

# **THE POWERS THAT PREY**

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The powers that prey by Josiah Flynt & Francis Walton

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**JOSIAH FLYNT & FRANCIS WALTON**

**THE POWERS  
THAT PREY**



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[Willard, Josiah Flynt]

*The*  
Powers That Prey

by

Josiah Flynt  
(pseud.)  
and

Francis Walton  
(pseud.)

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## INTRODUCTION.

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Criminologists have thought it more important to photograph the outcast's facial angle than to see the outcast and his world as he himself sees them. Having determined from the start that the outcast is an inferior, they have looked for stigmata of degeneration in him and have found what they looked for. They would have found stigmata of degeneration in any other body of men whom they had examined with a like pertinacity and preconception; they have found them indeed in practically all of the men of light and leading known in history. Men of science and romanticists have used the outcast as a point of departure for the esthetic imagination and have taken it for granted that he is not so interesting as they can fancy him. They have constructed for themselves two stock characters—a simplified human brute, an epitome of the stigmata of degeneration, half-witted, cunning, sullen, furious; and an abstract mathematical detective who sees the hu-

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man world as a magnified chessboard and solves problems in check and checkmate.

It may with great safety be said that both these stock characters belong to the realm of intellectual opera bouffe. People in the Under World differ more in their circumstances than in their psychology from people in the Upper. In both worlds there is a majority disposed rather to bear the ills they have than to fly to others that they know not of; and in both there is a minority to whom the ordinary lot of their class is simply intolerable. In the Upper World this minority become the "plungers" in the business, social, and political spheres; the *entrepreneurs*, who assume great risks on the chance of great returns, and are reckless of disaster whether to others or themselves. In the Under World this minority become the gambler, the thief, and the harlot. In both worlds the minority want honor and power in their own world, and in both they obtain their success by a combination of enterprise, intelligence, unscrupulousness, diligence, and sheer, rude power of will. The unscrupulousness in the Upper World may consist only in a bold stand against public opinion to gain an advantage, or in the violation in case

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of need of the conventions of a class; but it must be remembered that the Under World has its conventions as well as the Upper, and that a levy of blackmail is regarded in the side-streets with the mixture of indignation and admiring approval with which a ruthless manipulation of stocks or a particularly audacious stroke in politics is regarded in "society." If Huxley is right in his contention that there is a "fixed order of things which sends social disorganization upon the track of immorality as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespasses," then a correct understanding of the Under World and its relations to the whole body of society is a matter of prime importance.

High life in the Under World consists in the doings of the personages and potentates of side-streets; and the most significant feature in their life, both to themselves and to the rest of us, lies in the league between the Powers That Rule and the Powers That Prey. The Platonic idea of the case is that between detective and criminal there exists a natural feud like that between the shepherd and the wolf. The similitude is perfect in but one respect: both wolf and shepherd live at the expense of the flock. High life in the Un-