

The Bounty-Jumper

By MARY SYNON

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"... While faith, that in the mire was fain to wallow, Returns at last to find
The cold fanes desolate, the niches hollow, The windows dim and blind,

"And strown with ruins around, the shattered relic Of unregardful youth,
Where shapes of beauty once, with tongues angelic, Whispered the runes of Truth."

--From "*The Burden of Lost Souls*."

On the day before Isador Framberg's body was brought back to Chicago from Vera Cruz, James Thorold's appointment as ambassador to Forsland was confirmed by the Senate of the United States. Living, Isador Framberg might never have wedged into the affairs of nations and the destinies of James Thorold. Marines in the navy do not intrigue with chances of knee-breeches at the Court of St. Jerome. More than miles lie between Forquier Street and the Lake Shore Drive. Dead, Isador Framberg became, as dead men sometimes become, the archangel of a nation, standing with flaming sword at the gateway to James Thorold's paradise.

For ten years the Forsland embassy had been the goal of James Thorold's ambition. A man past seventy, head of a great importing establishment, he had shown interest in public affairs only within the decade, although his very build, tall, erect, commanding, and his manner suavely courteous and untouched by futile haste, seemed to have equipped him with a natural bent for public life. Marrying late in life, he seemed to have found his bent more tardily than did other men. But he had invested wealth, influence, and wisdom in the future of men who, come to power, were paying him with this grant of his desire. The news, coming to him unofficially but authoritatively from Washington, set him to cabling his wife and daughter in Paris and

telegraphing his son whose steamer was just docking in New York. The boy's answer, delayed in transit and announcing that he was already on his way to Chicago, came with the morning newspapers and hurried his father through their contents in order that he might be on time to meet Peter at the station.

The newspapers, chronicling Thorold's appointment briefly, were heavy with harbingering of the funeral procession of the boy who had fallen a fortnight before in the American navy's attack upon Vera Cruz. The relative values that editors placed upon the marine's death and his own honoring nettled Thorold. Ambassadors to the Court of St. Jerome were not chosen from Chicago every day, he reasoned, finding Isador Framberg already the fly in the amber of his contentment. To change the current of his thought he read over Peter's telegram, smiling at the exuberant message of joy in which the boy had vaunted the family glory. The yellow slip drove home to James Thorold the realization of how largely Peter's young enthusiasm was responsible for the whetting of his father's desire to take part in public affairs. For Peter's praise James Thorold would have moved mountains; and Peter's praise had a way of following the man on horseback. Thorold's eager anticipation of the boy's pride in him sped his course through rosy mists of hope as his motor-car threaded the bright drive and through the crowded Parkway toward the Rush Street bridge.

A cloud drifted across the sky of his serenity, however, as a blockade of traffic delayed his car in front of the old Adams homestead, rising among lilacs that flooded half city square with fragrance. The old house, famous beyond its own day for Judge Adams's friendship with Abraham Lincoln and the history-making sessions that the little group of Illinois idealists had held within its walls, loomed gray above the flowering shrubs, a saddening reminder of days that James Thorold must have known; but Thorold, glimpsing the place, turned away from it in a movement so swift as to betoken some resentment and gave heed instead to the long line of motors rolling smoothly toward the city's heart.

Over the bridge and through the packed streets of the down-town district Thorold, shaken from his reverie of power and Peter, watched the film that Chicago unrolled for the boulevard pilgrims. The boats in the river, the long switch-tracks of the railroads, the tall grain-

elevators, the low warehouses from which drifted alluring odors of spices linked for James Thorold the older city of his youth with the newer one of his age as the street linked one division of the city's geography with another. They were the means by which Chicago had risen from the sand-flats of the fifties to the Michigan Avenue of the present, that wide street of the high skyline that fronted the world as it faced the Great Lakes, squarely, solidly, openly. They were the means, too, by which James Thorold had augmented his fortune until it had acquired the power to send him to Forsland. To him, however, they represented not ladders to prosperity but a social condition of a passing generation, the Chicago of the seventies, a city distinctively American in population and in ideals, a youthful city of a single standard of endeavor, a pleasant place that had been swallowed by the Chicago of the present, that many-tentacled monster of heterogeneous races, that affected him as it did so many of the older residents, with an overwhelming sensation of revolt against its sprawling lack of cohesion. Even the material advantages that had accrued to him from the growth of the city could not reconcile James Thorold to the fact that the elements of the city's growth came from the races of men whom he held in contempt. What mattered it, he reasoned, that Chicago waxed huge when her grossness came from the unassimilated, indigestible mass of Latins and Greeks, Poles and Russians, Czechs, Bulgars, Jews, who filled the streets, the factories, and the schools?

The prejudice, always strong within him, rose higher as he found his machine blocked again, this time by the crowd that stood across Jackson Boulevard at La Salle Street. Even after the peremptory order of a mounted police officer had cleared the way for him James Thorold frowned on the lines of men and women pressed back against the curbstones. The thought that they were waiting the coming of the body of that boy who had died in Mexico added to his annoyance the realization that he would have to fight his way through another crowd at the station if he wished to reach the train-shed where Peter's train would come. The struggle was spared him, however, by the recognition of a newspaper reporter who took it for granted that the ambassador to Forsland had come to meet the funeral cortege of the marine and who led him through a labyrinthine passage that brought him past the gates and under the glass dome of the train-shed.

Left alone, Thorold paced the platform a little apart from the group of men who had evidently been delegated to represent the city. Some of them he knew. Others of them, men of Isador Framberg's people and of the ten tribes of Israel, he did not care to know. He turned away from them to watch the people beyond the gates. Thousands of faces, typical of every nation of Europe and some of the lands of Asia, fair Norsemen and Teutons, olive-skinned Italians and men and women of the swarthier peoples of Palestine, Poles, Finns, Lithuanians, Russians, Bulgars, Bohemians, units of that mass which had welded in the city of the Great Lakes of America, looked out from behind the iron fence. The tensivity written on their faces, eager yet awed, brought back to James Thorold another time when men and women had stood within a Chicago railway terminal waiting for a funeral cortege, the time when Illinois waited in sorrow to take Abraham Lincoln, dead, to her heart. The memory of that other day of dirges linked itself suddenly in the mind of James Thorold with the picture of the lilacs blooming in the yard of the Adams homestead on the parkway, that old house where Abraham Lincoln had been wont to come; and the fusing recollections spun the ambassador to Forsland upon his heel and sent him far down the platform, where he stood, gloomily apart, until the limited, rolling in from the end of the yards, brought him hastening to its side.

Peter Thorold was the first to alight.

A boy of sixteen, fair-haired, blue-eyed, ruddy-cheeked, springing from the platform of the Pullman into his father's arms, he brought with him the atmosphere of high adventure. In height, in poise of shoulders, in bearing, in a certain trick of lifting his chin, he was a replica of the dignified man who welcomed him with deep emotion; but a difference--of dream rather than of dogma--in the quality of their temperaments accoladed the boy. It was not only that his voice thrilled with the higher enthusiasms of youth. It held besides an inflexibility of tone that James Thorold's lacked. Its timbre told that Peter Thorold's spirit had been tempered in a furnace fierier than the one which had given forth the older man's. The voice rang out now in excited pleasure as the boy gripped his father's shoulders. "Oh, but it's good to see you again, dad," he cried. "You're a great old boy, and I'm proud of you, sir. Think of it!" he almost shouted. "Ambassador to Forsland! Say, but that's bully!" He slipped his arm around his father's

shoulder, while James Thorold watched him with eyes that shone with joy. "What do you call an ambassador?" he demanded laughingly.

"Fortunately," the older man said, "there is no title accompanying the office."

"Well, I should think not," the boy exclaimed. "Oh, dad, isn't it the greatest thing in the world that you're to represent the United States of America?"

James Thorold smiled. "No doubt," he said dryly. His gaze passed his son to glimpse the crowd at the gate, frantic now with excitement, all looking forward toward some point on the platform just beyond where the man and boy were standing. "These United States of America have grown past my thought of them," he added. The boy caught up the idea eagerly. "Haven't they, though?" he demanded. "And isn't it wonderful to think that it's all the same old America, 'the land of the free and the home of the brave?' Gee, but it's good to be back in it again. I came up into New York alongside the battleship that brought our boys home from Mexico," he went on, "and, oh, say, dad, you should have seen that harbor! I've seen a lot of things for a fellow," he pursued with a touch of boyish boastfulness, "but I never saw anything in all my life like that port yesterday. People, and people, and people, waiting, and flags at half-mast, and a band off somewhere playing a funeral march, and that battleship with the dead sailors--the fellows who died for our country at Vera Cruz, you know--creeping up to the dock. Oh, it was--well, I cried!" He made confession proudly, then hastened into less personal narrative.

"One of them came from Chicago here," he said. "He was only nineteen years old, and he was one of the first on the beach after the order to cross to the customhouse. He lived over on Forquier Street, one of the men was telling me--there are six of them, the guard of honor for him, on the train--and his name was Isador Framberg. He was born in Russia, too, in Kiev, the place of the massacres, you remember. See, dad, here comes the guard!"

Peter Thorold swung his father around until he faced six uniformed men who fell into step as they went forward toward the baggage-car. "It's too bad, isn't it," the boy continued, "that any of the boys had to die down in that greaser town? But, if they did, I'm proud that we

proved up that Chicago had a hero to send. Aren't you, dad?" James Thorold did not answer. Peter's hands closed over his arm. "It reminds me," he said, lowering his voice as they came closer to the place where the marines stood beside the iron carrier that awaited the casket of Isador Framberg's body, "of something the tutor at Westbury taught us in Greek last year, something in a funeral oration that a fellow in Athens made on the men who died in the Peloponnesian War. 'Such was the end of these men,'" he quoted slowly, pausing now and then for a word while his father looked wonderingly upon his rapt fervor, "'and they were worthy of Athens. The living need not desire to have a more heroic spirit. I would have you fix your eyes upon the greatness of Athens, until you become filled with the love of her; and, when you are impressed by the spectacle of her glory, reflect that this empire has been acquired by men who knew their duty and who had the courage to do it, who in the hour of conflict had the fear of dishonor always present to them.'" With the solemnity of the chant the young voice went on while the flag-covered casket was lifted from car to bier. "For the whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men; not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions in their own country, but in foreign lands there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not in stone but in the hearts of men. Make them your examples, and, esteeming courage to be freedom and freedom to be happiness, do not weigh too nicely the perils of war."

He pulled off his cap, tucking it under his arm and dragging his father with him to follow the men who had fallen in behind the marines as they moved forward toward the gates and the silent crowd beyond. Almost unwillingly James Thorold doffed his hat. The words of Peter's unexpected declamation of Pericles's oration resounded in his ears. "Once before," he said to the boy, "I heard that speech. Judge Adams said it one night to Abraham Lincoln."

"Father!" Peter's eyes flashed back from the cortege to meet James Thorold's. "I never knew that you knew Abraham Lincoln." His tone betokened an impression of having been cheated of some joy the older man had been hoarding. But James Thorold's voice held no joy. "Yes," he said. "I knew him."

The gates, sliding back, opened the way for the officers who led the procession with which Isador Framberg came back to the city of his adoption. The crowd yawned to give space to the guard of honor,

walking erectly beside the flag-draped coffin, to the mourners, men and women alien as if they had come from Kiev but yesterday, to the little group of men, public officials and rabbis, who trailed in their wake, and to James Thorold and Peter, reverently following. Then it closed in upon the cortege, urging it silently down the broad stairways and out into the street where other crowds fell in with the strange procession. Surging away after the shabby hearse, drawn by its listless horses and attended by the marines, the crowd left the Thorolds, father and son, on the pavement beside the station. "Don't you want to go?" There was a wistfulness in Peter's voice that told his father that the boy had sensed some lack of responsiveness in him. "He's going to lie in state to-day at the city hall. Don't you think we should go, dad?" Not Peter's query but Peter's eyes won his father's answer. "After a while," he promised. "Then let's find a breakfast," the boy laughed. "I spent my last dollar sending you that telegram."

All the way over to his father's club on Michigan Avenue, and all through the breakfast that he ordered with lusty young appetite, Peter kept up a running fire of reminiscence of his European adventures. That the fire held grapeshot for his father when he talked of the latter's worthiness for the ambassadorship to Forsland he could not guess; but he found that he was pouring salt in a wound when he went back to comment upon Isador Framberg's death. "Why make so much of a boy who happened to be at Vera Cruz?" the older man said at last, nettled that even his son found greater occasion for commendation in the circumstance of the Forquier Street hero than in his father's selection to the most important diplomatic post in the gift of the government. Peter's brows rose swiftly at his father's annoyance. He opened his lips for argument, then swiftly changed his intention. "Tell me about Judge Adams, dad," he said, bungling over his desire to change the topic, "the fellow who knew his Pericles."

"It's too long a story," James Thorold said. He watched Peter closely in the fashion of an advocate studying the characteristics of a judge. The boy's idealism, his vivid young patriotism, his eager championship of those elements of the new America that his father contemned, had fired his personality with a glaze that left James Thorold's smoothly diplomatic fingers wandering over its surface, unable to hold it within his grasp. He had a story to tell Peter--some time--a story of Judge Adams, of the house among the lilacs, of days of war, of Abraham Lincoln; but the time for its telling must wait

upon circumstance that would make Peter Thorold more ready to understand weakness and failure than he now seemed. Consciously James Thorold took a change of venue from Peter Thorold of the visions to Peter Thorold of the inevitable disillusion. But to the former he made concession. "Shall we go to the city hall now?" he asked as they rose from the table.

The city hall, a massive white granite pile covering half of the square east of La Salle Street and north of Washington and meeting its twin of the county building to form a solid mass of masonry, flaunted black drapings over the doorways through which James Thorold and his son entered. Through a wide corridor of bronze and marble they found their way, passing a few stragglers from the great crowd that had filled the lower floors of the huge structures when Isador Framberg's body had been brought from its hearse and carried to the centre of the aisles, the place where the intersecting thoroughfares met. Under a great bronze lamp stood the catafalque, covered with the Stars and Stripes and guarded by the men of the fleet.

Peter Thorold, pressing forward, took his place, his cap thrust under his arm, at the foot of the bier, giving his tribute of silence to the boy who had died for his country. But James Thorold went aside to stand beside an elevator-shaft. Had his son watched him as he was watching Peter, he would have seen the swift emotions that took their way across his father's face. He would have seen the older man's look dilate with the strained horror of one who gazed back through the dimming years to see a ghost. He would have seen sorrow, and grief, and a great remorse rising to James Thorold's eyes. He might even have seen the shadow of another bier cast upon the retina of his father's sight. He might have seen through his father's watching the memory of another man who had once lain on the very spot where Isador Framberg was lying, a man who had died for his country after he had lived to set his country among the free nations of the earth. But Peter Thorold saw only the boy who had gone from a Forquier Street tenement to the Mexican sands that he might prove by his dying that, with Irish, and Germans, and French, he too, the lad who had been born in Kiev of the massacres, was an American.

With the surge of strange emotions flooding his heart, Peter Thorold crossed to where his father stood apart. The tide of his thought overflowed the shore of prose and landed his expression high on a

cliff of poetry. No chance, but the urging of his own exalted mood, brought him the last lines of Moody's "Ode in Time of Hesitation":

"Then on your guiltier head Shall our intolerable self-disdain Wreak suddenly its anger and its pain; For manifest in that disastrous light We shall discern the right And do it, tardily.--O ye who lead, Take heed! Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will smite."

But to the older man, seeing as he stood the picture of that other catafalque to which he had crept one night in the lilac time of a year nearly a half century ago, the words flung anathema. He leaned back against the bronze grating of the shaft with a sudden look of age that brought Peter's protective arm to his shoulder. Then, with Peter following, he went out to the sun-bright street.

Like a man in a daze he dismissed his car, crossing pavements under Peter's guiding until he came to the building where the fortunes of the great Thorold mercantile business were administered. Through the outer room, where clerks looked up in surprise at the appearance which their chief presented on the morning when they had learned of the Forsland embassy, he led Peter until they came to the room where he had reigned for twenty years. It was a room that had always mirrored James Thorold to his son. Tall bookcases, stiff, old-fashioned, held long rows of legal works, books on history, essays on ethical topics, and bound volumes of periodicals. Except for its maps, it was a lawyer's room, although James Thorold never claimed either legal ability or legal standing. Peter seldom entered it without interest in its possibilities of entertainment, but to-day his father's strange and sudden preoccupation of manner engulfed all the boy's thought. "What is it, dad?" he asked, a tightening fear screwing down upon his brain as he noted the change that had come over the mask that James Thorold's face held to the world.

James Thorold made him no answer. He was standing at the wide walnut table, turning over and over in his hands the letters which his secretary had left for his perusal. Finally, he opened one of them, the bulkiest. He scanned it for a moment, then flung it upon the floor. Then he began to pace the room till in his striding he struck his foot against the paper he had cast aside. He picked it up, tossing it toward Peter. The boy turned from his strained watching of his father's face to read the letter. It was the official notification of the Senate's

confirmation of the President's appointment of James Thorold as ambassador to the Court of St. Jerome.

"Why, father!" Incredulity heightened the boyishness in Peter's tone. James Thorold wheeled around until he faced him. "Peter," he said huskily, "there's something you'll have to know before I go to Forsland--if ever I go to Forsland. You'll have to decide." The boy shrank from the ominous cadence of the words. "Why, I can't judge for you, dad," he said awkwardly. "Our children are always our ultimate judges," James Thorold said.

"I have sometimes wondered," he went on, speaking to himself rather than to the puzzled boy, "how the disciples who met Christ but who did not go his way with him to the end felt when they heard he had died. I knew a great man once, Peter. I went his way for a little while, then I took my own. I saw them bring him, dead, over the way they have brought that boy to-day. I came down to the court-house that night, and there, just where that boy lies, Peter, I made a promise that I have not kept."

Again he resumed his pacing, speaking as he went, sometimes in low tones, sometimes with tenseness of voice, always as if urged by some force that was driving him from silence. The boy, leaning forward at the edge of the chair, watched his father through the first part of the story. Before the end came he turned away.

"You remember," James Thorold began, his voice pleading patience, "that I've told you I came to Chicago from Ohio before the war? I was older than you then, Peter, but I was something of a hero-worshipper, too. Judge Adams was my hero in those troublous times of the fifties. I knew him only by sight for a long time, watching him go in and out of the big white house where he lived. After a time I came to know him. I was clerking in a coffee-importing house during the day and studying law at night. Judge Adams took me into his office. He took me among his friends. Abraham Lincoln was one of them.

"I remember the night I met Lincoln. Judge Adams had talked of him often. He had been talking of him that day. 'Greatness,' he had said, 'is the holding of a great dream, not for yourself, but for others. Abraham Lincoln has the dream. He has heard the voice, and seen the vision,

and he is climbing up to Sinai. You must meet him, James.' That night I met him in the old white house.

"We were in the front parlor of the old house," James Thorold continued, resetting the scene until his only listener knew that it was more real to him than the room through which he paced, "when some one said, 'Mr. Lincoln.' I looked up to see a tall, awkward man standing in the arched doorway. Other men have said that they had to know Lincoln a long time to feel his greatness. My shame is the greater that I felt his greatness on the instant when I met his eyes.

"There was talk of war that night. Lincoln did not join in it, I remember, although I do not recall what he said. But when he rose to go I went with him. We walked down the street past dooryards where lilacs were blooming, keeping together till we crossed the river. There our ways parted. I told him a little of what Judge Adams had said of him. He laughed at the praise, waving it away from himself. 'It's a good thought, though,' he said, 'a great dream for others. But we need more than the dreaming, my friend. When the time comes, will you be ready?'

"I held out my hand to him in pledge.

"My way home that night took me past the armory where the Zouaves, the boys whom Ellsworth trained, were drilling. You remember Ellsworth's story, Peter? He was the first officer to die in the war." The boy nodded solemnly, and the man went on. "With Abraham Lincoln's voice ringing in my ears I enlisted.

"Years afterward, when Abraham Lincoln was President, war came. I'd seen Lincoln often in the years between." James Thorold stopped his restless pacing and stood at the end of the table away from Peter, leaning over it slightly, as he seemed to keep up his story with difficulty. "He came often to Judge Adams's house. There were evenings when the three of us sat in the parlor with the dusk drifting in from the lake, and spoke of the future of the nation. Judge Adams thought war inevitable. Abraham Lincoln thought it could be averted. They both dreaded it. I was young, and I hoped for it. 'What'll you do, Jim, if war should come?' they asked me once. 'I'd go as a private,' I told them.

"If the war had come then I should have gone with the first regiment out. But when the call sounded Ellsworth had gone to New York and the Zouaves had merged with another regiment. I didn't go with them in the beginning because I told myself that I wanted to be with the first troop that went from Illinois to the front. I didn't join until after Lincoln had sent out his call for volunteers.

"You see," he explained to the silent boy, "I had left Judge Adams's office and struck out for myself. Chicago was showing me golden opportunities. Before me, if I stayed, stretched a wide road of success."

"And you didn't go?" Peter interrupted his father for the first time. "I thought--" His voice broke.

"I went," James Thorold said. "The regiment, the Nineteenth, was at the border when Lincoln gave the call. There was a bounty being offered to join it. I would have gone anyhow, but I thought that I might just as well take the money. I was giving up so much to go, I reasoned. And so I took the bounty. The provost marshal gave me the money in the office right across the square from the old court-house. I put it in the bank before I started south.

"I left Chicago that night with a great thrill. I was going to fight for a great cause, for Abraham Lincoln's great dream, for the country my father had died for in Mexico, that my grandfather had fought for at Lundy's Lane. I think," he said, "that if I might have gone right down to the fighting, I'd have stood the test. But when I came to Tennessee the regiment had gone stale. We waited, and waited. Every day I lost a little interest. Every day the routine dragged a little harder. I had time to see what opportunities I had left back here in Chicago. I wasn't afraid of the fighting. But the sheer hatred of what I came to call the uselessness of war gnawed at my soul. I kept thinking of the ways in which I might shape my destiny if only I were free. I kept thinking of the thousand roads to wealth, to personal success, that Chicago held for me. One night I took my chance. I slipped past the lines."

"Father!" The boy's voice throbbed with pain. His eyes, dilated with horror at the realization of the older man's admission, fixed their gaze accusingly on James Thorold. "You weren't a--a deserter?" He breathed the word fearfully.

"I was a bounty-jumper."

"Oh!" Peter Thorold's shoulders drooped as if under the force of a vital blow. Vaguely as he knew the term, the boy knew only too well the burden of disgrace that it carried. Once, in school, he had heard an old tutor apply it to some character of history whom he had especially despised. Again, in a home where he had visited, he had heard another old man use the phrase in contempt for some local personage who had attempted to seek public office. Bounty-jumper! Its province expressed to the lad's mind a layer of the inferno beneath the one reserved for the Benedict Arnolds and the Aaron Burrs. Vainly he bugled to his own troops of self-control; but they, too, were deserters in the calamity. He flung his arms across the table, surrendering to his sobs.

Almost impassively James Thorold watched him, as if he himself had gone so far back into his thought of the past that he could not bridge the gap to Peter now. With some thought of crossing the chasm he took up his tale of dishonor. Punctuated by the boy's sobs it went on.

"I came back to Chicago and drew the money from the bank. I knew I couldn't go back to the practise of law. I changed my name to Thorold and started in business as an army contractor. I made money. The money that's made us rich, the money that's sending me to Forsland"-- a bitterness not in his voice before edged his mention of the embassy-- "came from that bounty that the provost marshal gave me."

He turned his back upon the sobbing boy, walking over to the window and staring outward upon the April brightness of the noonday ere he spoke again. "You know of the Nineteenth's record? They were at Nashville, and they were at Chattanooga after my colonel came back, dead. I went out of Chicago when his body was brought in. Then Turchin took command of the brigade. The Nineteenth went into the big fights. They were at Chickamauga. Benton fell there. He'd been in Judge Adams's office with me. After I'd come back he'd joined the regiment. The day the news of Chickamauga came I met Judge Adams on Washington Street. He knew me. He looked at me as Peter might have looked at Judas."

Slowly Peter Thorold raised his head from his arms, staring at the man beside the window. James Thorold met his look with sombre sorrow. "Don't think I've had no punishment," he said. "Remember that I loved Judge Adams. And I loved Abraham Lincoln."

"Oh, no, no!" The boy's choked utterance came in protest. "If you'd really cared for them you wouldn't have failed them."

"I have prayed," his father said, "that you may never know the grief of having failed the men you have loved. There's no heavier woe, Peter." Again his gaze went from the boy, from the room, from the present. "I did not see Abraham Lincoln again until he was dead," he said. "They brought him back and set his bier in the old court-house. The night he lay there I went in past the guards and looked long upon the face of him who had been my friend. I saw the sadness and the sorrow, the greatness and the glory, that life and death had sculptured there. He had dreamed and he had done. When the time had come he had been ready. I knelt beside his coffin; and I promised God and Abraham Lincoln that I would, before I died, make atonement for the faith I had broken."

Peter's sobbing had died down to husky flutterings of breath, but he kept his face averted from the man at the other side of the table. "I meant to make some sort of reparation," James Thorold explained, listlessness falling like twilight on his mood as if the sun had gone down on his power, "but I was always so busy, so busy. And there seemed no real occasion for sacrifice. I never sought public office or public honors till I thought you wanted me to have them, Peter." He turned directly to the boy, but the boy did not move. "I was so glad of Forsland--yesterday. Through all these years I have told myself that, after all, I had done no great wrong. But sometimes, when the bands were playing and the flags were flying, I knew that I had turned away from the Grail after I had looked upon it. I knew it to-day when I stood beside that boy's coffin. I had said that times change. I know now that only the time changes. The spirit does not die, but it's a stream that goes underground to come up, a clear spring, in unexpected places. My father died in Mexico. I failed my country. And Isador Framberg dies at Vera Cruz."

"For our country," the boy said bitterly.

"And his own," his father added. "For him, for his people, for all these who walk in darkness Abraham Lincoln died. The gleam of his torch shone far down their lands. His message brought them here. They have known him even as I, who walked with him in life, did not know him until to-day. And they are paying him. That dead boy is their offering to him, their message that they are the Americans."

Into Peter Thorold's eyes, as he looked upon his father, leaped a flash of blue fire. Searchingly he stared into the face of the older man as Galahad might have gazed upon a sorrowing Percival. "You're going to give up Forsland?" he breathed, touching the paper on the table. "I gave up Forsland," James Thorold said, "when I saw you at Isador Framberg's side. I knew that I was not worthy to represent your America--and his." He held out his hands to Peter longingly. The boy's strong one closed over them. Peter Thorold, sighting the mansion of his father's soul, saw that the other man had passed the portals of confession into an empire of expiation mightier than the Court of St. Jerome.