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**His Brother's Keeper;**

Or,  
**Christian Stewardship.**

BY CHARLES M. SHELTON,  
 Author of "In His Steps," "The Crucifixion of Philip Strong," "Robert Hardy's Seven Days," "Malcom Kirk," etc.

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**CHAPTER XI.**  
**AN ORATOR.**

When Stuart and the doctor swept into De Mott after a fierce ride behind the foaming Ajax, they found almost the entire population gathered around the pasture block, in which

ter mostly for traveling show companies.

It was packed tonight with the miners. The union was in session, and every man who could find a foothold inside was there. The rest were waiting outside to hear a final decision. Not a man of them but believed the result had already been determined and that before morning every pump on the range would be pulled out and the companies would lose millions of dollars' worth of property in a few hours. It would be a grim revenge of labor over capital. It would strike capital at its most sensitive spot. It would be a real satisfaction for the great suffering and want of the winter. And many and many a hollow faced miner in the crowd around the hall was thinking of a little child lying dead under the snow in the great burial place on the slope of the range, and he grasped his stick tighter and cursed the rich in his palace of comfort that bitter night.

Stuart never felt more helpless. He looked at the faces around him, and his heart sank as he realized how great was the force of a mob bent on doing its own pleasure. He felt as if any influence he might possess in Champion was an empty breath in De Mott. Surely Andrew had been mistaken when he said Stuart could influence such men as these at such a time as this.

He was roused from all this by the doctor, who spoke short and sharp.

"Now, then, let's make a break for the hall! We'll leave Ajax right here." Stuart was astonished.

"They won't let us in the hall."

"We'll see about that," replied the doctor.

He drove Ajax up in front of one of the drug stores where he was in the habit of stopping when he came to De Mott, and, getting out of the cutter, with Stuart following with much wonder, he began to force his way to the hall door. As Stuart went on he began to realize that there had been a mistake made by Andrew. If there was one man left who had real influence over the miners, it was not Stuart Duncan, but Dr. Saxon.

It was almost comical to see the changes that went over the miners' faces as the doctor shoved men this way and that in order to get near the hall. At first they swore and threatened to do unspeakable damage for the rough treatment some one was giving them, but the minute they caught sight of the rugged, kindly face they were as polite and ready to make room as if he had been some high and mighty potentate and they his loyal subjects.

"Get out of the way there! Doctor, he be needed in the hall. Some one be hurt in there likely!" And a big Dane reached out and caught a miner, who was standing in front of the doctor, by the collar and pulled him off his feet as if he had been a dummy in a clothing store.

In this way the doctor, Stuart struggling in his wake, fought and had fought for him a way up to the hall door. Thirty years' absolute devotion to the great needs of the miners in De Mott as well as in Champion had endeared the doctor to every stolid, obstinate, dull, heavy brained, but warm hearted man out of the 5,000, but even tonight he was privileged to go where he wanted and no questions asked.

He was in the hall and Stuart behind him. It was contrary to union rules, but tonight there was no such strict enforcement of regulations. The men had reached or were nearing a desperate resolve and did not care much who knew it.

So the doctor, still silent, as he had been from the time he started to make his way into the hall, went on through the dense crowd that blocked the aisles, and Stuart still crowded after him, his mind in a dream, his amazement at the doctor's action not yet relieved by a real inkling of his purpose.

They were on the platform, and the speaker had stopped to shake hands with the doctor, and then the doctor had asked in a low voice if he might say a word to the men.

The chairman of the union happened to be one of the Champion men. It was only two weeks before that Dr. Saxon had gone out into one of the fiercest storms of the winter, waded through drifts over his head, where Ajax had refused to go, and at a critical time in the illness of this man's baby had dragged it, as if by sheer force of defiance against death, out of the very shadow of the valley back into the warmth of life. The chairman was a hard faced, hard fisted, but big hearted Cornishman, who loved his babies as much as any man on earth, and if Dr. Saxon had asked for his last crust of bread or a share of his pasty he would have said, "Take it all."

"Boys, doctor, he be wanting to say a word or two. It don't belong to be by the rules, but I say let doctor say his say."

"Aye, aye! Let's hear doctor!" shouted a hundred voices, and the man who had been speaking at once sat down.

The doctor turned around and faced the men. Stuart never forgot the scene. It flashed into him like light that the doctor was taking all this upon himself to save him, Stuart, from danger of collision with the men. He almost forgot Rhena in his love for his old friend tonight.

And it was a scene for painters, only painters never could catch the full meaning of it all. The doctor looked into the faces of men by whose side he had stood in the little cabins where life was going out or at the bottom of the mines after some horrible accident, and he was always the same in his unflinching devotion to duty and his unspoken love for the suffering and his great skill to beat death back and look hell in the face without a tremor of a nerve or the quiver of an eyelid.

"Now, then," began the doctor in his usual abrupt manner, "there isn't a man here ever heard me try to make

quiet that the noise of the crowd outdoors could plainly be heard. No one replied to the doctor's question. The men were all waiting to hear the next word. They were not easily surprised, but the sight of the doctor up there and the sound of his voice in this revelation of him were almost like seeing or hearing a man who had been dead for 30 years come suddenly to life.

"And I'm not going to try it now. But I want to tell you that if you do what you are threatening to do tonight you'll be bigger fools than I've been calling you for 30 years or more. Why, you must be insane idiots, every mother's son of you, to think you can gain anything by pulling up pumps! Who'll suffer? The mine owners? What if they do lose a little property up here? Haven't you got sense enough to know that it is only one item out of thousands for them? But it's the whole thing for you, and if you weren't a lot of blockheaded dummies you would know that the result of pulling up the pumps will be simply to give me more work to do in mending your cracked skulls and sewing up a lot of gunshot wounds in your useless bodies, and I tell you I've got my hands full now without having a lot of extra work piled on me just because you want to have a little picnic with those pumps. And after you've pulled 'em up and about a hundred of you are killed or get what few brains you have left knocked out what will you gain besides that? How much chance will there be for mining in the spring with all the shafts flooded? Do you want to kill me with all this preparation for bloodshed? Tell you what I'll do. Any man here that wants me to amputate an arm or leg or fix his brains back into his empty head after he's gone and got himself mixed up in a fight with the militia can just take my word for it here and now that I will turn him over to the job work of these stranger doctors that have been practicing on you since the fever struck in this winter. Hear that? I simply won't do a thing for you!"

"I'm as mad as you are at the mine owners. I think that, with the exception of Mr. Duncan here, they will have a heavy account to settle at the day of judgment. But, sure as death, you won't gain anything by trying to improve God's punishment for 'em. You know what'll happen if the mines close down for good in the spring. The owners will have to open if you let the pumps alone, and you can go back at a rise over old wages. The pressure for ore will force the companies to resume. But once you ruin the mines, and what will you do? The babies cry for food in the cabins now, you say, but it will be worse than that if!—The doctor softened his voice for a minute. The effect of it was magical. Stuart could not believe and will not as long as he lives that Dr. Saxon was talking for the next few sentences. He has never heard him with that voice since. "The babies that lie out there on the great slope will never hunger again. I have watched hundreds of them leave this unsatisfactory world this winter and not one of them that did not pull my heartstrings with his little fingers as death won him from me. But God is merciful. There is no doubt of his justice. There isn't a man here who doesn't know I love him and would never counsel an act that I was not sure would be for your good and the good of the wives and children in the long run. Why, every one of you knows"—here the doctor resumed his voice that the miners knew so well, and every one started and came back again, staring at the great rugged coated figure—"that even Ajax has more sense than to go and kick over the measure that contains his oats. But that's what you plan to do. I always said that the stupidest numskulls that ever lived could be found in De Mott, where I've looked into more cracked craniums than anything else, and I've made up my mind that after this when I've broken heads to fix up I'll use cotton or wool or something like that to stuff the vacant places I find!"

Just then there was a disturbance down by the door, and the next moment a voice broke the silence of the crowd: "Is the doctor here? He's wanted at once outside. Been a row, and Pat Penryck has got a broken head. Tell the doctor to come right out."

"Hear that!" roared the doctor. "If you pull up pumps, I'll go right up and get killed with the rest of you when the militia fires, and after I've gone who'll come and pump life into you when death has you by the throat? And if I don't get shot I'll leave you and go down to Chicago, where I won't have to furnish the brains for the whole community!"

Without another word the doctor jumped down off the platform and worked his way outside, where he cared for the wounded man as skillfully and tenderly as if his patient had been the president of the republic.

At first Stuart had started to go out with the doctor. Then he suddenly changed his mind and decided to remain. The doctor had made a decided impression on the men. They were used to his rough, uncomplimentary, invidious, and they loved him as perhaps they never loved any one else, and he had put the matter so plainly, even if it had been flung at them so roughly, that they were compelled to think.

The next half hour in that old hall that night witnessed the closing chapter in the great strike. Man after man rose and declared that it would be madness to pull up the pumps. The doctor's words had struck into the heart of things, and men who had sworn when they entered the hall to destroy every cent's worth of mine owners' property they could lay hands on now stood caution and waiting. There was, however, one element that had

The union had been for several weeks in a condition bordering on dissolution. Eric had found that out some time before he was confronted with the fact of his own loss of power. He knew that the end was very near. The entire effect of the evening's event so far tended to break down what remained of the union. Stuart could see the end coming. He sat back against the wall, forgotten by the leaders and their men as the talk went on. There were several fiery appeals for carrying out the original plans of destroying the mines. The crowd swayed all over the room as one and another from the floor as well as from the platform spoke. Finally the end came in a rush. A great, shambling figure, no less than our old friend Sanders, who had been charged by the doctor with getting cod liver oil from the dispensary wherewith to grease his boots, rose and in a voice that in spite of its being perforated with spasmodic coughs was easily heard made a motion that the strike be declared off.

A pandemonium started in with the debate on this motion. The crowd outside caught the news, and it maddened the mob. There was a great rush for the hall entrance. The chairman finally put the motion as yells of "Question!" "Question!" rose on every side and it carried by a two-thirds vote.

Instantly the men in the hall started to rush into the street and were met at the hall entrance by the yelling crowd trying to get in. For several minutes there was a tremendous struggle, but gradually the crowd outside, as it learned of the action of the union leaders, gave way, and when one of the most prominent men in the De Mott range put the question, standing on the steps of the courthouse at the corner, the majority of the voices yelled "Aye!" to the question declaring the strike off. There was no accounting for this to Stuart's mind except by the fact that all along the men had grown more and more tired of the strike and had really been waiting for some one to make the break. Then they followed like sheep, and in less than ten minutes the union was past history.

A few of the disaffected men that night, inflamed with drink and mad at the close of the strike, went up to the Queen mine, determined to pull up the pumps and destroy as much as possible, but the troops had already anticipated such an attempt and in a skirmish with the miners drove them back, no one, however, being killed and only a few heads broken with clubs and ore missiles. Stuart did not know of this until the next day, and the doctor helped mend the broken heads, grumbling as he did so and declaring with each new case that it was positively the very last he would attend.

Stuart came out into the street feeling that his part of the evening's work had been very insignificant. He had, in fact, been almost ignored in the excitement and had sat a silent spectator of the affair. He was calm enough to realize that the doctor's abrupt statement, combined with the great love the miners had for him, had a great deal to do with the way the matters were being shaped. The crowd still remained in the streets, but it was broken up into groups, discussing the situation and wondering what the owners would do now.

Stuart was standing by the doctor's cutter, waiting for him to return, when a man touched him on the arm. He turned, and there stood Eric. He had run nearly all the way from Champion, but Stuart did not know that.

"Eric!" cried Stuart.

"I got here just in time to be of no use," said Eric gloomily. Then he added, with more feeling, "You are not hurt?"

"No. There has been no disturbance. You've heard that the strike is declared off? How did you come over?"

"Yes, I heard the news quick enough. I came on foot. I will never trust a crowd again. I thought I knew these men. I would have sworn nothing could prevent their pulling up the pumps tonight. That shows how little I have really known them."

"We thank the doctor for the way things have turned. You never heard such a talk as he gave the men."

"No, and you never will again," said the doctor as he came up and began to untie Ajax. "It was my first and will be my last on the stage. I wouldn't have gone up this time only I wanted to tell the good for nothing lot of them what fools they are. I seldom have such a chance to say so to as large a number of them at once. Come on. Going back to Champion with me, Stuart?"

"Wait a minute, doctor!" cried Stuart. He drew Eric off one side. "Eric, you came over on purpose to share the danger with me. I know what it means." Eric did not answer. "You are not feeling the injustice of the men toward you. Don't let it make you bitter. The cause is the same." Still Eric was silent. "Won't you go back with us? The doctor can make room."

"No; I'll stay over here with some friends. I'll be back tomorrow," Eric replied as if with an effort.

Stuart laid a hand on his shoulder. "Eric," he said simply, "I love you."

Eric choked. In the darkness a tear rolled down over his cheek. He turned away and walked into the street, and Stuart went back to Champion with the doctor.

"Eric takes it hard; his loss of influence over the men," said Stuart, with a sigh.

"Put not your trust in the mob," replied the doctor shortly.

When they drove back into the square at Champion, the lights in the Salvation Army hall were shining out a welcome. To Stuart it seemed as if the old weather beaten building was glorified. Whatever the outcome of that night's action on the part of the miners, he felt that he had a place in the love of one person, who, believing in him and his desire to be true to his

den and responsibility and privilege that awaited them under this new turn of affairs. Between this man and woman had now sprung up a mutual faith each in the other which made possible for them much of the great work that lay before them. Rhena dated from that night when her lover risked his life, as they both thought, at the call of duty, a new and sacred respect and attachment for him.

The next few days in Champion and De Mott were full of excitement. The men flocked back to the mines and gathered about the little offices of the mine captains up on the hills by the engine houses. The Cleveland owners had as yet made no movement to open up again. The captains on the De Mott ranges were waiting every hour for orders. Stuart was independent so far as his own action was concerned, and, true to his promise made so long ago, he at once posted notices that he would give all the men yet on the payroll of the Champion mines \$2 a day in a week he had more applicants than he could employ. He at once took



A man touched him on the arm.

steps to open up some new shafts which had been begun by his father. This enlarged his force of men by 500, but the men from De Mott came over in crowds, and he was not able to employ a fifth part of them. He knew that he had made enemies of the other owners, and he anticipated a move on their part to ruin him commercially, but the longer they held out and refused to open up or grant the \$2 a day Stuart was practically in a position to gain many markets once closed to him. The demand for ore was growing more imperative. As it happened also, the Champion mines were producing a very superior grade of ore, and Stuart could afford to pay the \$2 in any case, whether the other mines were worked or not.

As a matter of history, the whole outcome of the matter was as follows: The De Mott range did not open up in full for two weeks. The Cleveland owners, after doing all in their power to coerce Stuart, finding that every day only placed him, owing to the peculiar condition of the trade, in a better position, finally opened up a few mines at a 10 per cent rise on previous wages. This almost led to another strike and a formation of the union again. But the long winter, the long idleness, so unusual to the men, the great loss they had sustained, had their effect, and the De Mott men began to go back a few at a time. This led to a singular condition of affairs in the iron region, never before known. Nearly 1,500 men were receiving \$2 a day at Champion, while on the lower range twice as many men were working for \$1.90.

At the end of two months, however, with the opening up of the lake navigation, ore went up with such a bound that De Mott ranges advanced wages to \$2, and the men at last actually received, largely through Stuart's firmness in holding out, the amount they had originally demanded. But there was no great demonstration over the fact. The strike had been too costly. The suffering had left its mark on every home, and the men were not in a condition when the rise in wages finally came to spend much enthusiasm over it.

Long before this had come about Stuart and Rhena had planned for their new life together.

One day very soon after Champion mines had opened the two were out looking at the new cottages going up in Cornishtown. The work had been pushed hard, and at last satisfactory results were being seen. Most of the houses would be ready for use in a fortnight. After looking on and directing some special part of the settlement Stuart asked Rhena to go up the trail with him to the old stump where he had first told her he loved her.

When they reached the place, they turned to look down at the town. It was winter still. The snow lay deep in all the valley. The sound of the workmen came up to them from Cornishtown. The engine stacks were smoking all over the range. All the ore stock piles were dotted over with busy moving figures.

Stuart said something about the site being a good one for a house.

"I don't know but I shall put up a little cottage on this stump, and we could begin housekeeping on a modest scale, like the rest of the people down there. What do you think of that?"

"But wouldn't we be putting ourselves above them to come up here?" asked Rhena shyly.

"No; we would simply be in a position to see all of them and be better able to help them in case of need."

"I don't think the stump is quite large enough for a foundation," said Rhena very soberly, though she was very happy. "After I had opened the front door I would have to go outside to shut it again."

"You are very hard to suit, madam," replied Stuart.

Salvation Army lass would be ready to put up with almost anything."

"Stuart"—Rhena spoke with real seriousness—"I could be happy with you in one of the cottages down there, and you and I know that together. The army is very dear to me. I cannot leave it."

"I do not ask you to," replied Stuart, smiling. "I first fell in love with your bonnet, and I hope you will wear it at the wedding."

"I am thinking of the poor men and women I have been living with so long," continued Rhena. Her great eyes filled with tears. "I can't bear to have them think that because I am going to be the wife of the mine owner and live in his house I am going to be lifted so far away from them that they will—Stuart, you know what I mean. If I didn't believe so completely in you and your thought of stewardship of God's property, I would never dare marry you, a man with all this money and master of such a house. I cannot even think of the selfish surroundings of my life without a shudder."

"We need great wisdom to use God's blessings. It will be a joy to us to work out the problem together, won't it?"

Stuart said something so softly that with the exception of Rhena, only a snowbird on a fir tree near by heard it, and the snowbird never told.

They talked for awhile about their approaching marriage. It was to be the following week.

"Louise and Aunt Royal are going to New York the first of the week. My only regret, Rhena, is in being unable to reconcile them to us. We move in a different world from theirs."

"You have done all you could, I am sure, Stuart," replied Rhena gently. She was thinking of another matter. Finally she asked, almost timidly: "The army has asked me if I expected to be married in the church. Would you mind, Stuart, if we were married in the old hall?"

"No," said Stuart. He was and always had been indifferent to the particular forms and ceremonies of life, even the old life from which he was now emancipated, and he understood Rhena's reason for this request. She belonged to the army, and the little squad of officers and privates was very dear to her. She longed to assure them in every way possible that her marriage had not in any way removed them from her sympathy.

So one evening about a week after the departure of Louise and Aunt Royal Stuart went down to Eric's cottage and met Andrew and the doctor there. Together they went over to Rhena's lodging, and presently she came out dressed in the army costume that Stuart said was the best and most becoming for her to wear. She took his arm, and, with Eric and the doctor and Andrew marching behind, they stepped over to the hall.

The army was in great excitement. It had paraded the streets, held its outdoor meeting and was back at the hall to welcome the bride and groom. The little band stood just outside, and what it lacked in numbers it made up in muscle. The big drum had never received such a vigorous beating as it received that night. The tambourines would certainly have been knocked into small pieces if they had not been made of very tough material. Andrew "Sealy Joe," now known as "Witnessing Joseph," would surely have blown himself through the holes of his duty if he had not been possessed of a pair of lungs that could be almost indefinitely expanded.

Outside the hall, standing about in great crowd, were the miners of Champion. They greeted the little bridal party with hearty cheers as it came up, and as soon as the band had finished and Stuart and Rhena, Andrew and Eric and the doctor had gone in they crowded after, filling up the old room until it could not hold another person.

There were a good many brief prayers and several rousing songs as the army took its place on the platform. The major, also carried away by the greatness of the occasion, made a rattling speech, punctuated with frequent ams and hallelujahs from the rest of the army. The collection was not forgotten, and as it was an occasion out of a lifetime and the men were getting wages again the tambourines were heavy with silver, and the major began to think of putting up suitable headquarters at once.

Finally the noise ceased, and Andrew read the marriage service, Rhena and Stuart standing in the middle of the platform, Eric and the doctor a little one side and behind Stuart. The part of the ceremony was not strictly according to Salvation Army rules, but "everything goes tonight," as "Witnessing Joseph" said in a few remarks after the collection. Andrew's prayer was full of beauty and power. "There was almost as good a prayer as we have here in the hall conference nights," said the major afterward. The whole ceremony was very impressive to Stuart in spite of the surroundings and the army exercises that accompanied them, for he felt in it all that woman standing by his side in that costume, which had become dear to him sick and body suffering humanly, was the woman who was to walk in hand with him through life with these people now crowded into the hall, the largest factor in both their experiences, and it seemed to him especially appropriate that they should solemnize the most sacred event of their lives in the presence of those whom they had begun to help and regard as truly belonging to the brotherhood in the family which is in God the Father.

They had planned to remain some time after the service was over, to shake hands with the men. The crowd outside was clamoring to get in, and finally, at the major's suggestion, the men filed up to the platform, their hands, offered their greetings and