## CHAPTER XXI-Continued. -13-

Our daily actions are controlled by a variety of opposing influences which are like threads pulling at us from various directions. When for any reason certain of these threads are snapped and the balance is disturbed we are drawn into strange pathways, and our whole lives may be changed through the operation of what seems a most trivial case. In Bob's case the cause approached, all unheralded, in the person of Mr. Richard Cady, a youth whose magnificent vacuity of purpose was the envy of his friends. Cometlike, he was destined to appear, flash brightly, then disappear below the horizon of this tale. Mr. Cady greeted Bob with listless enthusiasm, teetering the while upon his cane like a Japanese equilibrist.

"Haven't seen you for ages," he began. "Been abroad?"

Bob explained that he was spending the summer in New York, a statement that filled his listener with the same horror he would have felt had he learned that Bob was passing the heated season in the miasmatic jungles of the Amazon.

"Just ran down from Newport," Cady volunteered. "I'm sailing today. Better join me for a trip. I knowhe cut Bob's refusal short-"travel's an awful nuisance; I get seasick my-

"Then why play at it?"

Cady rolled a mournful eye upon his friend. "Girl!" said he, hollowly. "Show girl! If I stay I'll marry her, and that wouldn't do. Posi-tive-ly not! So I'm running away. I'll wait over if you'll join me."

"I'm a working man."

"Haw!" Mr. Cady expelled a short

"True! And I've quit drinking." Now Cady was blase, but he had a beart; his sympathies were slow, but he was not insensible to misfortune. Accordingly he responded with a cry of pity, running his eye over his friend to estimate the ravages of temperance. "Up against it?" inquired the other.

"So says my heartless father. He has sewed up my pockets and scuttled my drawing account, hence the dinner pall on my arm. I'm in quest of toil." "I'll bet you starve," brightly pre-

dicted Mr. Cady, in an effort at encouragement. "I'll lay you five thousand that you make a flivver of anything you try."

"I've quit gambling, too." As they shook hands Cady grunted: "My invitation to globe-trot is withfrawn. Fine company you'd be!"

As Bob walked up the avenue he pondered deeply, wondering if he really were so lacking in ability as his friends believed. Money was such a common thing, after all; the silly labor of acquiring it could not be half on interesting as the spending of it. Anybody could make money, but to sajoy it, to circulate it judiciously, one like me." must possess individuality—of a sort. Money seemed to come to some people without effort, and from the strangest sources-Kurtz, for instance, had joking, of course?" grown rich out of coats and trousers!

Bob haited, frowning, while Ying peered out from his hiding place at "Well-" the the passing throngs, exposing a tiny. limp, ping-ribbon tongue. If Kurtz, armed only with a pair of shears and a foolish tape, had won to affinence, why couldn't another? Stock broking was no longer profitable; and old Hannibal's opposition evidently forced a change of occupation.

The prospect of such a change was annoying, but scarcely alarming to an agrained optimist, and Bob took comfort in reflecting that the best-selling literature of the day was replete with mstances of disinherited sons, impov-



" Should Like to Know Nice People,"

Loreisi Confessed. wished society men, ruined bankers, or mere idiers, who by lightning drokes of genius had mended their fortunes overnight. Some few, in the earlier days of frenzied fiction, had played the market, others the ponies. will others had gone west and develsped abandoned gold mines or obscure grown disgustingly rich from patent- fing?" fug rat-traps or shoe buttons. One young man had discovered a way to never discover how many suits they and promptly bludgeoned the railroad bad news."

companies out of fabulous royalties. could work up no enthusiasm-he lars." knew too much about it-and, inas-

## The AUCTION BIO

A NOVEL OF NEW YORK LIFE

OF REX BEACH † †

ILLUSTRATIONS OF F PARKER

Author of The Iron Trail" "The Spoilers" "The Silver Horde" Etc. Cappright, By Harper & Brukers

or shoe buttons. As for going west, might be better. Anyhow, it's the he was clearly of the opinion that a hardest thirteen hundred and seventysearch for abandoned gold mines or six dollars I ever earned." forgotten waterfalls wasn't in his line; and the secret of creosoting railroad twitched, oscillating his cigar violently. ties, now that he came to think of it, "Hard! I'll bet those fellows even was still locked up in the breast of its bought your lunch. I suppose you mean affluent discoverer. Besides, as the it's the first money you ever-earned." whole episode had occurred in the sec- He seemed to choke over the last word. ond act of the play, the safety of "Well, it's worth something to get men building upon it was doubtful at best. like these on the books, but-thirteen Bob's wrinkled brow smoothed itself, hundred and seventy-six dollars-" and he nodded. His path was plain; it led around the nearest corner to his tailor's door.

with its high-backed Flemish-oak months?" chairs, its great carved tables, its paneled walls with their antiered decora- of purest speculation." Bob favored tions. This, it may be said, was not a him with a sunny smile. "As well ask shop, not a store where clothes were me how much my living expenses must sold, but a studio where men's distinctive garments were draped, and the difference was perfectly apparent on the first of each month.

"Kurtz," began Bob, abruptly, "! just bet Dick Cady five thousand dollars that I can make my own living for six months." This falsehood troubled him vaguely until he remembered that high finance must be often conducted behind a veil.

Mr. Kurtz, genial, shrewd, gray, raised admiring eyes and said:

"I'll take another five thousand." But Bob declined. "No, I'm going

to work." This announcement interested the tailor deeply. "Who's going to hire you?" he asked.

"You are." Kurtz blinked. "Maybe you'd like to bet on that, too," he ventured. "I'll

give you odds." "Work is one of the few things ! haven't tried. You need a good salesman.

"No, I don't. I have seven already." "Say, wouldn't you like the trade of the whole younger set? I can bring you a lot of fresh customers-fellows

"'Fresh customers' is right," laughed Kurtz, then sobered quickly. "You're

"I'm so serious I could cry. How much is it worth to you to make clothes

'Quite a bit."

"The boys like to see Dick trimmed -it's a matter of principle with them never to let him win a bet-and they'd do anything for me. You're the best tailor in the city, but too conservative. Now I'm going to bring you fifty new accounts, every one good for better than two thousand a year. That's a hundred thousand dollars. How much am I offered? Going! Going!-"

"Wait a minute! Would you stick to me for six months if I took you on?" "My dear Kurtz, I'll poultice myself upon you for life. I'll guarantee myself not to slide, slip, wrinkle or skid. Thirty years bence, when you come hobbling down to business, you'll find

Mr. Kurtz dealt in novelties, and the idea of a society salesman was sufficiently new to appeal to his commercial sense.

"I'll pay you twenty per cent," he offered, "for all the new names you put on my books."

"Make it twenty-five on first orders and twenty on repeaters. I'll bring my own luncheon and pay my car fare." "There wouldn't be any profit left,"

demurred Kurtz. "Good! Then it's a bargain-twentyfive and twenty. Now watch me grab

Four Hundred." Bob took a bus up enough to pay up." the avenue to the College club for At three o'clock he returned, accomspite of their modish appearance they declared themselves indecently shabby, and allowed Bob to order for them-

jah's lofty disregard of expense. He sat upon one of the carved tables, selecting samples as if for a quartet of bridegrooms. Being bosom cronies of Mr. Cady, the four youths needed to be measured Kurtz said guardedly:

a favor which he performed with a ra-

"Whew! That's more stuff than I've sold in two weeks!" "A mere trifle," Bob grinned, hap-

juvenile plutocrats-no office hours, no sers bag. Besides, we've been under going to make you famous." "You'll break me with another run

water powers. A number, also, had like this. You don't think they're bluf-

"Why should they bluff? They'll ep worms out of railroad ties and have. Now figure it up and tell the

Mr. Kurtz did as directed, announc-Over the stock-market idea Bob ing, "Fifty-five hundred and five dol-

"Pikera!" exclaimed the new sales-

In the business of inventing rat-traps Not bad for dull times, and yet it for a week-end."

"Hard!" The merchant's lips "And twenty-five cents."

Mr. Kurtz gulped. "In one day! Why, I could buy a farm for that. Mr. Kurtz's greeting was warm as How much will you have to 'earn' to Bob strolled into the stately showroom cover your living expenses for six

"Ah, there we journey in the realm tallors.



Piceza

He Made Love Openly, Violently, Now.

Whatever one is, the other will be ap- she forgot her vague dislike of Hayproximately ditto-or perhaps slightly man himself. Bert, who had met her in excess thereof. Anyhow, nothing but rigid economy—bane of my life— to be, instead of a polished man of the will make the one fit into the other. But I have a thought. Something tells me laugh and a pair of sober, heavy-lidded these boys need white flannels, so get eyes. That he possessed a keen apout your stock, Kurtz. If they can't preciation of feminine beauty he play tennis they must learn, for my sako."

Bob's remarkable stroke of fortune customers clamored that he squander his first profits forthwith. Ordinarily he escaped from bis friends as soon as possible. Thus it chanced that he arrived home sober.

It was a happy home-coming. Bob was in a state of exaltation. He had no desire to bind himself to Kurtz' service for six months or for any other people were chatting at tea tables. period; nor had he the least thought of living up to his agreement until Lorelei Then he objected blankly:

I don't want to be a tailor. There's no romance in woolen goods,"

"How much do you owe?" she asked. "Really, I've no idea. It's something you don't have to remembersomebody always reminds you in plenadolescent offshoots of our famous ty of time, and then you borrow

"Let's forget the romance and pay up without borrowing. Remember you have two families to support." Noting panied by four flushed young men that the idea of permanent employwhose names gave Kurtz a thrill. In ment galled him, she added, craftlly, "Of course you'll never se another lot of clothes like this, but-

> "Why not? It's like selling candy to a child."

"You can't go with that crowd without drinking."

"Is that so? Now you sit tight and hold your hat on. I can make that business pay if I try, and still stay little urging. When they had gone in in the Rainmakers' union. There's big money in it-enough so we can live the way we want to. I'm sick of this telephone booth, anyhow; we'll present it to some nice newsboy and rent an pily. "Say, Kurtz, this is the life! apartment with a closet. This one's This is the job for me-panhandling so small I don't dare to let my trouheavy lifting, and Thursdays off. I'm cover long enough, and I want you to this sort of thing very much." meet the people I know. We can afford the expense-now that I'm making thirteen bundred and seventy-six dollars and twenty-five cents a day."

"I should like to know nice people," Lorelet confessed. "I'm sick of the him anxiously. kind I've met; the men are indecent

fire, and already he was far along wouldn't hurt anybody," Noting his "We weren't surprised in the least. You'll wake everybody in the house," toward prosperity. "You'll make a wife's expression, he kissed her lightly. . . . Bob's always doing some crazy

much as horse racing was no longer | man; then he began laboriously to com- hit with the younger set; you'll be a | "Now don't spoil your first party by fashionable, opportunities for a Pitts- pute 25 per cent of the sum, using as perfect rave. Bert Hayman told me worrying over me. Just forget you're His marriage they seemed to look upon burgh Phil future seemed limited, a pad a bolt of expensive white slik today that his married sister is enter- married and have a good time. Moreover, he had never saved a jock- vest material, "Thirteen hundred and taining a lot, and, since the drama will ey's life nor a jockey's mother from seventy-six dollars and twenty-five be tottering on its way to destruction eviction, hence feedbox tips were not cents is my blackmail, Kurtz. That's without you in a few days, I'll tell him the guests dancing to the strains of likely. Nor did he know a single soul what I call 'a safe and sane Fourth.' that we're invited out to Long Island a giant orchestrion built into the mu-

## CHAPTER XXII.

Under Lorelei's encouragement Bob put in the next two weeks to good advantage. In fact, so obsessed was he with his new employment that it was not long before his imaginary bet with Cady assumed reality in bis mind. In riding clothes, out for a gallop, dis-Moreover, it became gossip around his well known his method of winning the wager was deemed not only characteristle but ingenious. His exploits were famous; and his friends, rejoicing in one more display of eccentricity, and relishing any mild misfortune to Dick Cady, in the majority of cases changed

Business at Kurtz' increased so substantially that Bob was treated with a reverential amazement by everyone in the shop. The other salesmen gazed upon him with envy: Kurtz' bearing changed in a way that was extremely gratifying to one who had been universally accounted a failure. And Bob expanded under success; he began to feel more than mere amusement in his experiment.

His marriage had become public, but the affair was too old to be of much news value. Now that he had escaped the disagreeable notoriety he had expected and was possessed of larger means, Bob-inordinately proud of his wife's beauty and boyishly eager to display it-undertook to win social recognition for her. It was no difficult task for one with his wide acquaintance to make a beginning. Lorelet was surprised and delighted one day to receive an invitation for ber and her husband to spend a week-end at Fennellcourt, the country home of Bert Hayman's sister. She had not been sorry to give up her theatrical work, and the prospect of meeting nice people, of leaving for good and all the sordid, unhealthy atmosphere of Broadway, bathed her in a glow of anticipa-

Fennellcourt is one of the show places of the Wheatley Hills section. Bert Hayman drove the Whartons out from the city, and Lorelei's first be in order to cover my earnings. glimpse of Fennellcourt was such that and Bob for luncheon, had turned out world, a glib youth with an artificial showed by surrendering uncondition-

ally to Lorelel's charms. As Hayman's car rolled up the drive called for a celebration, and his four way and the beauties of Fennellcourt displayed themselves, Lorelei found her heart throbbing violently. Was not such a course would have been just this the beginning of a glorious advento his liking; but now he was dying to ture? Was not life unfolding at last? tell Lorelei of his triumph, and, fearing | Was she not upon the threshold of a to trust himself with even one drink, new world? The flutter in her breast

> Bert led the way through an impressive hall that bisected the building, then out upon a stately balustraded stone terrace, where, in the grateful shade of gaudy awnings, a dozen

Mrs. Fennell, the hostess, a plainfaced, dumpy young matron, welcomed began to treat the matter seriously. the newcomers, then made Lorelei known. As for Bob, he needed no in-"Why, it was all right as a joke, but troductions; a noisy outburst greeted him, and Lorelel's heart warmed at the welcome.

A few moments of chatter, then she and Bob were led into the house again and up to a cool, wide bedroom. As Lorelel removed her motor coat and bonnet she exclaimed, breathlessly: "What a gorgeous house! And those people! They weren't the least bit formal."

Bob laughed. "Formality is about the last thing they're famous for. There's liable to be too much informality. Say! You made those dames look like the Monday morning washladies' parade. I knew you would."

"You said this was the younger setbut that awful Thompson-Bellaire widow is here, and that blonde girl I met with her."

"Alice Wyeth?" "Yes. I thought she was going to kiss you." Bob grinned. "So did L. She will,

too, if she feels like it." "Won't you have anything to say about it?" "What could I say? Alice does just

as she likes. So does everybody else, for that matter. I've never gone in for After a moment Lorelei ventured, "I

suppose they're all hard drinkers-" "That wasn't spring water you saw in their glasses." "Are you-going to?" Lorelel eyed

"I can't very well make myself conand the women are vulgar. I've all spicuous by refusing everything; I Bob was delighted; his fancy took henyard-and a cocktail before dinner to the man on her right;

ed the stairs, and they found some of was looking for amusement. sic room. Hayman promptly seized blonde making for Bob as an eagle makes for its prey.

time to time; some from Westchester | been too much for him. and the Connecticut shore, others from neighboring estates. One couple mounted and stayed for a trot. The Lorelei was sickened by the sheer clubs; and in quarters where he was huge tiled terrace began to resemble a Broadway the dansant.

after a manful struggle against his cused herself as soon as she could. desires and a frightened resistance to the advances of Miss Wyeth, had with a knowing laugh: "There's no fled to the billiard room.

Lorelei became interested in watching Miss Courtenay, the girl in the riding habit, one of the season's debutantes, who, it seemed, was especially susceptible to the influence of liquor.

the stairs to say:

frantically jealous of you." "Of me? I don't understand." "She and Bert are great friendsand he's gone perfectly daft over you. Why, he's telling everybody." Lorelei flushed, to the evident amusement of her hostess, who ran on: "Oh, Bert means it! I never heard him rave so. Quite a compliment, my dear!" With a playful pat she went on her way, leav-

When Bob came in he betrayed an elation only too familiar. "You've been drinking!" cried Lore-

"I had to; I ran fifteen three times. whole party."

"I'm afraid-" "Say! You can't help sneezing when you have a cold. What's a fellow going to do in a crowd like this? But she dismissed the servant. don't worry, I know when to quit." take care of himself than most of the distinguished Betty Fennell's voice bid-

more. As he throttled himself with his

time?" courage for a negative answer; she could not confess that her dream had turned out wretchedly, and that what Bob seemed to consider simply the usual thing impressed her as abnormal and wanton.

"Well, that's good," he said. "I'm not strong for these week-end slaughters, but it's something you'll have to

"Is all society like-this?" she inquired.

"Um-m, yes and no! Society is like layer cake-" "Because it's made of dough?"

Bob laughed. "Partly! Anyhow, the upper crust is icy, and while the lower ayer is just as rich as those above. it's more indigestible. There's the heavy, soggy layers in between, too. don't know any of that crowd. They're mostly Dodos-the kind that endow colleges. This younger set keeps the whole cake from getting tasteless."

After a while Lorelei ventured: "I'm still a little nervous. I wish you'd stay close to me this evening."

"Can't be done," Bob declared. "It's a rule at Fennellcourt that husbands must ignore their wives. Betty doesn't invite many married couples, and a wife-lover is considered a pest. When in Rome do as the tourists do."

Lorelel anished dressing in silence. Diaper was quite different to anything Bob's wife had ever experienced, and if the afternoon had been embarrassing to her the evening was a trial. As the cockthils were served, Harden Fennell distinguished himself by losing his balance and falling backward. to the great amusement of his guests. No one went to his assistance; he regained his feet by climbing a highbacked chair, hand over hand, and during the dinner he sat for the most part in a comatose state, his eyes bleared dressing table and pressed the pearl Lorelel had little opportunity of watching him, since Bert Hayman monopothat Bob had again failen into the reeled away, covering his face with his clutches of Miss Wyeth, who made no secret of her fondness for him.

ation. Mrs. Thompson-Bellaire was that set the table laughing and drove the blood from Lorelei's face. Some- Fenneli's startled face appeared before ways wanted to know the other kind." don't want to look like a zebra in a time later Lorelei heard her explain her.

thing when he's drunk. . . . His latest fancy . . . pretty, of course. but . . from some western village, can't possibly last. I believe . Why should it?" The words were purposely made audible, and during the rest of the meal, when Mrs. Thompson-Bellaire was not bitingly sarcastic to Lorelel, she was offensively patronfring.

After dinner Lorelei had a better opportunity than during the afternoon of becoming acquainted with the women of the party, but the experience was not pleasant. She was made to understand that they regarded her not as Bob's wife in any real sense, but rather as his latest and most fleeting fancy. as a bizarre adventure, such as might Music greeted them as they descend- happen to any man in their set who

There was more dancing during the evening. Miss Wyeth continued to monopolize Bob, and Lorelel was ofupon Lorelei and whirled her away. fended to note that his resistance gave but not before she saw the Wyeth signs of weakening. She smothered her feelings, however, and remonstrated gently, only to find that he was in Guests continued to arrive from no condition to listen. The dinner had

There were many gayeties to enliven the party, and, although outward decencies were observed after a fashion, license that she felt on every hand. She had a wild desire to make her ex-There was more freedom, more vi- cuses and escape from Fennellcourt, vacity than Lorelel was accustomed to, but Bob had disappeared, and she gatheven in the gayest downtown resorts; ered that he and Bert were playing off the fun was swift and bilarious, there some fabulous wager in the billiard was a great deal of drinking. Bob, room. Pleading a headache, she ex-

"So sorry," said Mrs. Fennell; then, likelihood of Bob's annoying you for some time.'

Once in her room, Lorelei gave way to the indignation that had been slowly growing in her breast. How dared Bob introduce her to such people! If Lorelei was glad when it came time this was the world in which he had to dress for dinner. As she went to moved before his marriage, he had her room Mrs. Fennell stopped her on shown his wife an insult by bringing her into it. Surely people like the Fen-"My dear, Elizabeth Courtenay was nells, Bert Hayman, Mrs. Thompson-Bellaire, the Madden woman, were not typical members of New York's exclusive circles! Applied to them, 'smart' was a laughably inadequate term; they were worse than fast; they were frankly vicious. This was more than a gay week-end party; it was an orgy. Lorelel's anger at her betrayal was so keen that she dared not send for Bob immediately for fear of speaking too vioing the young wife weak with dismay. lently, but she assured herself that she would leave in the morning, even

though he chose to remain. Still in a blazing temper, she disrobed and sat down to calm herself and to wait for her husband. A half-hour My abstinence is the marvel of the passed, then another; at last she sent a maid in quest of him, but the report she received was not reassuring; Bob was scarcely in a condition to come to his room. Lorelei's lips were white as

By and by the music ceased. She In truth he did seem better able to heard people passing in the hall, and men Lorelei had seen, so she said no ding good night to someone. Still she waited.

When at last the door opened Hayning tie Bob gasped: "Having a good man stood on the threshold, peering at her. She saw that he was considerably "Ye-es!" Lorelei could not summon drunker than when she had escaped from his attentions, but evidently he knew quite well what he was about. "Kindly get out, and close the door

after you," she directed, still without raising her voice. The intruder took no warning from her crisp tones nor from the fact that her twilight eyes were as dark as a



Hayman Reeled Away.

and staring, his tongue unresponsive. push-button, holding her finger upon it and staring at Hayman. He moved toward her, but she snatched one of lized her attention. The latter made the candlesticks from among her tollet love openly, violently now, and it articles, swung it above her head, and added to her general disgust to see brought the weapon down. Hayman hands and cursing wildly; then, Lorelei, guided more by instinct than by Lorelel was not the only one to take reason or memory, found Mrs. Fenspecial note of the blonde girl's infatu- nell's chamber and pounded upon its door with blind fury. She heard a stir equally observant and at length made from the direction whence she had her disapproval patent by a remark come, and Hayman's voice calling something unintelligible; then Mrs.

> "What's the matter? My dear! (TO BE GONTINUED.)