Three millions! : $b or, The way of the world

Oliver Optic

MUNDO DE LIBROS

Vista previa gratuita · Mundo de Libros · tiendamundodelibros.com

Three millions! : or, The way of the world

Oliver Optic

Edición digital de dominio público.
Texto original: Project Gutenberg.
Mundo de Libros

TO

HIRAM CLAPP, ESQ.,

This Book

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY HIS FRIEND

WILLIAM T. ADAMS.

THREE MILLIONS!

OR

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

BY

WILLIAM T. ADAMS

(_OLIVER OPTIC_)

AUTHOR OF “LIVING TOO FAST,” “IN DOORS AND OUT,” “TAKEN BY THE ENEMY,” “WITHIN THE ENEMY’S LINES,” “ON THE BLOCKADE,” ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

BOSTON MDCCCXCI

LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS

10 MILK STREET NEXT “THE OLD SOUTH MEETING HOUSE”

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by WILLIAM T. ADAMS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Copyright, 1894, by WILLIAM T. ADAMS

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THREE MILLIONS.	7
II.	MR. ELIOT BUCKSTONE.	21
III.	THE HUNGERFORD FAMILY.	33
IV.	OFF THE GREAT BELL.	45
V.	THE KINGMAN FAMILY.	58
VI.	A STRANGE STORY.	71
VII.	POOR MARY!	83

VIII. TO EUROPE AND BACK. 96

IX. HEALING THE WOUNDS. 109

X. ROSS KINGMAN. 122

XI. DOCTOR BILKS. 135

XII. DICK BIRCH. 144

XIII. DICK UNDER A SHADOW. 161

XIV. IN THE LIBRARY. 174

XV. DR. BILKS ON THE STAND. 188

XVI. DR. BILKS'S BABY. 203

XVII. THE SETTLEMENT. 217

XVIII. EVIDENCE WANTED. 231

XIX. THE ROPE AND THE WEIGHT. 244

XX. THE SHADOW AT PINE HILL. 256

XXI. THE DEMIGOD OF PINE HILL. 269

XXII. DICK BIRCH’S SUGGESTION. 282

XXIII. JULIA HUNGERFORD. 296

XXIV. POPPLETON GOSPEL. 309

XXV. DOCTOR LYNCH. 321

XXVI. THE PENITENT DEMIGOD. 335

XXVII. THE VERDICT. 349

XXVIII. THE DOCTOR HIMSELF AGAIN. 362

XXIX. FORGIVE AND FORGET. 374

XXX. THE RUSTIC BRIDGE. 387

XXXI. A HOMŒOPATHIC DOSE. 400

XXXII. CRIMINAL CARELESSNESS. 412

XXXIII. DICK BIRCH AND LADY. 425

XXXIV. THIRTY YEARS OLD. 438

XXXV. THE LAST OF THE THREE MILLIONS. 450

THE

WAY OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

THREE MILLIONS.

Three million dollars! In round numbers, three million dollars, after the legacies to individuals and the bequests to charitable institutions had been paid!

Three million dollars! Suggestive of mighty air-castles, of untold grandeur, of matchless liberality to the poor and needy! Suggestive, also, of long and weary years of patient seeking after worldly wealth, of painful struggles with adverse circumstances, and of parsimonious self-denial extending even to the very necessities of life.

There had been three great epochs in the life of John Hungerford, the Baltimore _millionnaire_, at each of which he had annexed a zero to the number indicating his worldly wealth; and it must also be said that he was continually adding zeros to the sum total of his moral and spiritual possessions. When he commenced his business career, he had three thousand dollars. Operating with care and prudence, it required twenty years to annex the first zero, and he was forty-one when the first financial cycle was completed. Another twenty years of care and toil annexed the second zero, and John Hungerford was more than threescore. Then fortune, always constant, became lavish, and the very skies seemed to rain down wealth. His real estate doubled, tripled, and quadrupled, and ten years placed the third and last zero against the accumulations of his lifetime. Then, having passed his threescore years and ten, he retired from active business with fear and trembling for the stupendous fortune he had made. Only three years more of life were vouchsafed to him; but one with his simple habits could not spend a tithe of his income, and another half million was added, almost in spite of himself.

Wherefore had John Hungerford struggled so patiently with the tide of fortune? Wherefore had he neglected his body and his soul for fifty long years? Wherefore had he lived in a mean house, upon the coarsest fare, with never a horse, and hardly a servant to ease his toilsome but successful march up to the pinnacle of his worldly

ambition? He had not a child to inherit his hard-earned gains. He had no friends but those who had been constant to him in business relations, and they never crossed the threshold of his homely dwelling. Nothing but the love of wealth could have sustained him in his fierce struggles for the mammon of the world.

Yet John Hungerford was not a bad man. He had cheated no one; had never wronged the widow and the fatherless. He had no friends, because he wanted none; his blood relations had long ago ceased to darken his doors, feeling that they were not welcome guests. They were few in number, including only the son and daughter of his only brother, for the Baltimore _millionnaire_ could boast of no long line of ancestors, and the family tree, so far as his knowledge extended, had its root in the preceding generation.

John Hungerford, senior, had never known a father or a mother. He was, at his earliest recollection, an inmate of an English workhouse, and he had at a tender age been bound out to a farmer. From this humble beginning he had bettered his condition until he was able to save a few pounds, when he married. Prosperity smiled upon him in a small way, and about the year 1790 he had emigrated to America, bringing with him his wife and his four children, the oldest of whom, John, junior, was nineteen years of age, while the youngest, James, was twelve.

The whole family went to work in good earnest, and for a year were prosperous and happy; but the angel of death swept through the contented household during the following year. A malignant fever carried off first the mother, then the two daughters, and finally the father, leaving only John and James to mourn the wreck which death

had made in their home. The old man, who had learned industry and thrift in an English workhouse, left six thousand dollars.

John was now twenty-one years of age, and, besides receiving the portion that fell to him, he was appointed the guardian of his younger brother. Then he commenced the career of which we have given the result at the beginning of this chapter. James worked in a store till he was of age; and then, with his three thousand dollars, which John promptly paid to him, with interest, he went farther north, where he invested his little capital in a cotton-mill, and obtained the situation of overseer in the factory.

James Hungerford had none of the genius for money getting which distinguished his brother. He was content with his position in the cotton-mill, and hardly doubled his capital in twenty years. At the age of thirty-four he married a lady of twenty; but it was ten years later when his first child, Eugene, was born, who was followed, four years after, by a daughter, Julia.

When the patient, plodding father died at the age of fifty-four, he left only the small cottage in which he lived, and the three thousand dollars in mill stock, which had paid him dividends for over thirty years. Mrs. Hungerford was a prudent and skilful woman, and she contrived to live very comfortably with her little family on the income of the stock, still occupying the small cottage which her husband had left. At this time John Hungerford had added the second zero to the number which indicated his wealth. For many years there had been no regular communication between the families of John and James. Mrs. Hungerford had written to her brother-in-law, whom she had never seen, the particulars of the death of her husband. A prompt

Hasta aqui llega la vista previa gratuita.

Sigue leyendo este libro completo en tu biblioteca:

compralo por $20 MXN o leelo con la Membresia ($149 / 30 dias).

tiendamundodelibros.com