

AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTRUISM

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An Experiment in Altruism by Margaret Sherwood

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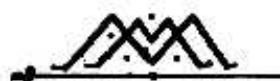
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MARGARET SHERWOOD

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IN ALTRUISM**

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BY

MARGARET SHERWOOD

"The world, which took but six days to make, is like to take
six thousand to make out."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

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AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTRUISM

CHAPTER I

"WHEN Tantalus," said Janet, "was standing in the water that he could not reach, and was dying of thirst, a Philosopher came by. 'Don't you understand,' said the Philosopher, 'that what you want is *water?*'"

"What do you mean by that?" I asked, turning to look at the girl's face. Her colour was shifting quickly in the cool October air.

"I mean," she answered, with her lips curling into her wickedest smile, "that I have been talking with my cousin Paul. He explained, with an air of giving information, that what I need is faith."

"Your cousin Paul," growled the Doctor, "has a most remarkable way of dis-

covering what the rest of us have always known."

"Did you always know that?" asked the girl. "I had an idea that you thought I needed a tonic."

"There's the 'brotherhood of man,'" the Doctor went on. "Your cousin Paul thinks that he has discovered or invented the 'brotherhood of man.'"

"Don't you mean," I suggested, "that he discovers and acts upon what the rest of us have always known without letting it make any particular difference?"

"I cannot see that he is trying any harder than the rest of us to find out how to treat his neighbour," said the Doctor. "Living in the slums is as comfortable nowadays as living anywhere else. At least, it is at Barnet House. That has as good appointments as any house in the city."

"Good plumbing isn't quite everything," I ventured to say.

"Those university men who go to live with the poor are too supercilious," said