

OPOLITAN.

"A Poor Devil."

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[WRITTEN FOR THE METROPOLITAN.]

Since I was first able to think I have had intense longings for wealth. To have money, to have honor, greatness, grandeur and splendour; to have all this, was to live. Money, to me, was everything. As no man ever longed before, as no one ever could long, I longed for wealth. Oh! to be able to put one's hand in the pocket and feel the roll of bank-notes, the clink of gold and silver, to be able to sit at a desk and write off a cheque for whatever amount I desired—to have wealth, to have wealth, I prayed God to grant it to me.

I was a law clerk. When I say "law clerk," please do not suppose I mean a "law student." The student in a law office studies his profession and eventually becomes a lawyer; but the law clerk, stay, I am going to define to you what a law clerk is. He is the poor devil in the office who is bullied by the partners, patronized by the students, pitied by the typewriter and envied by the office boy. He it is who looks after everything that comes in and goes out of the office. who does the book-keeping, assists the typewriter, goes messages, and after giving ten years of his precious life to one firm actually receives the magnificent sum of \$10 per week!

I had only one relative in the world—my mother. She lived in the country, and I had not seen her since I was a boy of fourteen, when I came to the city to earn my living. Nevertheless I had to support

it impossible to one who looks at as did. Fools! I loved, I loved, I loved. With all my heart, with all my strength, with all my soul, I loved a woman—a woman who seemed as far above me as my God, the God I did and did not believe in, the God I said I did not believe in, and yet to whom I prayed to for help and forgiveness—my only friend.

Stern men, who condemn me now, who know he brought her with not what my past had been, of my trials, my before, and she seemed poverty, my longings, pause, and wonder no commonplace girl. He caught that I committed crime. few words meant to be graceful.

To others I appeared quiet, reserved, reticent on my desk. All the time she The student in the office getting up a party to go half curious, with pitying smile snowshoeing, skating, or on some other amusement looked at the thing. It was a \$10 bill. ment, refrained from asking Blake to go, "be at it dully, the I picked it up and flung cause he does not care for such things, you face. "Go," I yelled; "go before know," not out of unkindness, for I firmly believed He stepped back. He was so amazed lieve that they all, more or less, liked me. For utter not a word. He had expected to be was not Blake the one that could be blamed for whelmed with thanks, but his face was smart everything, who never interfered, never quarrelled, the strength was which I flung the bill at him never tattled. I was quiet, and they thought me Gradually he recovered himself, but he was to absent-minded. Was I absent-minded? Never! well he had the same, dull or clever, good or bad, they had

How one thought—self. I hated him for his wealth, his success, his good breeding, his pitying contempt for me. I wanted to be rich myself, but I hated, I detested, all who had wealth, for they seemed to mock me. He was the man who had brought us to poverty, who had sold my father up, beggared him, killed him. And yet he dared to pity me. He was the proprietor of a large manufactory, a man who paid poor girls to work for him from 75 cents to \$1 a week, and yet was a pillar of his church, an M. P., an Honorable, in fact, my employer's best client. One day he came to me and offered to help me, to give me his old clothes. I refused quietly at first, but when he had left me I went nearly mad. To be offered old clothes! Had it come to this, to be offered charity by mine

enemy? God! and I was so wretched.

*This is a full
I never made
It was possible*

who was so proud.

contain

*liked sexually for
a couple of
This is a 26
I was 14 years old*