
THEODORE
DREISER
JENNIE
GERHARDT

**Theodore Dreiser**

# Jennie Gerhardt

**A Novel**

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# CHAPTER I

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One morning, in the fall of 1880, a middle-aged woman, accompanied by a young girl of eighteen, presented herself at the clerk's desk of the principal hotel in Columbus, Ohio, and made inquiry as to whether there was anything about the place that she could do. She was of a helpless, fleshy build, with a frank, open countenance and an innocent, diffident manner. Her eyes were large and patient, and in them dwelt such a shadow of distress as only those who have looked sympathetically into the countenances of the distraught and helpless poor know anything about. Any one could see where the daughter behind her got the timidity and shamefacedness which now caused her to stand back and look indifferently away. She was a product of the fancy, the feeling, the innate affection of the untutored but poetic mind of her mother combined with the gravity and poise which were characteristic of her father. Poverty was driving them. Together they presented so appealing a picture of honest necessity that even the clerk was affected.

"What is it you would like to do?" he said.

"Maybe you have some cleaning or scrubbing," she replied, timidly. "I could wash the floors."

The daughter, hearing the statement, turned uneasily, not because it irritated her to work, but because she hated people to guess at the poverty that made it necessary. The clerk, manlike, was affected by the evidence of beauty in

distress. The innocent helplessness of the daughter made their lot seem hard indeed.

"Wait a moment," he said; and, stepping into a back office, he called the head housekeeper.

There was work to be done. The main staircase and parlor hall were unswept because of the absence of the regular scrub-woman.

"Is that her daughter with her?" asked the housekeeper, who could see them from where she was standing.

"Yes, I believe so."

"She might come this afternoon if she wants to. The girl helps her, I suppose?"

"You go see the housekeeper," said the clerk, pleasantly, as he came back to the desk. "Right through there"—pointing to a near-by door. "She'll arrange with you about it."

A succession of misfortunes, of which this little scene might have been called the tragic culmination, had taken place in the life and family of William Gerhardt, a glass-blower by trade. Having suffered the reverses so common in the lower walks of life, this man was forced to see his wife, his six children, and himself dependent for the necessaries of life upon whatever windfall of fortune the morning of each recurring day might bring. He himself was sick in bed. His oldest boy, Sebastian, or "Bass," as his associates transformed it, worked as an apprentice to a local freight-car builder, but received only four dollars a week. Genevieve, the oldest of the girls, was past eighteen, but had not as yet been trained to any special work. The other children, George, aged fourteen; Martha, twelve; William

ten, and Veronica, eight, were too young to do anything, and only made the problem of existence the more complicated. Their one mainstay was the home, which, barring a six-hundred-dollar mortgage, the father owned. He had borrowed this money at a time when, having saved enough to buy the house, he desired to add three rooms and a porch, and so make it large enough for them to live in. A few years were still to run on the mortgage, but times had been so bad that he had been forced to use up not only the little he had saved to pay off the principal, but the annual interest also. Gerhardt was helpless, and the consciousness of his precarious situation—the doctor's bill, the interest due upon the mortgage, together with the sums owed butcher and baker, who, through knowing him to be absolutely honest, had trusted him until they could trust no longer—all these perplexities weighed upon his mind and racked him so nervously as to delay his recovery.

Mrs. Gerhardt was no weakling. For a time she took in washing, what little she could get, devoting the intermediate hours to dressing the children, cooking, seeing that they got off to school, mending their clothes, waiting on her husband, and occasionally weeping. Not infrequently she went personally to some new grocer, each time farther and farther away, and, starting an account with a little cash, would receive credit until other grocers warned the philanthropist of his folly. Corn was cheap. Sometimes she would make a kettle of lye hominy, and this would last, with scarcely anything else, for an entire week. Corn-meal also, when made into mush, was better than nothing, and this, with a little milk, made almost a feast. Potatoes fried was

the nearest they ever came to luxurious food, and coffee was an infrequent treat. Coal was got by picking it up in buckets and baskets along the maze of tracks in the near-by railroad yard. Wood, by similar journeys to surrounding lumber-yards. Thus they lived from day to day, each hour hoping that the father would get well and that the glass-works would soon start up. But as the winter approached Gerhardt began to feel desperate.

"I must get out of this now pretty soon," was the sturdy German's regular comment, and his anxiety found but weak expression in the modest quality of his voice.

To add to all this trouble little Veronica took the measles, and, for a few days, it was thought that she would die. The mother neglected everything else to hover over her and pray for the best. Doctor Ellwanger came every day, out of purely human sympathy, and gravely examined the child. The Lutheran minister, Pastor Wundt, called to offer the consolation of the Church. Both of these men brought an atmosphere of grim ecclesiasticism into the house. They were the black-garbed, sanctimonious emissaries of superior forces. Mrs. Gerhardt felt as if she were going to lose her child, and watched sorrowfully by the cot-side. After three days the worst was over, but there was no bread in the house. Sebastian's wages had been spent for medicine. Only coal was free for the picking, and several times the children had been scared from the railroad yards. Mrs. Gerhardt thought of all the places to which she might apply, and despairingly hit upon the hotel. Now, by a miracle, she had her chance.

"How much do you charge?" the housekeeper asked her.

Mrs. Gerhardt had not thought this would be left to her, but need emboldened her.

"Would a dollar a day be too much?"

"No," said the housekeeper; "there is only about three days' work to do every week. If you would come every afternoon you could do it."

"Very well," said the applicant. "Shall we start to-day?"

"Yes; if you'll come with me now I'll show you where the cleaning things are."

The hotel, into which they were thus summarily introduced, was a rather remarkable specimen for the time and place. Columbus, being the State capital, and having a population of fifty thousand and a fair passenger traffic, was a good field for the hotel business, and the opportunity had been improved; so at least the Columbus people proudly thought. The structure, five stories in height, and of imposing proportions, stood at one corner of the central public square, where were the Capitol building and principal stores. The lobby was large and had been recently redecorated. Both floor and wainscot were of white marble, kept shiny by frequent polishing. There was an imposing staircase with hand-rails of walnut and toe-strips of brass. An inviting corner was devoted to a news and cigar-stand. Where the staircase curved upward the clerk's desk and offices had been located, all done in hardwood and ornamented by novel gas-fixtures. One could see through a door at one end of the lobby to the barbershop, with its chairs and array of shaving-mugs. Outside were usually two or three buses, arriving or departing, in accordance with the movement of the trains.

To this caravanserai came the best of the political and social patronage of the State. Several Governors had made it their permanent abiding place during their terms of office. The two United States Senators, whenever business called them to Columbus, invariably maintained parlor chambers at the hotel. One of them, Senator Brander, was looked upon by the proprietor as more or less of a permanent guest, because he was not only a resident of the city, but an otherwise homeless bachelor. Other and more transient guests included Congressmen, State legislators and lobbyists, merchants, professional men, and, after them, the whole raft of indescribables who, coming and going, make up the glow and stir of this kaleidoscopic world.

Mother and daughter, suddenly flung into this realm of superior brightness, felt immeasurably overawed. They went about too timid to touch anything for fear of giving offense. The great red-carpeted hallway, which they were set to sweep, had for them all the magnificence of a palace; they kept their eyes down and spoke in their lowest tones. When it came to scrubbing the steps and polishing the brass-work of the splendid stairs both needed to steel themselves, the mother against her timidity, the daughter against the shame at so public an exposure. Wide beneath lay the imposing lobby, and men, lounging, smoking, passing constantly in and out, could see them both.

"Isn't it fine?" whispered Genevieve, and started nervously at the sound of her own voice.

"Yes," returned her mother, who, upon her knees, was wringing out her cloth with earnest but clumsy hands.

"It must cost a good deal to live here, don't you think?"

"Yes," said her mother. "Don't forget to rub into these little corners. Look here what you've left."

Jennie, mortified by this correction, fell earnestly to her task, and polished vigorously, without again daring to lift her eyes.

With painstaking diligence they worked downward until about five o'clock; it was dark outside, and all the lobby was brightly lighted. Now they were very near the bottom of the stairway.

Through the big swinging doors there entered from the chilly world without a tall, distinguished, middle-aged gentleman, whose silk hat and loose military cape-coat marked him at once, among the crowd of general idlers, as some one of importance. His face was of a dark and solemn cast, but broad and sympathetic in its lines, and his bright eyes were heavily shaded with thick, bushy, black eyebrows. Passing to the desk he picked up the key that had already been laid out for him, and coming to the staircase, started up.

The middle-aged woman, scrubbing at his feet, he acknowledged not only by walking around her, but by graciously waving his hand, as much as to say, "Don't move for me."

The daughter, however, caught his eye by standing up, her troubled glance showing that she feared she was in his way.

He bowed and smiled pleasantly.

"You shouldn't have troubled yourself," he said.

Jennie only smiled.

When he had reached the upper landing an impulsive sidewise glance assured him, more clearly than before, of her uncommonly prepossessing appearance. He noted the high, white forehead, with its smoothly parted and plaited hair. The eyes he saw were blue and the complexion fair. He had even time to admire the mouth and the full cheeks—above all, the well-rounded, graceful form, full of youth, health, and that hopeful expectancy which to the middle-aged is so suggestive of all that is worth begging of Providence. Without another look he went dignifiedly upon his way, but the impression of her charming personality went with him. This was the Hon. George Sylvester Brander, junior Senator.

"Wasn't that a fine-looking man who went up just now?" observed Jennie a few moments later.

"Yes, he was," said her mother.

"He had a gold-headed cane."

"You mustn't stare at people when they pass," cautioned her mother, wisely. "It isn't nice."

"I didn't stare at him," returned Jennie, innocently. "He bowed to me."

"Well, don't you pay any attention to anybody," said her mother. "They may not like it."

Jennie fell to her task in silence, but the glamor of the great world was having its effect upon her senses. She could not help giving ear to the sounds, the brightness, the buzz of conversation and laughter surrounding her. In one section of the parlor floor was the dining-room, and from the clink of dishes one could tell that supper was being prepared. In another was the parlor proper, and there some one came to

play on the piano. That feeling of rest and relaxation which comes before the evening meal pervaded the place. It touched the heart of the innocent working-girl with hope, for hers were the years, and poverty could not as yet fill her young mind with cares. She rubbed diligently always, and sometimes forgot the troubled mother at her side, whose kindly eyes were becoming invested with crows' feet, and whose lips half repeated the hundred cares of the day. She could only think that all of this was very fascinating, and wish that a portion of it might come to her.

At half-past five the housekeeper, remembering them, came and told them that they might go. The fully finished stairway was relinquished by both with a sigh of relief, and, after putting their implements away, they hastened homeward, the mother, at least, pleased to think that at last she had something to do.

As they passed several fine houses Jennie was again touched by that half-defined emotion which the unwonted novelty of the hotel life had engendered in her consciousness.

"Isn't it fine to be rich?" she said.

"Yes," answered her mother, who was thinking of the suffering Veronica.

"Did you see what a big dining-room they had there?"

"Yes."

They went on past the low cottages and among the dead leaves of the year.

"I wish we were rich," murmured Jennie, half to herself.

"I don't know just what to do," confided her mother with a long-drawn sigh. "I don't believe there's a thing to eat in

the house."

"Let's stop and see Mr. Bauman again," exclaimed Jennie, her natural sympathies restored by the hopeless note in her mother's voice.

"Do you think he would trust us any more?"

"Let's tell him where we're working. I will."

"Well," said her mother, wearily.

Into the small, dimly lighted grocery store, which was two blocks from their house, they ventured nervously. Mrs. Gerhardt was about to begin, but Jennie spoke first.

"Will you let us have some bread to-night, and a little bacon? We're working now at the Columbus House, and we'll be sure to pay you Saturday."

"Yes," added Mrs. Gerhardt, "I have something to do."

Bauman, who had long supplied them before illness and trouble began, knew that they told the truth.

"How long have you been working there?" he asked.

"Just this afternoon."

"You know, Mrs. Gerhardt," he said, "how it is with me. I don't want to refuse you. Mr. Gerhardt is good for it, but I am poor, too. Times are hard," he explained further, "I have my family to keep."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Gerhardt, weakly.

Her old shoddy shawl hid her rough hands, red from the day's work, but they were working nervously. Jennie stood by in strained silence.

"Well," concluded Mr. Bauman, "I guess it's all right this time. Do what you can for me Saturday."

He wrapped up the bread and bacon, and, handing Jennie the parcel, he added, with a touch of cynicism:

"When you get money again I guess you'll go and trade somewhere else."

"No," returned Mrs. Gerhardt; "you know better than that." But she was too nervous to parley long.

They went out into the shadowy street, and on past the low cottages to their own home.

"I wonder," said the mother, wearily, when they neared the door, "if they've got any coal?"

"Don't worry," said Jennie. "If they haven't I'll go."

"A man run us away," was almost the first greeting that the perturbed George offered when the mother made her inquiry about the coal. "I got a little, though." he added. "I threw it off a car."

Mrs. Gerhardt only smiled, but Jennie laughed.

"How is Veronica?" she inquired.

"She seems to be sleeping," said the father. "I gave her medicine again at five."

While the scanty meal was being prepared the mother went to the sick child's bedside, taking up another long night's vigil quite as a matter of course.

While the supper was being eaten Sebastian offered a suggestion, and his larger experience in social and commercial matters made his proposition worth considering. Though only a car-builder's apprentice, without any education except such as pertained to Lutheran doctrine, to which he objected very strongly, he was imbued with American color and energy. His transformed name of Bass suited him exactly. Tall, athletic, and well-featured for his age, he was a typical stripling of the town. Already he had formulated a philosophy of life. To succeed one must do

something—one must associate, or at least seem to associate, with those who were foremost in the world of appearances.

For this reason the young boy loved to hang about the Columbus House. It seemed to him that this hotel was the center and circumference of all that was worth while in the social sense. He would go down-town evenings, when he first secured money enough to buy a decent suit of clothes, and stand around the hotel entrance with his friends, kicking his heels, smoking a two-for-five-cent cigar, preening himself on his stylish appearance, and looking after the girls. Others were there with him—town dandies and nobodies, young men who came there to get shaved or to drink a glass of whisky. And all of these he admired and sought to emulate. Clothes were the main touchstone. If men wore nice clothes and had rings and pins, whatever they did seemed appropriate. He wanted to be like them and to act like them, and so his experience of the more pointless forms of life rapidly broadened.

"Why don't you get some of those hotel fellows to give you their laundry?" he asked of Jennie after she had related the afternoon's experiences. "It would be better than scrubbing the stairs."

"How do you get it?" she replied.

"Why, ask the clerk, of course."

This plan struck Jennie as very much worth while.

"Don't you ever speak to me if you meet me around there," he cautioned her a little later, privately. "Don't you let on that you know me."

"Why?" she asked, innocently.

"Well, you know why," he answered, having indicated before that when they looked so poor he did not want to be disgraced by having to own them as relatives. "Just you go on by. Do you hear?"

"All right," she returned, meekly, for although this youth was not much over a year her senior, his superior will dominated.

The next day on their way to the hotel she spoke of it to her mother.

"Bass said we might get some of the laundry of the men at the hotel to do."

Mrs. Gerhardt, whose mind had been straining all night at the problem of adding something to the three dollars which her six afternoons would bring her, approved of the idea.

"So we might," she said. "I'll ask that clerk."

When they reached the hotel, however, no immediate opportunity presented itself. They worked on until late in the afternoon. Then, as fortune would have it, the housekeeper sent them in to scrub up the floor behind the clerk's desk. That important individual felt very kindly toward mother and daughter. He liked the former's sweetly troubled countenance and the latter's pretty face. So he listened graciously when Mrs. Gerhardt ventured meekly to put the question which she had been revolving in her mind all the afternoon.

"Is there any gentleman here," she said, "who would give me his washing to do? I'd be so very much obliged for it."

The clerk looked at her, and again recognized that absolute want was written all over her anxious face.

"Let's see," he answered, thinking of Senator Brander and Marshall Hopkins. Both were charitable men, who would be more than glad to aid a poor woman. "You go up and see Senator Brander," he continued. "He's in twenty-two. Here," he added, writing out the number, "you go up and tell him I sent you."

Mrs. Gerhardt took the card with a tremor of gratefulness. Her eyes looked the words she could not say.

"That's all right," said the clerk, observing her emotion. "You go right up. You'll find him in his room now."

With the greatest diffidence Mrs. Gerhardt knocked at number twenty-two. Jennie stood silently at her side.

After a moment the door was opened, and in the full radiance of the bright room stood the Senator. Attired in a handsome smoking-coat, he looked younger than at their first meeting.

"Well, madam," he said, recognizing the couple, and particularly the daughter, "what can I do for you?"

Very much abashed, the mother hesitated in her reply.

"We would like to know if you have any washing you could let us have to do?"

"Washing?" he repeated after her, in a voice which had a peculiarly resonant quality. "Washing? Come right in. Let me see."

He stepped aside with much grace, waved them in and closed the door. "Let me see," he repeated, opening and closing drawer after drawer of the massive black-walnut bureau. Jennie studied the room with interest. Such an array of nicknacks and pretty things on mantel and dressing-case she had never seen before. The Senator's easy-chair, with a

green-shaded lamp beside it, the rich heavy carpet and the fine rugs upon the floor—what comfort, what luxury!

"Sit down; take those two chairs there," said the Senator, graciously, disappearing into a closet.

Still overawed, mother and daughter thought it more polite to decline, but now the Senator had completed his researches and he reiterated his invitation. Very uncomfortably they yielded and took chairs.

"Is this your daughter?" he continued, with a smile at Jennie.

"Yes, sir," said the mother; "she's my oldest girl."

"Is your husband alive?"

"What is his name?"

"Where does he live?"

To all of these questions Mrs. Gerhardt very humbly answered.

"How many children have you?" he went on.

"Six," said Mrs. Gerhardt.

"Well," he returned, "that's quite a family. You've certainly done your duty to the nation."

"Yes, sir," returned Mrs. Gerhardt, who was touched by his genial and interesting manner.

"And you say this is your oldest daughter?"

"Yes, sir."

"What does your husband do?"

"He's a glass-blower. But he's sick now."

During the colloquy Jennie's large blue eyes were wide with interest. Whenever he looked at her she turned upon him such a frank, unsophisticated gaze, and smiled in such

a vague, sweet way, that he could not keep his eyes off of her for more than a minute of the time.

"Well," he continued, sympathetically, "that is too bad! I have some washing here not very much but you are welcome to it. Next week there may be more."

He went about now, stuffing articles of apparel into a blue cotton bag with a pretty design on the side.

"Do you want these any certain day?" questioned Mrs. Gerhardt.

"No," he said, reflectively; "any day next week will do."

She thanked him with a simple phrase, and started to go.

"Let me see," he said, stepping ahead of them and opening the door, "you may bring them back Monday."

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Gerhardt. "Thank you."

They went out and the Senator returned to his reading, but it was with a peculiarly disturbed mind.

"Too bad," he said, closing his volume. "There's something very pathetic about those people." Jennie's spirit of wonder and appreciation was abroad in the room.

Mrs. Gerhardt and Jennie made their way anew through the shadowy streets. They felt immeasurably encouraged by this fortunate venture.

"Didn't he have a fine room?" whispered Jennie.

"Yes," answered the mother; "he's a great man."

"He's a senator, isn't he?" continued the daughter.

"Yes."

"It must be nice to be famous," said the girl, softly.

# CHAPTER II

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The spirit of Jennie—who shall express it? This daughter of poverty, who was now to fetch and carry the laundry of this distinguished citizen of Columbus, was a creature of a mellowness of temperament which words can but vaguely suggest. There are natures born to the inheritance of flesh that come without understanding, and that go again without seeming to have wondered why. Life, so long as they endure it, is a true wonderland, a thing of infinite beauty, which could they but wander into it wonderingly, would be heaven enough. Opening their eyes, they see a conformable and perfect world. Trees, flowers, the world of sound and the world of color. These are the valued inheritance of their state. If no one said to them "Mine," they would wander radiantly forth, singing the song which all the earth may some day hope to hear. It is the song of goodness.

Caged in the world of the material, however, such a nature is almost invariably an anomaly. That other world of flesh into which has been woven pride and greed looks askance at the idealist, the dreamer. If one says it is sweet to look at the clouds, the answer is a warning against idleness. If one seeks to give ear to the winds, it shall be well with his soul, but they will seize upon his possessions. If all the world of the so-called inanimate delay one, calling with tenderness in sounds that seem to be too perfect to be less than understanding, it shall be ill with the body. The

hands of the actual are forever reaching toward such as these—forever seizing greedily upon them. It is of such that the bond servants are made.

In the world of the actual, Jennie was such a spirit. From her earliest youth goodness and mercy had molded her every impulse. Did Sebastian fall and injure himself, it was she who struggled with straining anxiety, carried him safely to his mother. Did George complain that he was hungry, she gave him all of her bread. Many were the hours in which she had rocked her younger brothers and sisters to sleep, singing whole-heartedly betimes and dreaming far dreams. Since her earliest walking period she had been as the right hand of her mother. What scrubbing, baking, errand-running, and nursing there had been to do she did. No one had ever heard her rudely complain, though she often thought of the hardness of her lot. She knew that there were other girls whose lives were infinitely freer and fuller, but, it never occurred to her to be meanly envious; her heart might be lonely, but her lips continued to sing. When the days were fair she looked out of her kitchen window and longed to go where the meadows were. Nature's fine curves and shadows touched her as a song itself. There were times when she had gone with George and the others, leading them away to where a patch of hickory-trees flourished, because there were open fields, with shade for comfort and a brook of living water. No artist in the formulating of conceptions, her soul still responded to these things, and every sound and every sigh were welcome to her because of their beauty.

When the soft, low call or the wood-doves, those spirits of the summer, came out of the distance, she would incline her head and listen, the whole spiritual quality of it dropping like silver bubbles into her own great heart.

Where the sunlight was warm and the shadows flecked with its splendid radiance she delighted to wonder at the pattern of it, to walk where it was most golden, and follow with instinctive appreciation the holy corridors of the trees.

Color was not lost upon her. That wonderful radiance which fills the western sky at evening touched and unburdened her heart.

"I wonder," she said once with girlish simplicity, "how it would feel to float away off there among those clouds."

She had discovered a natural swing of a wild grape-vine, and was sitting in it with Martha and George.

"Oh, wouldn't it be nice if you had a boat up there," said George.

She was looking with uplifted face at a far-off cloud, a red island in a sea of silver.

"Just supposing," she said, "people could live on an island like that."

Her soul was already up there, and its elysian paths knew the lightness of her feet.

"There goes a bee," said George, noting a bumbler winging by.

"Yes," she said, dreamily, "it's going home."

"Does everything have a home?" asked Martha.

"Nearly everything," she answered.

"Do the birds go home?" questioned George.

"Yes," she said, deeply feeling the poetry of it herself, "the birds go home."

"Do the bees go home?" urged Martha.

"Yes, the bees go home."

"Do the dogs go home?" said George, who saw one traveling lonesomely along the nearby road.

"Why, of course," she said, "you know that dogs go home."

"Do the gnats?" he persisted, seeing one of those curious spirals of minute insects turning energetically in the waning light.

"Yes," she said, half believing her remark. "Listen!"

"Oho," exclaimed George, incredulously, "I wonder what kind of houses they live in."

"Listen!" she gently persisted, putting out her hand to still him.

It was that halcyon hour when the Angelus falls like a benediction upon the waning day. Far off the notes were sounding gently, and nature, now that she listened, seemed to have paused also. A scarlet-breasted robin was hopping in short spaces upon the grass before her. A humming bee hummed, a cow-bell tinkled, while some suspicious cracklings told of a secretly reconnoitering squirrel. Keeping her pretty hand weighed in the air, she listened until the long, soft notes spread and faded and her heart could hold no more. Then she arose.

"Oh," she said, clenching her fingers in an agony of poetic feeling. There were crystal tears overflowing in her eyes. The wondrous sea of feeling in her had stormed its banks. Of such was the spirit of Jennie.

# CHAPTER III

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The junior Senator, George Sylvester Brander, was a man of peculiar mold. In him there were joined, to a remarkable degree, the wisdom of the opportunist and the sympathetic nature of the true representative of the people. Born a native of southern Ohio, he had been raised and educated there, if one might except the two years in which he had studied law at Columbia University. He knew common and criminal law, perhaps, as well as any citizen of his State, but he had never practised with that assiduity which makes for pre-eminent success at the bar. He had made money, and had had splendid opportunities to make a great deal more if he had been willing to stultify his conscience, but that he had never been able to do. And yet his integrity had not been at all times proof against the claims of friendship. Only in the last presidential election he had thrown his support to a man for Governor who, he well knew, had no claim which a strictly honorable conscience could have recognized.

In the same way, he had been guilty of some very questionable, and one or two actually unsavory, appointments. Whenever his conscience pricked him too keenly he would endeavor to hearten himself with his pet phrase, "All in a lifetime." Thinking over things quite alone in his easy-chair, he would sometimes rise up with these words on his lips, and smile sheepishly as he did so. Conscience

was not by any means dead in him. His sympathies, if anything, were keener than ever.

This man, three times Congressman from the district of which Columbus was a part, and twice United States Senator, had never married. In his youth he had had a serious love affair, but there was nothing discreditable to him in the fact that it came to nothing. The lady found it inconvenient to wait for him. He was too long in earning a competence upon which they might subsist.

Tall, straight-shouldered, neither lean nor stout, he was to-day an imposing figure. Having received his hard knocks and endured his losses, there was that about him which touched and awakened the sympathies of the imaginative. People thought him naturally agreeable, and his senatorial peers looked upon him as not any too heavy mentally, but personally a fine man.

His presence in Columbus at this particular time was due to the fact that his political fences needed careful repairing. The general election had weakened his party in the State Legislature. There were enough votes to re-elect him, but it would require the most careful political manipulation to hold them together. Other men were ambitious. There were a half-dozen available candidates, any one of whom would have rejoiced to step into his shoes. He realized the exigencies of the occasion. They could not well beat him, he thought; but even if this should happen, surely the President could be induced to give him a ministry abroad.

Yes, he might be called a successful man, but for all that Senator Brander felt that he had missed something. He had wanted to do so many things. Here he was, fifty-two years of

age, clean, honorable, highly distinguished, as the world takes it, but single. He could not help looking about him now and then and speculating upon the fact that he had no one to care for him. His chamber seemed strangely hollow at times—his own personality exceedingly disagreeable.

"Fifty!" he often thought to himself. "Alone—absolutely alone."

Sitting in his chamber that Saturday afternoon, a rap at his door aroused him. He had been speculating upon the futility of his political energy in the light of the impermanence of life and fame.

"What a great fight we make to sustain ourselves!" he thought. "How little difference it will make to me a few years hence!"

He arose, and opening wide his door, perceived Jennie. She had come, as she had suggested to her mother, at this time, instead of on Monday, in order to give a more favorable impression of promptness.

"Come right in," said the Senator; and, as on the first occasion, he graciously made way for her.

Jennie passed in, momentarily expecting some compliment upon the promptitude with which the washing had been done. The Senator never noticed it at all.

"Well, my young lady," he said when she had put the bundle down, "how do you find yourself this evening?"

"Very well," replied Jennie. "We thought we'd better bring your clothes to-day instead of Monday."

"Oh, that would not have made any difference," replied Brander lightly. "Just leave them on the chair."