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Or,
Christian Stewardship.
BY CHARLES M. SHELDON,
Author of "In His Steps," "The Conclusion of Philip Strone," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," "Mail-com Kirk," etc.

CHAPTER VIII. COMPLICATIONS.
Stuart had known every foot of Cornishton as a boy and was familiar even now with most of the curious little lanes and paths that cut it across and tracked up and down the side of the great hill like the marking of some gigantic game. There was probably no other place just like it in America. The prospecting holes were of various depths. Some of them had caved in a the sides and were shaped like old cellars or cellars with masses of rubbish at the bottom. Others were wells anywhere from 50 to 100 feet deep, and especially dangerous in winter, when the snow, lodging on bushes growing about the shaft's mouth, artfully concealed the locality of danger. It was Stuart's first thought when he calmed himself to think and act that Rhena had attempted to make a short cut by one of the miners' paths from the upper part of the settlement of Cornishton to Champion and in the dark and confusion caused by the

change which snow makes in the appearance of old landmarks had stumbled into one of the shafts. Under this conviction he ran back to the house where Rhena had been and from which he had just come himself, and, begging a lantern, he started out on a path which at first in his terror he had forgotten. He had followed it but a little way when the lantern revealed a small black object right in the center of the path. He stooped eagerly and picked it up. It was a lady's winter glove trimmed with fur at the wrist. He recognized it as Rhena's. He had seen her wearing that kind of a glove a few days before. He placed it in his pocket and went on as fast as he dared, eager and yet dreading with a horror he never felt before the possible discoveries he might make. The miner who had come up with him had gone down to the settlement at Stuart's suggestion to rouse others to come out and join in the search. So he was alone up there in the mysterious shadows of the pine covered slope. Every step he took over the small, barely defined trail was like a step into an unknown land, and yet he was conscious, even as he dwelt with terror upon the strange adventure so suddenly thrust upon him, of going over that very path one warm summer day when a boy only 10 years old, and the smell of the balsams as they gave out their peculiar pungent odor in the warmth of the sun seemed to be in his senses now. Several persons had evidently been over the path that very day, for the snow was trodden down, and the marks of feet were not yet wholly covered by new snow.

Quite a long distance from the place where the glove was found Stuart came to an old stump which marked a giant pine of many years before. The path turned about the foot of this stump, and on the other side of it as he strode up, praying in his heart for mercy and safety to be shown this woman, he saw her lying so still and white that he dared not think what it might mean. She had fallen over a mass of ore that had rolled into the path, and one hand and arm lay stretched out directly over one of the most dangerous pits on the hill. So near had she been to instant death!

With a cry Stuart caught her up. Still, he dared not question whether she he held was alive or dead. He said to himself he would not ask. He knew she was not conscious. He moved now with more of instinct than by sight or reason, feeling his way down the hill. He seemed to feel confident that he would not fall into any of the shafts with this burden, and with a strength and purpose that moved him with even more than his usual determination he went on down, keeping before him the glimmering light of the nearest cottage. Finally he had reached a cross path to the one he had first entered and in which Rhena had met with her accident. The light from the cottage had disappeared. He was now in a hollow or depression of the slope which had sometimes been used by the miners for a rough roadway to one part of the Davis mine, and as he entered it he thought that he could feel rather than see that tracks had recently been made through the hollow. He went down very cautiously. Rhena was still unconscious.

Suddenly a sound came to Stuart from above. He stopped and listened. It was the sound of sleighbells. He could not trust his hearing and listened the voice of the doctor from the cutter, which bounded out of the hole all right and came to sight again, like a snowplow on an engine just after plunging out of a drift.
"Doctor!" cried Stuart. "Thank God! Quick! Miss Dwight! She is dead or dying! I found her unconscious on the upper trail!"
He crowded through the snow up to the side of the cutter and placed Rhena on the seat beside the astonished doctor.
"Well, well, if this doesn't beat the Salvation Army drum all to pieces! I can't escape from practice even in Cornishton hollow. You take the prize for furnishing material on the spot. Are there any more of the army dead or wounded or dying around here?"
"Hurry, doctor! Save her! Say, is she dying? Is she seriously hurt?"
"Humph! Well, I tell you, Stuart, she's a plucky lass, and it's ten to one that she's dangerously hurt. No; she's not dead." All this time the doctor, who never wasted any breath talking and doing nothing, had been examining the condition of Rhena. "We'll get her right down to the town as fast as possible. Come, jump in and hold her. I can't drive and tend to her too."
Stuart did as directed, and the horse lunged forward at the doctor's word. It seemed to Stuart that the doctor was mad to drive at such a pace.
"Do be careful, doctor! You'll kill us all! Go slower!" Stuart gasped as he held Rhena and breathlessly braced himself against the back of the cutter.
"You've got your hands full without driving," was all the satisfaction Stuart could get, and before he could utter much more remonstrance they were out of the dangerous part of the hollow and had struck into the beginning of the road that led down to Champion. From that point the two men did not speak until the doctor reined Ajax up in front of Rhena's lodging. He had chosen to go right on instead of stopping at any of the cottages where the accommodations for help were so meager. The doctor carried Rhena into her room and left Stuart outside with the cutter. When Saxon finally came out, he was able to bring Stuart good news. It was a case of unconsciousness from a bad fall, but he did not fear any serious consequences.
They were standing by the cutter talking together, when one of the women looked from the door and called the doctor.
"Oh, doctor, will you see if Miss Dwight's glove is out there anywhere? She's lost one of them."
"Shake that robe, Stuart," said the doctor as he flashed the lantern around on the sidewalk and about the cutter. "Like as not it's down in the bottom somewhere. Don't you find it?" he asked, not noticing what Stuart was doing. Getting no answer, he shouted back: "It's not here, ma'am! Must have dropped it on the way down." The woman shut the door, and the doctor said, "Get in, Stuart, and I'll take you home."
Stuart climbed into the cutter without a word. As the doctor seated himself and Ajax was about to make his usual wild plunge up the street Stuart said, "I have Miss Dwight's glove in my pocket, doctor, and I am going to keep it."
"What's that?" exclaimed the doctor. He was nearly twice Stuart's age and had known him all his life. Stuart did not know any one to whom he felt like telling his secret more than to the doctor.
"But what's the good of one glove, Stuart?" The doctor was not quite sure that Stuart wanted to tell him all.
"I mean to have them both," replied Stuart frankly, looking right into the doctor's face. "Old friend, can't you see that I am in love with her and at the very highest point of my life already because of it?"
Stuart spoke louder than he had meant to, forgetting that persons were passing along the sidewalk. Several of the Salvation Army people had gone up to Rhena's lodgings to inquire about her. It is not probable that any heard Stuart, but the doctor suddenly struck Ajax, and the cutter whirled into the square and darted across one of the diagonals. Close by the hand stand the doctor pulled up as suddenly as he had started and said abruptly, "I'll wait for you."
"Wait for what?" exclaimed Stuart, astonished.
"Why, I thought maybe you might want to go up into the stand and tell all Champion that you were in love with Miss Dwight."
Stuart laughed softly. "I am not ashamed of it. Indeed, doctor, I do feel like shouting it out at times. No, no!" he added as the doctor started Ajax on again and they came out into the main street. "It is a matter of great pride with me. And at the same time I shrink from making it too common. There is no danger. Doctor, will you say, 'God bless you, Stuart,' as you used to sometimes when other events in my life came on?"
"God bless you, Stuart! Aye, aye, 'that belongs to be,' as my Cornishmen say when they mean it ought to be so. You've chosen the best, pluckiest and most character endowed woman in all Champion, or the state for that matter. Well, well, I knew it all the time! You and Eric think I'm so busy that I don't have time to notice anything. But that's because I see so much more than you do in a given time." There was a short pause. "If I were you, Stuart, I wouldn't keep that glove very long. It isn't just fair this cold weather."
"Thank you, doctor. I have been thinking of that," replied Stuart.
"He had grown very thoughtful suddenly. His life had opened out into another possibility with this new experience. He was conscious of its bearing upon all the rest of the problems that knocked at his heart and mind for answers, and when he bade the doctor good night he went into the

house thrilled through with the most profound conviction and persuasion that his life would shape this way or that according to the response of Rhena Dwight's soul to his. He was startled for the first time he realized how strong his feeling was and how little he knew of hers. What could she be to him with all the social differences between them? It is true he had come to a place where social differences counted for very little with him, but how could he tell what she might think now that her life moved on the plane of Salvation Army methods? And then there was his money and all. She had deliberately moved out from the world of wealth and fashion in which he still remained, of which he was yet a part. They were separated in this way by a great gulf of difference. On the other hand, he reflected, they had one great and common bond of sympathy in their Christian faith. After all, was not that stronger than anything else? What were conditions or artificial social distinctions by the side of the all powerful oneness of spirit which disciples of the Master possessed in common? It was with that last thought on his heart that he finally went to rest.
He did not speak to Louise or his aunt of the evening's adventure when he saw them in the morning. His statement of the evening before concerning his feelings toward Rhena had driven the two women into a position of hostility to him that did not find immediate expression in words, but was very apparent none the less. Louise was angry to think that her attempts to deceive Rhena might and probably would result in nothing. Aunt Royal ignored the subject definitely, but there was no mistaking her entire opposition to Stuart's present attitude. It was true she did not understand him. Stuart was too engrossed in his perplexities and plans and too much absorbed in the new life to feel all this very deeply, and yet it showed him how squarely his new life was henceforth to conflict with the old.
It was two days after that that Stuart, Eric and Andrew met again to talk over matters, this time at Eric's cottage. Rhena had recovered. She was up and doing part of her work. Stuart had called to inquire after her, but had not seen her. He could not help feeling that when he did have an opportunity to speak it would be an eventful meeting for him. He had inherited a large portion of his father's abrupt determination of conduct and action. All this faculty, intensified in another direction under the influence of his spiritual awakening, burned as strong as in the old Stuart, only for another purpose. Paul was Saul Christianized. And the new Stuart was as likely to act in matters that required decision with as much quickness as the old Stuart, only with a larger and truer vision of the meaning of the action.
The three men met with a more serious and thoughtful bearing than at the other meeting. Every day in Champion now intensified the situation and increased the sum total of suffering. There was no outward sign of the union weakening. The winter had set in definitely, and it looked very much as if the mines had closed down for the season. Stuart remembered one winter when the mines had closed for a month through action of the owners in order to force up the price of ore. That was when he was a boy. He could still remember something of the suffering at that time. Now it promised to be infinitely worse.
"Eric, you have more influence with the men than any one on the ranges. Can't you persuade the union to do something to arrive at a decision?" asked Stuart a little vaguely. He was feeling around after answers to a thousand questions, and he started the talk aimlessly because he was preoccupied.
"Well, what can I do? The owners are the ones to arrive at a decision. Can't you persuade them to agree to our demands and your own promise of \$2 a day?" replied Eric, who never hesitated to say what he felt no matter how abrupt it might seem.
"No; I have no influence that way with the other owners. You ought to see some of the letters I get from Cleveland. I tell you the owners will not give in. The whole situation is horrible. Sometimes, Eric, Andrew, I feel as if the men were destitute of all sense. What right have a third or a fourth of them to keep the rest from work because all cannot get the same wages?"
"They don't look at it that way. The principle is with them all based on the right or wrong side of the demand for the \$2. At the same time, as I said the other day, I look at the strike from another point of view. I am ready to acknowledge it is a miserable way to try to get justice done. The men can never make up what they have lost by this idleness. But, good God, Stuart," ejaculated Eric, hobbling to the window and looking out on the snow covered hills just back of the cottage, "what other way is there if the owners refuse to listen to appeals and arbitration? Are we to submit indefinitely to starvation wages because we can't help ourselves? Of course I look at it from a workingman's standpoint. Billed down to its simplest terms, the men don't see anything but reason in asking that a business like the ore industry, that has made a few men princely rich, ought to divide up its profits more fairly and make a good many persons more comfortable instead of making a select few uncomfortably wealthy."
"Do you believe a man can be uncomfortably wealthy?" asked Andrew, with a smile, as if he believed it himself.
"You don't need to go outside this room to find one," answered Stuart soberly. "What good can I do with all my money in a case like this? I seem to be as helpless as either of you."
"No, you're not. You can relieve a

great deal of distress. Money is a great power in that way."
"But look here, Eric. Isn't this the situation? Here are 5,000 men out on a strike. A thousand of them have been offered their demands. They have been offered out of sympathy for the rest, who will never get what they ask, for I can't compel the other companies to do what I think is the right thing. Now, then, these men are faced with starvation or at least with great suffering this winter. Shall I say to them practically: 'Never mind; I have money. I will take care of you indefinitely or until the money is gone?' It seems to me that the thousand men ought to go to work if they have an offer at their own terms. What do you think, Andrew?"
"I think as you do. I regard the strike as a disaster. At the same time the men are doing as thousands of men have done and will continue to do until we have a better system than we have at present of settling the differences between men who labor with the brain and those who labor with the hand. Would it be possible to provide the men with work of any kind, so that they would not be fed in idleness?"
"Why, what can miners do except their own kind of work? Who can manufacture work in a country like this, where the whole industry revolves about one thing? Besides—well, go on, Eric, if you want to speak," said Stuart, who saw Eric impatiently biting his lips and nervously clinching his hands.
"I don't know what to say!" burst out Eric. "The whole situation is maddening. The men are right, and the men are wrong. If their methods of getting justice are at fault, the demand itself for justice, I believe, is right. But what can you expect? Who for all these years has paid any attention to the human end of this ore producing business? What care do the men at Cleveland have for the souls or the development of the souls of these men who dig the stuff out of the ground that helps buy other men costly luxuries and fine clothes and houses, travel, education, pleasures and beauties of all sorts? What are we reaping now but the fruits of a great sowing of selfishness in the one great passion for money and what it will bring? I ask you two men, who have been reared in a finer atmosphere than mine, if it is not true that the wagemakers of the world, ignorant or mistaken or wrong and even vicious though at times they may have been and are, still have sinned according to their light less deeply or less wholly than the men of great wealth and education and social power. I am not saying that we are perfect or never make mistakes or that the selfishness is all on one side, but I do say that this present condition would not now be on us here if the men who have made their fortunes by the toil of the miners had acted like Christian men. How many of the mine owners have got together and prayed for wisdom to settle this matter right? Not one of them except Stuart here. And yet—well, when I get started I feel as if I could break all bounds. There is a fire in my bones over this problem. I don't believe there is a man living who can devise a thorough remedy. If he can, he stands guilty before God for keeping silent. And this much is certain: No man or nation or form of government known to civilization is free from these differences between the men of muscle and the men of money. Why, only this morning the papers had telegraphic dispatches announcing tremendous strikes in five different countries—England, France, Germany, Australia and the United States. There are more than 100,000 men out on strikes this very minute. I know there is great discontent, and men say great foolishness, on the part of the men of labor. Grant it. The fact is we live in an age of unrest. But at the bottom the whole secret of the trouble lies in a disregard of humanity in a passion for getting wealth first of all. The love of money has wrecked empires, and it will smash our civilization unless"— Eric stopped abruptly and buried his face in his hands.
Stuart stepped up to him and laid his hand on Eric's shoulder. "Well, Eric," he said simply, "God will triumph in the end. Let's hold fast to the great truths that have always been true."
"There is no solution of these difficulties, I am sure," said Andrew after a moment of quiet in the room, "except as it comes along the religious lines. I believe the next great factor in what is called the labor question will be the religious factor. I see no possible hope for a better condition unless it is brought about by the appeal to and a belief in Christianity as the real source of final adjustment of men's relation with one another in the social compact. In reality the problem consists in getting men on both sides to act like Christians. There could be no possible clash, for instance, between you two men if either one worked for the other, because you love each other. Love for one another, therefore, is, after all, the greatest thing in the world, because it is the great and final adjuster of all social problems and differences."
"I believe that, too," said Stuart, pacing up and down the little room. "I don't question the final triumph of love and right. But we don't live in the millennium yet. And we have our own questions local to us right here and now."
"There can't be any doubt about our duty to the suffering women and children," said Andrew. "And I can tell you there's a lot of it beginning. One of the worst things about it all is the way the men are beginning to drink. What little savings many of them had are going this way."
"Curse the saloon! Oh hell on earth!" cried Stuart and Andrew in unison, the hemence of his tone, churches on Sunday preach for peace a

giveness and love and blessing on little children and all that, and then on election day we go and vote with all the rum funds on earth to perpetuate a system by local option that damn with its infernal breath every pure desire and every upward reach of humanity, and the prayers of the nation ought to come back into its homes and down upon its religious altars as curses, as they are coming, until we learn how horribly foolish and wicked we have been not to act our prayers out in our votes against this devil. The saloon has done my people more harm than any one thing in our civilization."
Stuart was silent. For the first time he felt the force of Eric's passion in the matter. He remembered that the last time he and his father voted they voted for license. So did nearly every church member in Champion. So did every one of the 40 saloon keepers there at present.
"Well, we can't drive the saloon out this winter. It's a legalized institution so far as it has a right to sell to those who want to buy," at last Stuart said sadly. "It's one more factor in the problem. Let's face it like men and hope for better things to come. Of course Andrew is right about the relief of suffering women and children. I have a plan, too, that I believe can be carried out to a certain extent in getting the men to work instead of receiving aid in idleness. I need more time to work it out. Meanwhile we ought to consult with the doctor and the city officers as to the best and most effective way of—"
There was a knock at the door, and Dr. Saxon came in. "I haven't but a minute to stay. Heard you were here,

There was a knock at the door, and Dr. Saxon came in.



Wanted to tell you that the typhoid has started in and looks like a bad job. Never knew typhoid to come this way in winter before, but all the streams are poisoned. Jim Binney is going with it. Sanders' two girls are down with it. Cornishton is likely to be swept with it. I can't make these people obey my directions about the drainage. I find they've been drinking poisoned water all the fall. The mines ought to furnish the doctor with a company of militia with orders to stand guard over these obstinate, stupid old—"
The doctor choked off the next word and went on: "And if they didn't obey, shoot 'em on the spot and save expenses of medical attendance. Tell you, Stuart, I'll run up a bill against the company for all this work I've put in lately without pay. I'm tired of it. Been out on Davis hill every day now for a month. Tipped over this afternoon coming down the Iron Cliff road and got two bushels of snow up my sleeves. If there is anything I hate, it's snow up my sleeve. I'm going to quit running my head into anvils for these ungrateful, thankless—"
Just then a loud knock at the door interrupted the doctor, who all the time he was speaking was shaking the snow off his coat upon the stove, which hissed and spluttered with the doctor's vigorous growl.
"Is the doctor here?" said a voice as Eric went to the door and opened it.
"Yes. What do you want?"
"Lew Trethven has broken his leg. Fell into prospecting hole near upper trail of Cornishton. He wants doctor to come right up."
"Yes. Hear that, will you?" said the doctor, who was listening hard to catch every word. "Trethven has broken every leg of his body three separate times since I've been here. If he had six legs, he'd break every one of 'em. He always falls into a hole at the close of day, when I'm the farthest off and feel the least like going to see him. I've mended him so often that he looks like a bamboo fish rod."
"Say, doctor, can you come right up?" asked the man outside as he caught a glimpse of him through the opening.
"No; I haven't had anything to eat all day since breakfast. Tell Trethven to wait until morning. He's used to breaking his legs by this time. Tell him to set the fracture himself. Tell him I'm sick. Tell him—"
Eric shut the door, and the man outside walked slowly away. The doctor saw him go by the window.
"Excuse me," he muttered. "I forgot to blanket Ajax." He darted out of the room, and Stuart saw him go around the corner and overtake the man. Ajax was standing out near the street where the doctor had left him. Stuart saw Saxon rush the messenger from Trethven into the cutter, climb in himself, leaving one foot out as usual, turn Ajax around with such haste that for a moment it was a matter of doubt whether the miner would remain inside or outside the reeling, swaying cutter, and then they disappeared behind a great drift by the side of the street.
When Stuart went home that afternoon, he carried with him a burden that grew heavier as the twilight deepened. There were more questions to