HIS PRISON BARS: A TEMPERANCE STORY

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His Prison Bars: A Temperance Story by A. A. Hopkins

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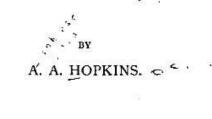
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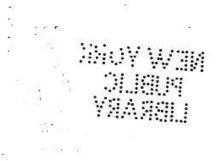
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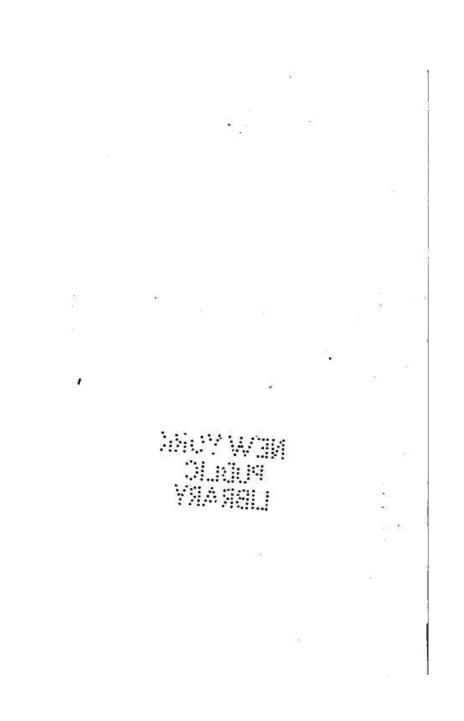
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PREFATORY.

HE was just a common man. That is to say, he was not one of the few, set high up by Genius, and standing, so to speak, alone. Talent of a kind, or of several kinds, he certainly possessed. The world spoke of his "gifts," and so I suppose he was gifted. But the many have gifts as great as had he; and his talent was not extraordinary. He had some tact, and considerable assurance. He was pliable: he could adapt himself to places and demands. He was reputed shrewd, and not without reason, since he could not have become all that he did become, lacking shrewdness. Yet he was voluntarily in prison.

His prison bars were of a common kind. You and I have seen the same a thousand times. You are fortunate, indeed, if you have never looked out from behind them. I have seen them well gilded, and so attractive men would smile upon them. I have beheld them jagged and rough, frowning with hard suggestion and cruel fact. How did his look to him? Were they in his sight prison bars at all? Not for long years. Not until he had gone out and in between them, free and yet not free, until toward middle life.

Before that time came there were years of experience, of hard work, of ambitious purpose, of partial successes, of miserable failures, of bitter but unavailing repentance. With these my story has to do.

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