

**THE SECOND
GENERATION.
[1907]**

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The Second Generation. [1907] by David Graham Phillips

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DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

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[1907]**



“ ‘Father! What is it?’ she repeated.”

[Page 86]

The SECOND GENERATION

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

AUTHOR OF

"THE COST," "THE PLUM TREE," "THE SOCIAL
SECRETARY," "THE DELUGE," ETC.



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CHAPTER I

"PUT YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER!"



IN six minutes the noon whistle would blow. But the workmen—the seven hundred in the Ranger-Whitney flour mills, the two hundred and fifty in the Ranger-Whitney cooperage adjoining—were, every man and boy of them, as hard at it as if the dinner rest were hours away.

On the threshold of the long room where several scores of filled barrels were being headed and stamped there suddenly appeared a huge figure, tall and broad and solid, clad in a working suit originally gray but now white with the flour dust that saturated the air, and coated walls and windows both within and without. At once each of the ninety-seven men and boys was aware of that presence and unconsciously showed it by putting on extra "steam." With swinging step the big figure crossed the packing room. The gray-white face held straight ahead, but the keen blue eyes paused upon each worker and each task. And every "hand" in those two great factories knew how all-seeing that glance was—critical, but just; exacting, but encouraging. All-seeing, in this instance, did not mean merely fault-seeing.

Hiram Ranger, manufacturing partner and controlling owner of the Ranger-Whitney Company of St. Christopher and Chicago, went on into the cooperage, leaving energy behind him, rousing it before him. Many times, each working day, between seven in the morning and six at night, he made the tour of those two establishments. A miller by inheritance and training, he had

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learned the cooper's trade like any journeyman, when he decided that the company should manufacture its own barrels. He was not a rich man who was a manufacturer; he was a manufacturer who was incidentally rich—one who made of his business a vocation. He had no theories on the dignity of labor; he simply exemplified it, and would have been amazed, and amused or angered according to his mood, had it been suggested to him that useful labor is not as necessary and continuous a part of life as breathing. He did not speculate and talk about ideals; he lived them, incessantly and unconsciously. The talker of ideals and the liver of ideals get echo and response, each after his kind—the talker, in the empty noise of applause; the liver, in the silent spread of the area of achievement.]

[A moment after Hiram roused the packing room of the flour mill with the master's eye, he was in the cooperage, the center of a group round one of the hooping machines. It had got out of gear, and the workman had bungled in shutting off power; the result was chaos that threatened to stop the whole department for the rest of the day. Ranger brushed away the wrangling tinkerers and examined the machine. After grasping the problem in all its details, he threw himself flat upon his face, crawled under the machine, and called for a light. A moment later his voice issued again, in a call for a hammer. Several minutes of sharp hammering; then the mass of iron began to heave. It rose at the upward pressure of Ranger's powerful arms and legs, shoulders and back; it crashed over on its side; he stood up and, without pause or outward sign of his exertion of enormous strength, set about adjusting the gearing to action, with the broken machinery cut out. "And he past sixty!" muttered one workman to another, as a murmur of applause ran round the admiring circle. Clearly Hiram Ranger was master there not by reason of money but because he was first in brain and in brawn; not because he could hire but because he could direct and do.]

In the front rank of the ring of on-looking workmen stood a young man, tall as himself and like him in the outline of his strong features, especially like him in the fine curve of the