - Miss Henderson's plot. She hated me. And he - he wanted me. He used to speak to me - out on the platform. Then he began to - to make love to me. He offered me money. He begged me - he said he loved me. Then he threatened me. He knew all about us; he knew we would starve. He knew your boss - he knew Marija's. He would hound us to death, he said - then he said if I would - if I - we would all of us be sure of work - always. Then one day he caught hold of me - he would not let go - he - he -'

'Where was this?'

'In the hallway - at night - after everyone had gone. I could not help it. I thought of you - of the baby - of mother and the children. I was afraid of him - afraid to cry out.'

A moment ago her face had been ashen grey; now it was scarlet. She was beginning to breathe hard again. Jurgis made not a sound.

'That was two months ago. Then he wanted me to come - to that house. He wanted me to stay there. He said all of us - that we would not have to work. He made me come there - in the evenings. I told you - you thought I was at the factory. Then - one night it snowed, and I couldn't get back. And last night - the cars were stopped. It was

such a little thing – to ruin us all, I tried to walk, but I couldn't. I didn't want you to know. It would have – it would have been all right. We could have gone on – just the same – you need never have known about it. He was getting tired of me – he would have let me alone soon. I am going to have a baby – I am getting ugly. He told me that – twice, he told me, last night. He kicked me – last night – too. And now you will kill him – you – you will kill him – and we shall die.'

All this she had said without a quiver; she lay still as death, not an eyelid moving. And Jurgis, too, said not a word. He lifted himself by the bed, and stood up. He did not stop for another glance at her, but went to the door and opened it. He did not see Elzbieta, crouching terrified in the corner. He went out, hatless, leaving the street door open behind him. The instant his feet were on the sidewalk he broke into a run.

He ran like one possessed, blindly, furiously, looking neither to the right nor left. He was on Ashland Avenue before exhaustion compelled him to slow down, and then, noticing a car, he made a dart for it and drew himself aboard. His eyes were wild and his hair flying, and he was breathing hoarsely, like a wounded bull; but the people on the car did not notice this particularly – perhaps it seemed natural to them that a man who smelt as Jurgis smelt should exhibit an aspect to correspond. They began to give way before him as usual. The conductor took his nickel gingerly, with the tips of his fingers, and then left him with the platform to himself. Jurgis did not even notice it – his thoughts were far away. Within his soul it was like a roaring furnace; he stood waiting, waiting, crouching as if for a spring.

He had some of his breath back when the car came to the entrance of the yards, and so he leaped off and started again, racing at full speed. People turned and stared at him, but he saw no one – there was the factory, and he bounded through the doorway and down the corridor. He knew the room where Ona worked, and he knew Connor,

the boss of the loading gang outside. He looked for the man as he sprang into the room.

The truckmen were hard at work, loading the freshly-packed boxes and barrels upon the cars. Jurgis shot one swift glance up and down the platform – the man was not on it. But then suddenly he heard a voice in the corridor, and started for it with a bound. In an instant more he fronted the boss.

He was a big, red-faced Irishman, coarse-featured, and smelling of liquor. He saw Jurgis as he crossed the threshold, and turned white. He hesitated one second, as if meaning to run, and in the next his assailant was upon him. He put up his hands to protect his face, but Jurgis, lunging with all the power of his arm and body, struck him fairly between the eyes and knocked him backward. The next moment he was on top of him, burying his fingers in his throat.

To Jurgis this man's whole presence reeked of the crime he had committed; the touch of his body was madness to him – it set every nerve of him a-tremble, it aroused all the demon in his soul. It had worked its will upon Ona, this great beast – and now he had it, he had it! It was his turn now! Things swam blood before him, and he screamed aloud in his fury, lifting his victim and smashing his head upon the floor.

The place, of course, was in an uproar – women fainting and shrieking, and men rushing in. Jurgis was so bent upon his task that he knew nothing of this, and scarcely realized that people were trying to interfere with him; it was only when half a dozen men had seized him by the legs and shoulders and were pulling at him, that he understood that he was losing his prey. In a flash he had bent down and sunk his teeth into the man's cheek; and when they tore him away he was dripping with blood, and little ribbons of skin were hanging in his mouth.

They got him down upon the floor, clinging to him by his arms and legs, and still they could hardly hold him. He fought like a tiger, writhing and twisting, half flinging them off, and starting towards his unconscious enemy. But

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