

The Cost

David Graham Phillips

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by David Graham Phillips

March, 1996 [Etext #478]

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THE COST
By DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

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THE COST

I.

A FATHER INVITES DISASTER

Pauline Gardiner joined us on the day that we, the Second Reader class, moved from the basement to the top story of the old Central Public School. Her mother brought her and, leaving, looked round at us, meeting for an instant each pair of curious eyes with friendly appeal.

We knew well the enchanted house where she lived--stately, retreated far into large grounds in Jefferson Street; a high brick wall all round, and on top of the wall broken glass set in cement. Behind that impassable barrier which so teased our young audacity were flower-beds and "shrub" bushes, whose blossoms were wonderfully sweet if held a while in the closed hand; grape arbors and shade and fruit trees, haunted by bees; winding walks strewn fresh each spring with tan-bark that has such a clean, strong odor, especially just after a rain, and that is at once firm and soft beneath the feet. And in the midst stood the only apricot tree in Saint X. As few of us had tasted apricots, and as those few pronounced them better far than oranges or even bananas, that tree was the climax of tantalization.

The place had belonged to a childless old couple who hated children--or did they bar them out and drive them away because the sight and sound of them quickened the ache of empty old age into a pain too keen to bear? The husband died, the widow went away to her old maid sister at Madison; and the Gardiners, coming from Cincinnati to live in the town where Colonel Gardiner was born and had spent his youth, bought the place. On our way to and from school in the first weeks of that term, pausing as always to gaze in through the iron gates of the drive, we had each day seen Pauline walking alone among the flowers. And she

would stop and smile at us; but she was apparently too shy to come to the gates; and we, with the memory of the cross old couple awing us, dared not attempt to make friends with her.

She was eight years old, tall for her age, slender but strong, naturally graceful. Her hazel eyes were always dancing mischievously. She liked boys' games better than girls'. In her second week she induced several of the more daring girls to go with her to the pond below town and there engage in a raft-race with the boys. And when John Dumont, seeing that the girls' raft was about to win, thrust the one he was piloting into it and upset it, she was the only girl who did not scream at the shock of the sudden tumble into the water or rise in tears from the shallow, muddy bottom.

She tried going barefooted; she was always getting bruised or cut in attempts--usually successful-- at boys' recklessness; yet her voice was sweet and her manner toward others, gentle. She hid her face when Miss Stone whipped any one-- more fearful far than the rise and fall of Miss Stone's ferule was the soaring and sinking of her broad, bristling eyebrows.

From the outset John Dumont took especial delight in teasing her--John Dumont, the roughest boy in the school. He was seven years older than she, but was only in the Fourth Reader--a laggard in his studies because his mind was incurious about books and the like, was absorbed in games, in playing soldier and robber, in swimming and sledding, in orchard-looting and fighting. He was impudent and domineering, a bully but not a coward, good-natured when deferred to, the feared leader of a boisterous, imitative clique. Until Pauline came he had rarely noticed a girl--never except to play her some prank more or less cruel.

After the adventure of the raft he watched Pauline afar off, revolving plans for approaching her without impairing his barbaric dignity, for subduing her without subduing himself to her. But he knew only one way of making friends, the only kind of friends he had or could conceive--loyal subjects, ruled through their weaknesses and fears. And as that way was to give the desired addition to his court a sound thrashing, he felt it must be modified somewhat to help him in his present conquest. He tied her hair to the back of her desk; he snowballed her and his sister Gladys home from school. He raided her playhouse and broke her dishes and--she giving desperate battle--fled with only the parents of her doll family. With Gladys shrieking for their mother, he shook her out of a tree in their yard, and it sprained her ankle so severely that she had to stay away from school for a month. The net result of a year's arduous efforts was that she had singled him out for detestation--this when her conquest of him was complete because she had never told on him, had never in her worst encounters with him shown the white feather.

But he had acted more wisely than he knew, for she had at least singled him out from the crowd of boys. And there was a certain frank good-nature about him, a fearlessness--and she could not help admiring his strength and leadership. Presently she discovered his secret--that his persecutions were not through

hatred of her but through anger at her resistance, anger at his own weakness in being fascinated by her. This discovery came while she was shut in the house with her sprained ankle. As she sat at her corner bay-window she saw him hovering in the neighborhood, now in the alley at the side of the house, now hurrying past, whistling loudly as if bent upon some gay and remote errand, now skulking along as if he had stolen something, again seated on the curbstone at the farthest crossing from which he could see her window out of the corner of his eye. She understood--and forthwith forgave the past. She was immensely flattered that this big, audacious creature, so arrogant with the boys, so contemptuous toward the girls, should be her captive.

When she was in her first year at the High School and he in his last he walked home with her every day; and they regarded themselves as engaged. Her once golden hair had darkened now to a beautiful brown with red flashing from its waves; and her skin was a clear olive pallid but healthy. And she had shot up into a tall, slender young woman; her mother yielded to her pleadings, let her put her hair into a long knot at the back of her neck and wear skirts ALMOST to the ground.

When he came from Ann Arbor for his first Christmas holidays each found the other grown into a new person. She thought him a marvel of wisdom and worldly experience. He thought her a marvel of ideal womanhood--gay, lively; not a bit "narrow" in judging him, yet narrow to primness in her ideas of what she herself could do, and withal charming physically. He would not have cared to explain how he came by the capacity for such sophisticated judgment of a young woman. They were to be married as soon as he had his degree; and he was immediately to be admitted to partnership in his father's woolen mills--the largest in the state of Indiana.

He had been home three weeks of the long vacation between his sophomore and junior years. There appeared on the town's big and busy stream of gossip, stories of his life at Ann Arbor--of drinking and gambling and wild "tears" in Detroit. And it was noted that the fast young men of Saint X--so every one called Saint Christopher--were going a more rapid gait. Those turbulent fretters against the dam of dullness and stern repression of even normal and harmless gaiety had long caused scandal. But never before had they been so daring, so defiant.

One night after leaving Pauline he went to play poker in Charley Braddock's rooms. Braddock, only son of the richest banker in Saint X, had furnished the loft of his father's stable as bachelor quarters and entertained his friends there without fear that the noise would break the sleep and rouse the suspicions of his father. That night, besides Braddock and Dumont, there were Jim Cauldwell and his brother Will. As they played they drank; and Dumont, winning steadily, became offensive in his raillery. There was a quarrel, a fight; Will Cauldwell, accidentally toppled down a steep stairway by Dumont, was picked up with a broken arm and leg.

By noon the next day the town was boiling with this outbreak of devilry in the leading young men, the sons and prospective

successors of the "bulwarks of religion and morality." The Episcopalian and Methodist ministers preached against Dumont, that "importer of Satan's ways into our peaceful midst," and against Charley Braddock with his "ante-room to Sheol"--the Reverend Sweetser had just learned the distinction between Sheol and Hades. The Presbyterian preacher wrestled spiritually with Will Cauldwell and so wrought upon his depression that he gave out a solemn statement of confession, remorse and reform. In painting himself in dark colors he painted Jack Dumont jet black.

Pauline had known that Dumont was "lively"--he was far too proud of his wild oats wholly to conceal them from her. And she had all the tolerance and fascinated admiration of feminine youth for the friskiness of masculine freedom. Thus, though she did not precisely approve what he and his friends had done, she took no such serious view of it as did her parents and his. The most she could do with her father was to persuade him to suspend sentence pending the conclusion of an investigation into Jack's doings at the University of Michigan and in Detroit. Colonel Gardiner was not so narrow or so severe as Jack said or as Pauline thought. He loved his daughter; so he inquired thoroughly. He knew that his daughter loved Dumont; so he judged liberally. When he had done he ordered the engagement broken and forbade Dumont the house.

"He is not wild merely; he is--worse than you can imagine," said the colonel to his wife, in concluding his account of his discoveries and of Dumont's evasive and reluctant admissions--an account so carefully expurgated that it completely misled her. "Tell Pauline as much as you can--enough to convince her."

This, when Mrs. Gardiner was not herself convinced. She regarded the colonel as too high-minded to be a fit judge of human frailty; and his over-caution in explanation had given her the feeling that he had a standard for a husband for their daughter which only another such rare man as himself could live up to. Further, she had always been extremely reserved in mother-and-daughter talk with Pauline, and thus could not now give her a clear idea of what little she had been able to gather from Colonel Gardiner's half-truths. This typical enacting of a familiar domestic comedy-tragedy had the usual result: the girl was confirmed in her original opinion and stand.

"Jack's been a little too lively," was her unexpressed conclusion from her mother's dilution of her father's dilution of the ugly truth. "He's sorry and won't do it again, and--well, I'd hate a milksop. Father has forgotten that he was young himself once."

Dumont's father and mother charged against Ann Arbor that which they might have charged against their own alternations of tyranny and license, had they not been humanly lenient in self-excuse. "No more college!" said his father.

"The place for you, young man, is my office, where I can keep an eye or two on you."

"That suits me," replied the son, indifferently--he made small

pretense of repentance at home.

"I never wanted to go to college."

"Yes, it was your mother's doing," said old Dumont. "Now we'll try MY way of educating a boy."

So Jack entered the service of his father's god-of-the-six-days, and immediately showed astonishing talent and twelve-to-fourteen-hour assiduity. He did not try to talk with Pauline. He went nowhere but to business; he avoided the young men.

"It's a bad idea to let your home town know too much about you," he reflected, and he resolved that his future gambols out of bounds should be in the security of distant and large cities--and they were. Seven months after he went to work he amazed and delighted his father by informing him that he had bought five hundred shares of stock in the mills--he had made the money, fifty-odd thousand dollars, by a speculation in wool. He was completely reestablished with his father and with all Saint X except Colonel Gardiner.

"That young Jack Dumont's a wonder," said everybody. "He'll make the biggest kind of a fortune or the biggest kind of a smash before he gets through."

He felt that he was fully entitled to the rights of the regenerate; he went to Colonel Gardiner's law office boldly to claim them.

At sight of him the colonel's face hardened into an expression as near to hate as its habit of kindness would concede. "Well, sir!" said he, sharply, eying the young man over the tops of his glasses.

Dumont stiffened his strong, rather stocky figure and said, his face a study of youthful frankness: "You know what I've come for, sir. I want you to give me a trial."

"No!" Colonel Gardiner shut his lips firmly.

"Good morning, sir!" And he was writing again.

"You are very hard," said Dumont, bitterly.

"You are driving me to ruin."

"How DARE you!" The old man rose and went up to him, eyes blazing scorn. "You deceive others, but not me with my daughter's welfare as my first duty. It is an insult to her that you presume to lift your eyes to her."

Dumont colored and haughtily raised his head. He met the colonel's fiery gaze without flinching.

"I was no worse than other young men--"

"It's a slander upon young men for you to say that they--that any of them with a spark of decency--would do as you have done, as you DO! Leave my office at once, sir!"

"I've not only repented--I've shown that I was ashamed of--of that," said Dumont. "Yet you refuse me a chance!"

The colonel was shaking with anger.

"You left here for New York last Thursday night," he said. "Where and how did you spend Saturday night and Sunday and Monday?"

Dumont's eyes shifted and sank.

"It's false," he muttered. "It's lies."

"I expected this call from you," continued Colonel Gardiner, "and I prepared for it so that I could do what was right. I'd rather see my daughter in her shroud than in a wedding-dress for you."

Dumont left without speaking or looking up.

"The old fox!" he said to himself. "Spying on me--what an idiot I was not to look out for that. The narrow old fool! He doesn't know what 'man of the world' means. But I'll marry her in spite of him. I'll let nobody cheat me out of what I want, what belongs to me."

A few nights afterward he went to a dance at Braddock's, hunted out Pauline and seated himself beside her. In a year he had not been so near her, though they had seen each other every few days and he had written her many letters which she had read, had treasured, but had been held from answering by her sense of honor, unless her looks whenever their eyes met could be called answers.

"You mustn't, Jack," she said, her breath coming fast, her eyes fever-bright. "Father has forbidden me--and it'll only make him the harder."

"You, too, Polly? Well, then, I don't care what becomes of me."

He looked so desperate that she was frightened.

"It isn't that, Jack--you KNOW it isn't that."

"I've been to see your father. And he told me he'd never consent--never! I don't deserve that--and I can't stand it to lose you. No matter what I've done, God knows I love you, Polly."

Pauline's face was pale. Her hands, in her lap, were gripping her little handkerchief.

"You don't say that, too--you don't say 'never'?"

She raised her eyes to his and their look thrilled through and through him. "Yes, John, I say `never'--I'll NEVER give you up."

All the decent instincts in his nature showed in his handsome face, in which time had not as yet had the chance clearly to write character. "No wonder I love you--there never was anybody so brave and so true as you. But you must help me. I must see you and talk to you--once in a while, anyhow."

Pauline flushed painfully.

"Not till--they--let me--or I'm older, John. They've always trusted me and left me free. And I can't deceive them."

He liked this--it was another proof that she was, through and through, the sort of woman who was worthy to be his wife.

"Well--we'll wait," he said. "And if they won't be fair to us, why, we'll have a right to do the best we can." He gave her a tragic look.

"I've set my heart on you, Polly, and I never can stand it not to get what I've set my heart on. If I lost you, I'd go straight to ruin."

She might have been a great deal older and wiser and still not have seen in this a confirmation of her father's judgment of her lover. And her parents had unconsciously driven her into a mental state in which, if he had committed a crime, it would have seemed to her their fault rather than his. The next day she opened the subject with her mother--the subject that was never out of their minds.

"I can't forget him, mother. I CAN'T give him up." With the splendid confidence of youth, "I can save him--he'll do anything for my sake." With the touching ignorance of youth, "He's done nothing so very dreadful, I'm sure--I'd believe him against the whole world."

And in the evening her mother approached her father. She was in sympathy with Pauline, though her loyalty to her husband made her careful not to show it. She had small confidence in a man's judgments of men on their woman-side, great confidence in the power of women to change and uplift men.

"Father," said she, when they were alone on the side porch after supper, "have you noticed how hard Polly is taking IT?"

His eyes and the sudden deepening of the lines in his face answered her.

"Don't you think maybe we've been a little--too--severe?"

"I've tried to think so, but--" He shook his head. "Maggie, he's hopeless, hopeless."

"I don't know much about those things." This was a mere form of speech. She thought she knew all there was to be known; and as she was an intelligent woman who had lived a long time and had a normal human curiosity she did know a great deal. But, after the fashion of many of the women of the older generation, she had left undisturbed his delusion that her goodness was the result not of intelligence but of ignorance. "But I can't help fearing it isn't right to condemn a young man forever because he was led away as a boy."

"I can't discuss it with you, Maggie--it's a degradation even to speak of him before a good woman. You must rely upon my judgment. Polly must put him out of her head."

"But what am I to tell her? You can't make a woman like our Pauline put a man out of her life when she loves him unless you give her a reason that satisfies her. And if you don't give ME a reason that satisfies me how can I give HER a reason that will satisfy her?"

"I'll talk to her," said the colonel, after a long pause.
"She must--she shall give him up, mother."

"I've tried to persuade her to go to visit Olivia," continued Mrs. Gardiner. "But she won't. And she doesn't want me to ask Olivia here."

"I'll ask Olivia before I speak to her."

Mrs. Gardiner went up to her daughter's room--it had been her play-room, then her study, and was now graduated into her sitting-room. She was dreaming over a book--Tennyson's poems. She looked up, eyes full of hope.

"He has some good reason, dear," began her mother.

"What is it?" demanded Pauline.

"I can't tell you any more than I've told you already," replied her mother, trying not to show her feelings in her face.

"Why does he treat me--treat you--like two naughty little children?" said Pauline, impatiently tossing the book on the table.

"Pauline!" Her mother's voice was sharp in reproof. "How can you place any one before your father!"

Pauline was silent--she had dropped the veil over herself. "I--I--where did you place father--when--when--" Her eyes were laughing again.

"You know he'd never oppose your happiness, Polly." Mrs. Gardiner was smoothing her daughter's turbulent red-brown hair. "You'll only have to wait under a little more trying circumstances. And if he's right, the truth will come out. And if he's mistaken and John's all you think him, then that will come out."

Pauline knew her father was not opposing her through tyranny or pride of opinion or sheer prejudice; but she felt that this was another case of age's lack of sympathy with youth, felt it with all the intensity of infatuated seventeen made doubly determined by opposition and concealment. The next evening he and she were walking together in the garden. He suddenly put his arm round her and drew her close to him and kissed her.

"You know I shouldn't if I didn't think it the only course--don't you, Pauline?" he said in a broken voice that went straight to her heart.

"Yes, father." Then, after a silence: "But--we--we've been sweethearts since we were children. And--I--father, I MUST stand by him."

"Won't you trust me, child? Won't you believe ME rather than him?"

Pauline's only answer was a sigh. They loved each the other; he adored her, she revered him. But between them, thick and high, rose the barrier of custom and training. Comradeship, confidence were impossible.

II.

OLIVIA TO THE RESCUE.

With the first glance into Olivia's dark gray eyes Pauline ceased to resent her as an intruder. And soon she was feeling that some sort of dawn was assailing her night.

Olivia was the older by three years. She seemed--and for her years, was--serious and wise because, as the eldest of a large family, she was lieutenant-general to her mother. Further, she had always had her own way--when it was the right way and did not conflict with justice to her brothers and sisters. And often her parents let her have her own way when it was the wrong way, nor did they spoil the lesson by mitigating disagreeable consequences.

"Do as you please," her mother used to say, when doing as she pleased would involve less of mischief than of valuable experience, "and perhaps you'll learn to please to do sensibly." Again, her father would restrain her mother from interference--"Oh, let the girl alone. She's got to teach herself how to behave, and she can't begin a minute too young." This training had produced a self-reliant and self-governing Olivia.

She wondered at the change in Pauline--Pauline, the light-hearted, the effervescent of laughter and life, now silent and almost somber. It was two weeks before she, not easily won to the confiding mood for all her frankness, let Olivia into her

secret. Of course, it was at night; of course, they were in the same bed. And when Olivia had heard she came nearer to the truth about Dumont than had Pauline's mother. But, while she felt sure there was a way to cure Pauline, she knew that way was not the one which had been pursued. "They've only made her obstinate," she thought, as she, lying with hands clasped behind her head, watched Pauline, propped upon an elbow, staring with dreamful determination into the moonlight.

"It'll come out all right," she said; her voice always suggested that she knew what she was talking about. "Your father'll give in sooner or later--if YOU don't change."

"But he's so bitter against Jack," replied Pauline. "He won't listen to his side--to our side--of it."

"Anyhow, what's the use of anticipating trouble? You wouldn't get married yet. And if he's worthwhile he'll wait."

Pauline had been even gentler than her own judgment in painting her lover for her cousin's inspection. So, she could not explain to her why there was necessity for haste, could not confess her conviction that every month he lived away from her was a month of peril to him.

"We want it settled," she said evasively.

"I haven't seen him around anywhere," went on Olivia. "Is he here now?"

"He's in Chicago--in charge of his father's office there. He may stay all winter."

"No, there's no hurry," went on Olivia. "Besides, you ought to meet other men. It isn't a good idea for a girl to marry the man she's been brought up with before she's had a chance to get acquainted with other men." Olivia drew this maxim from experience--she had been engaged to a school-days lover when she went away to Battle Field to college; she broke it off when, going home on vacation, she saw him again from the point of wider view.

But Pauline scorned this theory; if Olivia had confessed the broken engagement she would have thought her shallow and untrustworthy. She was confident, with inexperience's sublime incapacity for self-doubt, that in all the wide world there was only one man whom she could have loved or could love.

"Oh, I shan't change," she said in a tone that warned her cousin against discussion.

"At any rate," replied Olivia, "a little experience would do you no harm." She suddenly sat up in bed. "A splendid idea!" she exclaimed. "Why not come to Battle Field with me?"

"I'd like it," said Pauline, always eager for self-improvement and roused by Olivia's stories of her college experiences. "But father'd never let me go to Battle Field College."

"Battle Field UNIVERSITY," corrected Olivia. "It has classical courses and scientific courses and a preparatory school--and a military department for men and a music department for women. And it's going to have lots and lots of real university schools--when it gets the money. And there's a healthy, middle-aged wagon-maker who's said to be thinking of leaving it a million or so--if he should ever die and if they should change its name to his."

"But it's coeducation, isn't it? Father would never consent. It was all mother could do to persuade him to let me go to public school."

"But maybe he'd let you go with me, where he wouldn't let you go all alone."

And so it turned out. Colonel Gardiner, anxious to get his daughter away from Saint X and into new scenes where Dumont might grow dim, consented as soon as Olivia explained her plan.

Instead of entering "senior prep", Pauline was able to make freshman with only three conditions. In the first week she was initiated into Olivia's fraternity, the Kappa Alpha Kappa, joined the woman's literary and debating society, and was fascinated and absorbed by crowding new events, associations, occupations, thoughts. In spite of herself her old-time high spirits came flooding back. She caught herself humming--and checked herself reproachfully. She caught herself singing--and lowered it to humming. She caught herself whistling--and decided that she might as well be cheerful while she waited for fate to befriend her and Jack. And she found that she thought about him none the less steadfastly for thinking hopefully.

Battle Field put no more restraint upon its young women than it put upon its young men--and it put no restraint upon the young men. In theory and practice it was democratic, American, western--an outgrowth of that pioneer life in which the men and the women had fought and toiled and enjoyed, side by side, in absolute equality, with absolute freedom of association. It recognized that its students had been brought up in the free, simple, frank way, that all came from a region where individualism was a religion, with self-reliance as the cardinal principle of faith and self-development as the goal.

There were no dormitories at Battle Field then. Olivia and Pauline lived in one of the hundred or more boarding-houses--a big, square, white "frame," kept by a Mrs. Trent, the widow of a "hero of two wars."

Her hero had won her with his uniform when he returned from the Mexican War. His conduct was so irregular and his income so uncertain that it had been a relief to her when he departed for his second war. From it he had brought home a broken constitution, a maimed body and confirmed habits of shiftlessness and drunkenness. His country took his character and his health and paid him in exchange a pension which just about kept him in

whisky and tobacco. So long as he was alive Mrs. Trent hated him as vigorously as her Christianity permitted. When he was safely in his grave she canonized him; she put his picture and his sword, belt and epaulets in the conspicuous place in the parlor; she used his record for gallantry to get herself social position and a place of honor at public gatherings.

Her house stood back from the highway in a grove of elms and walnuts. Its angularity was relieved by a porch with a flat roof that had a railing about it and served as a balcony for the second-story lodgers. There were broad halls through the middle of the house down-stairs and up. Olivia and Pauline had the three large rooms in the second story on the south side. They used the front room as a study and Pauline's bedroom was next to it.

Late one afternoon she was seated at the study window watching a cherry-red sun drop through the purple haze of the autumn. She became conscious that some one was on the balcony before the window of the front room across the hall. She leaned so that she could see without being seen. Sharp against the darkening sky was the profile of a young man. Olivia joined her and followed her glance. The profile remained fixed and the two girls watched it, fascinated. It certainly was a powerful outline, proud and stern, but with a mouth that was sweet in its kindliness and gentleness.

"I wonder what he's thinking about," said Olivia, in an undertone; he was not fifteen feet from them. "I suppose, some scheme for conquering the world."

Most of Battle Field's youth came from the farms of that western country, the young men with bodies and brains that were strong but awkward. Almost all were working their way through--as were not a few of the women. They felt that life was a large, serious business impatiently waiting for them to come and attend to it in a large, serious way better than it had ever been attended to before. They studied hard; they practised oratory and debating. Their talk was of history and philosophy, religion and politics. They slept little; they thought--or tried to think--even more than they talked.

At a glance this man was one of them, a fine type.

"He's handsome, isn't he?" said Pauline.

"But--" She did not finish; indeed it was not clear to her what the rest of her protest was. He reminded her of Dumont--there was the same look of superiority, of the "born to lead." But his face seemed to, have some quality which Dumont's lacked--or was it only the idealizing effect of the open sky and the evening light?

When the bell rang for supper he apparently did not hear it. The two girls went down and had talked to the others a few minutes and all had seated themselves before he entered. An inch or so above six feet, powerful in the chest and shoulders, he moved with a large grace until he became self-conscious or approached

the, by comparison, frail pieces of furniture. He had penetrating, candid eyes that looked dark in the gaslight but were steel-blue. His face now wore the typical western-American expression--shrewd, easy-going good humor. Mrs. Trent, intrenched in state behind a huge, silver-plated coffee-urn with ivory-trimmed faucet, introduced him--Mr. Scarborough--to Olivia, to Pauline, to Sadie McIntosh, to Pierson and Howe and Thiebaud (pronounced Cay-bo). Scarborough sat directly opposite Olivia. But whenever he lifted his eyes from his plate he looked at Pauline, who was next to her. When she caught him he blushed and stirred in his chair so uneasily that it creaked and crackled; and his normal difficulties with his large hands and the small knife and fork were distressingly increased.

Pauline was disappointed in him--his clothes were ill-fitting and gave him the appearance of being in danger of bursting from them; his hair was too long, suggesting a shaggy, tawny mane; though his hands were well-shaped they had the recent scars of hard manual labor. Thus, when Olivia spoke enthusiastically of him after supper, she made no reply. She would have been ashamed to acknowledge the reasons for her lack of admiration, even had she been conscious of them.

But the next morning at breakfast she revised her opinion somewhat. He talked, and he had a remarkable voice--clear, musical, with a quality which made it seem to penetrate through all the nerves instead of through the auditory nerve only. Further, he talked straight to Pauline, without embarrassment and with a quaint, satiric humor. She was forgetting for the moment his almost uncouth hair and dress when, in making a sweeping gesture, he upset a glass of water and sent a plate of hot bread flying from the waitress' hand.

"He'd do well in the open air," thought she, "but he's out of place in a house."

Still, she found him interesting and original. And he persistently sought her--his persistence was little short of heroism in view of the never-wholly-concealed sufferings which the contrast between her grace and style and his lack of both caused him.

"He looks like a king who had been kidnapped as a child and brought up in the wilds," said Olivia. "I wonder who he is."

"I'll ask him," replied Pauline. And Olivia was slyly amused by her cousin's unconscious pride in her power with this large, untamed person.

III.

AND SCARBOROUGH.

His name was Hampden Scarborough and he came from a farm about twenty miles east of Saint X. He was descended from men who had

learned to hate kings in Holland in the sixteenth century, had learned to despise them in England in the seventeenth century, had learned to laugh at them in America in the eighteenth century, had learned to exalt themselves into kings--the kings of the new democracy--in the free West in the nineteenth century.

When any one asked his father, Bladen Scarborough, who the family ancestors were, Bladen usually did not answer at all. It was his habit thus to treat a question he did not fancy, and, if the question was repeated, to supplement silence with a piercing look from under his aggressive eyebrows. But sometimes he would answer it. Once, for example, he looked coldly at the man who, with a covert sneer, had asked it, said, "You're impudent, sir. You insinuate I'm not enough by myself to command your consideration," and struck him a staggering blow across the mouth. Again--he was in a playful mood that day and the questioner was a woman--he replied, "I'm descended from murderers, ma'am--murderers."

And in a sense it was the truth.

In 1568 the Scarboroughs were seated obscurely in an east county of England. They were tenant farmers on the estates of the Earl of Ashford and had been strongly infected with "leveling" ideas by the refugees then fleeing to England to escape the fury of continental prince and priest. John Scarborough was trudging along the highway with his sister Kate. On horseback came Aubrey Walton, youngest son of the Earl of Ashford. He admired the rosy, pretty face of Kate Scarborough. He dismounted and, without so much as a glance at her brother, put his arm round her. John snatched her free. Young Walton, all amazement and wrath at the hind who did not appreciate the favor he was condescending to bestow upon a humble maiden, ripped out an insult and drew his sword. John wrenched it from him and ran it through his body.

That night, with four gold pieces in his pocket, John Scarborough left England in a smuggler and was presently fighting Philip of Spain in the army of the Dutch people.

In 1653 Zachariah Scarborough, great grandson of the preceding, was a soldier in Cromwell's army. On the night of April twentieth he was in an ale-house off Fleet Street with three brother officers. That day Cromwell had driven out Parliament and had dissolved the Council of State. Three of the officers were of Cromwell's party; the fourth, Captain Zachariah Scarborough, was a "leveler"--a hater of kings, a Dutch-bred pioneer of Dutch-bred democracy. The discussion began hot--and they poured ale on it.

"He's a tyrant!" shouted Zachariah Scarborough, bringing his huge fist down on the table and upsetting a mug. "He has set up for king. Down with all kings, say !! His head must come off!"

At this knives were drawn, and when Zachariah Scarborough staggered into the darkness of filthy Fleet Street with a cut down his cheek from temple to jaw-bone, his knife was dripping the life of a cousin of Ireton's.

He fled to the Virginia plantations and drifted thence to North Carolina.

His great-grandson, Gaston Scarborough, was one of Marion's men in his boyhood--a fierce spirit made arrogant by isolated freedom, where every man of character owned his land and could conceive of no superior between him and Almighty God. One autumn day in 1794 Gaston was out shooting with his youngest brother, John, their father's favorite. Gaston's gun was caught by a creeper, was torn from him; and his hand, reaching for it, exploded the charge into his brother's neck. His brother fell backward into the swamp and disappeared.

Gaston plunged into the wilderness--to Tennessee, to Kentucky, to Indiana.

"And it's my turn," said Hampden Scarborough as he ended a brief recital of the ancestral murders which Pauline had drawn from him--they were out for a walk together.

"Your turn?" she inquired.

"Yes--I'm the great-grandson--the only one. It's always a great-grandson."

"You DO look dangerous," said Pauline, and the smile and the glance she sent with the words might have been misunderstood by a young man entertaining the ideas which were then filling that young man's brain.

Again, he told her how he had been sent to college--she was always leading him to talk of himself, and her imagination more than supplied that which his unaffected modesty, sometimes deliberately, more often unconsciously, kept out of his stories.

Ever since he could remember, his strongest passion had been for books, for reading. Before he was born the wilderness was subdued and the cruel toil of his parents' early life was mitigated by the growth of towns, the spread of civilization. There was a chance for some leisure, for the higher gratification of the intense American passion for education. A small library had sprung up in one corner of the general room of the old farm-house--from the seeds of a Bible, an almanac, Milton's Paradise Lost, Baxter's Saint's Rest and a Government report on cattle. But the art collection had stood still for years--a facsimile of the Declaration of Independence, another of the Emancipation Proclamation, pictures of Washington, Lincoln and Napoleon, the last held in that household second only to Washington in all history as a "leveler."

The only daughter, Arabella, had been sent to boarding-school in Cincinnati. She married a rich man, lived in the city and, under the inspiration of English novels and the tutelage of a woman friend who visited in New York and often went abroad, was developing ideas of family and class and rank. She talked feelingly of the "lower classes" and of the duty of the "upper

class" toward them. Her "goings-on" created an acid prejudice against higher education in her father's mind. As she was unfolding to him a plan for sending Hampden to Harvard he interrupted with, "No MORE idiots in my family at my expense," and started out to feed the pigs. The best terms Hampden's mother could make were that he should not be disinherited and cast off if he went to Battle Field and paid his own way.

He did not tell Pauline all of this, nor did he repeat to her the conversation between himself and his father a few days before he left home.

"Is 'Bella going to pay your way through?" asked his father, looking at him severely--but he looked severely at every one except Hampden's gentle-voiced mother.

"No, sir." The son's voice was clear.

"Is your mother?"

"No, sir."

"Have you got money put by?"

"Four hundred dollars."

"Is that enough?"

"It'll give me time for a long look around."

The old man drew a big, rusty pocketbook from the inside pocket of the old-fashioned, flowered-velvet waistcoat he wore even when he fed the pigs. He counted out upon his knee ten one-hundred-dollar bills. He held them toward his son. "That'll have to do you," he said. "That's all you'll get."

"No, thank you," replied Hampden. "I wish no favors from anybody."

"You've earned it over and above your keep," retorted his father. "It belongs to you."

"If I need it I'll send for it," said Hampden, that being the easiest way quickly to end the matter.

But he did tell Pauline that he purposed to pay his own way through college.

"My father has a notion," said he, "that the things one works for and earns are the only things worth having. And I think one can't begin to act on that notion too early. If one is trying to get an education, why not an all-round education, instead of only lessons out of books?"

From that moment Pauline ceased to regard dress or any other external feature as a factor in her estimate of Hampden Scarborough.

"But your plan might make a man too late in getting a start--some men, at least," she suggested.

"A start--for what?" he asked.

"For fame or fortune or success of any kind."

Scarborough's eyes, fixed on the distance, had a curious look in them--he was again exactly like that first view she had had of him.

"But suppose one isn't after any of those things," he said. "Suppose he thinks of life as simply an opportunity for self-development. He starts at it when he's born, and the more of it he does the more he has to do. And--he can't possibly fail, and every moment is a triumph--and----" He came back from his excursion and smiled apologetically at her.

But she was evidently interested.

"Don't you think a man ought to have ambition?" she asked. She was thinking of her lover and his audacious schemes for making himself powerful.

"Oh--a man is what he is. Ambition means so many different things."

"But shouldn't you like to be rich and famous and--all that?"

"It depends----" Scarborough felt that if he said what was in his mind it might sound like cant. So he changed the subject. "Just now my ambition is to get off that zoology condition."

IV.

A DUMONT TRIUMPH.

But in the first week of her second month Pauline's interest in her surroundings vanished. She was corresponding with Jennie Atwater and Jennie began to write of Dumont--he had returned to Saint X; Caroline Sylvester, of Cleveland, was visiting his mother; it was all but certain that Jack and Caroline would marry. "Her people want it," Jennie went on--she pretended to believe that Jack and Pauline had given each the other up--"and Jack's father is determined on it. They're together morning, noon and evening. She's really very swell, though _I_ don't think she's such a raving beauty." Following this came the Saint X News-Bulletin with a broad hint that the engagement was about to be announced.

"It's ridiculously false," said Pauline to herself; but she tossed for hours each night, trying to soothe the sick pain in her heart. And while she scouted the possibility of losing him, she was for the first time entertaining it--a cloud in the great horizon of her faith in the future; a small cloud, but black and

bold against the blue. And she had no suspicion that he had returned from Chicago deliberately to raise that cloud.

A few days later another letter from Jennie, full of gossip about Jack and Caroline, a News-Bulletin with a long article about Caroline, ending with an even broader hint of her approaching marriage--and Dumont sent Pauline a note from the hotel in Villeneuve, five miles from Battle Field: "I must see you. Do not deny me. It means everything to both of us--what I want to say to you." And he asked her to meet him in the little park in Battle Field on the bank of the river where no one but the factory hands and their families ever went, and they only in the evenings. The hour he fixed was ten the next morning, and she "cut" ancient history and was there. As he advanced to meet her she thought she had never before appreciated how handsome he was, how distinguished-looking--perfectly her ideal of what a man should be, especially in that important, and at Battle Field neglected, matter, dress.

She was without practice in indirection, but she successfully hid her jealousy and her fears, though his manner was making their taunts and threats desperately real. He seemed depressed and gloomy; he would not look at her; he shook hands with her almost coldly, though they had not seen each other for weeks, had not talked together for months. She felt faint, and her thoughts were like flocks of circling, croaking crows.

"Polly," he began, when they were in the secluded corner of the park, "father wants me to get married. He's in a rage at your father for treating me so harshly. He wants me to marry a girl who's visiting us. He's always at me about it, making all sorts of promises and threats. Her father's in the same business that we are, and----"

He glanced at her to note the effect of his words. She had drawn her tall figure to its full height, and her cheeks were flushed and her eyes curiously bright. He had stabbed straight and deep into the heart of her weakness, but also into the heart of her pride.

The only effect of his thrust that was visible to him put him in a panic. "Don't--PLEASE don't look that way, Polly," he went on hastily. "You don't see what I'm driving at yet. I didn't mean that I'd marry her, or think of it. There isn't anybody but you. There couldn't be, you know that."

"Why did you tell me, then?" she asked haughtily.

"Because--I had to begin somewhere. Polly, I'm going away, going abroad. And I'm not to see you for--for I don't know how long--and--we must be married!"

She looked at him in a daze.

"We can cross on the ferry at half-past ten," he went on. "You see that house--the white one?" He pointed to the other bank of the river where a white cottage shrank among the trees not far from a little church. "Mr. Barker lives there--you must

have heard of him. He's married scores and hundreds of couples from this side. And we can be back here at half-past eleven--twelve at the latest."

She shook her head expressed, not determination, only doubt.

"I can't, Jack," she said. "They----"

"Then you aren't certain you're ever going to marry me," he interrupted bitterly. "You don't mean what you promised me. You care more for them than you do for me. You don't really care for me at all."

"You don't believe that," she protested, her eyes and her mind on the little white cottage. "You couldn't--you know me too well."

"Then there's no reason why we shouldn't get married. Don't we belong to each other now? Why should we refuse to stand up and say so?"

That seemed unanswerable--a perfect excuse for doing what she wished to do. For the little white cottage fascinated her--how she did long to be sure of him! And she felt so free, so absolutely her own mistress in these new surroundings, where no one attempted to exercise authority over another.

"I must feel sure of you, Pauline. Sometimes everything seems to be against me, and I even doubt you. And--that's when the temptations pull hardest. If we were married it'd all be different."

Yes, it would be different. And he would be securely hers, with her mind at rest instead of harassed as it would be if she let him go so far away, free. And where was the harm in merely repeating before a preacher the promise that now bound them both? She looked at him and he at her.

"You don't put any others before me, do you, dear?" he asked.

"No, Jack--no one. I belong to you."

"Come!" he pleaded, and they went down to the boat. She seemed to herself to be in a dream--in a trance.

As she walked beside him along the country road on the other shore a voice was ringing in her ears: "Don't! Don't! Ask Olivia's advice first!" But she walked on, her will suspended, substituted for it his will and her jealousy and her fears of his yielding to the urgings of his father and the blandishments of "that Cleveland girl." He said little but kept close to her, watching her narrowly, touching her tenderly now and then.

The Reverend Josiah Barker was waiting for them--an oily smirk on a face smooth save where a thin fringe of white whiskers dangled from his jaw-bone, ear to ear; fat, damp hands rubbing in anticipation of the large fee that was to repay him for celebrating the marriage and for keeping quiet about it

afterward. At the proper place in the brief ceremony Dumont, with a sly smile at Pauline which she faintly returned, produced the ring--he had bought it at Saint X a week before and so had started a rumor that he and Caroline Sylvester were to be married in haste. He held Pauline's hand firmly as he put the ring on her finger--he was significantly cool and calm for his age and for the circumstances. She was trembling violently, was pale and wan. The ring burned into her flesh.

"Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," ended Barker, with pompous solemnity.

Dumont kissed her--her cheek was cold and at the touch of his lips she shuddered.

"Don't be afraid," he said in a low voice that was perfectly steady.

They went out and along the sunny road in silence. "Whom God hath joined," the voice was now dinning into her ears. And she was saying to herself, "Has GOD joined us? If so, why do I feel as if I had committed a crime?" She looked guiltily at him--she felt no thrill of pride or love at the thought that he was her husband, she his wife. And into her mind poured all her father's condemnations of him, with a vague menacing fear riding the crest of the flood.

"You're sorry you've done it?" he said sullenly.

She did not answer.

"Well, it's done," he went on, "and it can't be undone. And I've got you, Polly, in spite of them. They might have known better than to try to keep me from getting what I wanted. I always did, and I always shall!"

She looked at him startled, then hastily looked away. Even more than his words and his tone, she disliked his eyes--gloating, triumphant. But not until she was years more experienced did she study that never-forgotten expression, study it as a whole--words, tone, look. Then, and not until then, did she know that she had instinctively shrunk because he had laid bare his base and all but loveless motive in marrying her.

"And," he added, "I'll force father to give me a big interest in the business very soon. Then--we'll announce it."

Announce IT? Announce WHAT? "Why, I'm a married woman," she thought, and she stumbled and almost fell. The way danced before her eyes, all spotted with black. She was just able to walk aboard the boat and drop into a seat.

He sat beside her, took her hand and bent over it; as he kissed it a tear fell on it. He looked at her and she saw that his eyes were swimming. A sob surged into her throat, but she choked it back. "Jack!" she murmured, and hid her face in her handkerchief.

When they looked each at the other both smiled--her foreboding had retreated to the background. She began to turn the ring round and round upon her finger.

"Mrs. John Dumont," she said. "Doesn't it sound queer?" And she gazed dreamily away toward the ranges of hills between which the river danced and sparkled as it journeyed westward. When she again became conscious of her immediate surroundings--other than Dumont--she saw a deck-hand looking at her with a friendly grin.

Instantly she covered the ring with her hand and handkerchief. "But I mustn't wear it," she said to Dumont.

"No--not on your finger." He laughed and drew from his pocket a slender gold chain. "But you might wear it on this, round your neck. It'll help to remind you that you don't belong to yourself any more, but to me."

She took the chain--she was coloring in a most becoming way--and hid it and the ring in her bosom. Then she drew off a narrow hoop of gold with a small setting and pushed it on his big little finger.

"And THAT, sir," she said, with a bewitching look, "may help you not to forget that YOU belong to me."

She left the ferry in advance of him and faced Olivia just in time for them to go down together to the half-past twelve o'clock dinner.

V.

FOUR FRIENDS.

As Mrs. Trent's was the best board in Battle Field there were more applicants than she could make places for at her one table. In the second week of the term she put a small table in the alcove of the dining-room and gave it to her "star" boarders--Pierson, Olivia and Pauline. They invited Scarborough to take the fourth place. Not only did Pierson sit opposite Olivia and Scarborough opposite Pauline three times a day in circumstances which make for intimacy, but also Olivia and Pierson studied together in his sitting-room and Pauline and Scarborough in her sitting-room for several hours three or four times a week. Olivia and Pierson were sophomores. Pauline and Scarborough were freshmen; also, they happened to have the same three "senior prep" conditions to "work off"--Latin, zoology and mathematics.

Such intimacies as these were the matter-of-course at Battle Field. They were usually brief and strenuous. A young man and a young woman would be seen together constantly, would fall in love, would come to know each the other thoroughly. Then, with the mind and character and looks and moods of each fully revealed to the other, they would drift or fly in opposite directions,

wholly disillusioned. Occasionally they found that they were really congenial, and either love remained or a cordial friendship sprang up. The modes of thought, inconceivable to Europeans or Europeanized Americans, made catastrophe all but impossible.

It was through the girls that Scarborough got his invitation to the alcove table. There he came to know Pierson and to like him. One evening he went into Pierson's rooms--the suite under Olivia and Pauline's. He had never seen--but had dreamed of--such a luxurious bachelor interior. Pierson's father had insisted that his son must go to the college where forty years before he had split wood and lighted fires and swept corridors to earn two years of higher education. Pierson's mother, defeated in her wish that her son should go East to college, had tried to mitigate the rigors of Battle Field's primitive simplicity by herself fitting up his quarters. And she made them the show-rooms of the college.

"Now let's see what can be done for you," said Pierson, with the superiority of a whole year's experience where Scarborough was a beginner. "I'll put you in the Sigma Alpha fraternity for one thing. It's the best here."

"I don't know anything about fraternities," Scarborough said. "What are they for?"

"Oh, everybody that is anybody belongs to a fraternity. There are about a dozen of them here, and among them they get all the men with any claim to recognition. Just now, we lean rather toward taking in the fellows who've been well brought up."

"Does everybody belong to a fraternity?"

"Lord, no! Two-thirds don't belong. The fellows outside are called 'barbs'--that is, barbarians; we on the inside are Greeks. Though, I must say, very few of us are Athenians and most of us are the rankest Macedonians. But the worst Greeks are better than the best barbs. They're the rummest lot of scrubs you ever saw--stupid drudges who live round in all sorts of holes and don't amount to anything. The brush of the backwoods."

"Oh, yes--mm--I see." Scarborough was looking uncomfortable.

"The Sigma Alphas'll take you in next Saturday," said Pierson. "They do as I say, between ourselves."

"I'm ever so much obliged, but----" Scarborough was red and began to stammer. "You see--I--it----"

"What's the matter? Expense? Don't let that bother you. The cost's nothing at all, and the membership is absolutely necessary to your position."

"Yes--a matter of expense." Scarborough was in control of himself now. "But not precisely the kind of expense you mean. No--I can't join I'd rather not explain. I'm ever so much obliged, but really I can't."

"As you please." Pierson was offended. "But I warn you, you've got to belong to one or the other of these fraternities or you'll be cut off from everything. And you oughtn't to miss the chance to join the best."

"I see I've offended you." Scarborough spoke regretfully. "Please don't think I'm not appreciating your kindness. But--I've made a sort of agreement with myself never to join anything that isn't organized for a general purpose and that won't admit anybody who has that purpose, too."

Pierson thought on this for a moment. "Pardon me for saying so, but that's nonsense. You can't afford to stand alone. It'll make everything harder for you--many things impossible. You've got to yield to the prejudices of people in these matters. Why, even the barbs have no use for each other and look up to us. When we have an election in the Literary Society I can control more barb votes than any one else in college. And the reason is--well, you can imagine." (Mr. Pierson was only twenty years old when he made that speech.)

"It doesn't disturb me to think of myself as alone." The strong lines in Scarborough's face were in evidence. "But it would disturb me if I were propped up and weren't sure I could stand alone. I'm afraid to lean on any one or anything--my prop might give way. And I don't want any friends or any associates who value me for any other reason than what I myself am. I purpose never to 'belong' to anything or anybody."

Pierson laughed. "Do as you please," he said. "I'd like to myself if it wasn't such an awful lot of trouble!"

"Not in the end," replied Scarborough.

"Oh, bother the end. To-day's good enough for me."

"You'd better not let Miss Shrewsbury hear you say that," said Scarborough, his eyes mocking.

Pierson grew serious at once. "Splendid girl, isn't she?" She happened to be the first he had known at all well who hadn't agreed with him in everything he said, hadn't shown the greatest anxiety to please him and hadn't practically thrown herself at his head. His combination of riches, good looks, an easy-going disposition and cleverness had so agitated those who had interested him theretofore that they had overreached themselves. Besides, his mother had been subtly watchful.

"Indeed, yes," assented Scarborough, heartily but not with enthusiasm--he always thought of Olivia as Pauline's cousin.

The four had arranged to go together to Indian Rock on the following Sunday. When the day came Olivia was not well; Pierson went to a poker game at his fraternity house; Pauline and Scarborough walked alone. As she went through the woods beside him she was thinking so intensely that she could not talk. But he was not disturbed by her silence--was it not enough to be near

her, alone with her, free to look at her, so graceful and beautiful, so tasteful in dress, in every outward way what he thought a woman ought to be? Presently she roused herself and began a remark that was obviously mere politeness.

He interrupted her. "Don't mind me. Go on with your thinking--unless it's something you can say."

She gave him a quizzical, baffling smile. "How it would startle you if I did!" she said. "But--I shan't. And"--she frowned impatiently--"there's no use in thinking about it. It's all in the future."

"And one can't control the future."

"Yes, indeed--one can," she protested.

"I wish you'd tell me how. Are you sure you don't mean you could so arrange matters that the future would control you? Anybody can SURRENDER to the future and give it hostages. But that's not controlling, is it?"

"Certainly it is--if you give the hostages in exchange for what you want." And she looked triumphant.

"But how do you know what you'll want in the future? The most I can say is that I know a few things I shan't want."

"I shouldn't like to be of that disposition," she said.

"But I'm afraid you are, whether you like it or not." Scarborough was half-serious, half in jest.

"Are you the same person you were a month ago?"

Pauline glanced away. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean in thought--in feeling."

"Yes--and no," she replied presently, when she had recovered from the shock of his chance knock at the very door of her secret. "My coming here has made a sort of revolution in me already. I believe I've a more--more grown-up way of looking at things. And I've been getting into the habit of thinking--and--and acting--for myself."

"That's a dangerous habit to form--in a hurry," said Scarborough. "One oughtn't to try to swim a wide river just after he's had his first lesson in swimming."

Pauline, for no apparent reason, flushed crimson and gave him a nervous look--it almost seemed a look of fright.

"But," he went on, "we were talking of the change in you. If you've changed so much in, thirty days, or, say, in sixty-seven days--you've been here that long, I believe--think of your whole life. The broader your mind and your life become, the less certain you'll be what sort of person to-morrow will find you."

It seems to me--I know that, for myself, I'm determined to keep the future clear. I'll never tie myself to the past."

"But there are some things one MUST anchor fast to." Pauline was looking as if Scarborough were trying to turn her adrift in an open boat on a lonely sea. "There are--friends. You wouldn't desert your friends, would you?"

"I couldn't help it if they insisted on deserting me. I'd keep them if their way was mine. If it wasn't--they'd give me up."

"But if you were--were--married?"

Scarborough became intensely self-conscious.

"Well--I don't know--that is----" He paused, went on: "I shouldn't marry until I was sure--her way and mine were the same."

"The right sort of woman makes her husband's way hers," said she.

"Does she? I don't know much about women. But it has always seemed to me that the kind of woman I'd admire would be one who had her own ideals and ideas of life--and that--if--if she liked me, it would be because we suited each other. You wouldn't want to be--like those princesses that are brought up without any beliefs of any sort so that they can accept the beliefs of the kingdom of the man they happen to marry?"

Pauline laughed. "I couldn't, even if I wished," she said.

"I should say not!" he echoed, as if the idea in connection with such an indelibly distinct young woman were preposterous.

"But you have such a queer way of expressing yourself. At first I thought you were talking of upsetting everything."

"I? Mercy, no. I've no idea of upsetting anything. I'm only hoping I can help straighten a few things that have been tumbled over or turned upside down."

Gradually, as they walked and talked, her own affairs--Dumont's and hers--retreated to the background and she gave Scarborough her whole attention. Even in those days--he was then twenty-three--his personality usually dominated whomever he was with. It was not his size or appearance of strength; it was not any compulsion of manner; it was not even what he said or the way he said it. All of these--and his voice contributed; but the real secret of his power was that subtle magnetic something which we try to fix--and fail--when we say "charm."

He attracted Pauline chiefly because he had a way of noting the little things--matters of dress, the flowers, colors in the sky or the landscape, the uncommon, especially the amusing, details of personality--and of connecting these trifles in unexpected ways with the large aspects of things. He saw the mystery of the universe in the contour of a leaf; he saw the secret of a

professor's character in the way he had built out his whiskers to hide an absolute lack of chin and to give the impression that a formidable chin was there. He told her stories of life on his father's farm that made her laugh, other stories that made her feel like crying. And--he brought out the best there was in her. She was presently talking of the things about which she had always been reticent--the real thoughts of her mind, those she had suppressed because she had had no sympathetic listener, those she looked forward to talking over with Dumont in that happy time when they would be together and would renew the intimacy interrupted since their High School days.

When she burst in upon Olivia her eyes were sparkling and her cheeks glowing. "The air was glorious," she said, "and Mr. Scarborough; is SO interesting."

And Olivia said to herself: "In spite of his tight clothes he may cure her of that worthless Dumont."

VI.

"LIKE HIS FATHER."

Scarborough soon lifted himself high above the throng, and was marked by faculty and students as a man worth watching. The manner of this achievement was one of those forecasts of the future with which youth bristles for those who take the trouble to watch it.

Although Pierson was only a sophomore he was the political as well as the social leader of his fraternity. Envy said that the Sigma Alphas truckled to his wealth; perhaps the exacter truth was that his wealth forced an earlier recognition of his real capacity. His position as leader made him manager of the Sigma Alpha combination of fraternities and barbs which for six years had dominated the Washington and Jefferson Literary Society. The barbs had always voted humbly with the aristocratic Sigma Alphas; so Pierson's political leadership apparently had no onerous duties attached to it--and he was not the man to make work for himself.

As the annual election approached he heard rumors of barb disaffection, of threatened barb revolt. Vance, his barb lieutenant, reassured him.

"Always a few kickers," said Vance, "and they make a lot of noise. But they won't draw off twenty votes." Pierson made himself easy--there was no danger of one of those hard-fought contests which in past years had developed at Battle Field many of Indiana's adroit political leaders.

On election night he felt important and powerful as he sat in the front row among the arrogant Sigma Alphas, at the head of his forces massed in the left side of the hall. He had insisted on Scarborough's occupying a seat just behind him. He tilted back

in his arm-chair and said, in an undertone: "You're voting with us?"

Scarborough shook his head. "Can't do it. I'm pledged to Adee."

Pierson looked amused. "Who's he? And who's putting him up?"

"I'm nominating him," replied Scarborough, "as the barb candidate."

"Take my advice don't do it, old man," said Pierson in a friendly, somewhat patronizing tone.

"You'll only get our fellows down on you--them and all the fraternity men. And--well, your candidate'll have a dozen votes or so, at most--and there'll be a laugh."

"Yes--I suppose there will be a laugh," said Scarborough, his eyes twinkling.

"Don't do it," urged Pierson. "Be practical."

"No--I leave that to your people."

Just then nominations for president were called for and the candidates of the two factions were proposed and seconded. "The nominations for president are----" began the chairman, but before he could utter the word "closed" Scarborough was on his feet--was saying, "Mr. Chairman!"

Pierson dropped his eyes and grew red with embarrassment for his friend who was thus "rushing on to make a fool of himself."

Scarborough's glance traveled slowly from row to row of expectant young men.

"Mr. Chairman and fellow-members of the Washington and Jefferson Society," he said in a conversational tone. "I have the honor of placing in nomination Frank Adee, of Terre Haute. In addition to other qualifications of which it would be superfluous for me to speak in this presence, he represents the masses of the membership of this society which has been too long dominated by and for its classes. It is time to compel the fraternities to take faction and caste and political wire-pulling away from this hall, and to keep them away. It is time to rededicate our society to equality, to freedom of thought and speech, to the democratic ideas of the plain yet proud builders of this college of ours."

Scarborough made no attempt at oratory, made not a single gesture. It was as though he were talking privately and earnestly with each one there. He sat amid silence; when a few barbs nervously applauded, the fraternity men of both factions, recovering themselves, raised a succession of ironical cheers. A shabby, frightened barb stood awkwardly, and in a trembling, weak voice seconded the nomination. There was an outburst of barb applause--strong, defiant. Pierson was anxiously studying the

faces of his barbs.

"By Jove," he muttered, "Vance has been caught napping. I believe Scarborough has put up a job on us. If I can't gain time we're beat." And he sprang to his feet, his face white. In a voice which he struggled in vain to keep to his wonted affected indifferent drawl, he said: "Mr. Chairman, I move you, sir, that we adjourn." As he was bending to sit his ready lieutenant seconded the motion.

"Mr. Chairman!" It was an excited voice from the rear of the hall--the voice of a tall, lank, sallow man of perhaps thirty-five. "What right," he shouted shrilly, "has this Mr. Pierson to come here and make that there motion? He ain't never seen here except on election nights. He----"

The chairman rapped sharply.

"Motion to adjourn not debatable," he said, and then mumbled rapidly: "The question's the motion to adjourn. All in favor say Aye--all opposed, No--the ayes seem to have it--the ayes have----"

"Mr. Chairman; I call for a count of the ayes and noes!" It was Scarborough, standing, completely self-possessed. His voice was not raised but it vibrated through that room, vibrated through those three hundred intensely excited young men.

The chairman--Waller, a Zeta Rho, of the Sigma Alpha combination--knew that Pierson was scowling a command to him to override the rules and adjourn the meeting; but he could not take his eyes from Scarborough's, dared not disobey Scarborough's imperious look. "A count of the ayes and noes is called for," he said. "The secretary will call the roll."

Pierson's motion was lost--one hundred and thirty-two to one hundred and seventy-nine. For the first time in his life he was beaten; and it was an overwhelming, a public defeat that made his leadership ridiculous. His vanity was cut savagely; it was impossible for him to control himself to stay and witness the inevitable rout. He lounged down the wide aisle, his face masked in a supercilious smile, his glance contemptuously upon the jubilant barbs. They were thick about the doors, and as he passed among them he said, addressing no one in particular: "A revolt of the Helots." A barb raised a threatening fist; Pierson sneered, and the fist unclenched and dropped before his fearless eyes.

An hour later Scarborough, his ticket elected and the society adjourned, reached Mrs. Trent's porch. In its darkness he saw the glowing end of a cigarette. "That you, Pierson?" he asked in the tone of one who knows what the answer will be.

"Sit down for a few minutes," came the reply, in a strained voice.

He could not see even the outline of Pierson's face, but with those acute sensibilities which made life alternately a keen

pleasure and a pain to him, he felt that his friend was struggling for self-control. He waited in silence.

At last Pierson began: "I owe you an apology. I've been thinking all sorts of things about you. I know they're unjust and--mean, which is worse. But, damn it, Scarborough, I HATE being beaten. And it doesn't make defeat any the easier because YOU did it."

He paused; but Scarborough did not speak.

"I'm going to be frank," Pierson went on with an effort. "I know you had a perfect right to do as you pleased, but--hang it all, old man--you might have warned me."

"But I didn't do as I pleased," said Scarborough. "And as for telling you--" He paused before he interrupted himself with: "But first I want to say that I don't like to give an account of myself to my friends. What does friendship mean if it forbids freedom? I didn't approve or condemn you because you belonged to a fraternity, and because you headed a clique that was destroying the Literary Society by making it a place for petty fraternity politics instead of a place to develop speakers, writers and debaters. Yet now you're bringing me to account because I didn't slavishly accept your ideas as my own. Do you think that's a sound basis for a friendship, Pierson?"

When Scarborough began Pierson was full of a grievance which he thought real and deep. He was proposing to forgive Scarborough, forgive him generously, but not without making him realize that it was an act of generosity. As Scarborough talked he was first irritated, then, and suddenly, convinced that he was himself in the wrong--in the wrong throughout.

"Don't say another word, Scarborough," he replied, impulsively laying his hand on the arm of his friend--how powerful it felt through the sleeve! "I've been spoiled by always having my own way and by people letting me rule them. You gave me my first lesson in defeat. And--I needed it badly. As for your not telling me, you'd have ruined your scheme if you had. Besides, looking back, I see that you did warn me. I know now what you meant by always jumping on the fraternities and the combinations."

"Thank you," said Scarborough, simply. "When I saw you leaving the society hall I feared I'd lost a friend. Instead, I've found what a friend I have." Then after a brief silence he continued: "This little incident up there to-night--this little revolution I took part in--has meant a good deal to me. It was the first chance I'd had to carry out the ideas I've thought over and thought over down there on the farm while I was working in the fields or lying in the hay, staring up at the sky. And I don't suppose in all the future I'll ever have a greater temptation to be false to myself than I had in the dread that's been haunting me--the dread of losing your friendship--and the friendship of--of--some others who might see it as I was afraid you would. There may be lessons in this incident for you, Fred. But the greatest lesson of all is the one you've taught me--NEVER

to be afraid to go forward when the Finger points."

Pierson and Olivia walked to chapel together the next morning, and he told her the story of the defeat, putting himself in a worse light than he deserved. But Olivia, who never lost a chance to attack him for his shortcomings, now, to his amazement, burst out against Scarborough.

"It was contemptible," she said hotly. "It was treachery! It was a piece of cold-blooded ambition. He'd sacrifice anything, any one, to ambition. I shall never like him again."

Pierson was puzzled--being in love with her, he had been deceived by her pretense that she had a poor opinion of him; and he did not appreciate that her sense of justice was now clouded by resentment for his sake. At dinner, when the four were together, she attacked Scarborough. Though she did not confess it, he forced her to see that at least his motives were not those she had been attributing to him. When he and Pauline were alone--Olivia and Pierson had to hurry away to a lecture he said: "What do YOU think, Miss Gardiner? You--did you--do you--agree with your cousin?"

"I?" Pauline dropped her eyes. "Oh, I----"

She hesitated so long that he said: "Go on--tell me just what you think. I'd rather know than suspect."

"I think you did right. But--I don't see how you had the courage to do it."

"That is, you think I did right--but the sort of right that's worse than wrong."

"No--no!" she protested, putting a good deal of feeling into her voice in the effort to reassure him. "I'd have been ashamed of you if you hadn't done it. And--oh, I despise weakness in a man most of all! And I like to think that if everybody in college had denounced you, you'd have gone straight on. And--you WOULD!"

Within a week after this they were calling each the other by their first names.

For the Christmas holidays she went with her mother from Battle Field direct to Chicago, to her father's sisters Mrs. Hayden--Colonel Gardiner had been called south on business. When she came back she and Scarborough took up their friendship where they had left it. They read the same books, had similar tastes, disagreed sympathetically, agreed with enthusiasm. She saw a great deal of several other men in her class, enough not to make her preference for him significant to the college--or to herself. They went for moonlight straw-rides, on moonlight and starlight skating and ice-boat parties, for long walks over the hills--all invariably with others, but they were often practically alone. He rapidly dropped his rural manners and mannerisms--Fred Pierson's tailor in Indianapolis made the most radical of the

surface changes in him.

Late in February his cousin, the superintendent of the farm, telegraphed him to come home. He found his mother ill--plainly dying. And his father--Bladen Scarborough's boast had been that he never took a "dose of drugs" in his life, and for at least seventy of his seventy-nine years he had been "on the jump" daily from long before dawn until long after sundown. Now he was content to sit in his arm-chair and, with no more vigorous protest than a frown and a growl, to swallow the despised drugs.

Each day he made them carry him in his great chair into HER bedroom. And there he sat all day long, his shaggy brows down, his gaze rarely wandering from the little ridge her small body made in the high white bed; and in his stern eyes there was a look of stoic anguish. Each night, as they were carrying him to his own room, they took him near the bed; and he leaned forward, and the voice that in all their years had never been anything but gentle for her said: "Good night, Sallie." And the small form would move slightly, there would be a feeble turning of the head, a wan smile on the little old face, a soft "Good night, Bladen."

It was on Hampden's ninth day at home that the old man said "Good night, Sallie," and there was no answer--not even a stir. They did not offer to carry him in the next morning; nor did he turn his face from the wall. She died that day; he three days later--he had refused food and medicine; he had not shed a tear or made a sound.

Thus the journey side by side for fifty-one years was a journey no longer. They were asleep side by side on the hillside for ever.

Hampden stayed at home only one day after the funeral. He came back to Battle Field apparently unchanged. He was not in black, for Bladen Scarborough abhorred mourning as he abhorred all outward symbols of the things of the heart. But after a week he told Pauline about it; and as he talked she sobbed, though his voice did not break nor his eyes dim.

"He's like his father," she thought.

When Olivia believed that Dumont was safely forgotten she teased her--"Your adoring and adored Scarborough."

Pauline was amused by this. With his unfailing instinct, Scarborough had felt--and had never permitted himself to forget--that there was some sort of wall round her for him. It was in perfect good faith that she answered Olivia: "You don't understand him. He's a queer man--sometimes I wonder myself that he doesn't get just a little sentimental. I suppose I'd find him exasperating--if I weren't otherwise engaged."

Olivia tried not to show irritation at this reference to Dumont. "I think you're mistaken about which of you is queer," she said. "You are the one--not he."

"I?" Pauline laughed--she was thinking of her charm against any love but one man's, the wedding ring she always wore at her neck. "Why, I COULDN'T fall in love with HIM."

"The woman who gets him will do mighty well for herself--in every way," said Olivia.

"Indeed she will. But--I'd as soon think of falling in love with a tree or a mountain."

She liked her phrase; it seemed to her exactly to define her feeling for Scarborough. She liked it so well that she repeated it to herself reassuringly many times in the next few weeks.

VII.

PAULINE AWAKENS.

In the last week of March came a succession of warm rains. The leaves burst from their impatient hiding just within the cracks in the gray bark. And on Monday the unclouded sun was irradiating a pale green world from a pale blue sky. The four windows of Pauline and Olivia's sitting-room were up; a warm, scented wind was blowing this way and that the strays of Pauline's red-brown hair as she sat at the table, her eyes on a book, her thoughts on a letter--Dumont's first letter on landing in America. A knock, and she frowned slightly.

"Come!" she cried, her expression slowly veering toward welcome.

The door swung back and in came Scarborough. Not the awkward youth of last October, but still unable wholly to conceal how much at a disadvantage he felt before the woman he particularly wished to please.

"Yes--I'm ten minutes early," he said, apology in his tone for his instinct told him that he was interrupting, and he had too little vanity to see that the interruption was agreeable. "But I thought you'd be only reading a novel."

For answer she held up the book which lay before her--a solemn volume in light brown calf.

"Analytical geometry," he said; "and on the first day of the finest spring the world ever saw!" He was at the window, looking out longingly--sunshine, and soft air washed clean by the rains; the new-born leaves and buds; the pioneer birds and flowers. "Let's go for a walk. We can do the Vergil to-night."

"YOU--talking of neglecting WORK!" Her smile seemed to him to sparkle as much in the waves of her hair as in her even white teeth and gold-brown eyes. "So you're human, just like the rest

of us."

"Human!" He glanced at her and instantly glanced away.

"Do leave that window," she begged. "We must get the Vergil now. I'm reading an essay at the society to-night--they've fined me twice for neglecting it. But if you stand there reminding me of what's going on outside I'll not be able to resist."

"How this would look from Indian Rock!"

She flung open a Vergil text-book with a relentless shake of the head. "I've got the place. Book three, line two forty-five--

"*Una in praecelsa consedit rupe Celaeno----*" "

"It doesn't matter what that hideous old Harpy howled at the pious Aeneas," he grumbled. "Let's go out and watch the Great God Pan dedicate his brand-new temple."

"Do sit there!" She pointed a slim white forefinger at the chair at the opposite side of the table--the side nearer him. "I'll be generous and work the dictionary to-day." And she opened a fat, black, dull-looking book beside the Vergil.

"Where's the Johnnie?" he asked, reluctantly dropping into the chair.

She laid Dryden's translation of the Aeneid on his side of the table. They always read the poetical version before they began to translate for the class-room--Dryden was near enough to the original to give them its spirit, far enough to quiet their consciences. "Find the place yourself," said she. "I'm not going to do everything."

He opened the Dryden and languidly turned the pages. "*At length rebuff'd, they leave their mangled----*" " he began.

"No--two or three lines farther down," she interrupted. "That was in the last lesson."

He pushed back the rebellious lock that insisted on falling down the middle of his forehead, plunged his elbows fiercely upon the table, put his fists against his temples, and began again:

"*High on a craggy cliff Celaeno sate
And thus her dismal errand did relate--*"

Have you got the place in the Latin?" he interrupted himself.

Fortunately he did not look up, for she was watching the waving boughs. "Yes," she replied, hastily returning to the book. "You do your part and I'll do mine."

He read a few lines in an absent-minded sing-song, then interrupted himself once more: "Did you ever smell anything like that breeze?"

"Never. `Bellum etiam pro caede bovum'--go on--I'm listening--or trying to."

He read:

"But know that ere your promised walls you build,
My curse shall severely be fulfilled.
Fierce famine is your lot--for this misdeed,
Reduced to grind the plates on which you feed.' "

He glanced at her. She was leaning on her elbow, obviously weaving day-dreams round those boughs as they trembled with the ecstasy of spring.

"You are happy to-day?" he said.

"Yes--happier than I have been for a year." She smiled mysteriously. "I've had good news." She turned abruptly, looked him in the eyes with that frank, clear expression--his favorite among his memory-pictures of her had it. "There's one thing that worries me--it's never off my mind longer than a few minutes. And when I'm blue, as I usually am on rainy days, it makes me--horribly uncomfortable. I've often almost asked your advice about it."

"If you'd be sorry afterward that you told me," said he, "I hope you won't. But if I can help you, you know how glad I'd be."

"It's no use to tell Olivia," Pauline went on. "She's bitterly prejudiced. But ever since the first month I knew you, I felt that I could trust you, that you were a real friend. And you're so fair in judging people and things."

His eyes twinkled.

"I'm afraid I'd tilt the scales--just a little--where you were concerned."

"Oh, I want you to do that," she answered with a smile. "Last fall I did something--well, it was foolish, though I wouldn't admit that to any one else. I was carried away by an impulse. Not that I regret. In the only really important way, I wouldn't undo it if I could--I think." Those last two words came absently, as if she were debating the matter with herself.

"If it's done and can't be undone," he said cheerfully, "I don't see that advice is needed."

"But--you don't understand." She seemed to be casting about for words. "As I said, it was last fall--here. In Saint X there was a man--and he and I--we'd cared for each other ever since we were children. And then he went away to college. He did several things father didn't like. You know how older people are--they don't make allowances. And though father's the gentlest, best--at any rate, he turned against Jack, and--"

Scarborough abruptly went to the window and stood with his back

to her.

After a pause Pauline said, in a rush, "And he came here last fall and we got married."

There was a long silence.

"It was DREADFUL, wasn't it?" she said in the tone of one who has just made a shocking discovery.

Scarborough did not answer.

"I never realized till this minute," she went on after a while. "Not that I'm sorry or that I don't--don't CARE--just as I always did. But somehow, telling it out loud to some one else has made me see it in a different light. It didn't seem like treachery to them--to father and mother--then. It hasn't seemed like a--a marriage REALLY marriage--until now."

Another long silence. Then she burst out appealingly: "Oh, I don't see how I'm ever going to tell them!"

Scarborough came back to his chair and seated himself. His face was curiously white. It was in an unnatural voice that he said: "How old is he?"

"Twenty-five," she replied, then instantly flared up, as if he had attacked Dumont: "But it wasn't his fault--not in the least. I knew what I was doing--and I wanted to do it. You mustn't get a false impression of him, Hampden. You'd admire and respect him. You--any one--would have done as he did in the same circumstances." She blushed slightly. "You and he are ever so much alike--even in looks. It was that that made me tell you, that made me like you as I have--and trust you."

Scarborough winced. Presently he began: "Yet you regret----"

"No--no!" she protested--too vehemently. "I do NOT regret marrying him. That was certain to be sooner or later. All I regret is that I did something that seems underhanded. Perhaps I'm really only sorry I didn't tell them as soon as I'd done it."

She waited until she saw he was not going to speak. "And now," she said, "I don't know HOW to tell them." Again she waited, but he did not speak, continued to look steadily out into the sky. "What do you think?" she asked nervously. "But I can see without your saying. Only I--wish you'd SAY it."

"No, I don't condemn you," he said slowly. "I know you. YOU couldn't possibly do anything underhanded. If you'd been where you'd have had to conceal it directly, face to face, from some one who had the right to know--you'd never have done it." He rested his arms on the table and looked straight at her. "I feel I must tell you what I think. And I feel, too, it wouldn't be fair and honest if I didn't let you see why you might not want to take my advice."

She returned his gaze inquiringly.

"I love you," he went on calmly. "I've known it ever since I missed you so at the Christmas holidays. I love you for what you are, and for what you're as certain to be as--as a rosebud is certain to be a full-blown rose. I love you as my father loved my mother. I shall love you always." His manner was calm, matter-of-fact; but there was in his musical, magical voice a certain quality which set her nerves and her blood suddenly to vibrating. She felt as if she were struggling in a great sea--the sea of his love for her--struggling to reach the safety of the shore.

"Oh--I WISH you hadn't told me!" she exclaimed.

"Suppose I hadn't; suppose you had taken my advice? No"--he shook his head slowly--"I couldn't do that, Pauline--not even to win you."

"I'm sorry I said anything to you about it."

"You needn't be. You haven't harmed yourself. And maybe I can help you."

"No--we won't talk of it," she said--she was pressing her hand on her bosom where she could feel her wedding ring. "It wouldn't be right, now. I don't wish your advice."

"But I must give it. I'm years and years older than you--many, many years more than the six between us. And----"

"I don't wish to hear."

"For his sake, for your own sake, Pauline, tell them! And they'll surely help you to wait till you're older before you do anything--irrevocable."

"But I care for him," she said--angrily, though it could not have been what he was saying so gently that angered her. "You forget that I care for him. It IS irrevocable now. And I'm glad it is!"

"You LIKE him. You don't LOVE him. And--he's not worthy of your love. I'm sure it isn't prejudice that makes me say it. If he were, he'd have waited----"

She was on her feet, her eyes blazing.

"I asked for advice, not a lecture. I DESPISE you! Attacking the man I love and behind his back! I wish to be alone."

He rose but met her look without flinching.

"You can send ME away," he said gently, "but you can't send away my words. And if they're true you'll feel them when you get over your anger. You'll do what you think right. But--be SURE, Pauline. Be SURE!" In his eyes there was a look--the secret altar with the never-to-be-extinguished flame upon it. "Be

SURE!, Pauline. Be SURE."

Her anger fell; she sank, forlorn, into a chair. For both, the day had shriveled and shadowed. And as he turned and left the room the warmth and joy died from air and sky and earth; both of them felt the latent chill--it seemed not a reminiscence of winter past but the icy foreboding of winter closing in.

When Olivia came back that evening from shopping in Indianapolis she found her cousin packing.

"Is it something from home?" she asked, alarmed.

Pauline did not look up as she answered:

"No--but I'm going home--to stay--going in the morning. I've telegraphed them."

"To stay!"

"Yes--I was married to Jack--here--last fall."

"You--married! To JOHN DUMONT--you, only seventeen--oh, Pauline--" And Olivia gave way to tears for the first time since she was a baby.

Scarborough was neither at supper nor at breakfast--Pauline left without seeing him again.

VIII.

THE DECISION.

When the sign-board on a station platform said "5.2 miles to St. X," Pauline sank back in her chair in the parlor-car with blanched face. And almost immediately, so it seemed to her, Saint X came into view--home! She fancied she could see the very house as she looked down on the mass of green in which the town was embowered. The train slid into the station, slowed down--there were people waiting on the platform--her father! He was glancing from window to window, trying to catch a glimpse of her; and his expression of almost agonized eagerness made her heartsick. She had been away from him for nearly seven months--long enough to break the habit which makes it impossible for members of a family to know how they really look to each other. How gray and thin his beard seemed! What was the meaning of that gaunt look about his shoulders? What was the strange, terrifying shadow over him? "Why, he's OLD!" The tears welled into her eyes--"He's gliding away from me!" She remembered what she had to tell him and her knees almost refused to support her.

He was at the step as she sprang down. She flew into his arms. He held her away from him and scanned her face with anxious eyes.

"Is my little girl ill?" he asked. "The telegram made me

uneasy."

"Oh, no!" she said with a reassuring hug. "Where's mother?"

"She--she's got a--a--surprise for you. We must hurry--she'll be impatient, though she's seen you since I have."

At the curbstone stood the familiar surrey, with Mordecai humped upon the front seat. "I don't see how the colonel ever knowed you," said he, as she shook hands with him. "I never seen the like for growin'."

"But YOU look just the same, Mordecai--you and the surrey and the horses. And how's Amanda?"

"Poorly," replied Mordecai--his invariable answer to inquiries about his wife. She patterned after the old school, which held that for a woman to confess to good health was for her to confess to lack of refinement, if not of delicacy.

"You think I've changed, father?" asked Pauline, when the horses were whirling them home. She was so busily greeting the familiar streets and houses and trees and faces that she hardly heard his reply.

"'I never seen the like for growin',' " he quoted, his eyes shining with pride in her. He was a reticent man by nature as well as by training; he could not have SAID how beautiful, how wonderful he thought her, or how intensely he loved her. The most he could do to express himself to her was, a little shyly, to pat her hand--and to LOOK it into Mordecai's back.

She was about to snuggle up to him as a wave of delight at being home again swept over her; but her secret rushed from the background of her mind. "How could I have done it? How can I tell them?" Then, the serene and beautiful kindness of her father's face reassured her.

Her mother was waiting in the open front door as the surrey came up the drive--still the same dear old-young mother, with the same sweet dignity and gentleness.

"Oh, mother, mother!" exclaimed Pauline, leaping from the carriage into her arms. And as they closed about her she felt that sorrow and evil could not touch her; felt just as when she, a little girl, fleeing from some frightful phantom of her own imagining, had rushed there for safety. She choked, she sobbed, she led her mother to the big sofa opposite the stairway; and, sitting there, they held each the other tightly, Pauline kissing her, smoothing her hair, she caressing Pauline and crying softly.

"We've got a surprise for you, Polly," said she, when they were calmer.

"I don't want anything but you and father," replied Pauline.

Her father turned away--and so she did not see the shadow deepen

in his face. Her mother shook her head, mischief in her eyes that were young as a girl's--younger far than her daughter's at that moment. "Go into the sitting-room and see," she said.

Pauline opened the sitting-room door. John Dumont caught her in his arms. "Polly!" he exclaimed. "It's all right. They've come round and--and--here I am!"

Pauline pushed him away from her and sank to the floor in a faint.

When she came to herself she was lying on the divan in the sitting-room. Her mother was kneeling beside her, bathing her temples with cold water; her father and her husband were standing, helplessly looking at her. "Send him away," she murmured, closing her eyes.

Only her mother heard. She motioned to the two men to leave the room. When the door closed Pauline sat up.

"He said it was all right," she began feverishly. "What did he mean, mother?" She was hoping she was to be spared the worst part of her ordeal.

But her mother's reply dashed her hopes, made her settle back among the cushions and hide her face. "It IS all right, Polly. You're to have your own way, and it's your father's way. John has convinced him that he really has changed. We knew--that is, I suspected why you were coming, and we thought we'd give you a surprise--give you what your heart was set on, before you had to ask for it. I'm so sorry, dear, that the shock was--"

Pauline lay perfectly still, her face hidden. After a pause: "I don't feel well enough to see him now. I want this day with you and father. To-morrow--to-morrow, we'll--to-day I want to be as I was when I was--just you and father, and the house and the garden."

Her mother left her for a moment and, when she came back, said: "He's gone."

Pauline gave a quick sigh of relief. Soon she rose. "I'm going for father, and we'll walk in the garden and forget there's anybody else in the world but just us three."

At half-past eight they had family prayers in the sitting-room; Pauline kneeling near her mother, her father kneeling beside his arm-chair and in a tremulous voice pouring out his gratitude to God for keeping them all "safe from the snares and temptations of the world," for leading them thus far on the journey.

"And, God, our Father, we pray Thee, have this daughter of ours, this handmaiden of Thine, ever in Thy keeping. And these things we ask in the name of Thy Son--Amen." The serene quiet, the beloved old room, the evening scene familiar to her from her earliest childhood, her father's reverent, earnest voice, halting and almost breaking after every word of the petition for her; her mother's soft echo of his "Amen"--Pauline's eyes were swimming

as she rose from her knees.

Her mother went with her to her bedroom, hovered about her as she undressed, helped her now and then with fingers that trembled with happiness, and, when she was in bed, put out the light and "tucked her in" and kissed her--as in the old days. "Good night--God bless my little daughter--my HAPPY little daughter."

Pauline waited until she knew that they were sleeping. Then she put on a dressing-gown and went to the open window--how many springtimes had she sat there in the moonlight to watch, as now, the tulips and the hyacinths standing like fairies and bombarding the stars with the most delicious perfumes.

She sat hour after hour, giving no outward sign of battle within. In every lull came Scarborough's "Be SURE, Pauline!" to start the tumult afresh. When the stars began to pale in the dawn she rose--she WAS sure. Far from sure that she was doing the best for herself; but sure, sure without a doubt, that she was doing her duty to her parents.

"I must not punish THEM for MY sin," she said.

Late the next morning she went to the farthest corner of the garden, to the small summer-house where she had played with her dolls and her dishes, where she had worked with slate and spelling-book, where she had read her favorite school-girl romances, where she had dreamed her own school-girl romance. She was waiting under the friendly old canopy of bark--the posts supporting it were bark-clad, too; up and around and between them clambered the morning-glories in whose gorgeous, velvet-soft trumpets the sun-jewels glittered.

And presently he came down the path, his keen face and insolent eyes triumphant. He was too absorbed in his own emotion especially to note hers. Besides, she had always been receptive rather than demonstrative with him.

"We'll be married again, and do the gossips out of a sensation," he said. Though she was not looking at him, his eyes shifted from her face as he added in a voice which at another time she might have thought strained: "Then, too, your father and mother and mine are so strait-laced--it'd give 'em a terrible jar to find out. You're a good deal like them, Polly--only in a modern sort of way."

Pauline flushed scarlet and compressed her lips. She said presently: "You're sure you wish it?"

"Wish what?"

"To marry me. Sometimes I've thought we're both too young, that we might wait----"

He put his arm round her with an air of proud possession. "What'd be the sense in that?" he demanded gaily. "Aren't you MINE?"

And again she flushed and lowered her eyes and compressed her lips. Then she astonished him by flinging her arms round his neck and kissing him hysterically. "But I DO love you!" she exclaimed. "I do! I DO!"

IX.

A THOROUGHBRED RUNS AWAY.

It was midday six weeks later, and Pauline and Dumont were landing at Liverpool, when Scarborough read in the college-news column of the Battle Field Banner that she had "married the only son of Henry Dumont, of Saint Christopher, one of the richest men in our state, and has departed for an extended foreign tour." Olivia--and Pierson naturally--had known, but neither had had the courage to tell him.

Scarborough was in Pierson's room. He lowered the paper from in front of his face after a few minutes.

"I see Pauline has married and gone abroad," he said.

"Yes, so I heard from Olivia," replied Pierson, avoiding Scarborough's eyes.

"Why didn't you tell me?" continued Scarborough, tranquil so far as Pierson could judge. "I'd have liked to send her a note."

Pierson was silent.

"I thought it would cut him horribly," he was thinking. "And he's taking it as if he had only a friendly interest." Scarborough's face was again behind the newspaper. When he had finished it he sauntered toward the door. He paused there to glance idly at the titles of the top row in the book-case. Pierson was watching him. "No--it's all right," he concluded. Scarborough was too straight and calm just to have received such a blow as that news would have been had HE cared for Pauline. Pierson liked his look better than ever before--the tall, powerful figure; the fair hair growing above his wide and lofty brow, with the one defiant lock; and in his aquiline nose and blue-gray eyes and almost perfect mouth and chin the stamp of one who would move forward irresistibly, moving others to his will.

"How old are you, Scarborough?" he asked.

"Twenty-three-nearly twenty-four. I ought to be ashamed to be only a freshman, oughtn't I?" He shrugged his shoulders. "I'm tired of it all." And he strolled out.

He avoided Pierson and Olivia and all his friends for several days, went much into the woods alone, took long walks at night. Olivia would have it that he had been hard hit, and almost

convinced Pierson.

"He's the sort of person that suffers the most," she said.

"I've a brother like him--won't have sympathy, keeps a wound covered up so that it can't heal."

"But what shall I do for him?" asked Pierson.

"Don't do anything--he'd hate you if you did."

After a week or ten days he called on Pierson and, seating himself at the table, began to shuffle a pack of cards. He looked tired.

"I never saw cards until I was fifteen," he said.

"At home they thought them one of the devil's worst devices--we had a real devil in our house."

"So did we," said Pierson.

"But not a rip-snorter like ours--they don't have him in cities, or even in towns, any more. I've seen ours lots of times after the lights were out--saw him long after I'd convinced myself in daylight that he didn't exist. But I never saw him so close as the night of the day I learned to play casino."

"Did you learn in the stable?" asked Pierson.

"That's where I learned, and mother slipped up behind me--I didn't know what was coming till I saw the look in the other boy's face. Then--" Pierson left the rest to imagination.

"I learned in the hay-loft--my sister and my cousin Ed and I. One of the farm-hands taught us. The cards were so stained we could hardly see the faces. That made them look the more devilish. And a thunder-storm came up and the lightning struck a tree a few rods from the barn."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Pierson. "I'll bet you fell to praying."

"Not I. I'd just finished Tom Paine's Age of Reason--a preacher's son down the pike stole it from a locked closet in his father's library and loaned it to me. But I'll admit the thunderbolt staggered me. I said to them--pretty shakily, I guess: 'Come on, let's begin again.' But the farm-hand said: 'I reckon I'll get on the safe side,' and began to pray--how he roared! And I laughed--how wicked and reckless and brave that laugh did sound to me. 'Bella and Ed didn't know which to be more afraid of--my ridicule or the lightning. They compromised--they didn't pray and they didn't play.'"

"And so you've never touched a card since."

"We played again the next afternoon--let's have a game of poker. I'm bored to death today."

This was Scarborough's first move toward the fast set of which Pierson was leader. It was a small fast set--there were not many spoiled sons at Battle Field. But its pace was rapid; for every member of it had a constitution that was a huge reservoir of animal spirits and western energy. They "cribbed" their way through recitations and examinations--as the faculty did not put the students on honor but watched them, they reasoned that cribbing was not dishonorable provided one did barely enough of it to pull him through. They drank a great deal--usually whisky, which they disliked but poured down raw, because it was the "manly" drink and to take it undiluted was the "manly" way. They made brief excursions to Indianapolis and Chicago for the sort of carousals that appeal to the strong appetites and indiscriminating tastes of robust and curious youth.

Scarborough at once began to reap the reward of his advantages--a naturally bold spirit, an unnaturally reckless mood. In two weeks he won three hundred dollars, half of it from Pierson. He went to Chicago and in three nights' play increased this to twenty-nine hundred. The noise of the unprecedented achievement echoed through the college. In its constellation of bad examples a new star had blazed out, a star of the first magnitude.

Bladen Scarborough had used his surplus to improve and extend his original farm. But farms were now practically unsalable, and Hampden and Arabella were glad to let their cousin Ed--Ed Warfield--stay on, rent free, because with him there they were certain that the place would be well kept up. Hampden, poor in cash, had intended to spend the summer as a book agent. Instead, he put by a thousand dollars of his winnings to insure next year's expenses and visited Pierson at his family's cottage in the summer colony at Mackinac. He won at poker there and went on East, taking Pierson. He lost all he had with him, all Pierson could lend him, telegraphed to Battle Field for half his thousand dollars, won back all he had lost and two thousand besides.

When he reappeared at Battle Field in September he was dazzling to behold. His clothes were many and had been imported for him by the Chicago agent of a London tailor. His shirts and ties were in patterns and styles that startled Battle Field. He had taken on manners and personal habits befitting a "man of the world"--but he had not lost that simplicity and directness which were as unchangeably a part of him as the outlines of his face or the force which forbade him to be idle for a moment. He and Pierson--Pierson was pupil, now--took a suite of rooms over a shop in the town and furnished them luxuriously. They had brought from New York to look after them and their belongings the first English manservant Battle Field had seen.

Scarborough kept up his college work; he continued regularly to attend the Literary Society and to be its most promising orator and debater; he committed no overt act--others might break the college rules, might be publicly intoxicated and noisy, but he was always master of himself and of the situation. Some of the fanatical among the religious students believed and said that he had sold himself to the devil. He would have been expelled summarily but for Pierson--Pierson's father was one of the two large contributors to the support of the college, and it was

expected that he would will it a generous endowment. To entrap Scarborough was to entrap Pierson. To entrap Pierson-- The faculty strove to hear and see as little as possible of their doings.

In the college Y.M.C.A. prayers were offered for Scarborough--his name was not spoken, but every one understood. A delegation of the religious among his faithful fellow barbs called upon him to pray and to exhort. They came away more charmed than ever with their champion, and convinced that he was the victim of slander and envy. Not that he had deliberately deceived them, for he hadn't; he was simply courteous and respectful of their sincerity.

"The fraternities are in this somewhere," the barbs decided. "They're trying to destroy him by lying about him." And they liked it that their leader was the brilliant, the talked-about, the sought-after person in the college. When he stood up to speak in the assembly hall or the Literary Society they always greeted him with several rounds of applause.

To the chagrin of the faculty and the irritation of the fraternities a jury of alumni selected him to represent Battle Field at the oratorical contest among the colleges of the state. And he not only won there but also at the interstate contest--a victory over the orators of the colleges of seven western states in which public speaking was, and is, an essential part of higher education. His oratory lacked style, they thought at Battle Field. It was the same then, essentially, as it was a few years later when the whole western country was discussing it. He seemed to depend entirely upon the inherent carrying power of his ably constructed sentences--like so many arrows, some flying gracefully, others straight and swift, all reaching the mark at which they were aimed. In those days, as afterward, he stood upon the platform almost motionless; his voice was clear and sweet, never noisy, but subtly penetrating and, when the sense demanded it, full of that mysterious quality which makes the blood run more swiftly and the nerves tingle. "Merely a talker, not an orator," declared the professor of elocution, and few of those who saw him every day appreciated his genius then. It was on the subject-matter of his oration, not on his "delivery," that the judges decided for him--so they said and thought.

In February of this resplendent sophomore year there came in his mail a letter postmarked Battle Field and addressed in printed handwriting. The envelope contained only a newspaper cutting--from the St. Christopher Republic:

At four o'clock yesterday afternoon a boy was born to Mr. and Mrs. John Dumont. It is their first child, the first grandchild of the Dumont and Gardiner families. Mother and son are reported as doing well.

Scarborough spent little time in the futile effort to guess what coward enemy had sped this anonymous shaft on the chance of its hitting him. His only enemies that interested him were those

within himself. He destroyed envelope and clipping, then said to Pierson: "I neglected to celebrate an important event not long ago." He paused to laugh--so queerly that Pierson looked at him uneasily. "We must go to Chicago to celebrate it."

"Very good," said Fred. "We'll get Chalmers to go with us to-morrow."

"No-to-day--the four-o'clock train--we've got an hour and a half. And we'll have four clear days."

"But there's the ball to-night and I'm down for several dances."

"We'll dance them in Chicago. I've never been really free to dance before." He poured out a huge drink. "I'm impatient for the ball to begin." He lifted his glass. "To our ancestors," he said, "who repressed themselves, denied themselves, who hoarded health and strength and capacity for joy, and transmitted them in great oceans to us--to drown our sorrows in!"

He won six hundred dollars at faro in a club not far from the Auditorium, Pierson won two hundred at roulette, Chalmers lost seventy--they had about fourteen hundred dollars for their four days' "dance." When they took the train for Battle Field they had spent all they had with them--had flung it away for dinners, for drives, for theaters, for suppers, for champagne. All the return journey Scarborough stared moodily out of the car window. And at every movement that disturbed his clothing there rose to nauseate him, to fill him with self-loathing, the odors of strong, sickening-sweet perfumes.

The next day but one, as he was in the woods near Indian Rock, he saw Olivia coming toward him. They had hardly spoken for several months. He turned to avoid her but she came on after him.

"I wish to talk with you a few minutes, Mr. Scarborough," she said coldly, storm in her brave eyes.

"At your service," he answered with strained courtesy. And he walked beside her.

"I happen to know," she began, "that they're going to expel you and Fred Pierson the next time you leave here without permission."

"Indeed! You are very kind to warn me of my awful danger." He looked down at her with a quizzical smile.

"And I wish to say I think it's a disgrace that they didn't do it long ago," she went on, her anger rising to the bait of his expression.

"Your opinions are always interesting," he replied. "If you have nothing further I'll ask your permission to relieve you of----"

"No," she interrupted. "I've not said what I wished to say."

You're making it hard for me. I can't get accustomed to the change in you since last year. There used to be a good side to you, a side one could appeal to. And I want to talk about--Fred. You're RUINING him."

"You flatter me." He bowed mockingly. "But I doubt if HE'D feel flattered."

"I've told him the same thing, but you're too strong for me." Her voice trembled; she steadied it with a frown. "I can't influence him any longer."

"Really, Miss Shrewsbury----"

"Please!" she said. "Fred and I were engaged. I broke it last night. I broke it because--you know why."

Scarborough flushed crimson.

"Oh," he said. "I didn't know he was engaged."

"I know you, Hampden Scarborough," Olivia continued. "I've understood why you've been degrading yourself. And I haven't blamed you--though I've wondered at your lack of manhood."

"You are imposing on my courtesy," he said haughtily.

"I can't help it. You and I must talk this thing to the end. You're robbing me of the man I love. Worse than that, you're destroying him, dragging him down to a level at which HE may stay, while YOU are sure to rise again. You've got your living to make--I don't agree with those who think you'll become a professional gambler. But he his father's rich and indulgent, and--God only knows how low he'll sink if you keep on pushing him."

"You are excited, hysterical. You misjudge him, believe me," said Scarborough, gently.

"No--I know he's not depraved--yet. Do you think I could care for him if he were?"

"I hope so. That's when he'd need it most."

Olivia grew red. "Well, perhaps I should. I'm a fool, like all women. But I ask you to let him alone, to give his better self a chance."

"Why not ask him to let ME alone--to give MY better nature a chance?"

"You--laughing at me in these circumstances! You who pretended to be a man, pretended to love Pauline Gardiner----"

He started and his eyes blazed, as if she had cut him across the face with a whip. Then he drew himself up with an expression of insolent fury. His lips, his sharp white teeth, were cruel.

She bore his look without flinching.

"Yes," she went on, "you think you love her. Yet you act as if her love were a degrading influence in your life, as if she were a bad woman instead of one who ought to inspire a man to do and be his best. How ashamed she'd be of you, of your love, if she could see you as you are now--the tempter of all the bad impulses in this college."

He could not trust himself to reply. He was suffocating with rage and shame. He lifted his hat, walked rapidly away from her and went home. Pierson had never seen him in an ugly mood before. And he, too, was in an ugly mood--disgusted with his own conduct, angry at Scarborough, whom he held responsible for the unprecedented excesses of this last trip to Chicago and for their consequences.

"What's happened?" he asked sourly. "What's the matter with YOU?"

"Your Olivia," replied Scarborough, with a vicious sneer, "has been insulting me for your sins. She is a shrew! I don't wonder you dropped her."

Pierson rose slowly and faced him.

"You astonish me," he said. "I shouldn't have believed you capable of a speech which no gentleman could possibly utter."

"YOU, sitting as a court of honor to decide what's becoming a gentleman!" Scarborough looked amused contempt. "My dear Pierson, you're worse than offensive--you are ridiculous."

"No man shall say such things to me especially a man who notoriously lives by his wits."

Scarborough caught him up as if he had been a child and pinned him against the wall. "Take that back," he said, "or I'll kill you." His tone was as colorless as his face.

"Kill and be damned," replied Pierson, cool and disdainful. "You're a coward."

Scarborough's fingers closed on Pierson's throat. Then flashed into his mind that warning which demands and gets a hearing in the wildest tempest of passion before an irrevocable act can be done. It came to him in the form of a reminder of his laughing remark to Pauline when he told her of the traditions of murder in his family. He released Pierson and fled from the apartment.

Half an hour later Pierson was reading a note from him:

"I've invited some friends this evening. I trust it will be convenient for you to absent yourself. They'll be out by eleven, and then, if you return, we can decide which is to stay in the apartment and which to leave."

Pierson went away to his fraternity house and at half-past eight

Scarborough, Chalmers, Jack Wilton and Brigham sat down to a game of poker. They had played about an hour, the cards steadily against Chalmers and Brigham--the cards were usually against Brigham. He was a mere boy, with passionate aspirations to be considered a sport. He had been going a rapid gait for a year. He had lost to Scarborough alone as much as he had expected to spend on the year's education.

Toward ten o'clock there was a jack-pot with forty-three dollars in it and Brigham was betting wildly, his hands and his voice trembling, his lips shriveled. With a sudden gesture Chalmers caught the ends of the table and jerked it back. There--in Brigham's lap--were two cards.

"I thought so!" exclaimed Chalmers. "You dirty little cheat! I've been watching you."

The boy looked piteously at Chalmers' sneering face, at the faces of the others. The tears rolled down his cheeks. "For God's sake, boys," he moaned, "don't be hard on me. I was desperate. I've lost everything, and my father can't give me any more. He's a poor man, and he and mother have been economizing and sacrificing to send me here. And when I saw I was ruined--God knows, I didn't think what I was doing." He buried his face in his hands. "Don't be hard on me," he sobbed. "Any one of you might have done the same if he was in my fix."

"You sniveling cur," said Chalmers, high and virtuous, "how dare you say such a thing! You forget you're among gentlemen----"

"None of that, Chalmers," interrupted Scarborough. "The boy's telling the truth. And nobody knows it better than YOU." This with a significant look into Chalmers' eyes. They shifted and he colored.

"I agree with Scarborough," said Wilton. "We oughtn't to have let the boy into our games. We must never mention what has happened here this evening."

"But we can't allow a card sharp to masquerade as a gentleman," objected Chalmers. "I confess, Scarborough, I don't understand how you can be so easy-going in a matter of honor."

"You think I must have a fellow-feeling for dishonor, eh?" Scarborough smiled satirically. "I suppose because I was sympathetic enough with you to overlook the fact that you were shy on your share of our Chicago trip."

"What do you mean?"

"The three hundred you borrowed of Pierson when you thought he was too far gone to know what he was doing. My back was turned--but there was the mirror."

Chalmers' sullen, red face confirmed Scarborough's charge.

"No," continued Scarborough, "we GENTLEMEN ought to be

charitable toward one another's DISCOVERED lapses." He seated himself at his desk and wrote rapidly:

We, the undersigned, exonerate Edwin Brigham of cheating in the poker game in Hampden Scarborough's rooms on Saturday evening, February 20, 18--. And we pledge ourselves never to speak of the matter either to each other or to any one else.

"I've signed first," said Scarborough, rising and holding the pen toward Chalmers. "Now, you fellows sign. Chalmers!"

Chalmers signed, and then Wilton.

"Take Chalmers away with you," said Scarborough to Wilton in an undertone. "I've something to say to Brigham."

When they were gone he again seated himself at his desk and, taking his check-book, wrote a check and tore it out.

"Now, listen to me, Brig," he said friendlily to Brigham, who seemed to be in a stupor. "I've won about six hundred dollars from you, first and last--more, rather than less. Will that amount put you in the way of getting straight?"

"Yes," said Brigham, dully.

"Then here's a check for it. And here's the paper exonerating you. And--I guess you won't play again soon."

The boy choked back his sobs.

"I don't know how I ever came to do it, Scarborough. Oh, I'm a dog, a dog! When I started to come here my mother took me up to her bedroom and opened the drawer of her bureau and took out a savings-bank book--it had a credit of twelve hundred dollars. 'Do you see that?' she said. 'When you were born I began to put by as soon as I was able--every cent I could from the butter and the eggs--to educate my boy. And now it's all coming true,' she said, Scarborough, and we cried together. And----" Brigham burst into a storm of tears and sobs. "Oh, how could I do it!" he said. "How COULD I!"

"You've done wrong," said Scarborough, shakily, "but I've done much worse, Eddie. And it's over now, and everything'll be all right."

"But I can't take your money, Scarborough. I must pay for what I've done."

"You mean, make your mother pay. No, you must take it back, Brigham. I owe it to you--I owe it to your mother. This, is the butter and egg money that I--I stole from her."

He put the papers into the boy's pocket. "You and I are going to be friends," he went on.

"Come round and see me to-morrow--no, I'll look you up." He put out his hand and held Brigham's hand in a courage-giving grasp. "And--I hope I'll have the honor of meeting your mother some day."

Brigham could only look his feelings. Soon after he left Pierson came. His anger had evaporated and his chief emotion was dread lest Scarborough might still be angry. "I want to take back----" he began eagerly, as soon as his head was inside the door.

"I know you do, but you shan't," replied Scarborough. "What you said was true, what Olivia said was true. I've been acting like a blackguard."

"No," said Pierson, "what I said was a disgraceful lie. Will you try to forget it, Scarborough?"

"FORGET it?" Scarborough looked at his friend with brilliant eyes. "Never! So help me God, never! It's one of three things that have occurred to-day that I must never forget."

"Then we can go on as before. You'll still be my friend?"

"Not STILL, Fred, but for the first time."

He looked round the luxurious study with a laugh and a sigh. "It'll be a ghastly job, getting used to the sort of surroundings I can earn for myself. But I've got to grin and bear it. We'll stay on here together to the end of the term--my share's paid, and besides, I'm not going to do anything sensational. Next year--we'll see."

While Pierson was having his final cigarette before going to bed he looked up from his book to see before him Scarborough, even more tremendous and handsome in his gaudy pajamas.

"I wish to register a solemn vow," said he, with mock solemnity that did not hide the seriousness beneath. "Hear me, ye immortal gods! Never again, never again, will I engage in any game with a friend where there is a stake. I don't wish to tempt. I don't wish to be tempted."

"What nonsense!" said Pierson. "You're simply cutting yourself off from a lot of fun."

"I have spoken," said Scarborough, and he withdrew to his bedroom. When the door was closed and the light out he paused at the edge of the bed and said: "And never again, so long as he wishes to retain his title to the name man, will Hampden Scarborough take from anybody anything which he hasn't honestly earned."

And when he was in bed he muttered: "I shall be alone, and I may stay poor and obscure, but I'll get back my self-respect--and keep it--Pauline!"

X.

MRS. JOHN DUMONT.

And Pauline?--She was now looking back upon the first year of her married life.

She had been so brought up that at seventeen, within a few weeks of eighteen, she had only the vaguest notion of the meaning of the step she was about to take in "really marrying" John Dumont. Also, it had never occurred to her as possible for a properly constituted woman not to love her husband. It was clearly her duty to marry Jack; therefore, the doubting thoughts and the ache at the heart which would not ease were merely more outcroppings of the same evil part of her nature that had tempted her into deceiving her parents, and into entangling herself and Scarborough. She knew that, if she were absolutely free, she would not marry Jack. But she felt that she had bartered away her birthright of freedom; and now, being herself, the daughter of HER father and HER mother, she would honorably keep her bargain, would love where she ought to love--at seventeen "I will" means "I shall." And so--they were "really married."

But the days passed, and there was no sign of the miracle she had confidently expected. The magic of the marriage vow failed to transform her; Pauline Dumont was still Pauline Gardiner in mind and in heart. There was, however, a miracle, undreamed of, mysterious, overwhelming--John Dumont, the lover, became John Dumont, the husband. Beside this transformation, the revelation that the world she loved and lived in did not exist for him, or his world for her, seemed of slight importance. She had not then experience enough to enable her to see that transformation and revelation were as intimately related as a lock and its key.

"It's all my fault," she told herself. "It must be my fault." And Dumont, unanalytic and self-absorbed, was amused whenever Pauline's gentleness reminded him of his mother's half-believed warnings that his wife had "a will of her own, and a mighty strong one."

They were back at Saint X in August and lived at the Frobisher place in Indiana Street--almost as pretentious as the Dumont homestead and in better taste. Old Mrs. Dumont had gone to Chicago alone for the furnishings for her own house; when she went for the furnishings for her son's house, she got Mrs. Gardiner to go along--and Pauline's mother gave another of her many charming illustrations of the valuable truth that tact can always have its own way. Saint X was too keen-eyed and too interested in the new Mrs. Dumont to fail to note a change in her. It was satisfied with the surface explanation that Europe in general and Paris in particular were responsible. And it did not note that, while she had always been full of life and fond of company, she was now feverish in her restlessness, incessantly seeking distraction, never alone when she could either go somewhere or induce some one to come to her.

"You MUST be careful, my dear," said her mother-in-law, as soon as she learned that she had a grandmotherly interest in her daughter-in-law's health. "You'll wear yourself out with all this running about."

Pauline laughed carelessly, recklessly.

"Oh, I'm disgustingly healthy. Nothing hurts me. Besides, if I were quiet, I think I should--EXPLODE!"

Late in September Dumont had to go to New York. He asked her to go with him, assuming that she would decline, as she had visitors coming. But she was only too glad of the chance to give her increasing restlessness wider range. They went to the Waldorf--Scarborough and Pierson had been stopping there not a week before, making ready for that sensational descent upon Battle Field which has already been recorded. The first evening Dumont took her to the play. The next morning he left her early for a busy day down-town--"and I may not be able to return for dinner. I warned you before we left Saint X," he said, as he rose from breakfast in their sitting-room.

"I understand," she answered. "You needn't bother to send word even, if you don't wish. I'll be tired from shopping and shan't care to go out this evening, anyhow."

In the afternoon she drove with Mrs. Fanshaw, wife of one of Jack's business acquaintances--they had dined at the Fanshaws' when they paused in New York on the way home from Europe. Pauline was at the hotel again at five; while she and Mrs. Fanshaw were having tea together in the palm garden a telegram was handed to her. She read it, then said to Mrs. Fanshaw: "I was going to ask you and your husband to dine with us. Jack sends word he can't be here, but--why shouldn't you come just the same?"

"No you must go with us," Mrs. Fanshaw replied. "We've got a box at Weber and Fields', and two men asked, and we need another woman. I'd have asked you before, but there wouldn't be room for any more men."

Mrs. Fanshaw had to insist until she had proved that the invitation was sincere; then, Pauline accepted--a distraction was always agreeable, never so agreeable as when it offered itself unannounced. It was toward the end of the dinner that Mrs. Fanshaw happened to say: "I see your husband's like all of them. I don't believe there ever was a woman an American man wouldn't desert for business."

"Oh, I don't in the least mind," replied Pauline. "I like him to show that he feels free. Why, when we were in Paris on the return trip and had been married only two months, he got tangled up in business and used to leave me for a day--for two days, once."

At Pauline's right sat a carefully dressed young man whose name she had not caught--she learned afterward that he was Mowbray Langdon. He was now giving her a stare of amused

mock-admiration. When he saw that he had her attention, he said: "Really, Mrs. Dumont, I can't decide which to admire most--YOUR trust or your husband's."

Pauline laughed--it struck her as ridiculous that either she or Jack should distrust the other. Indeed, she only hazily knew what distrust meant, and hadn't any real belief that "such things" actually existed.

Half an hour later the party was driving up to Weber and Fields'. Pauline, glancing across the thronged sidewalk and along the empty, brilliantly lighted passage leading into the theater, saw a striking, peculiar-looking woman standing at the box-office while her escort parleyed with the clerk within. "How much that man looks like Jack," she said to herself--and then she saw that it was indeed Jack. Not the Jack she thought she knew, but quite another person, the one he tried to hide from her--too carelessly, because he made the common mistake of underestimating the sagacity of simplicity. A glance at the woman, a second glance at Dumont, his flushed, insolent face now turned full front--and she KNEW this unfamiliar and hitherto-only-hinted Jack.

The omnibus was caught in a jam of cars and carriages; there were several moments of confusion and excitement. When the Fanshaw party was finally able to descend, she saw that Jack and his companion were gone--the danger of a scene was over for the moment. She lingered and made the others linger, wishing to give him time to get to his seats. When they entered the theater it was dark and the curtain was up. But her eyes, searching the few boxes visible from the rear aisle, found the woman, or, at least, enough of her for recognition--the huge black hat with its vast pale blue feather. Pauline drew a long breath of relief when the Fanshaws' box proved to be almost directly beneath, the box.

If she had been a few years older, she would have given its proper significance to the curious fact that this sudden revelation of the truth about her husband did not start a tempest of anger or jealousy, but set her instantly to sacrificing at the shrine of the great god Appearances. It is notorious that of all the household gods he alone erects his altar only upon the hearth where the ashes are cold.

As she sat there through the two acts, she seemed to be watching the stage and taking part in the conversation of the Fanshaws and their friends; yet afterward she could not recall a single thing that had occurred, a single word that had been said. At the end of the last act she again made them linger so that they were the last to emerge into the passage. In the outside doorway, she saw the woman--just a glimpse of a pretty, empty, laughing face with a mouth made to utter impertinences and eyes that invited them.

Mrs. Fanshaw was speaking--"You're very tired, aren't you?"

"Very," replied Pauline, with a struggle to smile.

"What a child you look! It seems absurd that you are a married woman. Why, you haven't your full growth yet." And on an

impulse of intuitive sympathy Mrs. Fanshaw pressed her arm, and Pauline was suddenly filled with gratitude, and liked her from that moment.

Alone in her sitting-room at the hotel, she went up to the mirror over the mantel, and, staring absently at herself, put her hands up mechanically to take out her hat-pins. "No, I'll keep my, hat on," she thought, without knowing why. And she sat, hat and wrap on, and looked at a book. Half an hour, and she took off her hat and wrap, put them in a chair near where she was sitting. The watched hands of the clock crawled wearily round to half-past one, to two, to half-past two, to three--each half-hour an interminable stage. She wandered to the window and looked down into empty Fifth Avenue. When she felt that at least an hour had passed, she turned to look at the clock again--twenty-five minutes to four. Her eyes were heavy.

"He is not coming," she said aloud, and, leaving the lights on in the sitting-room, locked herself in the bedroom.

At five o'clock she started up and seized the dressing-gown on the chair near the head of the bed. She listened--heard him muttering in the sitting-room. She knew now that a crash of some kind had roused her. Several minutes of profound silence, then through the door came a steady, heavy snore.

The dressing-gown dropped from her hand. She slid from the bed, slowly crossed the room, softly opened the door, looked into the sitting-room. A table and a chair lay upset in the middle of the floor. He was on a sofa, sprawling, disheveled, snoring.

Slowly she advanced toward him--she was barefooted, and the white nightgown clinging to her slender figure and the long braid down her back made her look as young as her soul--the soul that gazed from her fixed, fascinated eyes, the soul of a girl of eighteen, full as much child as woman still. She sat down before him in a low chair, her elbows on her knees, her chin supported by her hands, her eyes never leaving his swollen, dark red, brutish face--a cigar stump, much chewed, lay upon his cheek near his open mouth. He was as absurd and as repulsive as a gorged pig asleep in a wallow.

The dawn burst into broad day, but she sat on motionless until the clock struck the half-hour after six. Then she returned to the bedroom and locked herself in again.

Toward noon she dressed and went into the sitting-room. He was gone and it had been put to rights. When he came, at twenty minutes to one, she was standing at the window, but she did not turn.

"Did you get my note?" he asked, in a carefully careless tone. He went on to answer himself: "No, there it is on the floor just where I put it, under the bedroom door. No matter--it was only to say I had to go out but would be back to lunch. Sorry I was kept so late last night. Glad you didn't wait up for me--but you might have left the bedroom door open--it'd have been perfectly safe." He laughed good-naturedly. "As it was, I was

so kind-hearted that I didn't disturb you, but slept on the sofa."

As he advanced toward her with the obvious intention of kissing her, she slowly turned and faced him. Their eyes met and he stopped short--her look was like the eternal ice that guards the pole.

"I saw you at the theater last night," she said evenly. "And this morning, I sat and watched you as you lay on the sofa over there."

He was taken completely off his guard. With a gasp that was a kind of groan he dropped into a chair, the surface of his mind strewn with the wreckage of the lying excuses he had got ready.

"Please don't try to explain," she went on in the same even tone. "I understand now about--about Paris and--everything. I know that--father was right."

He gave her a terrified glance--no tears, no trace of excitement, only calmness and all the strength he knew was in her nature and, in addition, a strength he had not dreamed was there.

"What do you intend to do?" he asked after a long silence.

She did not answer immediately. When she did, she was not looking at him.

"When I married you--across the river from Battle Field," she said, "I committed a crime against my father and mother. This is--my punishment--the beginning of it. And now--there'll be the--the--baby--" A pause, then: "I must bear the consequences--if I can. But I shall not be your wife--never--never again. If you wish me to stay on that condition, I'll try. If not--"

"You MUST stay, Pauline," he interrupted. "I don't care what terms you make, you must stay. It's no use for me to try to defend myself when you're in this mood. You wouldn't listen. But you're right about not going. If you did, it'd break your father's and mother's hearts. I admit I did drink too much last night, and made a fool of myself. But if you were more experienced, you'd--"

He thought he had worked his courage up to the point where he could meet her eyes. He tried it. Her look froze his flow of words. "I KNOW that you were false from the beginning," she said.

"The man I thought you were never existed--and I know it. We won't speak of this--ever--after now. Surely you can't wish me to stay?" And into her voice surged all her longing to go, all her hope that he would reject the only terms on which self-respect would let her stay.

"Wish you to stay?" he repeated. And he faced her, looking at her, his chest heaving under the tempest of hate and passion that

was raging in him--hate because she was defying and dictating to him, passion because she was so beautiful as she stood there, like a delicate, fine hot-house rose poised on a long, graceful stem. "No wonder I LOVE you!" he exclaimed between his clenched teeth.

A bright spot burned in each of her cheeks and her look made him redden and lower his eyes.

"Now that I understand these last five months," she said, "that from you is an insult."

His veins and muscles swelled with the fury he dared not show; for he saw and felt how dangerous her mood was.

"I'll agree to whatever you like, Pauline," he said humbly. "Only, we mustn't have a flare-up and a scandal. I'll never speak to you again about--about anything you don't want to hear."

She went into her bedroom. When, after half an hour, she reappeared, she was ready to go down to lunch. In the elevator he stole a glance at her--there was no color in her face, not even in her lips. His rage had subsided; he was ashamed of himself--before her. But he felt triumphant too.

"I thought she'd go, sure, in spite of her fear of hurting her father and mother," he said to himself. "A mighty close squeak. I was stepping round in a powder magazine, with every word a lit match."

In January she sank into a profound lassitude. Nothing interested her, everything wearied her. As the time drew near, her mother came to stay with her; and day after day the two women sat silent, Mrs. Gardiner knitting, Pauline motionless, hands idle in her lap, mind vacant. If she had any emotion, it was a hope that she would die and take her child with her.

"That would settle everything, settle it right," she reflected, with youth's morbid fondness for finalities.

When it was all over and she came out from under the opiate, she lay for a while, open-eyed but unseeing, too inert to grope for the lost thread of memory. She felt a stirring in the bed beside her, the movement of some living thing. She looked and there, squeezed into the edge of the pillow was a miniature head of a little old man--wrinkled, copperish. Yet the face was fat--ludicrously fat. A painfully homely face with tears running from the closed eyes, with an open mouth that drooled and drooled.

"What is it?" she thought, looking with faint curiosity. "And why is it here?"

Two small fists now rose aimlessly in the air above the face and flapped about; and a very tempest of noise issued from the sagging mouth.

"A baby," she reflected. Then memory came--"MY baby!"

She put her finger in the way of the wandering fists. First one of them, then the other, awkwardly unclosed and as awkwardly closed upon it. She smiled. The grip tightened and tightened and tightened until she wondered how hands so small and new could cling so close and hard. Then that electric clasp suddenly tightened about her heart. She burst into tears and drew the child against her breast. The pulse of its current of life was beating against her own--and she felt it. She sobbed, laughed softly, sobbed again.

Her mother was bending anxiously over her.

"What's the matter, dearest?" she asked. "What do you wish?"

"Nothing!" Pauline was smiling through her tears. "Oh, mother, I am SO happy!" she murmured.

And her happiness lasted with not a break, with hardly a pause, all that spring and all that summer--or, so long as her baby's helplessness absorbed the whole of her time and thought.

XI.

YOUNG AMERICA.

When Pierson, laggard as usual, returned to Battle Field a week after the end of the long vacation, he found Scarborough just establishing himself. He had taken two small and severely plain rooms in a quaint old frame cottage, one story high, but perched importantly upon a bank at the intersection of two much-traveled streets.

"What luck?" asked Pierson, lounging in on him.

"A hundred days' campaign; a thousand dollars net," replied the book agent. "And I'm hard as oak from tramping those roads, and I've learned--you ought to have been along, Pierson. I know people as I never could have come to know them by any other means--what they think, what they want, how they can be reached."

There was still much of the boy in Pierson's face. But Scarborough looked the man, developed, ready.

Pierson wandered into the bedroom to complete his survey. "I see you're going to live by the clock," he called out presently. He had found, pasted to the wall, Scarborough's schedule of the daily division of his time; just above it, upon a shelf, was a new alarm clock, the bell so big that it overhung like a canopy. "You don't mean you're going to get up at four?"

"Every morning--all winter," replied Scarborough, without

stopping his unpacking. "You see, I'm going to finish this year--take the two years in one. Then I've registered in a law office--Judge Holcombe's. And there's my speaking--I must practise that every day."

Pierson came back to the sitting-room and collapsed into a chair. "I see you allow yourself five hours for sleep," he said. "It's too much, old man. You're self-indulgent."

"That's a mistake," replied Scarborough. "Since making out the schedule I've decided to cut sleep down to four hours and a half."

"That's more like it!"

"We all sleep too much," he continued. "And as I shan't smoke, or drink, or worry, I'll need even less than the average man. I'm going to do nothing but work. A man doesn't need much rest from mere work."

"What! No play?"

"Play all the time. I've simply changed my playthings."

Pierson seated himself at the table and stared gloomily at his friend.

"Look here, old man. For heaven's sake, don't let Olivia find out about this program."

But Olivia did hear of it, and Pierson was compelled to leave his luxury in the main street and to take the two remaining available rooms at Scarborough's place. His bed was against the wall of Scarborough's bedroom--the wall where the alarm clock was. At four o'clock on his first morning he started from a profound sleep.

"My bed must be moved into my sitting-room to-day," he said to himself as soon as the clamor of Scarborough's gong died away and he could collect his thoughts. But at four o'clock the next morning the gong penetrated the two walls as if they had not been there. "I see my finish," he groaned, sitting up and tearing at his hair.

He tried to sleep again, but the joint pressure of Olivia's memory-mirrored gray eyes and of disordered nerves from the racking gong forced him to make an effort to bestir himself. Groaning and muttering, he rose and in the starlight looked from his window. Scarborough was going up the deserted street on his way to the woods for his morning exercise. His head was thrown back and his chest extended, and his long legs were covering four feet at a stride. "You old devil!" said Pierson, his tone suggesting admiration and affection rather than anger. "But I'll outwit you."

By a subterfuge in which a sympathetic doctor was the main factor, he had himself permanently excused from chapel. Then he said to Scarborough: "You get up too late, old man. My

grandfather used to say that only a drone lies abed after two in the morning, wasting the best part of the day. You ought to turn in, say, at half-past nine and rise in time to get your hardest work out of the way before the college day begins."

"That sounds reasonable," replied Scarborough, after a moment's consideration. "I'll try it."

And so it came to pass that Pierson went to bed at the sound of Scarborough's two-o'clock rising gong and pieced out his sleep with an occasional nap in recitations and lectures and for an hour or two late in the afternoon. He was able once more to play poker as late as he liked, and often had time for reading before the gong sounded. And Scarborough was equally delighted with the new plan. "I gain at least one hour a day, perhaps two," he said. "Your grandfather was a wise man."

Toward spring, Mills, western manager of the publishing house for which Scarborough had sold Peaks of Progress through Michigan, came to Battle Field to see him.

"You were far and away the best man we had out last year," said he. "You're a born book agent."

"Thank you," said Scarborough, sincerely. He appreciated that a man can pay no higher compliment than to say that another is master of his own trade.

"We got about fifty orders from people who thought it over after you'd tried to land them and failed--that shows the impression you made. And you sold as many books as our best agent in our best field."

"I'll never go as agent again," said Scarborough. "The experience was invaluable--but sufficient."

"We don't want you to go as agent. Our proposition is for much easier and more dignified work."

At the word dignified, Scarborough could not restrain a smile. "I've practically made my plans for the summer," he said.

"I think we've got something worth your while, Mr. Scarborough. Our idea is for you to select about a hundred of the young fellows who're working their way through here, and train them in your methods of approaching people. Then you'll take them to Wisconsin and Minnesota and send them out, each man to a district you select for him. In that way you'll help a hundred young men to earn a year at college and you'll make a good sum for yourself--two or three times what you made last summer."

Scarborough had intended to get admitted to the bar in June, to spend the summer at an apprenticeship in a law office and to set up for himself in the fall. But this plan was most attractive--it would give him a new kind of experience and would put him in funds for the wait for clients. The next day he signed an advantageous contract--his expenses for the summer and a guaranty of not less than three thousand dollars clear.

He selected a hundred young men and twelve young women, the most intelligent of the five hundred self-supporting students at Battle Field. Pierson, having promised to behave himself, was permitted to attend the first lesson. The scholars at the Scarborough, School for Book Agents filled his quarters and overflowed in swarms without the windows and the door. The weather was still cool; but all must hear, and the rooms would hold barely half the brigade.

"I assume that you've read the book," began Scarborough. He was standing at the table with the paraphernalia of a book agent spread upon it. "But you must read it again and again, until you know what's on every page, until you have by heart the passages I'll point out to you." He looked at Drexel--a freshman of twenty-two, with earnest, sleepless eyes and a lofty forehead; in the past winter he had become acquainted with hunger and with that cold which creeps into the room, crawls through the thin covers and closes in, icy as death, about the heart. "What do you think of the book, Drexel?"

The young man--he is high in the national administration to-day--flushed and looked uneasy.

"Speak frankly. I want your candid opinion."

"Well, I must say, Mr. Scarborough, I think it's pretty bad."

"Thank you," said Scarborough; and he glanced round. "Does anybody disagree with Mr. Drexel?"

There was not a murmur. Pierson covered his face to hide his smile at this "jolt" for his friend. In the group round one of the windows a laugh started and spread everywhere except to seven of the twelve young women and to those near Scarborough--THEY looked frightened.

"I expected Mr. Drexel's answer," began Scarborough. "Before you can sell Peaks of Progress each of you must be convinced that it's a book he himself would buy. And I see you've not even read it. You've at most glanced at it with unfriendly eyes. This book is not literature, gentlemen. It is a storehouse of facts. It is an educational work so simply written and so brilliantly illustrated that the very children will hang over its pages with delight. If you attend to your training in our coming three months of preliminary work you'll find during the summer that the book's power to attract the children is its strongest point. I made nearly half my sales last summer by turning from the parents to the children and stirring their interest."

Pierson was now no more inclined to smile than were the pupils.

"When I started out," continued Scarborough, "I, too, had just glanced at the book and had learned a few facts from the prospectus. And I failed to sell, except to an occasional fool whom I was able to overpower. Every one instinctively felt the estimate I myself placed upon my goods. But as I went on the book gradually forced itself upon me. And, long before the

summer was over, I felt that I was an ambassador of education to those eager people. And I'm proud that I sold as many books as I did. Each book, I know, is a radiating center of pleasure, of thought, of aspiration to higher things. No, ladies and gentlemen, you must first learn that these eight hundred pages crowded with facts of history, these six hundred illustrations taken from the best sources and flooding the text with light, together constitute a work that should be in all humble households."

Scarborough had his audience with him now.

"Never sneer," he said in conclusion. "Sneering will accomplish nothing. Learn your business. Put yourself, your BEST self, into it. And then you may hope to succeed at it."

He divided his pupils into six classes of about twenty each and dismissed them, asking the first class to come at three the next afternoon. The young men and young women went thoughtfully away; they were revolving their initial lesson in the cardinal principle of success--enthusiasm. When the two friends were alone Pierson said: "Do you know, I'm beginning to get a glimpse of you. And I see there isn't anything beyond your reach. You'll get whatever you want."

Scarborough's reply was a sudden look of dejection, an impatient shrug. Then he straightened himself, lifted his head with a lion-like toss that shook back the obstinate lock of hair from his forehead. He laid his hand on his friend's shoulder. "Yes," he said, "because I'm determined to want whatever I get. Good fortune and bad--everything shall be grist for THIS mill."

Pierson attended next day's class and afterward went to Olivia with an account of it.

"You ought to have seen him put those fellows through, one at a time. I tell you, he'll teach them more in the next three months than they'll learn of the whole faculty. And this summer he'll get every man and woman of them enough to pay their way through college next year."

"What did he do to-day?" asked Olivia. Of the many qualities she loved in Pierson, the one she loved most was his unbounded, unselfish admiration for his friend.

"He took each man separately, the others watching and listening. First he'd play the part of book agent with his pupil as a reluctant customer. Then he'd reverse, and the pupil as agent would try to sell him the book, he pretending to be an ignorant, obstinate, ill-natured, close-fisted farmer or farmer's wife. It was a liberal education in the art of persuasion. If his pupils had his brains and his personality, Peaks of Progress would be on the center-table in half the farm parlors of Wisconsin and Minnesota by September."

"IF they had his personality, and IF they had his brains," said Olivia.

"Well, as it is, he'll make the dumbest ass in the lot bray to some purpose."

In September, when Scarborough closed his headquarters at Milwaukee and set out for Indianapolis, he found that the average earnings of his agents were two hundred and seventy-five dollars, and that he himself had made forty-three hundred. Mills came and offered him a place in the publishing house at ten thousand a year and a commission. He instantly rejected it. He had already arranged to spend a year with one of the best law firms in Indianapolis before opening an office in Saint X, the largest town in the congressional district in which his farm lay.

"But there's no hurry about deciding," said Mills. "Remember we'll make you rich in a few years."

"My road happens not to lie in that direction," replied Scarborough, carelessly. "I've no desire to be rich. It's too easy, if one will consent to give money-making his exclusive attention."

Mills looked amused--had he not known Scarborough's ability, he would have felt derisive.

"Money's power," said he. "And there are only two ambitions for a wide-awake man--money and power."

"Money can't buy the kind of power I'd care for," answered Scarborough. "If I were to seek power, it'd be the power that comes through ability to persuade."

"Money talks," said Mills, laughing.

"Money bellows," retorted Scarborough,, "and bribes and browbeats, bully and coward that it is. But it never persuades."

"I'll admit it's a coward."

"And I hope I can always frighten enough of it into my service to satisfy my needs. But I'm not spending my life in its service--no, thank you!"

XII.

AFTER EIGHT YEARS.

While Scarborough was serving his clerkship at Indianapolis, Dumont was engaging in ever larger and more daring speculations with New York as his base. Thus it came about that when Scarborough established himself at Saint X, Dumont and Pauline were living in New York, in a big house in East Sixty-first Street.

And Pauline had welcomed the change. In Saint X she was constantly on guard, always afraid her father and mother would see below that smiling surface of her domestic life which made them happy. In New York she was free from the crushing sense of peril and restraint, as their delusions about her were secure. There, after she and he found their living basis of "let alone," they got on smoothly, rarely meeting except in the presence of servants or guests, never inquiring either into the other's life, carrying on all negotiations about money and other household matters through their secretaries. He thought her cold by nature--therefore absolutely to be trusted. And what other man with the pomp and circumstance of a great and growing fortune to maintain had so admirable an instrument? "An ideal wife," he often said to himself. And he was not the man to speculate as to what was going on in her head. He had no interest in what others thought; how they were filling the places he had assigned them--that was his only concern.

In one of those days of pause which come now and then in the busiest lives she chanced upon his letters from Europe in her winter at Battle Field. She took one of them from its envelope and began to read--carelessly, with a languid curiosity to measure thus exactly the change in herself. But soon she was absorbed, her mind groping through letter after letter for the clue to a mystery. The Dumont she now knew stood out so plainly in those letters that she could not understand how she, inexperienced and infatuated though she then was, had failed to see the perfect full-length portrait. How had she read romance and high-mindedness and intellect into the personality so frankly flaunting itself in all its narrow sordidness, in all its poverty of real thought and real feeling?

And there was Hampden Scarborough to contrast him with. With this thought the truth suddenly stared at her, made her drop the letter and visibly shrink. It was just because Scarborough was there that she had been tricked. The slight surface resemblance between the two men, hardly more than the "favor" found in all men of the family of strong and tenacious will, had led her on to deck the absent Dumont with the manhood of the present Scarborough. She had read Scarborough into Dumont's letters. Yes, and--the answers she addressed and mailed to Dumont had really been written to Scarborough.

She tossed the letters back into the box from which they had reappeared after four long years. She seated herself on the white bear-skin before the open fire; and with hands clasped round her knees she rocked herself slowly to and fro like one trying to ease an intolerable pain.

Until custom dulled the edge of that pain, the days and the nights were the cruelest in her apprenticeship up to that time.

When her boy, Gardiner, was five years old, she got her father and mother to keep him at Saint X with them.

"New York's no place, I think, to bring up and educate a boy in the right way," she explained. And it was the truth, though not the whole truth. The concealed part was that she would have made

an open break with her husband had there been no other way of safeguarding their all-seeing, all-noting boy from his example.

Before Gardiner went to live with his grandparents she stayed in the East, making six or eight brief visits "home" each year. When he went she resolved to divide her year between her pleasure as a mother and her obligation to her son's father, to her parents' son-in-law--her devotions at the shrine of Appearances.

It was in the fall of the year she was twenty-five--eight years and a half after she left Battle Field--that Hampden Scarborough reappeared upon the surface of her life.

On a September afternoon in that year Olivia, descending from the train at Saint X, was almost as much embarrassed as pleased by her changed young cousin rushing at her with great energy--"Dear, dear Olivia! And hardly any different--how's the baby? No--not Fred, but Fred Junior, I mean. In some ways you positively look younger. You know, you were SO serious at college!"

"But you--I don't quite understand how any one can be so changed, yet--recognizable. I guess it's the plumage. You're in a new edition--an edition deluxe."

Pauline's dressmakers were bringing out the full value of her height and slender, graceful strength. Her eyes, full of the same old frankness and courage, now had experience in them, too. She was wearing her hair so that it fell from her brow in two sweeping curves reflecting the light in sparkles and flashes. Her manner was still simple and genuine--the simplicity and genuineness of knowledge now, not of innocence. Extremes meet--but they remain extremes. Her "plumage" was a fashionable dress of pale blue cloth, a big beplumed hat to match, a chiffon parasol like an azure cloud, at her throat a sapphire pendant, about her neck and swinging far below her waist a chain of sapphires.

"And the plumage just suits her," thought Olivia. For it seemed to her that her cousin had more than ever the quality she most admired--the quality of individuality, of distinction. Even in her way of looking clean and fresh she was different, as if those prime feminine essentials were in her not matters of frequent reacquirement but inherent and inalienable, like her brilliance of eyes and smoothness of skin.

Olivia felt a slight tugging at the bag she was carrying. She looked--an English groom in spotless summer livery was touching his hat in respectful appeal to her to let go. "Give Albert your checks, too," said Pauline, putting her arm around her cousin's waist to escort her down the platform. At the entrance, with a group of station loungers gaping at it, was a phaeton-victoria lined with some cream-colored stuff like silk, the horses and liveried coachman rigid. "She's giving Saint X a good deal to talk about," thought Olivia.

"Home, please, by the long road," said Pauline to the groom, and he sprang to the box beside the coachman, and they were

instantly in rapid motion. "That'll let us have twenty minutes more together," she went on to Olivia. "There are several people stopping at the house."

The way led through Munroe Avenue, the main street of Saint X. Olivia was astonished at the changes--the town of nine years before spread and remade into an energetic city of twenty-five thousand.

"Fred told me I'd hardly recognize it," said she, "but I didn't expect this. It's another proof how far-sighted Hampden Scarborough is. Everybody advised him against coming here, but he would come. And the town has grown, and at the same time he's had a clear field to make a big reputation as a lawyer in a few years, not to speak of the power he's got in politics."

"But wouldn't he have won no matter where he was?" suggested Pauline.,

"Sooner or later--but not so soon," replied Olivia.

"No--a tree doesn't have to grow so tall among a lot of bushes before it's noticed as it does in a forest."

"And you've never seen him since Battle Field?" As Olivia put this question she watched her cousin narrowly without seeming to do so.

"But," replied Pauline--and Olivia thought that both her face and her tone were a shade off the easy and the natural--"since he came I've been living in New York and haven't stayed here longer than a few days until this summer. And he's been in Europe since April. No," she went on, "I've not seen a soul from Battle Field. It's been like a painting, finished and hanging on the wall one looks toward oftenest, and influencing one's life every day."

They talked on of Battle Field, of the boys and girls they had known--how Thiebaud was dead and Mollie Crittenden had married the man who was governor of California; what Howe was not doing, the novels Chamberlayne was writing; the big women's college in Kansas that Grace Wharton was vice-president of. Then of Pierson--in the state senate and in a fair way to get to Congress the next year. Then Scarborough again--how he had distanced all the others; how he might have the largest practice in the state if he would take the sort of clients most lawyers courted assiduously; how strong he was in politics in spite of the opposition of the professionals--strong because he had a genius for organization and also had the ear and the confidence of the people and the enthusiastic personal devotion of the young men throughout the state. Olivia, more of a politician than Fred even, knew the whole story; and Pauline listened appreciatively. Few indeed are the homes in strenuously political Indiana where politics is not the chief subject of conversation, and Pauline had known about parties and campaigns as early as she had known about dolls and dresses.

"But you must have heard most of this," said Olivia, "from

people here in Saint X."

"Some of it--from father and mother," Pauline answered.

"They're the only people I've seen really to talk to on my little visits. They know him very well indeed. I think mother admires him almost as much as you do. Here's our place," she added, the warmth fading from her face as from a spring landscape when the shadow of the dusk begins to creep over it.

They were in the grounds of the Eyrie--the elder Dumont was just completing it when he died early in the previous spring. His widow went abroad to live with her daughter and her sister in Paris; so her son and his wife had taken it. It was a great rambling stone house that hung upon and in a lofty bluff. From its windows and verandas and balconies could be seen the panorama of Saint Christopher. To the left lay the town, its ugly part--its factories and railway yards--hidden by the jut of a hill. Beneath and beyond to the right, the shining river wound among fields brown where the harvests had been gathered, green and white where myriads of graceful tassels waved above acres on acres of Indian corn. And the broad leaves sent up through the murmur of the river a rhythmic rustling like a sigh of content. Once in a while a passing steamboat made the sonorous cry of its whistle and the melodious beat of its paddles echo from hill to hill. Between the house and the hilltop, highway lay several hundred acres of lawn and garden and wood.

The rooms of the Eyrie and its well-screened verandas were in a cool twilight, though the September sun was hot.

"They're all out, or asleep," said Pauline, as she and Olivia entered the wide reception hall. "Let's have tea on the east veranda. Its view isn't so good, but we'll be cooler. You'd like to go to your room first?"

Olivia said she was comfortable as she was and needed the tea. So they went on through the splendidly-furnished drawing-room and were going through the library when Olivia paused before a portrait--"Your husband, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied Pauline, standing behind her cousin. "We each had one done in Paris."

"What a masterful face!" said Olivia. "I've never seen a better forehead." And she thought,

"He's of the same type as Scarborough, except--what is it I dislike in his expression?"

"Do you notice a resemblance to any one you know?" asked Pauline.

"Ye-e-s," replied Olivia, coloring. "I think----"

"Scarborough, isn't it?"

"Yes," admitted Olivia.

After a pause Pauline said ambiguously: "The resemblance is stronger there than in life."

Olivia glanced at her and was made vaguely uneasy by the look she was directing at the face of the portrait. But though Pauline must have seen that she was observed, she did not change expression. They went out upon the east veranda and Olivia stood at the railing. She hardly noted the view in the press of thoughts roused by the hints of what was behind the richly embroidered curtain of her cousin's life.

All along the bluff, some exposed, some half hid by dense foliage, were the pretentious houses of the thirty or forty families who had grown rich through the industries developed within the past ten years. Two foreign-looking servants in foreign-looking house-liveries were bringing a table on which was an enormous silver tray with a tea-service of antique silver and artistic china. As Olivia turned to seat herself a young man and a woman of perhaps forty, obviously from the East, came through the doors at the far end of the long porch. Both were in white, carefully dressed and groomed; both suggested a mode of life whose leisure had never been interrupted.

"Who are coming?" asked Olivia. She wished she had gone to her room before tea. These people made her feel dowdy and mussy.

Pauline glanced round, smiled and nodded, turned back to her cousin.

"Mrs. Herron and Mr. Langdon. She's the wife of a New York lawyer, and she takes Mr. Langdon everywhere with her to amuse her, and he goes to amuse himself. He's a socialist, or something like that. He thinks up and says things to shock conservative, conventional people. He's rich and never has worked--couldn't if he would, probably. But he denounces leisure classes and large fortunes and advocates manual labor every day for everybody. He's clever in a queer, cynical way."

A Mrs. Fanshaw, also of New York, came from the library in a tea-gown of chiffon and real lace. All were made acquainted and Pauline poured the tea. As Olivia felt shy and was hungry, she ate the little sandwiches and looked and listened and thought--looked and thought rather than listened. These were certainly well-bred people, yet she did not like them.

"They're in earnest about trifles," she said to herself, "and trifle about earnest things." Yet it irritated her to feel that, though they would care not at all for her low opinion of them, she did care a great deal because they would fail to appreciate her.

"They ought to be jailed," Langdon was drawling with considerable emphasis.

"Who, Mr. Langdon?" inquired Mrs. Fanshaw--she had been as abstracted as Olivia. "You've been filling the jails rapidly to-day, and hanging not a few."

Mrs. Herron laughed. "He says your husband and Mrs. Dumont's and mine should be locked up as conspirators."

"Precisely," said Langdon, tranquilly. "They'll sign a few papers, and when they're done, what'll have happened? Not one more sheep'll be raised. Not one more pound of wool will be shorn. Not one more laborer'll be employed. Not a single improvement in any process of manufacture. But, on the other hand, the farmer'll have to sell his wool cheaper, the consumer'll have to pay a bigger price for blankets and all kinds of clothes, for carpets--for everything wool goes into. And these few men will have trebled their fortunes and at least trebled their incomes. Does anybody deny that such a performance is a crime? Why, in comparison, a burglar is honorable and courageous. HE risks liberty and life."

"Dreadful! Dreadful!" exclaimed Mrs. Fanshaw, in mock horror. "You must go at once, Mowbray, and lead the police in a raid on Jack's office."

"Thanks--it's more comfortable here." Langdon took a piece of a curious-looking kind of hot bread. "Extraordinary good stuff this is," he interjected; then went on: "And I've done my duty when I've stated the facts. Also, I'm taking a little stock in the new trust. But I don't pose as a 'captain of industry' or 'promoter of civilization.' I admit I'm a robber. My point is the rotten hypocrisy of my fellow bandits--no, pickpockets, by gad!"

Olivia looked at him with disapproving interest. It was the first time she had been present at a game of battledore and shuttlecock with what she regarded as fundamental morals. Langdon noted her expression and said to Pauline in a tone of contrition that did not conceal his amusement: "I've shocked your cousin, Mrs. Dumont."

"I hope so," replied Pauline. "I'm sure we all ought to be shocked--and should be, if it weren't you who are trying to do the shocking. She'll soon get used to you."

"Then it was a jest?" said Olivia to Langdon.

"A jest?" He looked serious. "Not at all, my dear Mrs. Pierson. Every word I said was true, and worse. They----"

"Stop your nonsense, Mowbray," interrupted Mrs. Herron, who appreciated that Olivia was an "outsider." "Certainly he was jesting, Mrs. Pierson. Mr. Langdon pretends to have eccentric ideas--one of them is that everybody with brains should be put under the feet of the numskulls; another is that anybody who has anything should be locked up and his property given to those who have nothing."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Langdon. And he took out a gold cigarette case and lighted a large, expensive-looking cigarette with a match from a gold safe. "Go on, dear lady! Herron should get you to write our prospectus when we're ready to unload on the public. The dear public! How it does yearn for a share

in any piratical enterprise that flies the snowy flag of respectability." He rose. "Who'll play English billiards?"

"All right," said Mrs. Herron, rising.

"And I, too," said Mrs. Fanshaw.

"Give me one of your cigarettes, Mowbray," said Mrs. Herron.

"I left my case in my room."

Pauline, answering Olivia's expression, said as soon as the three had disappeared:

"Why not? Is it any worse for a woman than for a man?"

"I don't know why not," replied Olivia. "There must be another reason than because I don't do it, and didn't think ladies did. But that's the only reason I can give just now."

"What do you think of Langdon?" asked Pauline.

"I guess my sense of humor's defective. I don't like the sort of jest he seems to excel in."

"I fancy it wasn't altogether a jest," said Pauline. "I don't inquire into those matters any more. I used to, but--the more I saw, the worse it was. Tricks and traps and squeezes and--oh, business is all vulgar and low. It's necessary, I suppose, but it's repulsive to me." She paused, then added carelessly, yet with a certain deliberateness, "I never meddle with Mr. Dumont, nor he with me."

Olivia wished to protest against Pauline's view of business. But--how could she without seeming to attack, indeed, without attacking, her cousin's husband?

Dumont brought Fanshaw up in his automobile, Herron remaining at the offices for half an hour to give the newspapers a carefully considered account of the much-discussed "merger" of the manufacturers of low-grade wools. Herron had objected to any statement. "It's our private business," he said. "Let them howl. The fewer facts they have, the sooner they'll stop howling." But Dumont held firm for publicity. "There's no such thing as a private business nowadays," he replied. "Besides, don't we want the public to take part of our stock? What's the use of acting shady--you've avoided the legal obstacles, haven't you? Let's tell the public frankly all we want it to know, and it'll think it knows all there is to know."

The whole party met in the drawing-room at a quarter-past eight, Langdon the last to come down--Olivia was uncertain whether or not she was unjust to him when she suspected design in his late entrance, the handsomest and the best-dressed man of the company.

He looked cynically at Dumont. "Well, fellow pirate: how go our plans for a merry winter for the poor?"

"Ass!" muttered Herron to Olivia, who happened to, be nearest

him. "He fancies impudence is wit. He's devoid of moral sense or even of decency. He's a traitor to his class and shouldn't be tolerated in it."

Dumont was laughingly answering Langdon in his own vein.

"Splendidly," he replied, "thanks to our worthy chaplain, Herron, who secures us the blessing and protection of the law."

"That gives me an appetite!" exclaimed Langdon. "I feared something might miscarry in these last hours of our months of plotting. Heaven be praised, the people won't have so much to waste hereafter. I'm proud to be in one of the many noble bands that are struggling to save them from themselves."

But Dumont had turned away from him; so he dropped into Mrs. Herron's discussion with Mrs. Fanshaw on their proposed trip to the Mediterranean. Dinner was announced and he was put between Mrs. Herron and Olivia, with Dumont on her right. It was a round table and Olivia's eyes lingered upon its details--the embroidered cloth with real lace in the center, the graceful antique silver candlesticks, the tall vases filled with enormous roses--everything exquisitely simple and tasteful.

Langdon talked with her until Mrs. Herron, impatient at his neglect, caught his eye and compelled his attention. Dumont, seeing that Olivia was free, drew her into his conversation with Mrs. Fanshaw; and then Mrs. Fanshaw began to talk with Mr. Herron, who was eating furiously because he had just overheard Langdon say: "That was a great day for pirates when they thought of taking aboard the lawyers as chaplains."

All the men were in high spirits; Dumont was boyish in his exuberance. When he left home that morning he was four times a millionaire; now he was at least twelve times a millionaire, through the magic of the "merger." True, eight of the twelve millions were on paper; but it was paper that would certainly pay dividends, paper that would presently sell at or near its face value. And this success had come when he was only thirty-four. His mind was already projecting greater triumphs in this modern necromancy by which millionaires evoke and materialize millions from the empty air--apparently. He was bubbling over with happiness--in the victory won, in victories to be won.

Olivia tried him on several subjects, but the conversation dragged. Of Pauline he would not talk; of Europe, he was interested only in the comfort of hotels and railway trains, in the comparative merits of the cooking and the wines in London and Paris. But his face--alert, shrewd, aggressive--and his mode of expression made her feel that he was uninteresting because he was thinking of something which he did not care to expose to her and could not take his mind from. And this was the truth. It was not until she adventured upon his business that he became talkative. And soon she had him telling her about his "combine"--frankly, boastfully, his face more and more flushed, for as he talked he drank.

"But," he said presently, "this little matter to-day is only a

fair beginning. It seemed big until it was about accomplished. Then I saw it was only a suggestion for a scheme that'd be really worth, while." And he went on to unfold one of those projects of to-day's commerce and finance that were regarded as fantastic, delirious a few years ago. He would reach out and out for hundreds of millions of capital; with his woolens "combine" as a basis he would build an enormous corporation to control the sheep industry of the world--to buy millions of acres of sheep-ranges; to raise scores of millions of sheep; to acquire and to construct hundreds of plants for utilizing every part of the raw product of the ranges; to sell wherever the human race had or could have a market.

Olivia was ambitious herself, usually was delighted by ambition in others. But his exhibit of imagination and energy repelled her, even while it fascinated. Partly through youth, more through that contempt for concealment which characterizes the courageous type of large man, he showed himself to her just as he was. And she saw him not as an ambition but as an appetite, or rather a bundle of appetites.

"He has no ideals," she thought. "He's like a man who wants food merely for itself, not for the strength and the intellect it will build up. And he likes or dislikes human beings only as one likes or dislikes different things to eat."

"It'll take you years and years," she said to him, because she must say something.

"Not at all." He waved his hand--Olivia thought it looked as much like a claw as like a hand. "It's a sky-scraper, but we build sky-scrapers overnight. Time and space used to be the big elements. WE practically disregard them." He followed this with a self-satisfied laugh and an emptying of his champagne glass at a gulp.

The women were rising to withdraw. After half an hour Langdon and Herron joined them. Dumont and Fanshaw did not come until eleven o'clock. Then Dumont was so abrupt and surly that every one was grateful to Mrs. Fanshaw for taking him away to the west veranda. At midnight all went to their rooms, Pauline going with Olivia, "to make sure you haven't been neglected."

She lingered until after one, and when they kissed each the other good night, she said: "It's done me a world of good to see you, 'Livia--more even than I hoped. I knew you'd be sympathetic with me where you understood. Now, I feel that you're sympathetic where you don't understand, too. And it's there that one really needs sympathy."

"That's what friendship means--and--love," said Olivia.

XIII.

"MY SISTER-IN-LAW, GLADYS."

The following afternoon Dumont took the Herrons, the Fanshaws and Langdon back to New York in his private car, and for three days Olivia and Pauline had the Eyrie to themselves. Olivia was about to write to Scarborough, asking him to call, when she saw in the News-Bulletin that he had gone to Denver to speak. A week after she left, Dumont returned, bringing his sister Gladys, just arrived from Europe, and Langdon. He stayed four days, took Langdon away with him and left Gladys.

Thus it came about that Scarborough, riding into Colonel Gardiner's grounds one hot afternoon in mid September, saw a phaeton-victoria with two women in it coming toward him on its way out. He drew his horse aside to make room. He was conscious that there were two women; he saw only one--she who was all in white except the scarlet poppies against the brim of her big white hat.

As he bowed the carriage stopped and Pauline said cordially: "Why, how d'ye do?"

He drew his horse close to the carriage and they shook hands. She introduced the other woman--"My sister-in-law, Gladys Dumont"--then went on: "We've been lunching and spending the afternoon with father and mother. They told us you returned this morning."

"I supposed you were in the East," said Scarborough--the first words he had spoken.

"Oh--I'm living here now--Gladys and I. Father says you never go anywhere, but I hope you'll make an exception for us."

"Thank you--I'll be glad to call."

"Why not dine with us--day after to-morrow night?"

"I'd like that--certainly, I'll come."

"We dine at half-past eight--at least we're supposed to."

Scarborough lifted his hat.

The carriage drove on.

"Why, he's not a bit as I expected," Gladys began at once. "He's much younger. ISN'T he handsome! That's the way a MAN ought to look. He's not married?"

"No," replied Pauline.

"Why did you look so queer when you first caught sight of him?"

"Did I?" Pauline replied tranquilly. "Probably it was because he very suddenly and vividly brought Battle Field back to me--that was the happiest time of my life. But I was too young or too foolish, or both, to know it till long afterward. At seventeen one takes happiness for granted."

"Did he look then as he does now?"

"No--and yes," said Pauline. "He was just from the farm and dressed badly and was awkward at times. But--really he was the same person. I guess it was the little change in him that startled me." And she became absorbed in her thoughts.

"I hope you'll send him in to dinner with me," said Gladys, presently.

"What did you say?" asked Pauline, absently.

"I was talking of Mr. Scarborough. I asked if you wouldn't send him in to dinner with me--unless you want to discuss old times with him."

"Yes--certainly--if you wish."

And Pauline gave Scarborough to Gladys and did her duty as hostess by taking in the dullest man in the party--Newnham. While Newnham droned and prosed, she watched Gladys lay herself out to please the distinguished Mr. Scarborough, successful as a lawyer, famous as an orator, deferred to because of his influence with the rank and file of his party in the middle West.

Gladys had blue-black hair which she wore pulled out into a sort of halo about her small, delicate face. There were points of light in her dark irises, giving them the look of black quartz in the sunshine. She was not tall, but her figure was perfect, and she had her dresses fitted immediately to it. Her appeal was frankly to the senses, the edge taken from its audacity by its artistic effectiveness and by her ingenuous, almost innocent, expression.

Seeing Pauline looking at her, she tilted her head to a graceful angle and sent a radiant glance between two blossom-laden branches of the green and white bush that towered and spread in the center of the table. "Mr. Scarborough says," she called out, "character isn't a development, it's a disclosure. He thinks one is born a certain kind of person and that one's life simply either gives it a chance to show or fails to give it a chance. He says the boy isn't father to the man, but the miniature of the man. What do you think, Pauline?"

"I haven't thought of it," replied Pauline. "But I'm certain it's true. I used to dispute Mr. Scarborough's ideas sometimes, but I learned better."

As she realized the implications of her careless remark, their eyes met squarely for the first time since Battle Field. Both hastily glanced away, and neither looked at the other again. When the men came up to the drawing-room to join the women, Gladys adroitly intercepted him. When he went to Pauline to take leave, their manner each toward the other was formal, strained and even distant.

Dumont came again just after the November election. It had been an unexpected victory for the party which Scarborough advocated, and everywhere the talk was that he had been the chief factor--his skill in defining issues, his eloquence in presenting them, the public confidence in his party through the dominance of a man so obviously free from self-seeking or political trickery of any kind. Dumont, to whom control in both party machines and in the state government was a business necessity, told his political agent, Merriweather, that they had "let Scarborough go about far enough," unless he could be brought into their camp.

"I can't make out what he's looking for," said Merriweather. "One thing's certain--he'll do US no good. There's no way we can get our hooks in him. He don't give a damn for money. And as for power--he can get more of that by fighting us than by falling in line. We ain't exactly popular."

This seemed to Dumont rank ingratitude. Had he not just divided a million dollars among charities and educational institutions in the districts where opposition to his "merger" was strongest?

"Well, we'll see," he said. "If he isn't careful we'll have to kill him off in convention and make the committees stop his mouth."

"The trouble is he's been building up a following of his own--the sort of following that can't be honeyfugled," replied Merriweather. "The committees are afraid of him." Merriweather always took the gloomy view of everything, because he thus discounted his failures in advance and doubled the effect of his successes.

"I'll see--I'll see," said Dumont, impatiently. And he thought he was beginning to "see" when Gladys expanded to him upon the subject of Scarborough--his good looks, his wit, his "distinction."

Scarborough came to dinner a few evenings later and Dumont was particularly cordial to him; and Gladys made the most of the opportunity which Pauline again gave her. That night, when the others had left or had gone to bed, Gladys followed her brother into the smoke-room adjoining the library. They sat in silence drinking a "night-cap." In the dreaminess of her eyes, in the absent smile drifting round the corners of her full red lips, Gladys showed that her thoughts were pleasant and sentimental.

"What do you think of Scarborough?" her brother asked suddenly.

She started but did not flush--in her long European experience she had gained control of that signal of surprise. "How do you mean?" she asked. She rarely answered a question immediately, no matter how simple it was, but usually put another question in reply. Thus she insured herself time to think if time should be necessary.

"I mean, do you like him?"

"Why, certainly. But I've seen him only a few times."

"He's an uncommon man," continued her brother. "He'd make a mighty satisfactory husband for an ambitious woman, especially one with the money to push him fast."

Gladys slowly lifted and slowly lowered her smooth, slender shoulders.

"That sort of thing doesn't interest a woman in a man, unless she's married to him and has got over thinking more about him than about herself."

"It ought to," replied her brother. "A clever woman can always slosh round in sentimental slop with her head above it and cool. If I were a girl I'd make a dead set for that chap."

"If you were a girl," said Gladys, "you'd do nothing of the sort. You'd compel him to make a dead set for you." And as she put down her glass she gave his hair an affectionate pull--which was her way of thanking him for saying what she most wished to hear on the subject she most wished to hear about.

XIV.

STRAINING AT THE ANCHORS.

Gladys was now twenty-four and was even more anxious to marry than is the average unmarried person. She had been eleven years a wanderer; she was tired of it. She had no home; and she wanted a home.

Her aunt--her mother's widowed sister--had taken her abroad when she was thirteen. John was able to defy or to deceive their mother. But she could and did enforce upon Gladys the rigid rules which her fanatical nature had evolved--a minute and crushing tyranny. Therefore Gladys preferred any place to her home. For ten years she had been roaming western Europe, nominally watched by her lazy, selfish, and physically and mentally near-sighted aunt. Actually her only guardian had been her own precocious, curiously prudent, curiously reckless self. She had been free to do as she pleased; and she had pleased to do very free indeed. She had learned all that her intense and catholic curiosity craved to know, had learned it of masters of her own selecting--the men and women who would naturally attract a lively young person, eager to rejoice in an escape from slavery. Her eyes had peered far into the human heart, farthest into the corrupted human heart; yet, with her innocence she had not lost her honesty or her preference for the things she had been brought up to think clean.

But she had at last wearied of a novelty which lay only in changes of scene and of names, without any important change in characters or plot. She began to be bored with the game of baffling the hopes inspired by her beauty and encouraged by her seeming simplicity. And when her mother came--as she said to

Pauline, "The only bearable view of mother is a distant view. I had forgot there were such people left on earth--I had thought they'd all gone to their own kind of heaven." So she fled to America, to her brother and his wife.

Dumont stayed eight days at the Eyrie on that trip, then went back to his congenial life in New York--to his business and his dissipation. He tempered his indulgence in both nowadays with some exercise--his stomach, his heart, his nerves and his doctor had together given him a bad fright. The evening before he left he saw Pauline and Gladys sitting apart and joined them.

"Why not invite Scarborough to spend a week up here?" he asked, just glancing at his wife. He never ventured to look at her when there was any danger of their eyes meeting.

Her lips tightened and the color swiftly left her cheeks and swiftly returned.

"Wouldn't you like it, Gladys?" he went on.

"Oh, DO ask him, Pauline," said Gladys, with enthusiasm. Like her brother, she always went straight to the point--she was in the habit of deciding for herself, of thinking what she did was above criticism, and of not especially caring if it was criticised. "Please do!"

Pauline waited long--it seemed to her long enough for time to wrinkle her heart--before answering: "We'll need another man. I'll ask him--if you wish."

Gladys pressed her hand gratefully--she was fond of Pauline, and Pauline was liking her again as she had when they were children and playmates and partners in the woes of John Dumont's raids upon their games. Just then Langdon's sister, Mrs. Barrow, called Gladys to the other end of the drawing-room. Dumont's glance followed her.

"I think it'd be a good match," he said reflectively.

Pauline's heart missed a beat and a suffocating choke contracted her throat.

"What?" she succeeded in saying.

"Gladys and Scarborough," replied Dumont. "She ought to marry--she's got no place to go. And it'd be good business for her--and for him, too, for that matter, if she could land him. Don't you think she's attractive to men?"

"Very," said Pauline, lifelessly.

"Don't you think it would be a good match?" he went on.

"Very," she said, looking round wildly, as her breath came more and more quickly.

Langdon strolled up.

"Am I interrupting a family council?" he asked.

"Oh, no," Dumont replied, rising. "Take my chair." And he was gone.

"This room is too warm," said Pauline. "No, don't open the window. Excuse me a moment." She went into the hall, threw a golf cape round her shoulders and stepped out on the veranda, closing the door-window behind her. It was a moonless, winter night--stars thronging the blue-black sky; the steady lamp of a planet set in the southern horizon.

When she had been walking there for a quarter of an hour the door-window opened and Langdon looked out. "Oh--there you are!" he said.

"Won't you join me?" Her tone assured him that he would not be intruding. He got a hat and overcoat and they walked up and down together.

"Those stars irritate me," he said after a while. "They make me appreciate that this world's a tiny grain of sand adrift in infinity, and that I'm----there's nothing little enough to express the human atom where the earth's only a grain. And then they go on to taunt me with how short-lived I am and how it'll soon be all over for me--for ever. A futile little insect, buzzing about, waiting to be crushed under the heel of the Great Executioner."

"Sometimes I feel that," answered Pauline. "But again--often, as a child--and since, when everything has looked dark and ugly for me, I've gone where I could see them. And they seemed to draw all the fever and the fear out of me, and to put there instead a sort of--not happiness, not even content, but--courage."

They were near the rail now, she gazing into the southern sky, he studying her face. It seemed to him that he had not seen any one so beautiful. She was all in black with a diamond star glittering in her hair high above her forehead. She looked like a splendid plume dropped from the starry wing of night.

"The stars make you feel that way," he said, in the light tone that disguises a compliment as a bit of raillery, "because you're of their family. And I feel as I do because I'm a blood-relation of the earthworms."

Her face changed. "Oh, but so am I!" she exclaimed, with a passion he had never seen or suspected in her before. She drew a long breath, closed her eyes and opened them very wide.

"You don't know, you can't imagine, how I long to LIVE! And KNOW what 'to live' means."

"Then why don't you?" he asked--he liked to catch people in their confidential moods and to peer into the hidden places in their hearts, not impudently but with a sort of scientific

curiosity.

"Because I'm a daughter--that's anchor number one. Because I'm a mother--that's anchor number two. Because I'm a wife--that's anchor number three. And anchor number four--because I'm under the spell of inherited instincts that rule me though I don't in the least believe in them. Tied, hands and feet!"

"Inherited instinct." He shook his head sadly. "That's the skeleton at life's banquet. It takes away my appetite."

She laughed without mirth, then sighed with some self-mockery. "It frightens ME away from the table."

XV.

GRADUATED PEARLS.

But Scarborough declined her invitation. However, he did come to dinner ten days later; and Gladys, who had no lack of confidence in her power to charm when and whom she chose, was elated by his friendliness then and when she met him at other houses.

"He's not a bit sentimental," she told Pauline, whose silence whenever she tried to discuss him did not discourage her. "But if he ever does care for a woman he'll care in the same tremendous way that he sweeps things before him in his career. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Pauline.

She had now lingered at Saint X two months beyond the time she originally set. She told herself she had reached the limit of endurance, that she must fly from the spectacle of Gladys' growing intimacy with Scarborough; she told Gladys it was impossible for her longer to neglect the new house in Fifth Avenue. With an effort she added: "You'd rather stay on here, wouldn't you?"

"I detest New York," replied Gladys. "And I've never enjoyed myself in my whole life as I'm enjoying it here."

So she went East alone, went direct to Dawn Hill, their country place at Manhasset, Long Island, which Dumont never visited. She invited Leonora Fanshaw down to stand between her thoughts and herself. Only the society of a human being, one who was light-hearted and amusing, could tide her back to any sort of peace in the old life--her books and her dogs, her horseback and her drawing and her gardening. A life so full of events, so empty of event. It left her hardly time for proper sleep, yet it had not a single one of those vivid threads of intense and continuous interest--and one of them is enough to make bright the dulllest pattern that issues from the Loom.

In her "splendor" her nearest approach to an intimacy had been

with Leonora.

She had no illusions about the company she was keeping in the East. To her these "friends" seemed in no proper sense either her friends or one another's. Drawn together from all parts of America, indeed of the world, by the magnetism of millions, they had known one another not at all or only slightly in the period of life when thorough friendships are made; even where they had been associates as children, the association had rarely been of the kind that creates friendship's democratic intimacy. They had no common traditions, no real class-feeling, no common enthusiasms--unless the passion for keeping rich, for getting richer, for enjoying and displaying riches, could be called enthusiasm. They were mere intimate acquaintances, making small pretense of friendship, having small conception of it or desire for it beyond that surface politeness which enables people whose selfish interests lie in the same direction to get on comfortably together.

She divided them into two classes. There were those who, like herself, kept up great establishments and entertained lavishly and engaged in the courteous but fierce rivalry of fashionable ostentation. Then there were those who hung about the courts of the rich, invited because they filled in the large backgrounds and contributed conversation or ideas for new amusements, accepting because they loved the atmosphere of luxury which they could not afford to create for themselves.

Leonora was undeniably in the latter class. But she was associated in Pauline's mind with the period before her splendor. She had been friendly when Dumont was unknown beyond Saint X. The others sought her--well, for the same reasons of desire for distraction and dread of boredom which made her welcome them. But Leonora, she more than half believed, liked her to a certain extent for herself--"likes me better than I like her." And at times she was self-reproachful for being thus exceeded in self-giving. Leonora, for example, told her her most intimate secrets, some of them far from creditable to her. Pauline told nothing in return. She sometimes longed for a confidant, or, rather, for some person who would understand without being told, some one like Olivia; but her imagination refused to picture Leonora as that kind of friend. Even more pronounced than her frankness, and she was frank to her own hurt, was her biting cynicism--it was undeniably amusing; it did not exactly inspire distrust, but it put Pauline vaguely on guard. Also, she was candidly mercenary, and, in some moods, rapaciously envious. "But no worse," thought Pauline, "than so many of the others here, once one gets below their surface. Besides, it's in a good-natured, good-hearted way."

She wished Fanshaw were as rich as Leonora longed for him to be. She was glad Dumont seemed to be putting him in the way of making a fortune. He was distasteful to her, because she saw that he was an ill-tempered sycophant under a pretense of manliness thick enough to shield him from the unobservant eyes of a world of men and women greedy of flattery and busy each with himself or herself. But for Leonora's sake she invited him. And Leonora was appreciative, was witty, never monotonous or commonplace,

most helpful in getting up entertainments, and good to look at--always beautifully dressed and as fresh as if just from a bath; sparkling green eyes, usually with good-humored mockery in them; hard, smooth, glistening shoulders and arms; lips a crimson line, at once cold and sensuous.

On a Friday in December Pauline came up from Dawn Hill and, after two hours at the new house, went to the jeweler's to buy a wedding present for Aurora Galloway. As she was passing the counter where the superintendent had his office, his assistant said: "Beg pardon, Mrs. Dumont. The necklace came in this morning. Would you like to look at it?"

She paused, not clearly hearing him. He took a box from the safe behind him and lifted from it a magnificent necklace of graduated pearls with a huge solitaire diamond clasp. "It's one of the finest we ever got together," he went on. "But you can see for yourself." He was flushing in the excitement of his eagerness to ingratiate himself with such a distinguished customer.

"Beautiful!" said Pauline, taking the necklace as he held it out to her. "May I ask whom it's for?"

The clerk looked puzzled, then frightened, as the implications of her obvious ignorance dawned upon him.

"Oh--I--I----" He almost snatched it from her, dropped it into the box, put on the lid. And he stood with mouth ajar and forehead beaded.

"Please give it to me again," said Pauline, coldly. "I had not finished looking at it."

His uneasy eyes spied the superintendent approaching. He grew scarlet, then white, and in an agony of terror blurted out: "Here comes the superintendent. I beg you, Mrs. Dumont, don't tell him I showed it to you. I've made some sort of a mistake. You'll ruin me if you speak of it to any one. I never thought it might be intended as a surprise to you. Indeed, I wasn't supposed to know anything about it. Maybe I was mistaken----"

His look and voice were so pitiful that Pauline replied reassuringly: "I understand--I'll say nothing. Please show me those," and she pointed to a tray of unset rubies in the show-case.

And when the superintendent, bowing obsequiously, came up himself to take charge of this important customer, she was deep in the rubies which the assistant was showing her with hands that shook and fingers that blundered.

She did not permit her feelings to appear until she was in her carriage again and secure from observation. The clerk's theory she could not entertain for an instant, contradicted as it was by the facts of eight years. She knew she had surprised Dumont. She had learned nothing new; but it forced her to stare straight into the face of that which she had been ignoring, that which she must continue to ignore if she was to meet the ever heavier and

crueler exactions of the debt she had incurred when she betrayed her father and mother and herself. At a time when her mind was filled with bitter contrasts between what was and what might have been, it brought bluntly to her the precise kind of life she was leading, the precise kind of surroundings she was tolerating.

"Whom can he be giving such a gift?" she wondered. And she had an impulse to confide in Leonora to the extent of encouraging her to hint who it was. "She would certainly know. No doubt everybody knows, except me."

She called for her, as she had promised, and took her to lunch at Sherry's. But the impulse to confide died as Leonora talked--of money, of ways of spending money; of people who had money, and those who hadn't money; of people who were spending too much money, of those who weren't spending enough money; of what she would do if she had money, of what many did to get money. Money, money, money--it was all of the web and most of the woof of her talk. Now it ran boldly on the surface of the pattern; now it was half hid under something about art or books or plays or schemes for patronizing the poor and undermining their self-respect--but it was always there.

For the first time Leonora jarred upon her fiercely--unendurably. She listened until the sound grew indistinct, became mingled with the chatter of that money-flaunting throng. And presently the chatter seemed to her to be a maddening repetition of one word, money--the central idea in all the thought and all the action of these people. "I must get away," she thought, "or I shall cry out." And she left abruptly, alleging that she must hurry to catch her train.

Money-mad! her thoughts ran on. The only test of honor--money, and ability and willingness to spend it. They must have money or they're nobodies. And if they have money, who cares where it came from? No one asks where the men get it--why should any one ask where the women get it?

XVI.

CHOICE AMONG EVILS.

A few days afterward--it was a Wednesday--Pauline came up to town early in the afternoon, as she had an appointment with the dressmaker and was going to the opera in the evening. At the dressmaker's, while she waited for a fitter to return from the workroom, she glanced at a newspaper spread upon the table so that its entire front page was in view. It was filled with an account of how the Woolens Monopoly had, in that bitter winter, advanced prices twenty to thirty-five per cent. all along the line. From the center of the page stared a picture of John Dumont--its expression peculiarly arrogant and sinister.

She read the head-lines only, then turned from the table. But on the drive up-town she stopped the carriage at the Savoy and sent

the footman to the news-stand to get the paper. She read the article through--parts of it several times.

She had Langdon and Honoria Longview at dinner that night; by indirect questioning she drew him on to confirm the article, to describe how the Woolens Monopoly was "giving the country an old-fashioned winter." On the way to the opera she was ashamed of her ermine wrap enfolding her from the slightest sense of the icy air. She did not hear the singers, was hardly conscious of her surroundings. As they left the Metropolitan she threw back her wrap and sat with her neck bared to the intense cold.

"I say, don't do that!" protested Langdon.

She reluctantly drew the fur about her. But when she had dropped him and then Honoria and was driving on up the avenue alone, she bared her shoulders and arms again--"like a silly child," she said. But it gave her a certain satisfaction, for she felt like one who has a secret store of food in time of famine and feasts upon it. And she sat unprotected.

"Is Mr. Dumont in?" she asked the butler as he closed the door of their palace behind her.

"I think he is, ma'am."

"Please tell him I'd like to see him--in the library."

She had to wait only three or four minutes before he came--in smoking jacket and slippers. It was long since she had looked at him so carefully as she did then; and she noted how much grosser he was, the puffs under his eyes, the lines of cruelty that were coming out strongly with autocratic power and the custom of receiving meek obedience. And her heart sank. "Useless," she said to herself. "Utterly useless!" And the incident of the necklace and its reminders of all she had suffered from him and through him came trooping into her mind; and it seemed to her that she could not speak, could not even remain in the room with him.

He dropped into a chair before the open fire. "Horribly cold, isn't it?"

She moved uneasily. He slowly lighted a cigar and began to smoke it, his attitude one of waiting.

"I've been thinking," she began at last--she was looking reflectively into the fire--"about your great talent for business and finance. You formed your big combination, and because you understand everything about wool you employ more men, you pay higher wages, and you make the goods better than ever, and at less cost."

"Between a third and a half cheaper," he said. "We employ thirty thousand more men, and since we settled the last strike"--a grim smile that would have meant a great deal to her had she known the history of that strike and how hard he had fought before he gave in--"we've paid thirty per cent. higher

wages. Yet the profits are--well, you can imagine."

"And you've made millions for yourself and for those in with you."

"I haven't developed my ideas for nothing."

She paused again. It was several minutes before she went on:

"When a doctor or a man of science or a philosopher makes a discovery that'll be a benefit to the world"--she looked at him suddenly, earnest, appealing--"he gives it freely. And he gets honor and fame. Why shouldn't you do that, John?" She had forgotten herself in her subject.

He smiled into the fire--hardly a day passed that he did not have presented to him some scheme for relieving him of the burden of his riches; here was another, and from such an unexpected quarter!

"You could be rich, too. We spend twenty, fifty times as much as we can possibly enjoy; and you have more than we could possibly spend. Why shouldn't a man with financial genius be like men with other kinds of genius? Why should he be the only one to stay down on the level with dull, money-grubbing, sordid kinds of people? Why shouldn't he have ideals?"

He made no reply. Indeed, so earnest was she that she did not give him time, but immediately went on:

"Just think, John! Instead of giving out in these charities and philanthropies--I never did believe in them--they're bound to be more or less degrading to the people that take, and when it's so hard to help a friend with money without harming him, how much harder it must be to help strangers. Instead of those things, why not be really great? Just think, John, how the world would honor you and how you would feel, if you used your genius to make the necessities cheap for all these fellow-beings of ours who have such a hard time getting on. That would be real superiority--and our life now is so vain, so empty. It's brutal, John."

"What do you propose?" he asked, curious as always when a new idea was presented to him. And this was certainly new--apparently, philanthropy without expense.

"You are master. You can do as you please. Why not put your great combine on such a basis that it would bring an honest, just return to you and the others, and would pay the highest possible wages, and would give the people the benefit of what your genius for manufacturing and for finance has made possible? I think we who are so comfortable and never have to think of the necessities of life forget how much a few cents here and there mean to most people. And the things you control mean all the difference between warmth and cold, between life and death, John!"

As she talked he settled back into his chair, and his face hardened into its unyielding expression. A preposterous project!

Just like a good, sentimental woman. Not philanthropy without expense, but philanthropy at the expense both, of his fortune and of his position as a master. To use his brain and his life for those ungrateful people who derided his benefactions as either contributions to "the conscience fund" or as indirect attempts at public bribery! He could not conceal his impatience--though he did not venture to put it into words.

"If we--if you and I, John," she hurried on, leaning toward him in her earnestness, "had something like that to live for, it might come to be very different with us--and--I'm thinking of Gardiner most of all. This'll ruin him some day. No one, NO ONE, can lead this kind of life without being dragged down, without becoming selfish and sordid and cruel."

"You don't understand," he said curtly, without looking at her. "I never heard of such--such sentimentalism."

She winced and was silent, sat watching his bold, strong profile. Presently she said in a changed, strange, strained voice: "What I asked to see you for was--John, won't you put the prices--at least where they were at the beginning of this dreadful winter?"

"Oh--I see!" he exclaimed. "You've been listening to the lies about me."

"READING," she said, her eyes flashing at the insult in the accusation that she had let people attack him to her.

"Well, reading then," he went on, wondering what he had said that angered her. And he made an elaborate explanation--about "the necessity of meeting fixed charges" which he himself had fixed, about "fair share of prosperity," "everything more expensive," "the country better able to pay," "every one doing as we are," and so on.

She listened closely; she had not come ignorant of the subject, and she penetrated his sophistries. When he saw her expression, saw he had failed to convince her, into, his eyes came the look she understood well--the look that told her she would only infuriate him and bruise herself by flinging herself against the iron of his resolve.

"You must let me attend to my own business," he ended, his tone good-natured, his eyes hard.

She sat staring into the fire for several minutes--from her eyes looked a will as strong as his. Then she rose and, her voice lower than before but vibrating, said: "All round us--here in New York--all over this country--away off in Europe--I can see them--I can feel them--SUFFERING! As you yourself said, it's HORRIBLY cold!" She drew herself up and faced him, a light in her eyes before which he visibly shrank. "Yes, it's YOUR business. But it shan't be mine or MY boy's!"

And she left the room. In the morning she returned to Dawn Hill and arranged her affairs so that she would be free to go. Not since the spring day, nearly nine years before, when she began

that Vergil lesson which ended in a lesson in the pitilessness of consequences that was not yet finished, had her heart been so light, so hopeful. In vain she reminded herself that the doing of this larger duty, so imperative, nevertheless endangered her father and mother. "They will be proud that I'm doing it," she assured herself.

"For Gardiner's sake, as well as for mine, they'll be glad I separated him and myself from this debased life. They will--they MUST, since it is right!" And already she felt the easing of the bonds that had never failed to cut deeper into the living flesh whenever she had ventured to hope that she was at last growing used to them.

"Free!" she said to herself exultantly. She dared to exult, but she did not dare to express to herself the hopes, the wild, incredible hopes, which the very thought of freedom set to quivering deep down in her, as the first warmth makes the life toss in its slumber in the planted seed.

On Friday she came up to New York late in the afternoon, and in the evening went to the opera--for a last look round. As the lights were lowering for the rise of the curtain on the second act, Leonora and her husband entered the box. She had forgotten inviting them. She gave Leonora the chair in front and took the one behind--Millicent Rowland, whom she herself brought, had the other front seat. As her chair was midway between the two, she was seeing across Leonora's shoulders. Presently Dumont came in and took the chair behind Leonora's and leaned forward, his chin almost touching the slope of her neck as he talked to her in an undertone, she greatly amused or pretending to be.

The light from the stage fell across Leonora's bosom, fell upon a magnificent string of graduated pearls clasped with a huge solitaire beyond question the string the jeweler's clerk had blunderingly shown her. And there was Dumont's heavy, coarse profile outlined against Leonora's cheek and throat, her cynical, sensuous profile showing just beyond.

Open sprang a hundred doors of memory; into Pauline's mind was discharged avalanche after avalanche of dreadful thoughts. "No! No!" she protested. "How infamous to think such things of my best friend!" But she tried in vain to thrust suspicions, accusations, proofs, back into the closets. Instead, she sank under the flood of them--sick and certain.

When the lights went up she said: "I'm feeling badly all at once. I'm afraid I'll have to take you home, Milly."

"Are you ill, dear?" asked Leonora.

"Oh, no--just faint," she replied, in a voice which she succeeded in making fairly natural.

"Please don't move. Stay on--you really must."

The other man--Shenstone--helped her and Millicent with their wraps and accompanied them to their carriage. When she had set

Millicent down she drew a long breath of relief. For the first time in seven years her course lay straight before her. "I must be free!" she said. "I must be ENTIRELY free--free before the whole world--I and my boy."

The next morning, in the midst of her preparations to take the ten-o'clock limited for the West, her maid brought a note to her--a copy of a National Woolens Company circular to the trade, setting forth that "owing to a gratifying easing in the prices for raw wool, the Company are able to announce and take great pleasure in announcing a ten per cent. reduction." On the margin Dumont had scrawled "To go out to-morrow and to be followed in ten days by fifteen per cent. more. Couldn't resist your appeal." Thus by the sheer luck that had so often supplemented his skill and mitigated his mistakes, he had yielded to her plea just in time to confuse the issue between her and him.

She read the circular and the scrawl with a sinking heart. "Nevertheless, I shall go!" she tried to protest. "True, he won't send out this circular if I do. But what does it matter, one infamy more or less in him? Besides, he will accomplish his purpose in some other way of which I shall not know." But this was only the beginning of the battle. Punishment on punishment for an act which seemed right at the time had made her morbid, distrustful of herself. And she could not conquer the dread lest her longing to be free was blinding her, was luring her on to fresh calamities, involving all whom she cared for, all who cared for her. Whichever way she looked she could see only a choice between wrongs. To stay under the same roof with him or at Dawn Hill--self-respect put that out of the question. To free herself--how could she, when it meant sacrificing her parents and also the thousands shivering under the extortions of his monopoly?

In the end she chose the course that seemed to combine the least evil with the most good. She would go to the Eyrie, and the world and her father and mother would think she was absenting herself from her husband to attend to the bringing up of her boy. She would see even less of Scarborough than she saw when she was last at Saint X.

That afternoon she wrote to Dumont:

Since we had our talk I have found out about Leonora. It is impossible for me to stay here. I shall go West to-morrow. But I shall not go to my father's; because of your circular I shall go to the Eyrie, instead--at least for the present.

PAULINE DUMONT.

Two weeks after she was again settled at the Eyrie, Langdon appeared in Saint X, alleging business at the National Woolens' factories there. He accepted her invitation to stay with her, and devoted himself to Gladys, who took up her flirtation with

him precisely where she had dropped it when they bade each the other a mock-mournful good-by five months before. They were so realistic that Pauline came to the satisfying conclusion that her sister-in-law was either in earnest with Langdon or not in earnest with anybody. If she had not been avoiding Scarborough, she would probably have seen Gladys' real game--to use Langdon as a stalking horse for him.

"No doubt Scarborough, like all men, imagines he's above jealousy," Gladys had said to herself, casting her keen eyes over the situation. "But there never was a man who didn't race better with a pace-maker than on an empty track."

Toward the end of Langdon's first week Pauline's suspicions as to one of the objects of his winter trip West were confirmed by his saying quite casually: "Dumont's dropped Fanshaw, and Leonora's talking of the stage. In fact, she's gone abroad to study."

When he was leaving, after nearly three weeks, he asked her when she was coming back East.

"Never--I hope," she said, her fingers playing with the close-cropped curls of her boy standing beside her.

"I fancied so--I fancied so," replied Langdon, his eyes showing that he understood her and that he knew she understood for whom he had asked.

"You are going to stay on--at the Eyrie?"

"I think so, unless something--disquieting--occurs. I've not made up my mind. Fate plays such queer tricks that I've stopped guessing at to-morrow."

"What was it Miss Dumont's friend, Scarborough, quoted from Spinoza at Atwater's the other night? 'If a stone, on its way from the sling through the air, could speak, it would say, "How free I am!"' Is that the way you feel?"

There came into Pauline's eyes a look of pain so intense that he glanced away.

"We choose a path blindfold," she said, her tone as light as her look was dark, "and we must go where it goes--there's no other ever afterward."

"But if it leads down?"

"All the PATHS lead up," she replied with a sad smile. "It's the precipices that lead down."

Gladys joined them and Langdon said to her:

"Well, good-by, Miss Dumont--don't get married till you see me." He patted the boy on the shoulder. "Good-by, Gardiner--remember, we men must always be brave, and gentle with the ladies. Good-by, Mrs. Dumont--keep away from the precipices. And if you should want to come back to us you'll have no trouble

in finding us. We're a lot of slow old rotters, and we'll be just where you left us--yawning, and shying at new people and at all new ideas except about clothes, and gossiping about each other." And he was in the auto and off for the station.

XVII

TWO AND THE BARRIER.

Scarborough often rode with Gladys and Pauline, sometimes with Gladys alone. One afternoon in August he came expecting to go out with both. But Gladys was not well that day. She had examined her pale face and deeply circled eyes in her glass; she had counseled with her maid--a discreetly and soothingly frank French woman. Too late to telephone him, she had overruled her longing to see him and had decided that at what she hoped was his "critical stage" it would be wiser not to show herself to him thus even in her most becoming tea-gown, which compelled the eyes of the beholder to a fascinating game of hide and seek with her neck and arms and the lines of her figure.

"And Mrs. Dumont?" inquired Scarborough of the servant who brought Gladys' message and note.

"She's out walking, sir."

Scarborough rode away, taking the long drive through the grounds of the Eyrie, as it would save him a mile of dusty and not well-shaded highway. A few hundred yards and he was passing the sloping meadows that lay golden bronze in the sun, beyond the narrow fringe of wood skirting and shielding the drive. The grass and clover had been cut. Part of it was spread where it had fallen, part had been raked into little hillocks ready for the wagons. At the edge of one of these hillocks far down the slope he saw the tail of a pale blue skirt, a white parasol cast upon the stubble beside it. He reined in his horse, hesitated, dismounted, tied his bridle round a sapling. He strode across the field toward the hillock that had betrayed its secret to him.

"Do I interrupt?" he called when he was still far enough away not to be taking her by surprise.

There was no answer. He paused, debating whether to call again or to turn back.

But soon she was rising--the lower part of her tall narrow figure hid by the hillock, the upper part revealing to him the strong stamp of that vivid individuality of hers which separated her at once from no matter what company. She had on a big garden hat, trimmed just a little with summer flowers, a blouse of some soft white material, with even softer lace on the shoulders and in the long, loose sleeves. She gave a friendly nod and glance in his direction, and said: "Oh, no--not at all. I'm glad to have help in enjoying this."

She was looking out toward the mists of the horizon hills. The heat of the day had passed; the woods, the hillocks of hay were casting long shadows on the pale-bronze fields. A breeze had sprung up and was lifting from the dried and drying grass and clover a keen, sweet, intoxicating perfume--like the odor which classic zephyrs used to shake from the flowing hair of woodland nymphs.

He stood beside her without speaking, looking intently at her. It was the first time he had been alone with her since the afternoon at Battle Field when she confessed her marriage and he his love.

"Bandit was lame," she said when it seemed necessary to say something.

She rode a thoroughbred, Bandit, who would let no one else mount him; whenever she got a new saddle she herself had to help put it on, so alert was he for schemes to entrap him to some other's service. He obeyed her in the haughty, nervous way characteristic of thoroughbreds--obeyed because he felt that she was without fear, and because she had the firm but gentle hand that does not fret a horse yet does not let him think for an instant that he is or can be free. Then, too, he had his share of the universal, fundamental vanity we should probably find swelling the oyster did we but know how to interpret it; and he must have appreciated what an altogether harmonious spectacle it was when he swept along with his mistress upon his back as light and free as a Valkyr.

"I was sorry to miss the ride," Pauline went on after another pause--to her, riding was the keenest of the many physical delights that are for those who have vigorous and courageous bodies and sensitive nerves. Whenever it was possible she fought out her battles with herself on horseback, usually finding herself able there to drown mental distress in the surge of physical exultation.

As he still did not speak she looked at him--and could not look away. She had not seen that expression since their final hour together at Battle Field, though in these few last months she had been remembering it so exactly, had been wondering, doubting whether she could not bring it to his face again, had been forbidding herself to long to see it. And there it was, unchanged like all the inflexible purposes that made his character and his career. And back to her came, as it had come many and many a time in those years, the story he had told her of his father and mother, of his father's love for his mother--how it had enfolded her from the harshness and peril of pioneer life, had enfolded her in age no less than in youth, had gone down into and through the Valley of the Shadow with her, had not left her even at the gates of Death, but had taken him on with her into the Beyond. And Pauline trembled, an enormous joy thrilling through and through her.

"Don't!" she said uncertainly. "Don't look at me like that, PLEASE!"

"You were crying," he said abruptly. He stood before her, obviously one who had conquered the respect of the world in fair, open battle, and has the courage that is for those only who have tested their strength and know it will not fail them. And the sight of him, the look of him, filled her not with the mere belief, but with the absolute conviction that no malign power in all the world or in the mystery round the world could come past him to her to harass or harm her. The doubts, the sense of desolation that had so agitated her a few minutes before now seemed trivial, weak, unworthy.

She lowered her eyes--she had thought he would not observe the slight traces of the tears she had carefully wiped away. She clasped her hands meekly and looked--and felt--like a guilty child. The coldness, the haughtiness were gone from her face.

"Yes," she said shyly. "Yes--I--I--" She lifted her eyes--her tears had made them as soft and luminous as the eyes of a child just awake from a long, untroubled sleep. "But--you must not ask me. It's nothing that can be helped. Besides, it seems nothing--now." She forced a faint smile. "If you knew what a comfort it is to cry you'd try it."

"I have," he replied. Then after a pause he added: "Once." Something in his tone--she did not venture to look at him again--made her catch her breath. She instantly and instinctively knew when that "once" was. "I don't care to try it again, thank you," he went on. "But it made me able to understand what sort of comfort you were getting. For--YOU don't cry easily."

The katydids were clamoring drowsily in the tops of the sycamores. From out of sight beyond the orchard came the monotonous, musical whirl of a reaper. A quail whistled his pert, hopeful, careless "Bob White!" from the rail fence edging the wheat field. A bumblebee grumbled among a cluster of swaying clover blossoms which the mower had spared. And the breeze tossed up and rolled over the meadow, over the senses of the young man and the young woman, great billows of that perfume which is the combined essence of all nature's love philters.

Pauline sank on the hay, and Scarborough stretched himself on the ground at her feet. "For a long time it's been getting darker and darker for me," she began, in the tone of one who is talking of some past sorrow which casts a retreating shadow over present joy to make it the brighter by contrast. "To-day--this afternoon it seemed as if the light were just about to go out--for good and all. And I came here. I found myself lying on the ground--on the bosom of this old cruel--kind mother of ours. And--" She did not finish--he would know the rest. Besides, what did it matter--now?

He said: "If only there were some way in which I could help."

"It isn't the people who appear at the crises of one's life, like the hero on the stage, that really help. I'm afraid the crises, the real crises of real life, must always be met alone."

"Alone," he said in an undertone. The sky was blue now--cloudless blue; but in that word alone he could hear the rumble of storms below the horizon, storms past, storms to come.

"The real helpers," she went on, "are those who strengthen us day by day, hour by hour. And when no physical presence would do any good, when no outside aid is possible--they--it's like finding a wall at one's back when one's in dread of being surrounded. I suppose you don't realize how much it means to--to how many people--to watch a man who goes straight and strong on his way--without blustering, without trampling anybody, without taking any mean advantage. You don't mind my saying these things?"

She felt the look which she did not venture to face as he answered: "I needed to hear them to-day. For it seemed to me that I, too, had got to the limit of my strength."

"But you hadn't." She said this confidently.

"No--I suppose not. I've thought so before; but somehow I've always managed to gather myself together. This time it was the work of years apparently undone--hopelessly undone. They"--she understood that "they" meant the leaders of the two corrupt rings whose rule of the state his power with the people menaced--"they have bought away some of my best men--bought them with those `favors' that are so much more disreputable than money because they're respectable. Then they came to me"--he laughed unpleasantly--"and took me up into a high mountain and showed me all the kingdoms of the earth, as it were. I could be governor, senator, they said, could probably have the nomination for president even,--not if I would fall down and worship them, but if I would let them alone. I could accomplish nearly all that I've worked so long to accomplish if I would only concede a few things to them. I could be almost free. ALMOST--that is, not free at all."

She said: "And they knew you no better than that!"

"Now," he continued, "it looks as if I'll have to build all over again."

"I think not," she replied. "If they weren't still afraid of you they'd never have come to you. But what does it matter? YOU don't fight for victory, you fight for the fight's sake. And so"--she looked at him proudly--"you can't lose."

"Thank you. Thank you," he said in a low voice.

She sighed. "How I envy you! You LIVE. I can simply be alive. Sometimes I feel as if I were sitting in a railway station waiting to begin my journey--waiting for a train that's late--nobody knows how late. Simply alive--that's all."

"That's a great deal," he said. He was looking round at the sky, at the horizon, at the fields far and near, at her. "A great deal," he repeated.

"You feel that, too?" She smiled. "I suppose I should live on through anything and everything, because, away down under the surface, where even the worst storms can't reach, there's always a sort of tremendous joy--the sense of being alive--just alive." She drew a long breath. "Often when I've been--anything but happy--a little while ago, for instance--I suddenly have a feeling of ecstasy. I say to myself: Yes, I'm unhappy, but--I'm ALIVE!"

He made a sudden impulsive movement toward her, then restrained himself, pressed his lips together and fell back on his elbow.

"I suppose I ought to be ashamed of myself," she added.

"You mustn't say that." He was sitting up, was speaking with all his energy. "All that you were telling me a while ago to encourage me applies to you, too--and more--more. You DO live. You ARE what you long to be. That ideal you're always trying to grasp--don't you know why you can't grasp it, Pauline? Because it's your own self, your own image reflected as in a mirror."

He broke off abruptly, acutely conscious that he was leaning far over the barrier between them. There was a distant shout, from vigorous, boyish lungs. Gardiner, mad with the joy of healthy seven, came running and jumping across the field to land with a leap astride the hillock, scattering wisps of hay over his mother and Scarborough. Pauline turned without getting up, caught her boy by the arms and with mock violence shook and thrust him deep down into the damaged hillock. She seemed to be making an outlet for some happiness too great to be contained. He laughed and shouted and struggled, pushed and pulled her. Her hat fell off, her hair loosened and the sun showered gold of many shades upon it. She released him and stood up, straightening and smoothing her hair and breathing quickly, the color high in her cheeks.

Scarborough was already standing, watching her with an expression of great cheerfulness.

"Good-by," he now said. "The caravan"--his tone was half-jesting, half-serious--"has been spending the heat and dust of the day on the oasis. It makes night journeys only. It must push on."

"Night journeys only," repeated Pauline. "That sounds gloomy."

"But there are the stars--and the moon."

She laughed. "And other oases ahead. Good-by--and thank you!"

The boy, close to his mother and facing Scarborough, was looking from her to him and back again--curiously, it almost seemed suspiciously. Both noticed it; both flushed slightly.

Scarborough shook hands with her, bowed to the little boy with a formality and constraint that might have seemed ludicrous to an onlooker. He went toward his horse; Gardiner and his mother took the course at right angles across the field in the direction in which the towers of the Eyrie could be seen above the tree-tops.

Suddenly the boy said, as if it were the conclusion of a long internal argument: "I like Mr. Scarborough."

"Why not?" asked his mother, amused.

"I--I don't know," replied the boy. "Anyhow, I like him. I wish he'd come and stay with us and Aunt Gladys."

Gladys! The reminder made her uncomfortable, made her feel that she ought to be remorseful. But she hastened on to defend herself. What reason had she to believe that Gladys cared for him, except as she always cared for difficult conquest? Hadn't Gladys again and again gone out of her way to explain that she wasn't in love with him? Hadn't she said, only two days before: "I don't believe I could fall in love with any man. Certainly I couldn't unless he had made it very clear to me that he was in love with me."

Pauline had latterly been suspecting that these elaborations of superfluous protestation were Gladys' efforts to curtain herself. Now she dwelt upon them with eager pleasure, and assured and reassured herself that she had been supersensitive and that Gladys had really been frank and truthful with her.

XVIII.

ON THE FARM.

On his way down the bluffs to town Scarborough felt as calm and peaceful as that tranquil evening. He had a sense of the end of a long strain of which he had until then been unconscious. "NOW I can go away and rest," he said to himself. And at sundown he set out for his farm.

He arrived at ten o'clock, by moonlight, amid a baying of dogs so energetic that it roused every living thing in the barnyard to protest in a peevish chorus of clucking and grunting and quacking and squealing.

"What on airth!" exclaimed Mrs. Gabbard, his farmer's wife, standing at the back door, in calico skirt and big shawl. When she saw who it was, her irritated voice changed to welcome. "Why, howdy, Mr. Scarborough! I thought it was old John Lovel among the chickens or at the granary. I might 'a' knowed he wouldn't come in the full of the moon and no clouds."

"Go straight back to bed, Mrs. Gabbard, and don't mind me," said Scarborough. "I looked after my horse and don't want anything to eat. Where's Eph?"

"Can't you hear?" asked Mrs. Gabbard, dryly. And in the pause a lusty snore penetrated. "When anything out of the way happens, I get up and nose around to see whether it's worth while to wake him."

Scarborough laughed. "I've come for a few days--to get some exercise," he said. "But don't wake me with the others to-morrow morning. I'm away behind on sleep and dead tired."

He went to bed--the rooms up-stairs in front were reserved for him and were always ready. His brain was apparently as busy and as determined not to rest as on the worst of his many bad nights during the past four months. But the thoughts were vastly different; and soon those millions of monotonous murmurings from brook and field and forest were soothing his senses. He slept soundly, with that complete relaxing of every nerve and muscle which does not come until the mind wholly yields up its despotic control and itself plunges into slumber unfathomable.

The change of the air with dawn slowly wakened him. It was only a little after five, but he felt refreshed. He got himself into farm working clothes and went down to the summer dining-room--a shed against the back of the house with three of its walls latticed. In the adjoining kitchen Mrs. Gabbard and her daughters, Sally and Bertha, were washing the breakfast dishes--Gabbard and his two sons and the three "hands" had just started for the meadows with the hay wagons.

"Good morning," said Scarborough, looking in on the three women.

They stopped work and smiled at him, and the girls dried their hands and shook hands with him--all with an absolute absence of embarrassment that, to one familiar with the awkward shyness of country people, would have told almost the whole story of Scarborough's character. "I'll get you some breakfast in the dining-room," said Mrs. Gabbard.

"No--just a little--on the corner of the table out here," replied Scarborough.

Mrs. Gabbard and Sally bustled about while he stood in the doorway of the shed, looking out into the yard and watching the hens make their careful early morning tour of the inclosure to glean whatever might be there before scattering for the day's excursions and depredations. He had not long to wait and he did not linger over what was served.

"You've et in a manner nothing," complained Mrs. Gabbard.

"I haven't earned an appetite yet," he replied. "Just wait till this evening."

As soon as he was out of view he gave a great shout and started to run. "What folly to bother with, a foolish, trouble-breeding thinking apparatus in a world like this!" he thought, as the tremendous currents of vitality surged through him. And he vaulted a six-rail fence and ran on. Down the hollow drenched with dew, across the brook which was really wide enough to be called a creek, up the steep slope of the opposite hill at a slower pace, and he was at the edge of the meadows. The sun was clear of the horizon now, and the two wagons, piled high with hay and "poled down" to keep the loads steady, were about to move

off to the barn.

"Bring back a fork for me, Bill!" he called to the driver of the nearer wagon--Bill was standing on the lofty top of his load, which projected forward and rear so far that, forward, the horses were half canopied. Against Bill's return he borrowed Gabbard's fork and helped complete the other wagon, the sweat streaming from his face as his broad shoulders swung down with the empty fork and up with a great mat of hay.

They worked alternately in the fields and at the barns until half-past eleven. Then they went into the shade at the edge of the meadow and had their dinner.

"My old woman," said Gabbard, "says that two set-down meals a day in harvest time's as many as she'll stand for. So we have dinner out here in good weather, and to the barn when it rains."

The talk was of weather prospects, of probable tonnage to the acre, of the outlook for the corn, of the health and family expectations of the mares and the cows and the pigs. It died away gradually as one man after another stretched out upon his back with a bunch of hay for an odorous pillow and his broad-brimmed straw hat for a light-shade. Scarborough was the fourth man to yield; as he dozed off his hat was hiding that smile of boundless content which comes only to him who stretches his well body upon grass or soft stubble and feels the vigor of the earth steal up and through him. "Why don't I do this oftener?" Scarborough was saying to himself. "I must--and I shall, now that my mind's more at ease."

A long afternoon of the toil that tires and vexes not, and at sundown he was glad to ride home on top of the last wagon instead of walking as he had intended. The supper-table was ready--was spread in the dining-shed. They washed their hands and sunburnt arms and soused their heads in cold water from the well, and sat, Scarborough at one end, Gabbard at the other, the strapping sons and the "hands" down either side. The whole meal was before them--huge platters of fried chicken, great dishes full of beans and corn and potatoes; plates piled high with hot corn bread, other plates of "salt-rising"; Mrs. Gabbard's miraculous apple pies, and honey for which the plundered flowers might still be mourning. Yesterday it would have seemed to Scarborough dinner enough for a regiment. To-day--he thought he could probably eat it all, and wished that he might try. To drink, there were coffee and cider and two kinds of milk. He tried the buttermilk and kept on with it.

"You must 'a' had a busy summer," said Gabbard. "This is the first time you've been with us."

"Yes," Scarborough replied. "I did hope to get here for the threshing, but I couldn't."

The threshing set them all off--it had been a record year; thirty-eight bushels to the acre on the average, twenty-seven on the hillsides which Gabbard had hesitated whether to "put in" or not. An hour after supper Scarborough could no longer hold

his eyes open. "Wake me with the others," he said to Mrs. Gabbard, who was making up the "salt-rising" yeast for the morrow's baking. "I'll have breakfast when they do."

"I reckon you've earned it," said Mrs. Gabbard. "Eph says you laid it over 'em all to-day."

"Well, I guess I at least earned my supper," replied Scarborough. "And I guess I ate it."

"You didn't do so bad, considerin'," Mrs. Gabbard admitted. "Nothin' like livin' in town to take appetite away."

"That isn't all it takes away," said Scarborough, going on to his own part of the house without explaining his remark. When his head touched the pillow his brain instantly stopped the machinery. He needed no croonings or dronings from the fields to soothe him. "Not an idea in my head all day," he said to himself with drowsy delight.

Four days of this, and on the fifth came the outside world in the form of Burdick, chairman of the county committee of his party in the county in which his farm lay. They sat on the fence under the big maple, out of earshot of the others.

"Larkin's come out for John Frankfort for the nomination for governor," said Burdick.

Scarborough smiled. "Even Larkin couldn't get it for Frankfort--he's too notorious."

"He don't want to get it for him," replied Burdick. "His real man's Judge Graney."

Scarborough stopped fanning himself with his wide-brimmed straw. Judge Graney was the most adroit and dangerous of John Dumont's tools. He had given invaluable aid from the bench at several of the National Woolens Company's most critical moments. Yet he had retained and increased his popularity and his reputation by deciding against his secret master with a brave show of virtue when he knew the higher courts must reverse him. For several years Scarborough had been looking forward to the inevitable open conflict between the forces of honesty in his party and the forces of the machine as ruled by the half-dozen big corporations who also ruled the machine of the opposition party. He had known that the contest must come, and that he must take part in it; and he had been getting ready. But he had not wished to give battle until he was strong enough to give a battle which, even if he lost it, would not strengthen the hold of the corruptionists.

After he rejected Larkin's dazzling offers, conditioned upon his aloofness rather than frank subservience, he had thought the whole situation over, and, as he hinted to Pauline, had realized how apparently hopeless a fight against the machine would be just then, with the people prosperous and therefore quiescent. And he had decided to stand aside for the time. He now saw that reluctance to attack Dumont had been at least a factor in this

decision; and he also saw that he could not delay, as he had hoped. There was no escape--either he must let his work of years be undermined and destroyed or he must give battle with all his strength and skill. He remembered what Pauline had said: "You can't lose!"

"No, one can't lose in this sort of fight," he thought. "Either WE win or there'll be no victory." He sprang from the fence to the ground. "Let's go to the house," he said to Burdick.

"What you going to do?" asked Burdick, as they walked toward the gate, where his horse and buggy were hitched.

"Fight, of course," said Scarborough. "Fight Larkin and his gang in the open. I'll get ex-Governor Bowen to let us use his name and canvass the state for him."

Burdick shook his head sadly.

"It ain't politics," he said. "You'll split the party; then the party'll turn and split you." And later, as they were separating, Scarborough to drive to Saint X, Burdick to go back to Marshaltown, he said: "I'll help all I can in a quiet way. But--I hope you've got your cyclone cellar dug."

Scarborough laughed. "I haven't been digging a cyclone cellar. I've been trying to manufacture a cyclone."

There were thirty-three clear days before the meeting of the convention. He wasted not an hour of them on the manufacturing towns; he went to the country--to the farmers and the villagers, the men who lived each man in his own house, on his own soil from which he earned his own living. Up and down and across the state he went, speaking, organizing, planning, inspiring--he and the coterie of young men who looked up to him as their leader and followed him in this desperate assault as courageously as if victory were assured.

Not long before the convention he paused at ex-Judge Bowen's country place and spent two hours with him in his great, quiet, cool library.

"Isn't it inspiring," Scarborough said, "to see so many young men in arms for a principle?"

The old man slowly shook his magnificent white head and smiled at the young man. "Principles without leaders go begging," he replied. "Men rally to the standard only when the right voice calls. The right voice at the right time." He laid his hand on Scarborough's shoulder with affection and pride. "If the moment should come for you to think of it, do not forget that the leader is the principle, and that in this fight the leader is not I--but you."

PAULINE GOES INTO POLITICS.

Larkin decided that the state convention should be held at Saint X because his machine was most perfect there. The National Woolens Company, the Consolidated Pipe and Wire Company and the Indiana Oil and Gas Corporation--the three principal political corporations in the state--had their main plants there and were in complete political control. While Larkin had no fear of the Scarborough movement, regarding it as a sentimental outburst in the rank and file of the party that would die away when its fomenters had been "read out of the party" at the convention by the regular organization, still he had been in the game too long to take unnecessary chances. He felt that it would be wise to have the delegates assemble where all the surroundings would be favorable and where his ablest and confidential men could do their work in peace and quiet.

The convention was to meet on the last Thursday in September. On the preceding Monday morning, Culver--Dumont's small, thin, stealthy private secretary--arrived at Saint X and, after making an appointment with Merriweather for half-past twelve, went out to the Eyrie to go through a lot of accumulated domestic business with Mrs. Dumont. When she in a most formal and unencouraging manner invited him to stop there, he eagerly accepted. "Thank you so much," he said effusively. "To be perfectly frank, I've been tempted to invite myself. I have some valuables with me that I don't feel at all easy about. If I should be robbed, it would be a very serious matter. Would it be asking too much of you to ask you to put a package in your jewel safe?"

"I'll be glad to do it for you," replied Pauline. "There's plenty of room--the safe's almost empty and it's ridiculously large."

"My package isn't small," said Culver. "And on my mind it weighs tons." He reached into his large bag--at sight of it Pauline had wondered why he had brought such a bag up from the hotel when his papers for her inspection were so few. He lifted out an oblong, bulky package.

"If you'll just touch that button," said she, "James will come and show you how to get to the safe."

Culver hesitated nervously. Finally he said: "I'm making a nuisance of myself, Mrs. Dumont, but would you mind going to the safe with me? I'd much rather none of the servants knew about this."

Pauline smiled and bade him follow her. They went to her private sitting-room and she showed him the safe, in a small closet built into the lower part of the book-case. "You have the combination?" asked Culver, as he put the package away.

"I see that you don't lock this door often."

"How fortunate you spoke of it!" said she.

"The combination is on a bit of paper in one of the little drawers."

Culver found it in the first drawer he opened, and handed it to her without looking at it.

"You mustn't let me know it," said he. "I'll just fix the time lock so that it won't interfere." And when he had done so, he closed the safe. As he left, he said, "I shall only bother you to let me sleep in the house. I'll be very busy all day each day I'm here." When she thought he had gone he returned to add: "Perhaps I'd better explain to you that there's forty-five thousand dollars in cash in the package. That's why I was so anxious for no one to know."

"I'll say nothing about it," Pauline assured him.

Larkin came down from Indianapolis the next day and registered at the Palace Hotel. As soon as he could escape from the politicians and newspaper correspondents in the hotel office, he went by a devious route to a room on the floor below his own and, knocking, was admitted to Culver and Merriweather. He nodded to Dumont's political agent, then said to Culver: "You've got the dough?"

"Yes," Culver answered, in his best imitation of the tone of the man of large affairs. "In twenties, fifties and hundreds."

"I hope, mighty few hundreds," said Larkin. "The boys are kind o' shy about changing hundred-dollar bills. It seems to attract attention to them." He had large, dreamy, almost sentimental, brown eyes that absurdly misrepresented his character, or, at least, his dominant characteristics. His long, slightly bent nose and sharp chin and thin, tight mouth were more truthful.

"How do things look, Joe?" asked Merriweather.

"Yes, Mr. Dumont asked me to telegraph him after I'd talked with you," said Culver. "Has Scarborough made much headway?"

"I must say, he's raised a darn sight more hell than I thought he would," Larkin answered.

"The people seem to be in a nasty mood about corruption. Darn their fool souls, as if they wouldn't be in the rottenest kind of a fix, with no property and no jobs, if we didn't keep the ignorant vote under control and head off such firebrands as this fellow Scarborough."

"Got any figgers?" demanded Merriweather, who had listened to this tirade with an expression suggesting cynicism. He thought, and he knew Joe Larkin thought, politics a mere game of chance--you won or you didn't win; and principles and oratory and likes and dislikes and resentments were so much "hot air." If the "oil can" had been with Scarborough, Merriweather would have served him as cheerfully and as loyally as--well, as would Joe Larkin in those circumstances.

Larkin wrenched a big bunch of letters and papers from the sagged inside pocket of his slouchy sack coat; after some fumbling and sorting, he paused upon the back of a dirty envelope.

"Here's how the convention stands, to a man," he said. "Sure, two hundred and sixty-seven-by `sure' I mean the fellows we own outright. Safe, two hundred and forty-five-by `safe' I mean those that'll stand by the organization, thick and thin. Insurgents, two hundred and ninety-five--those are the chaps that've gone clean crazy with Scarborough. Doubtful, three hundred and eighty-six--some of 'em can be bought; most of 'em are waiting to see which way the cat jumps, so as to jump with her."

"Then we've got five hundred and twelve, and it takes five hundred and ninety-seven to elect," said Merriweather, the instant the last word was out of Larkin's mouth. Merriweather was a mite of a man, could hardly have weighed more than a hundred pounds, had a bulging forehead, was bald and gray at the temples, eyes brown as walnut juice and quick and keen as a rat-terrier's. His expression was the gambler's--calm, watchful, indifferent, pallid, as from years of nights under the gas-light in close, hot rooms, with the cards sliding from the faro box hour after hour.

"Eighty-five short--that's right," assented Larkin. Then, with a look at Culver: "And some of 'em'll come mighty high."

"Where are you going to do business with them?" inquired Merriweather. "Here?"

"Right here in this room, where I've done it many's the time before," replied Larkin. "To-morrow night Conkey Sedgwick and my boy Tom'll begin steerin' 'em in one at a time about eight o'clock."

"Then I'll turn the money over to you at seven to-morrow night," said Culver. "I've got it in a safe place."

"Not one of the banks, I hope," said Merriweather.

"We noted your suggestions on that point, and on all the others," Culver answered with gracious condescension. "That's why I brought cash in small denominations and didn't go near anybody with it."

Larkin rose. "I've got to get to work. See you here to-morrow night at seven, Mr. Culver--seven sharp. I guess it'll be Judge Graney on the third ballot. On the first ballot the organization'll vote solid for Graney, and my fellows'll vote for John Frankfort. On the second ballot half my Frankfort crowd'll switch over to Graney. On the third I'll put the rest of 'em over, and that'll be enough to elect--probably the Scarborough crowd'll see it's no use and let us make it unanimous. The losers are always hot for harmony."

"That sounds well," said Merriweather--his was a voice that left his hearers doubtful whether he meant what his words said or

the reverse.

Culver looked with secret admiration from one man to the other, and continued to think of them and to admire, after they had gone. He felt important, sitting in and by proxy directing the councils of these powerful men, these holders and manipulators of the secret strings whereto were attached puppet peoples and puppet politicians. Seven years behind the scenes with Dumont's most private affairs had given him a thoroughgoing contempt for the mass of mankind. Did he not sit beside the master, at the innermost wheels, deep at the very heart of the intricate mechanism? Did not that position make him a sort of master, at any rate far superior to the princeliest puppet?

At five the next afternoon--the afternoon of the day before the convention--he was at the Eyrie, and sent a servant to say to Mrs. Dumont that he would like to see her. She came down to him in the library.

"I'm only troubling you for a moment," he said.

"I'll relieve you of my package."

"Very well," said Pauline. "I haven't thought of it since day before yesterday. I'll bring it down to you."

She left him in the library and went up the stairs--she had been reading everything that was published about the coming convention, and the evident surprise of all the politicians at the strength Scarborough was mustering for ex-Governor Bowen had put her in high good humor. She cautioned herself that he could not carry the convention; but his showing was a moral victory--and what a superb personal triumph! With everything against him--money and the machine and the skilful confusing of the issues by his crafty opponents--he had rallied about him almost all that was really intelligent in his party; and he had demonstrated that he had on his side a mass of the voters large out of all proportion to the number of delegates he had wrested away from the machine--nearly three hundred, when everybody had supposed the machine would retain all but a handful.

Money! Her lips curled scornfully--out here, in her own home, among these simple people, the brutal power of money was master just as in New York, among a people crazed by the passion for luxury and display.

She was kneeling before the safe, was working the combination, paper in hand. The knob clicked as the rings fell into place; she turned the bolt and swung the door open. She reached into the safe. Suddenly she drew her hand back and sat up on the floor, looking at the package. "Why, it's for use in the convention!" she exclaimed.

She did not move for several minutes; when she did, it was to examine the time lock, to reset it, to close the door and bolt it and throw the lock off the combination. Then she rose and slowly descended to the library. As she reappeared, empty-handed, Culver started violently and scrutinized her face. Its

expression put him in a panic. "Mrs. Dumont!" he exclaimed wildly.

"Has it been stolen?"

She shook her head. "No," she said. "It's there."

Trembling from weakness in the reaction, he leaned against the table, wiping his sweating brow with sweating hands.

"But," she went on, "it must stay there."

He looked open-mouthed at her.

"You have brought the money out here for use in the convention," she went on with perfect calmness. "You have tried to make me a partner in that vile business. And--I refuse to play the part assigned me. I shall keep the money until the convention is over."

He looked round like a terror-stricken drowning man, about to sink for the last time.

"I'm ruined! I'm ruined!" he almost screamed.

"No," she said, still calm. "You will not be ruined, though you deserve to be. But I understand why you have become callous to the commonplace decencies of life, and I shall see to it that no harm comes to you."

"Mr. Dumont will--DESTROY me! You don't realize, Mrs. Dumont. Vast property interests are at stake on the result of this convention--that's our cause. And you are imperiling it!"

"Imperiling a cause that needs lies and bribes to save it?" she said ironically. "Please calm yourself, Mr. Culver. You certainly can't be blamed for putting your money in a safe place. I take the responsibility for the rest. And when you tell Mr. Dumont exactly what happened, you will not be blamed or injured in any way."

"I shall telegraph him at once," he warned her.

"Certainly," said Pauline. "He might blame you severely for failing to do that."

He paused in his pacing up and down the room. He flung his arms toward her, his eyes blazing.

"I WILL have it!" he exclaimed. "Do you hear me, I WILL! I'll bring men from down-town and have the safe blown open. The money is not yours--it is----"

She advanced to the bell.

"Another word, Mr. Culver, and I'll have the servants show you the door. Yours is a strange courage--to dare to speak thus to me when your head should be hanging in shame for trying to make

such base use of me and my courtesy and friendliness."

His arms dropped, and he lowered his head.

"I beg your pardon," he said humbly. "I'm not myself. I think I'm going insane. PITY me!"

Pauline looked at him sadly. "I wish I had the right to. But--I SYMPATHIZE, and I'm sorry--so sorry--to have to do this." A pause, then--"Good afternoon, Mr. Culver." And she moved toward the door. At the threshold she turned. "I must say one thing further--THE CONVENTION MUST NOT BE PUT OFF. If it is adjourned to-morrow without making nominations, I shall understand that you are getting the money elsewhere. And--I shall be compelled to put such facts as I know in the possession of--of those you came to injure." And she was gone.

Culver went to Merriweather's office and sent out for him and Larkin. When they arrived he shut the doors and told them what had happened--and in his manner there was not left a trace of the New Yorker and ambassador condescending to westerners and underlings. Larkin cursed; Merriweather gave no outward sign. Presently Merriweather said: "Larkin, you must adjourn the convention over to-morrow. Culver can go to Chicago and get back with the money by to-morrow night."

"No use," groaned Culver. And he told them the last part of his talk with Mrs. Dumont.

"She thought of that!" said Merriweather, and he looked the impartial admiration of the connoisseur of cleverness.

"But she'd never carry out her threat--never in the world!" persisted Larkin.

"If you had seen her when she said it, and if you'd known her as long as I have, you wouldn't say that," replied Culver. "We must try to get the money here, right away--at the banks."

"All shut," said Merriweather "I wonder how much cash there is at the Woolens and the Oil and Steel offices? We must get together as much as we can--quietly." And he rapidly outlined a program that put all three at work within fifteen minutes. They met again at seven. Culver had twenty-six hundred dollars, Larkin thirty-one hundred, Merriweather, who had kept for himself the most difficult task, had only twelve hundred.

"Sixty-nine hundred," said Merriweather, eying the heap, of paper in packages and silver in bags.

"Better than nothing," suggested Culver, with a pitiful attempt to be hopeful.

Merriweather shrugged his shoulders. "Let's get some supper," he said to Culver. Then to Larkin: "Well, Joe, you'll have to try promises. Will you keep this cash or shall I?"

"You might as well keep it," replied Larkin, with a string of

oaths. "It'd be ruination to pay one without paying all. Perhaps you can use some of it between ballots to-morrow." Then, sharply to Culver: "You've telegraphed Mr. Dumont?"

"Of course," said Culver. "And it took some time as I had to put the whole story into cipher."

As Culver and Merriweather were seated, with the dinner before them which Culver did not touch, and which Merriweather ate placidly, Culver asked him whether there was "any hope at all."

"There's always hope," replied Merriweather. "Promises, especially from Joe Larkin, will go a long way, though they don't rouse the white hot enthusiasm that cold cash in the pocket does. We'll pull through all right." He ate for a while in silence. Then: "This Mrs. Dumont must be an uncommon woman." A few more mouthfuls and with his small, icy, mirthless laugh, he added: "I've got one something like her at home. I keep her there."

Culver decided to spend the night at the hotel. He hung round the hotel office until two in the morning, expecting and dreading Dumont's reply to his telegram. But nothing came either for him or for Merriweather. "Queer we don't get word of some sort, isn't it?" said he to Merriweather the next morning, as the latter was leaving for the convention.

Merriweather made no reply beyond a smile so faint that Culver barely saw it.

"She was right, after all," thought Culver, less despondent. "I'll get the money just before I leave and take it back. And I'll not open this subject with Dumont. Maybe he'll never speak of it to me."

And Dumont never did.

XX.

A MAN IN HIS MIGHT.

Olivia came to attend the convention as Fred was a delegate from Marion County. Pauline and Gladys accepted her invitation and shared her box--the convention was held in the Saint X Grand Opera House, the second largest auditorium in the state. Pauline, in the most retired corner, could not see the Marion County delegation into which Scarborough went by substitution. But she had had a glimpse of him as she came in--he was sitting beside Fred Pierson and was gazing straight ahead, as if lost in thought. He looked tired and worn, but not cast down.

"You should have been here, Polly, when Scarborough came in," said Olivia, who was just in front of her. "They almost tore the roof off. He's got the audience with him, even if the delegates aren't. A good many of the delegates applauded, too," she added--but in a significantly depressed tone.

"Why isn't he a candidate, Mrs. Pierson?" asked Gladys.

"They wanted him to be, of course," replied Olivia, "and I think it was a mistake that he didn't consent. But he wouldn't hear of it. He said it simply wouldn't do for him to make the fight to carry the convention for himself. He said that, even if he were nominated, the other side would use it against him."

"That seems reasonable," said Gladys.

"But it isn't," replied Olivia. "He may not know it but he can lead men where they wouldn't go for his merely sending them."

"I suppose it was his modesty," suggested Gladys.

"Modesty's a good deal of a vice, especially in a leader," replied Olivia.

There was an hour of dullness--routine business, reports of committees, wearisome speeches. But, like every one of those five thousand people, Pauline was in a fever of anticipation. For, while it was generally assumed that Scarborough and his friends had no chance and while Larkin was apparently carrying everything through according to program, still it was impossible to conceive of such a man as Scarborough accepting defeat on test votes tamely taken. He would surely challenge. Larkin watched him uneasily, wondering at what point in the proceedings the gage would be flung down. Even Merriweather could not keep still, but flitted about, his nervousness of body contrasting strangely with his calmness of face; himself the most unquiet man in the hall, he diffused quiet wherever he paused.

At last came the call for nominations. When the secretary of the convention read Cass from the roll of counties, a Larkin henchman rose and spoke floridly for twenty minutes on the virtues of John Frankfort, put up as the Larkin "draw-fire," the pretended candidate whose prearranged defeat was to be used on the stump as proof that Boss Larkin and his gang had been downed. At the call of Hancock County, another--a secret--Larkin henchman rose to eulogize "that stanch foe of corporate corruption and aggression, Hancock County's favorite son, the people's judge, Judge Edward Howel Graney!" Then the roll-call proceeded amid steadily rising excitement which abruptly died into silence as the clerk shouted, with impressive emphasis, "Wayne!" That was the home county of the Scarborough candidate. A Wayne delegate rose and in a single sentence put ex-Governor Bowen in nomination. There was a faint ripple of applause which was instantly checked. A silence of several seconds and--

"Mr. Chairman, and gentle--"

It was the voice Pauline knew so well. She could not see him, but that voice seemed to make him visible to her. She caught her breath and her heart beat wildly. He got no further into seconding Bowen's nomination than the middle of the fourth word. There may have been ears offended by the thunder-clap which burst

in that theater, but those ears were not Pauline's, were not in Olivia Pierson's box. And then came tumbling and roaring, huge waves of adulation, with his name shouted in voices hoarse and voices shrill like hissing foam on the triumphant crests of billows. And Pauline felt as if she were lifted from her bodily self, were tossing in a delirium of ecstasy on a sea of sheer delight.

And now he was on the platform, borne there above the shoulders of a hundred men. He was standing pale and straight and mighty. He stretched out his hand, so large and strong, and somehow as honest as his eyes; the tempest stilled. He was speaking--what did he say? She hardly heard, though she knew that it was of and for right and justice--what else could that voice utter or the brain behind those proud features think? With her, and with all there, far more than his words it was his voice, like music, like magic, rising and falling in thrilling inflections as it wove its spell of gold and fire. Whenever he paused there would be an instant of applause--a huge, hoarse thunder, the call of that mysterious and awful and splendid soul of the mass--an instant full of that one great, deep, throbbing note, then silence to hear him again.

Scarborough had measured his task--to lift that convention from the slough of sordidness to which the wiles and bribes of Dumont and his clique had lured it; to set it in the highroad of what he believed with all his intensity to be the high-road of right. Usually he spoke with feeling strongly repressed; but he knew that if he was to win that day against such odds he must take those delegates by surprise and by storm, must win in a suddenly descended whirlwind of passion that would engulf calculation and craft, sordidness and cynicism. He made few gestures; he did not move from the position he had first taken. He staked all upon his voice; into it he poured all his energy, all his fire, all his white-hot passion for right and justice, all his scorn of the base and the low.

"Head above heart, when head is right," he had often said. "But when head is wrong, then heart above head." And he reached for hearts that day.

Five minutes, and delegates and spectators were his captives. Fifteen minutes, and he was riding a storm such as comes only when the fountains of the human deeps are broken up. Thirty minutes and he was riding it as its master, was guiding it where he willed.

In vain Larkin sought to rally delegates round the shamed but steadfast nucleus of the bribed and the bossed. In vain his orator moved an adjournment until "calmness and reason shall be restored." The answer made him shrink and sink into his seat. For it was an awful, deafening roll of the war-drums of that exalted passion which Scarborough had roused.

The call of counties began. The third on the list--Bartholomew--was the first to say what the people longed to hear. A giant farmer, fiery and freckled, rose and in a voice like a blast from a bass horn bellowed: "Bartholomew casts her

solid vote for Hampden Scarborough!"

Pauline had thought she heard that multitude speak before. But she now knew she had heard hardly more than its awakening whisper. For, with the pronouncing of that name, the tempest really burst. She sprang to her feet, obeying the imperious inward command which made every one in that audience and most of the delegates leap up. And for ten long minutes, for six hundred cyclonic seconds, the people poured out their passionate adoration. At first Scarborough flung out his arms, and all could see that he was shouting some sort of protest. But they would not hear him now. He had told them WHAT to do. He must let them say HOW to do it.

Pauline looked out at those flaming thousands with the maddest emotions streaming like lightning from their faces. But she looked without fear. They--she--all were beside themselves; but it was no frenzy for blood or for the sordid things. It was the divine madness of the soldier of the right, battling for THE CAUSE, in utter forgetfulness of self and selfishness. "Beautiful! Beautiful!" she murmured, every nerve tingling. "I never knew before how beautiful human beings are!"

Finally the roll-call could proceed. Long before it was ended the necessary votes had been cast for Scarborough, and Larkin rose to move that the nomination be made unanimous--Larkin, beaten down in the open, was not the man to die there; he hastened to cover where he could resume the fight in the manner most to his liking. Again Scarborough was borne to the platform; again she saw him standing there--straight and mighty, but deathly pale, and sad--well he might be bowed by the responsibility of that mandate, given by the god-in-man, but to be executed by and through plain men. A few broken, hesitating words, and he went into the wings and left the theater, applause sweeping and swirling after him like a tidal wave.

Pauline, coming out into the open, looked round her, dazed. Why, it was the same work-a-day world as before, with its actions so commonplace and selfish, with only its impulses fine and high. If these moments of exaltation could but last, could but become the fixed order and routine of life! If high ideal and courage ruled, instead of low calculation and fear! She sighed, then her eyes shone.

"At least I have seen!" she thought. "At least I have lived one of those moments when the dreams come true. And 'human being' has a new meaning for me."

Two men, just behind her in the crowd, were talking of Scarborough. "A demagogue!" sneered one.

"A demi-god," retorted the other. And Pauline turned suddenly and gave him a look that astonished and dazzled him.

A COYOTE AT BAY.

Six weeks later, on the morning after the general election, Dumont awoke bubbling over with good humor--as always, when the world went well with him and so set the strong, red currents of his body to flowing in unobstructed channels.

He had not gone to bed the previous night until he had definite news from Indiana, Illinois and New York, the three states in which his industrial-political stakes were heaviest. They had gone as he wished, as he and his friends had spent large sums of money to assist them to go. And now a glance at the morning papers confirmed his midnight bulletins. Indiana, where he had made the strongest efforts because the control of its statute book was vital to him, had gone his way barely but, apparently, securely; Scarborough was beaten for governor by twenty-five hundred. Presently he had Culver in to begin the day's business. The first paper Culver handed him was a cipher telegram announcing the closing of an agreement which made the National Woolens Company absolute in the Northwest; the second item in Culver's budget was also a cipher telegram--from Merriweather. It had been filed at four o'clock--several hours later than the newspaper despatches. It said that Scarborough's friends conceded his defeat, that the Legislature was safely Dumont's way in both houses. Culver always sorted out to present first the agreeable part of the morning's budget; never had he been more successful.

At the office Dumont found another cipher telegram from Merriweather: "Later returns show Scarborough elected by a narrow majority. But he will be powerless as Legislature and all other state offices are with us."

Dumont crushed the telegram in his hand. "Powerless--hell!" he muttered. "Does he think I'm a fool?" He had spent three hundred thousand dollars to "protect" his monopoly in its home; for it was under Indiana laws, as interpreted by Dumont's agents in public office, that the main or holding corporation of his group was organized. And he knew that, in spite of his judges and his attorney-general and his legislative lobby and his resourceful lawyers and his subsidized newspapers, a governor of Scarborough's courage and sagacity could harass him, could force his tools in public office to activity against him, might drive him from the state. Heretofore he had felt, and had been, secure in the might of his millions. But now-- He had a feeling of dread, close kin to fear, as he measured this peril, this man strong with a strength against which money and intrigue were as futile as bow and arrow against rifle.

He opened the door into the room where his twenty personal clerks were at work. They glanced at his face, winced, bent to their tasks. They knew that expression: it meant "J. D. will take the hide off every one who goes near him to-day."

"Tell Mr. Giddings I want to see him," he snapped, lifting the head of the nearest clerk with a glance like an electric shock.

The clerk rose, tiptoed away to the office of the first vice-president of the Woolens Trust. He came tiptoeing back to say in a faint, deprecating voice: "Mr. Giddings isn't down yet, sir."

Dumont rolled out a volley of violent language about Giddings. In his tantrums he had no more regard for the dignity of his chief lieutenants, themselves rich men and middle-aged or old, than he had for his office boys. To the Ineffable Grand Turk what noteworthy distinction is there between vizier and sandal-strapper?

"Send him in--quick,--you, as soon as he comes," he shouted in conclusion. If he had not paid generously, if his lieutenants had not been coining huge dividends out of his brains and commercial audacity, if his magnetic, confidence-inspiring personality had not created in the minds of all about him visions of golden rivers widening into golden oceans, he would have been deserted and execrated. As it was, his service was eagerly sought; and his servants endured its mental and moral hardships as the prospector endures the physical cruelties of the mountain fastnesses.

He was closing his private door when the door-boy from the outermost of that maze of handsome offices came up to him with a card.

"Not here," he growled, and shut himself in.

Half an hour later the sounds of an angry tumult in the clerks' room made him fling his door open. "What the--" he began, his heavy face purple, then stopped amazed.

The outside doorkeeper, the watchman and several clerks were engaged in a struggle with Fanshaw. His hat was off, his hair wild, his necktie, shirt and coat awry.

"There you are now--I knew you were in," he shouted, as he caught sight of Dumont. "Call these curs off, Jack!"

"Let him alone," snarled Dumont.

Fanshaw was released. He advanced into Dumont's office, straightening his clothing and panting with exertion, excitement and anger. Dumont closed the door. "Well," he said surlily. "What d' you want?"

"I'll have to go to the wall at half-past ten if you don't help me out," said Fanshaw. "The Montana election went against my crowd--I'm in the copper deal. There's a slump, but the stock's dead sure to go up within a week."

"In trouble again?" sneered Dumont. "It's been only three months since I pulled you through."

"You didn't lose anything by it, did you?" retorted Fanshaw--he had recovered himself and was eying Dumont with the cool, steady, significant stare of one rascal at another whom he thinks he has

in his power.

Before that look Dumont flushed an angrier red. "I won't do it again!" and he brought his fist down with a bang.

"All I want is five hundred thousand to carry my copper for a week at the outside. If I get it I'll clear a million. If I don't"--Fanshaw shrugged his shoulders--"I'll be cleaned out." He looked with narrowed, shifting eyes at Dumont. "My wife has all she's got in this," he went on, "even her jewels."

Dumont's look shot straight into Fanshaw's.

"Not a cent!" he said with vicious emphasis. "Not a red!"

Fanshaw paled and pinched in his lips. "I'm a desperate man. I'm ruined. Leonora--"

Dumont shook his head, the veins swelling in his forehead and neck. The last strand of his self-restraint snapped. "Leave her out of this! She has no claim on me NOW--and YOU never had."

Fanshaw stared at him, then sprang to his feet, all in a blaze. "You scoundrel!" he shouted, shaking his fist under Dumont's nose.

"If you don't clear out instantly I'll have you thrown out," said Dumont. He was cool and watchful now.

Fanshaw folded his arms and looked down at him with the dignified fury of the betrayed and outraged. "So!" he exclaimed. "I see it all!"

Dumont pressed an electric button, then leaned back in his revolving chair and surveyed Fanshaw tranquilly. "Not a cent!" he repeated, a cruel smile in his eyes and round his mouth. The boy came and Dumont said to him: "Send the watchman."

Fanshaw drew himself up. "I shall punish you," he said. "Your wealth will not save you." And he stalked past the gaping office boy.

He stood in front of the Edison Building, looking aimlessly up and down the street as he pulled his long, narrow, brown-gray mustache. Gloom was in his face and hate in his heart--not hate for Dumont alone but hate for all who were what he longed to be, all rich and "successful" men. And the towering steel and stone palaces of prosperity sneered down on him with crushing mockery.

"Damn them all!" he muttered. "The cold-hearted thieves!"

From his entry into that district he had played a gambling game, had played it dishonestly in a small way. Again and again he had sneakily violated Wall Street's code of morality--that curious code with its quaint, unexpected incorporations of parts of the decalogue and its quainter, though not so unexpected, infringements thereof and amendments thereto. Now by "pull,"

now by trickery, he had evaded punishment. But apparently at last he was to be brought to bar, branded and banished.

"Damn them all!" he repeated. "They're a pack of wolves. They've got me down and they're going to eat me."

He blamed Dumont and he blamed his wife for his plight--and there was some justice in both accusations. Twenty years before, he had come down to "the Street" a frank-looking boy, of an old and distinguished New York family that had become too aristocratic for business and had therefore lost its hold upon its once great fortune. He was neither a good boy nor a bad. But he was weak, and had the extravagant tastes and cynical morals to which he had been bred; and his intelligent brain was of the kind that goes with weakness--shrewd and sly, preferring to slink along the byways of craft even when the highway of courage lies straight and easy. But he had physical bravery and the self-confidence that is based upon an assured social position in a community where social position is worshiped; so, he passed for manly and proud when he was in reality neither. Family vanity he had; personal pride he had not.

In many environments his weakness would have remained hidden even from himself, and he would have lived and died in the odor and complacency of respectability. But not in the strain and stress of Wall Street. There he had naturally developed not into a lion, not even into a wolf, but into a coyote.

Wall Street found him out in ten years--about one year after it began to take note of him and his skulking ways and his habit of prowling in the wake of the pack. Only his adroit use of his family connections and social position saved him from being trampled to death by the wolves and eaten by his brother coyotes. Thereafter he lived precariously, but on the whole sumptuously, upon carcasses of one kind and another. He participated in "strike" suits against big corporations--he would set on a pack of coyotes to dog the lions and to raise discordant howls that inopportunistly centered public attention upon leonine, lawless doings; the lions would pay him well to call off the pack. He assisted sometimes wolves and sometimes coyotes in flotations of worthless, or almost worthless, stocks and bonds from gold and mahogany offices and upon a sea of glittering prospectuses. He had a hand in all manner of small, shady transactions of lawful, or almost lawful, swindling that were tolerated by lions and wolves, because at bottom there is a feeling of fellowship among creatures of prey as against creatures preyed upon.

There were days when he came home haggard and blue in the lips to tell Leonora that he must fly. There were days when he returned from the chase, or rather from the skulk, elated, youthful, his pockets full of money and his imagination afire with hopes of substantial wealth. But his course was steadily downward, his methods steadily farther and farther from the line of the law. Dumont came just in time to save him, came to build him up from the most shunned of coyotes into a deceptive imitation of a wolf with aspirations toward the lion class.

Leonora knew that he was small, but she thought all men

small--she had supreme contempt for her own sex; and it seemed to her that men must be even less worthy of respect since they were under the influence of women and lavished time and money on them. Thus she was deceived into cherishing the hope that her husband, small and timid though he was, would expand into a multi-millionaire and would help her to possess the splendors she now enjoyed at the expense of her associates whom she despised. She was always thinking how far more impressive than their splendor her magnificence would be, if their money were added to her brains and beauty.

Dumont had helped Fanshaw as much as he could. He immediately detected the coyote. He knew it was impossible to make a lion or even a wolf out of one who was both small and crooked. He used him only in minor matters, chiefly in doing queer, dark things on the market with National Woolens, things he indirectly ordered done but refused to know the details of beyond the one important detail--the record of checks for the profits in his bank account. For such matters Fanshaw did as well as another. But as Dumont became less of a wolf and more of a lion, less of a speculator and more of a financier, he had less and less work of the kind Fanshaw could do.

But Leonora, unaware of her husband's worthlessness and desperate in her calamities, sneered and jeered and lashed him on--to ruin. The coyote could put on the airs of a lion so long as the lion was his friend and protector; when he kept on in kingly ways after the lion had cast him off, he speedily came to grief.

As he stood looking helplessly up and down Broad Street he was debating what move to make. There were about even measures of truth and falsehood in his statement to Dumont--he did need two hundred thousand dollars; and he must have it before a quarter past two that day or go into a bankruptcy from which he could not hope to save a shred of reputation or to secrete more than fifty thousand dollars.

"To the New York Life Building," he finally said to the driver as he got into his hansom. Then to himself: "I'll have a go at old Herron."

He knew that Dumont and Herron had quarreled, and that Herron had sold out of the National Woolens Company. But he did not know that Herron was a man with a fixed idea, hatred of Dumont, and a fixed purpose, to damage him at every opportunity that offered or could be created, to ruin him if possible.

When the National Woolens Company was expanded into the huge conglomerate it now was--a hundred millions common, a hundred millions preferred, and twenty millions of bonds--Herron had devised and directed the intricate and highly perilous course among the rocks of law and public opinion in many states and in the nation. It was a splendid exhibition of legal piloting, and he was bitterly dissatisfied with the modest reward of ten millions of the preferred stock which Dumont apportioned to him. He felt that that would have been about his just share in the new concern merely in exchange for his stock in the old. When he found Dumont obdurate, and grew frank and spoke such words as

"dishonor" and "dishonesty" and got into the first syllable of "swindling," Dumont cut him off with--

"If you don't like it, get out! I can hire that sort of work for half what I've paid you. You're swollen with vanity. We ought to have a young man in your position, anyhow."

Herron might have swallowed the insult to his pride as a lawyer. But the insult to his pride in his youth! He was fifty-seven and in dress and in expression was stoutly insisting that he was still a young man whom hard work had made prematurely gray and somewhat wrinkled. Dumont's insinuation that he was old and stale set a great fire of hate blazing; he, of course, told himself and others that his wrath was stirred solely because his sense of justice had been outraged by the "swindling."

Fanshaw entered Herron's office wearing the jaunty air of arrogant prosperity, never so important as when prosperity has fled. But Herron's shrewd, experienced eyes penetrated the sham. He had intended to be cold. Scenting a "hard-luck yarn" and a "touch" he lowered his temperature to the point at which conversation is ice-beset and confidences are frozen tight.

Fanshaw's nerve deserted him. "Herron," he said, dropping his prosperous pose, "I want to get a divorce and I want to punish Dumont."

Herron's narrow, cold face lighted up. He knew what everybody in their set knew of Fanshaw's domestic affairs, but like everybody else he had pretended not to know. He changed his expression to one of shock and indignation.

"You astound me!" he exclaimed. "It is incredible!"

"He told me himself not an hour ago," said Fanshaw. "I went to him as a friend to ask him to help me out of a hole. And--" He rose and theatrically paced the floor.

Herron prided himself upon his acute conscience and his nice sense of honor. He felt that here was a chance to wreak vengeance upon Dumont--or rather, as he put it to himself, to bring Dumont to an accounting for his depravity. Just as Dumont maintained with himself a character of honesty by ignoring all the dubious acts which his agents were forced to do in carrying out his orders, so Herron kept peace with a far more sensitive conscience by never permitting it to look in upon his mind or out through his eyes.

"Frightful! Frightful!" he exclaimed, after a long pause in which his immured and blindfold conscience decided that he could afford to support Fanshaw. "I knew he was a rascal in business--but THIS!"

There was genuine emotion in his voice and in his mind. He was strict to puritanic primness in his ideals of feminine morality; nor had he been relaxed by having a handsome wife, looking scarce a day over thirty behind her veil or in artificial light, and fond of gathering about her young men who treated him as if he

were old and "didn't count."

"You are certain, Fanshaw?"

"I tell you, he hinted it himself," replied Fanshaw. "And instantly my eyes were opened to scores of damning confirmations." He struck his forehead with his open hand. "How blind I've been!" he exclaimed.

Herron shook his head sympathetically and hastened on to business.

"WE can't handle your case," he said. "But Best and Sharpless, on the floor above, are reliable. And I'll be glad to help you with advice. I feel that this is the beginning of Dumont's end. I knew such insolent wickedness could not have a long course."

Fanshaw drew Herron on to tell the story of his wrongs--the "swindling." Before it was ended Fanshaw saw that he had found a man who hated Dumont malignantly and was thirsting for vengeance. This encouraged him to unfold his financial difficulties. Herron listened sympathetically, asked ingeniously illuminating questions, and in the end agreed to tide him over. He had assured himself that Fanshaw had simply undertaken too large an enterprise; the advance would be well secured; he would make the loan in such a way that he would get a sure profit, and would also bind Fanshaw firmly to him without binding himself to Fanshaw. Besides--"It wouldn't do for him to go to the wall just now."

Arm in arm they went up to Best and Sharpless' to take the first steps in the suit. Together they went down-town to relieve Fanshaw of the pressure of the too heavy burden of copper stocks; then up to their club where he assisted Fanshaw in composing the breaking-off letter to Leonora.

XXII.

STORMS IN THE WEST.

While the Fanshaw-Herron storm was slowly gathering in Dumont's eastern horizon, two others equally black were lifting in the west.

In the two months between Scarborough's election and his inauguration, the great monopolies thriving under the protection of the state's corrupted statute-book and corrupted officials followed the lead of their leader, Dumont's National Woolens Company, in making sweeping but stealthy changes in their prices, wages, methods and even in their legal status. They hoped thus to enable their Legislature plausibly to resist Scarborough's demand for a revision of the laws--why revise when the cry of monopoly had been shown to be a false issue raised by a demagogue to discredit the tried leaders of the party and to aggrandize

himself? And, when Scarborough had been thoroughly "exposed," business could be resumed gradually.

But Scarborough had the better brain, and had character as well. He easily upset their program and pressed their Legislature so hard that it was kept in line only by pouring out money like water. This became a public scandal which made him stronger than ever and also made it seem difficult or impossible for the monopolies to get a corruptible Legislature at the next election. At last the people had in their service a lawyer equal in ability to the best the monopolies could buy, and one who understood human nature and political machinery to boot.

Dumont began to respect Scarborough profoundly--not for his character, which made him impregnable with the people, but for his intellect, which showed him how to convince the people of his character and to keep them convinced. When Merriweather came on "to take his beating" from his employer he said among other things deprecatory: "Scarborough's a dreamer. His head's among the clouds." Dumont retorted: "Yes, but his feet are on the ground--too damned firmly to suit me." And after a moment's thought, he added: "What a shame for such a brain to go to waste! Why, he could make millions."

He felt that Gladys was probably his best remaining card. She had been in Indianapolis visiting the whole of February, Scarborough's second month as governor, and had gone on to her brother in New York with a glowing report of her progress with Scarborough's sister Arabella, now a widow and at her own invitation living with him in Indianapolis to relieve him of the social duties of his office. She was a dozen years more the Arabella who had roused her father's wrath by her plans for educating her brother "like a gentleman"; and Olivia and Fred were irritated and even alarmed by her anything but helpful peculiarities--though Scarborough seemed cheerful and indifferent enough about them.

It was a temperamental impossibility for Dumont to believe that Scarborough could really be sincere in a course which was obviously unprofitable. Therefore he attached even more importance to Arabella's cordiality than did Gladys herself. And, when the Legislature adjourned and Scarborough returned to Saint X for a brief stay, Dumont sent Gladys post-haste back to the Eyrie--that is, she instantly and eagerly acted upon his hint.

A few evenings after her return, she and Pauline were on the south veranda alone in the starlight. She was in low spirits and presently began to rail against her lot.

"Don't be absurd," said Pauline. "You've no right to complain. You have everything--and you're--free!"

That word "free" was often on Pauline's lips in those days. And a close observer might have been struck by the tone in which she uttered it. Not the careless tone of those who have never had or have never lost freedom, but the lingering, longing tone of those who have had it, and have learned to value it through

long years without it.

"Yes--everything!" replied Gladys, bitterly. "Everything except the one thing I want."

Pauline did not help her, but she was at the stage of suppressed feeling where desire to confide is stronger than pride.

"The one thing I want," she repeated. "Pauline, I used to think I'd never care much for any man, except to like it for him to like me. Men have always been a sort of amusement--and the oftener the man changed, the better the fun. I've known for several years that I simply must marry, but I've refused to face it. It seemed to me I was fated to wander the earth, homeless, begging from door to door for leave to come in and rest a while."

"You know perfectly well, Gladys, that this is your home."

"Of course--in a sense. It's as much my home as another woman's house could be. But"--with a little sob--"I've seen my mate and I want to begin my nest."

They were side by side on a wide, wicker sofa. Pauline made an impulsive move to put her arm round Gladys, then drew away and clasped her hands tightly in her lap.

Gladys was crying, sobbing, brokenly apologizing for it--"I'm a little idiot--but I can't help it--I haven't any pride left--a woman never does have, really, when she's in love--oh, Pauline, do you think he cares at all for me?" And after a pause she went on, too absorbed in herself to observe Pauline or to wonder at her silence: "Sometimes I think he does. Again I fear that--that he doesn't. And lately--why doesn't he come here any more?"

"You know how busy he is," said Pauline, in a voice so strained that Gladys ought to have noticed it.

"But it isn't that--I'm sure it isn't. No, it has something to do with me. It means either that he doesn't care for me or that--that he does care and is fighting against it. Oh, I don't know what to think." Then, after a pause: "How I hate being a woman! If I were a man I could find out the truth--settle it one way or the other. But I must sit dumb and wait, and wait, and wait! You don't know how I love him," she said brokenly, burying her face in the ends of the soft white shawl that was flung about her bare shoulders. "I can't help it--he's the best--he makes all the others look and talk like cheap imitations. He's the best, and a woman can't help wanting the best."

Pauline rose and leaned against the railing--she could evade the truth no longer. Gladys was in love with Scarborough, was at last caught in her own toils, would go on entangling herself deeper and deeper, abandoning herself more and more to a hopeless love, unless--

"What would you do, Pauline?" pleaded Gladys. "There must be some reason why he doesn't speak. It isn't fair to me--it isn't fair! I could stand anything--even giving him up--better than this uncertainty. It's--it's breaking my heart--I who thought I didn't have a heart."

"No, it isn't fair," said Pauline, to herself rather than to Gladys.

"I suppose you don't sympathize with me," Gladys went on. "I know you don't like him. I've noticed how strained and distant you are toward each other. And you seem to avoid each other. And he'll never talk of you to me. Did you have some sort of misunderstanding at college?"

"Yes," said Pauline, slowly. "A--a misunderstanding."

"And you both remember it, after all these years?"

"Yes," said Pauline.

"How relentless you are," said Gladys, "and how tenacious!" But she was too intent upon her own affairs to pursue a subject which seemed to lead away from them. Presently she rose.

"I'll be ashamed of having confessed when I see you in daylight. But I don't care. I shan't be sorry. I feel a little better. After all, why should I be ashamed of any one knowing I care for him?" And she sighed, laughed, went into the house, whistling softly--sad, depressed, but hopeful, feeling deep down that she surely must win where she had never known what it was to lose.

Pauline looked after her. "No, it isn't fair," she repeated. She stayed on the veranda, walking slowly to and fro not to make up her mind, for she had done that while Gladys was confessing, but to decide how she could best accomplish what she saw she must now no longer delay. It was not until two hours later that she went up to bed.

When Gladys came down at nine the next morning Pauline had just gone out--"I think, Miss Gladys, she told the coachman to drive to her father's," said the butler.

Gladys set out alone. Instead of keeping to the paths and the woods along the edge of the bluff she descended to the valley and the river road. She walked rapidly, her face glowing, her eyes sparkling--she was quick to respond to impressions through the senses, and to-day she felt so well physically that it reacted upon her mind and forced her spirits up. At the turn beyond Deer Creek bridge she met Scarborough suddenly. He, too, was afoot and alone, and his greeting was interpreted to her hopes by her spirits.

"May I turn and walk with you?" he asked.

"I'm finding myself disagreeable company today."

"You did look dull," she said, as they set out together, "dull

as a love-sick German. But I supposed it was your executive pose."

"I was thinking that I'll be old before I know it." His old-young face was shadowed for an instant. "Old--that's an unpleasant thought, isn't it?"

"Unpleasant for a man," said Gladys, with a laugh, light as youth's dread of age. "For a woman, ghastly! Old and alone--either one's dreadful enough. But--the two together! I often think of them. Don't laugh at me--really I do. Don't you?"

"If you keep to that, our walk'll be a dismal failure. It's a road I never take--if I can help it."

"You don't look as though you were ever gloomy." Gladys glanced up at him admiringly. "I should have said you were one person the blue devils wouldn't dare attack."

"Yes, but they do. And sometimes they throw me."

"And trample you?"

"And trample me," he answered absently.

"That's because you're alone too much," she said with a look of tactful sympathy.

"Precisely," he replied. "But how am I to prevent that?"

"Marry, of course," she retorted, smiling gaily up at him, letting her heart just peep from her eyes.

"Thank you! And it sounds so easy! May I ask why you've refused to take your own medicine--you who say you are so often blue?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "I've always suspected the men who asked me. They were--" She did not finish what she feared might be an unwise, repelling remark in the circumstances.

"They were after your money," he finished for her.

She nodded. "They were Europeans," she explained. "Europeans want money when they marry."

"That's another of the curses of riches," he said judicially. "And if you marry a rich man over here, you may be pretty sure he'll marry you for your money. I've observed that rich men attach an exaggerated importance to money, always."

"I'd prefer to marry a poor man," she hastened to answer, her heart beating faster--certainly his warning against rich suitors must have been designed to help his own cause with her.

"Yes, that might be better," he agreed. "But you would have to be careful after you were married or he might fancy you were

using your money to tyrannize over him. I've noticed that the poor husbands of rich women are supersensitive--often for cause."

"Oh, I'd give it all to him. He could do what he pleased with it. I'd not care so long as we were happy."

Scarborough liked the spirit of this, liked her look as she said it.

"That's very generous--very like you," he replied warmly.

"But I don't think it would be at all wise. You'd be in a dangerous position. You might spoil him--great wealth is a great danger, and when it's suddenly acquired, and so easily-- No, you'd better put your wealth aside and only use so much of it as will make your income equal to his--if you can stand living economically."

"I could stand anything with or from any one I cared for."

Gladys was eager for the conversation to turn from the general to the particular. She went on, forcing her voice to hide her interest: "And you, why don't you cure your blues?"

"Oh, I shall," he replied carelessly. "But not with your medicine. Every one to his own prescription."

"And what's yours for yourself?" said Gladys, feeling tired and nervous from the strain of this delayed happiness.

"Mine?" He laughed. "My dreams."

"You are a strange combination, aren't you? In one way you're so very practical--with your politics and all that. And in another way--I suspect you of being sentimental--almost romantic."

"You've plucked out the heart of my mystery. My real name is non Quixote de Saint X."

"And has your Dulcinea red hands and a flat nose and freckles like the lady of Toboso?" Gladys' hands were white, her nose notably fine, her skin transparently clear.

"Being Don Quixote, I don't know it if she has."

"And you prefer to worship afar, and to send her news of your triumphs instead of going to her yourself?"

"I dare not go." He was looking away, far away. "There are wicked enchanters. I'm powerless. She alone can break their spells."

They walked in silence, her heart beating so loudly that she thought he must be hearing it, must be hearing what it was saying. Yes--she must break the spells. But how--but how? What must she say to make him see? Did he expect her to ask him to marry her? She had heard that rich women often were forced to make this concession to the pride of the men they wished to

marry. On the other hand, was there ever a man less likely than Scarborough to let any obstacle stand between him and what he wanted?

The first huge drops of a summer rain pattered in big, round stains, brown upon the white of the road. He glanced up--a cloud was rolling from beyond the cliffs, was swiftly curtaining the blue.

"Come," he commanded, and they darted into the underbrush, he guiding her by her arm. A short dash among the trees and bushes and they were at the base of the bluff, were shielded by a shelf of rock.

"It'll be over soon," he assured her. "But you must stand close or you'll be drenched."

A clap of thunder deafened them as a flame and a force enswathed the sycamore tree a few yards away, blowing off its bark, scattering its branches, making it all in an instant a blackened and blasted wreck. Gladys gave a low scream of terror, fell against him, hid her face in his shoulder. She was trembling violently. He put his arm round her--if he had not supported her she would have fallen. She leaned against him, clinging to him, so that he felt the beat of her heart, the swell and fall of her bosom, felt the rush of her young blood through her veins, felt the thrill from her smooth, delicate, olive skin. And he, too, was trembling--shaken in all his nerves.

"Don't be afraid," he said--in his voice he unconsciously betrayed the impulse that was fighting for possession of him.

She drew herself closer to him with a long, tremulous sigh.

"I'm a coward," she murmured. "I'm shaking so that I can't stand." She tried to draw herself away--or did she only make pretense to him and to herself that she was trying?--then relaxed again into his arms.

The thunder cracked and crashed; the lightnings leaped in streaks and in sheets; the waters gushed from the torn clouds and obscured the light like a heavy veil. She looked up at him in the dimness--she, too, was drunk with the delirium of the storms raging without and within them. His brain swam giddily. The points of gold in her dark eyes were drawing him like so many powerful magnets. Their lips met and he caught her up in his arms. And for a moment all the fire of his intensely masculine nature, so long repressed, raged over her lips, her eyes, her hair, her cheeks, her chin.

A moment she lay, happy as a petrel, beaten by a tempest; a moment her thirsty heart drank in the ecstasy of the lightnings through her lips and skin and hair.

She opened her eyes to find out why there was a sudden calm. She saw him staring with set, white face through the rain-veil. His arms still held her, but where they had been like the clasp of life itself, they were now dead as the arms of a statue. A

feeling of cold chilled her skin, trickled icily in and in. She released herself--he did not oppose her.

"It seems to me I'll never be able to look you--or myself--in the face again," he said at last.

"I didn't know it was in me to--to take advantage of a woman's helplessness."

"I wanted you to do what you did," she said simply.

He shook his head. "You are generous," he answered. "But I deserve nothing but your contempt."

"I wanted you to do it," she repeated. She was under the spell of her love and of his touch. She was clutching to save what she could, was desperately hoping it might not be so little as she feared. "I had the--the same impulse that you had." She looked at him timidly, with a pleading smile. "And please don't say you're sorry you did it, even if you feel so. You'll think me very bold--I know it isn't proper for young women to make such admissions. But--don't reproach yourself--please!"

If she could have looked into his mind as he stood there, crushed and degraded in his own eyes, she would have been a little consoled--for, in defiance of his self-scorn and self-hate, his nerves were tingling with the memory of that delirium, and his brain was throbbing with the surge of impulses long dormant, now imperious. But she was not even looking toward him--for, through her sense of shame, of wounded pride, her love was clamoring to her to cry out: "Take me in your arms again! I care not on what terms, only take me and hold me and kiss me."

The rain presently ceased as abruptly as it had begun and they returned under the dripping leaves to the highroad. She glanced anxiously at him as they walked toward the town, but he did not speak. She saw that if the silence was to be broken, she must break it.

"What can I say to convince you?" she asked, as if not he but she were the offender.

He did not answer.

"Won't you look at me, please?"

He looked, the color mounting in his cheeks, his eyes unsteady.

"Now, tell me you'll not make me suffer because you fancy you've wronged me. Isn't it ungallant of you to act this way after I've humiliated myself to confess I didn't mind?"

"Thank you," he said humbly, and looked away.

"You won't have it that I was in the least responsible?" She was teasing him now--he was plainly unaware of the meaning of her yielding. "He's so modest," she thought, and went on: "You won't permit me to flatter myself I was a temptation too strong

even for your iron heart, Don Quixote?"

He flushed scarlet, and the suspicion, the realization of the truth set her eyes to flashing.

"It's before another woman he's abasing himself," she thought, "not before me. He isn't even thinking of me." When she spoke her tone was cold and sneering: "I hope she will forgive you. She certainly would if she could know what a paladin you are."

He winced, but did not answer. At the road up the bluffs she paused and there was an embarrassed silence. Then he poured out abrupt sentences:

"It was doubly base. I betrayed your friendly trust, I was false to her. Don't misunderstand--she's nothing to me. She's nothing to me, yet everything. I began really to live when I began to love her. And--every one must have a--a pole-star. And she's mine--the star I sail by, and always must. And--" He halted altogether, then blundered on: "I shall not forgive myself. But you--be merciful--forgive me--forget it!"

"I shall do neither," she replied curtly, jealousy and vanity stamping down the generous impulse that rose in response to his appeal. And she went up her road. A few yards and she paused, hoping to hear him coming after her. A few yards more and she sat down on a big boulder by the wayside. Until now all the wishes of her life had been more or less material, had been wishes which her wealth or the position her wealth gave had enabled her instantly to gratify. She buried her face in her arms and sobbed and rocked herself to and fro, in a cyclone of anger, and jealousy, and shame, and love, and despair.

"I hate him!" she exclaimed between clenched teeth. "I hate him, but--if he came and wanted me, oh, how I would LOVE him!"

Meanwhile Pauline was at her father's.

"He isn't down yet," said her mother. "You know, he doesn't finish dressing nowadays until he has read the papers and his mail. Then he walks in the garden."

"I'll go there," said Pauline. "Won't you bring him when he's ready?"

She never entered the garden that the ghosts of her childhood--how far, far it seemed!--did not join her, brushing against her, or rustling in tree and bush and leafy trellis. She paused at the end of the long arbor and sat on the rustic bench there. A few feet away was the bed of lilies-of-the-valley. Every spring of her childhood she used to run from the house on the first warm morning and hurry to it; and if her glance raised her hopes she would kneel upon the young grass and lower her head until her long golden hair touched the black ground; and the soil that had been hard and cold all winter would be cracked open this way and that; and from the cracks would issue an odor--the odor of life. And as she would peer into each crack in turn she would see, down, away down, the pale tip of what she knew to be an

up-shooting slender shaft. And her heart would thrill with joy, for she knew that the shafts would presently rise green above the black earth, would unfold, would blossom, would bloom, would fling from tremulous bells a perfumed proclamation of the arrival of spring.

As she sat waiting, it seemed to her that through the black earth of her life she could see and feel the backward heralds of her spring--"after the long winter," she said to herself.

She glanced up--her father coming toward her. He was alone, was holding a folded letter uncertainly in his hand. He looked at her, his eyes full of pity and grief. "Pauline," he began, "has everything been--been well--of late between you and--your husband?"

She started. "No, father," she replied. Then, looking at him with clear directness: "I've not been showing you and mother the truth about John and me--not for a long time."

She saw that her answer relieved him. He hesitated, held out the letter.

"The best way is for you to read it," he said. It was a letter to him from Fanshaw. He was writing, he explained, because the discharge of a painful duty to himself would compel him "to give pain to your daughter whom I esteem highly," and he thought it only right "to prepare her and her family for what was coming, in order that they might be ready to take the action that would suggest itself." And he went on to relate his domestic troubles and his impending suit.

"Poor Leonora!" murmured Pauline, as she finished and sat thinking of all that Fanshaw's letter involved.

"Is it true, Polly?" asked her father.

She gave a great sigh of relief. How easy this letter had made all that she had been dreading! "Yes--it's true," she replied. "I've known about--about it ever since the time I came back from the East and didn't return."

The habitual pallor of her father's face changed to gray.

"I left him, father." She lifted her head, impatient of her stammering. A bright flush was in her face as she went on rapidly: "And I came to-day to tell you the whole story--to be truthful and honest again. I'm sick of deception and evasion. I can't stand it any longer--I mustn't. I--you don't know how I've shrunk from wounding mother and you. But I've no choice now. Father, I must be free--free!"

"And you shall be," replied her father. "He shall not wreck your life and Gardiner's."

Pauline stared at him. "Father!" she exclaimed.

He put his arm round her and drew her gently to him.

"I know the idea is repellent," he said, as if he were trying to persuade a child. "But it's right, Pauline. There are cases in which not to divorce would be a sin. I hope my daughter sees that this is one."

"I don't understand," she said confusedly. "I thought you and mother believed divorce was dreadful--no matter what might happen."

"We did, Pauline. But we--that is, I--had never had it brought home. A hint of this story was published just after you came last year. I thought it false, but it set me to thinking. 'If your daughter's husband had turned out to be as you once thought him, would it be right for her to live on with him? To live a lie, to pretend to keep her vows to love and honor him? Would it be right to condemn Gardiner to be poisoned by such a father?' And at last I saw the truth, and your mother agreed with me. We had been too narrow. We had been laying down our own notions as God's great justice."

Pauline drew away from her father so that she could look at him. And at last she saw into his heart. "If I had only known," she said, and sat numb and stunned.

"When you were coming home from college," her father went on, "your mother and I talked over what we should do. John had just confessed your secret marriage--"

"You knew that!"

"Yes, and we understood, Polly. You were so young--so headstrong--and you couldn't appreciate our reasons."

Pauline's brain was reeling.

"Your mother and I talked it over before you got home and thought it best to leave you entirely free to choose. But when we saw you overcome by joy--"

"Don't!" she interrupted, her voice a cry of pain. "I can't bear it! Don't!" Years of false self-sacrifice, of deceiving her parents and her child, of self-suppression and self-degradation, and this final cruelty to Gladys--all, all in vain, all a heaping of folly upon folly, of wrong upon wrong.

She rushed toward the house. She must fly somewhere--anywhere--to escape the thoughts that were picking with sharp beaks at her aching heart. Half-way up the walk she turned and fled to a refuge she would not have thought of half an hour before to her father's arms.

"Oh, father," she cried. "If I had only known you!"

Gladys, returning from her walk, went directly to Pauline's sitting-room.

"I'm off for New York and Europe to-morrow morning," she began abruptly, her voice hard, her expression bitter and reckless.

"Where can she have heard about Leonora?" thought Pauline. She said in a strained voice: "I had hoped you would stay here to look after the house."

"To look after the house? What do you mean?" asked Gladys. But she was too full of herself to be interested in the answer, and went on: "I want you to forget what I said to you. I've got over all that. I've come to my senses."

Pauline began a nervous turning of her rings.

Gladys gave a short, grim laugh. "I detest him," she went on. "We're very changeable, we women, aren't we? I went out of this house two hours ago loving him--to distraction. I came back hating him. And all that has happened in between is that I met him and he kissed me a few times and stabbed my pride a few times."

Pauline stopped turning her rings--she rose slowly, mechanically, looked straight at Gladys.

"That is not true," she said calmly.

Gladys laughed sardonically. "You don't know the cold and haughty Governor Scarborough. There's fire under the ice. I can feel the places on my face where it scorched. Can't you see them?"

Pauline gave her a look of disgust. "How like John Dumont's sister!" she thought. And she shut herself in her room and stayed there, pleading illness in excuse, until Gladys was gone.

XXIII.

A SEA SURPRISE.

On the third day from New York, Gladys was so far recovered from seasickness that she dragged herself to the deck. The water was fairly smooth, but a sticky, foggy rain was falling. A deck-steward put her steamer-chair in a sheltered corner. Her maid and a stewardess swathed her in capes and rugs; she closed her eyes and said: "Now leave me, please, and don't come near me till I send for you."

She slept an hour. When she awoke she felt better. Some one had drawn a chair beside hers and was seated there--a man, for she caught the faint odor of a pipe, though the wind was the other way. She turned her head. It was Langdon, whom she had not seen since she went below a few hours after Sandy Hook disappeared. Indeed, she had almost forgotten that he was on board and that her brother had asked him to look after her. He was staring at her in an absent-minded way, his wonted expression of satire and

lazy good-humor fainter than usual. In fact, his face was almost serious.

"That pipe," she grumbled. "Please do put it away."

He tossed it into the sea. "Beg pardon," he said. "It was stupid of me. I was absorbed in--in my book."

"What's the name of it?"

He turned it to glance at the cover, but she went on:

"No--don't tell me. I've no desire to know. I asked merely to confirm my suspicion."

"You're right," he said. "I wasn't reading. I was looking at you."

"That was impertinent. A man should not look at a woman when she doesn't intend him to look."

"Then I'd never look at all. I'm interested only in things not meant for my eyes. I might even read letters not addressed to me if I didn't know how dull letters are. No intelligent person ever says anything in a letter nowadays. They use the telegraph for ordinary correspondence, and telepathy for the other kind. But it was interesting--looking at you as you lay asleep."

"Was my mouth open?"

"A little."

"Am I yellow?"

"Very."

"Eyes red? Hair in strings? Lips blue?"

"All that," he said, "and skin somewhat mottled. But I was not so much interested in your beauty as I was in trying to determine whether you were well enough to stand two shocks."

"I need them," replied Gladys.

"One is rather unpleasant, the other--the reverse, in fact a happiness."

"The unpleasant first, please."

"Certainly," he replied. "Always the medicine first, then the candy." And he leaned back and closed his eyes and seemed to be settling himself for indefinite silence.

"Go on," she said impatiently. "What's the medicine? A death?"

"I said unpleasant, didn't I? When an enemy dies it's all joy. When a friend passes over to eternal bliss, why, being good Christians, we are not so faithless and selfish as to let the

momentary separation distress us."

"But what is it? You're trying to gain time by all this beating about the bush. You ought to know me well enough to know you can speak straight out."

"Fanshaw's suing his wife for divorce--and he names Jack."

"Is that your news?" said Gladys, languidly. Suddenly she flung aside the robes and sat up.

"What's Pauline going to do? Can she--" Gladys paused.

"Yes, she can--if she wishes to."

"But--will she? Will she?" demanded Gladys.

"Jack doesn't know what she'll do," replied Langdon. "He's keeping quiet--the only sane course when that kind of storm breaks. He had hoped you'd be there to smooth her down, but he says when he opened the subject of your going back to Saint X you cut him off."

"Does she know?"

"Somebody must have told her the day you left. Don't you remember, she was taken ill suddenly?"

"Oh!" Gladys vividly recalled Pauline's strange look and manner. She could see her sister-in-law--the long, lithe form, the small, graceful head, with its thick, soft, waving hair, the oval face, the skin as fine as the petals at the heart of a rose, the arched brows and golden-brown eyes; that look, that air, as of buoyant life locked in the spell of an icy trance, mysterious, fascinating, sometimes so melancholy.

"I almost hope she'll do it, Mowbray," she said. "Jack doesn't deserve her. He's not a bit her sort. She ought to have married--"

"Some one who had her sort of ideals--some one like that big, handsome chap--the one you admired so frantically--Governor Scarborough. He was chock full of ideals. And he's making the sort of career she could sympathize with."

"Scarborough!" exclaimed Gladys, with some success at self-concealment. "I detest him! I detest `careers'!"

"Good," said Langdon, his face serious, his eyes amused.

"That opens the way for my other shock."

"Oh, the good news. What is it?"

"That I'd like it if you'd marry me."

Gladys glanced into his still amused eyes, then with a shrug sank back among her wraps. "A poor joke," she said.

"I should say that marriage was a stale joke rather than a poor one. Will you try it--with me? You might do worse."

"How did you have the courage to speak when I'm looking such a wreck?" she asked with mock gravity.

"But you ain't--you're looking better now. That first shock braced you up. Besides, this isn't romance. It's no high flight with all the longer drop and all the harder jolt at the landing. It's a plain, practical proposition."

Gladys slowly sat up and studied him curiously.

"Do you really mean it?" she asked. Each was leaning on an elbow, gazing gravely into the other's face.

"I'd never joke on such a dangerous subject as marriage. I'm far too timid for that. What do you say, Gladys?"

She had never seen him look serious before, and she was thinking that the expression became him.

"He knows how to make himself attractive to a woman when he cares to," she said to herself.

"I'd like a man that has lightness of mind. Serious people bore one so after a while." By "serious people" she meant one serious person whom she had admired particularly for his seriousness. But she was in another mood now, another atmosphere--the atmosphere she had breathed since she was thirteen, except in the brief period when her infatuation for Scarborough had swept her away from her world.

"No!" She shook her head with decision--and felt decided. But to his practised ear there was in her voice a hint that she might hear him further on the subject.

They lay back in their chairs, he watching the ragged, dirty, scurrying clouds, she watching him. After a while he said: "Where are you going when we reach the other side?"

"To join mother and auntie."

"And how long will you stay with them?"

"Not more than a week, I should say," she answered with a grimace.

"And then--where?"

She did not reply for some time. Studying her face, he saw an expression of lonesomeness gather and strengthen and deepen until she looked so forlorn that he felt as if he must take her in his arms. When she spoke it was to say dubiously: "Back to New York--to keep house for my brother--perhaps."

"And when his wife frees herself and he marries again--where will you go?"

Gladys lifted a fold of her cape and drew it about her as if she were cold. But he noted that it hid her face from him.

"You want--you need--a home? So do I," he went on tranquilly. "You are tired of wandering? So am I. You are bored with parade and parade--people? So am I. You wish freedom, not bondage, when you marry? I refuse to be bound, and I don't wish to bind any one. We have the same friends, the same tastes, have had pretty much the same experiences. You don't want to be married for your money. I'm not likely to be suspected of doing that sort of thing."

"Some one has said that rich men marry more often for money than poor men," interrupted Gladys. And then she colored as she recalled who had said it.

Langdon noted her color as he noted every point in any game he was playing; he shrewdly guessed its origin. "When Scarborough told you that," he replied calmly, "he told you a great truth. But please remember, I merely said I shouldn't be SUSPECTED of marrying you for money. I didn't say I wasn't guilty."

"Is your list of reasons complete?"

"Two more the clinchers. You are disappointed in love--so am I. You need consolation--so do I. When one can't have the best one takes the best one can get, if one is sensible. It has been known to turn out not so badly."

They once more lay back watching the clouds. An hour passed without either's speaking. The deck-steward brought them tea and biscuits which he declined and she accepted. She tried the big, hard, tasteless disk between her strong white teeth, then said with a sly smile: "You pried into my secret a few minutes ago. I'm going to pry into yours. Who was she?"

"As the lady would have none of me, there's no harm in confessing," replied Langdon, carelessly. "She was--and is--and--" he looked at her--"ever shall be, world without end--Gladys Dumont."

Gladys gasped and glanced at him with swift suspicion that he was jesting. He returned her glance in a calm, matter-of-fact way. She leaned back in her chair and they watched the slippery rail slide up and down against the background of chilly, rainy sea and sky.

"Are you asleep?" he asked after a long silence.

"No," she replied. "I was thinking."

"Of my--proposition?"

"Yes."

"Doesn't it grow on you?"

"Yes."

He shifted himself to a sitting position with much deliberateness. He put his hand in among her rugs and wraps until it touched hers. "It may turn out better than you anticipate," he said, a little sentiment in his eyes and smile, a little raillery in his voice.

"I doubt if it will," she answered, without looking at him directly. "For--I--anticipate a great deal."

XXIV.

DUMONT BETRAYS DUMONT.

Fanshaw versus Fanshaw was heard privately by a referee; and before Mrs. Fanshaw's lawyers had a chance to ask that the referee's report be sealed from publicity, the judge of his own motion ordered it. At the political club to which he belonged, he had received an intimation from the local "boss" that if Dumont's name were anywhere printed in connection with the case he would be held responsible. Thus it came to pass that on the morning of the filing of the decree the newspapers were grumbling over their inability to give the eagerly-awaited details of the great scandal. And Herron was Catonizing against "judicial corruption."

But Dumont was overswift in congratulating himself on his escape and in preening himself on his power.

For several days the popular newspapers were alone in denouncing the judge for favoritism and in pointing out that the judiciary were "becoming subservient to the rich and the powerful in their rearrangements of their domestic relations--a long first step toward complete subservience." Herron happened to have among his intimates the editor of an eminently respectable newspaper that prides itself upon never publishing private scandals. He impressed his friend with his own strong views as to the gravity of this growing discrimination between masses and classes; and the organ of independent conservatism was presently lifting up its solemn voice in a stentorian jeremiad.

Without this reinforcement the "yellows" might have shrieked in vain. It was assumed that baffled sensationalism was by far a stronger motive with them than justice, and the public was amused rather than aroused by their protests. But now soberer dailies and weeklies took up the case and the discussion spread to other cities, to the whole country. By his audacity, by his arrogant frankness he had latterly treated public opinion with scantiest courtesy--by his purchase of campaign committees, and legislatures, and courts, Dumont had made himself in the public mind an embodiment of the "mighty and menacing plutocracy" of which the campaign orators talked so much. And the various phases of the scandal gave the press a multitude of texts for satirical, or pessimistic, or fiery discourses upon the public

and private rottenness of "plutocrats."

But Dumont's name was never directly mentioned. Every one knew who was meant; no newspaper dared to couple him in plain language with the scandal. The nearest approach to it was where one New York newspaper published, without comment, in the center of a long news article on the case, two photographs of Dumont side by side—one taken when he first came to New York, clear-cut, handsome, courageous, apparently a type of progressive young manhood; the other, taken within the year, gross, lowering, tyrannical, obviously a type of indulged, self-indulgent despot.

Herron had forced Fanshaw to abandon the idea of suing Dumont for a money consolation. He had been deeply impressed by his wife's warnings against Fanshaw—"a lump of soot, and sure to smutch you if you go near him." He was reluctant to have Fanshaw give up the part of the plan which insured the public damnation of Dumont, but there was no other prudent course. He assured himself that he knew Fanshaw to be an upright man; but he did not go to so perilous a length in self-deception as to fancy he could convince cynical and incredulous New York. It was too eager to find excuses for successful and admired men like Dumont, too ready to laugh at and despise underdogs like Fanshaw. Herron never admitted it to himself, but in fact it was he who put it into Fanshaw's resourceless mind to compass the revenge of publicity in another way.

Fanshaw was denouncing the judge for sealing the divorce testimony, and the newspapers for being so timid about libel laws and contempt of court.

"If a newspaper should publish the testimony," said Herron, "Judge Glassford would never dare bring the editor before him for contempt. His record's too bad. I happen to know he was in the News-Record office no longer ago than last month, begging for the suppression of an article that might have caused his impeachment, if published. So there's one paper that wouldn't be afraid of him."

"Then why does it shield the scoundrel?"

"Perhaps," replied Herron, his hand on the door of his office law-library, "it hasn't been able to get hold of a copy of the testimony." And having thus dropped the seed on good soil, he left.

Fanshaw waited several weeks, waited until certain other plans of his and Herron's were perfected. Then he suddenly deluged the sinking flames of the divorce discussion with a huge outpouring of oil. Indirectly and with great secrecy he sent a complete copy of the testimony to the newspaper Herron had mentioned, the most sensational, and one of the most widely circulated in New York.

The next morning Dumont had to ring three times for his secretary. When Culver finally appeared he had in his trembling right hand a copy of the News-Record. His face suggested that he was its owner, publisher and responsible editor, and that he

expected then and there to be tortured to death for the two illustrated pages of the "Great Fanshaw-Dumont Divorce! All the Testimony! Shocking Revelations!"

"I thought it necessary for you to know this without delay, sir," he said in a shaky voice, as he held out the newspaper to his master.

Dumont grew sickly yellow with the first glance at those head-lines. He had long been used to seeing extensive and highly unflattering accounts of himself and his doings in print; but theretofore every open attack had been on some public matter where a newspaper "pounding" might be attributed to politics or stock-jobbery. Here--it was a verbatim official report, and of a private scandal, more dangerous to his financial standing than the fiercest assault upon his honesty as a financier; for it tore away the foundation of reputation--private character. A faithful transcript throughout, it portrayed him as a bag of slimy gold and gilded slime. He hated his own face staring out at him from a three-column cut in the center of the first page--its heavy jaw, its cynical mouth, its impudent eyes. "Do I look like THAT?" he thought. He was like one who, walking along the streets, catches sight of his own image in a show-window mirror and before he recognizes it, sees himself as others see him. He flushed to his temples at the contrast with the smaller cut beside it--the face of Pauline, high and fine icily beautiful as always in her New York days when her features were in repose.

Culver shifted from one weak leg to the other, and the movement reminded Dumont of his existence. "That's all. Clear out!" he exclaimed, and fell back into his big chair and closed his eyes. He thought he at last understood publicity.

But he was mistaken.

He finished dressing and choked down a little breakfast. As he advanced toward the front door the servant there coughed uneasily and said: "Beg pardon, sir, but I fear you won't be able to get out."

"What's the matter?" he demanded, his brows contracting and his lips beginning to slide back in a snarl--it promised to be a sad morning for human curs of all kinds who did not scurry out of the lion's way.

"The crowd, sir," said the servant. And he drew aside the curtain across the glass in one of the inside pair of great double doors of the palace entrance. "It's quite safe to look, sir. They can't see through the outside doors as far as this."

Dumont peered through the bronze fretwork. A closely packed mass of people was choking the sidewalk and street--his brougham was like an island in a troubled lake. He saw several policemen--they were trying to move the crowd on, but not trying sincerely. He saw three huge cameras, their operators under the black cloths, their lenses pointed at the door--waiting for him to appear. For the first time in his life he completely lost his nerve. Not only publicity, the paper--a lifeless sheet of print;

but also publicity, the public--with living eyes to peer and living voices to jeer. He looked helplessly, appealingly at the "cur" he had itched to kick the moment before.

"What the devil shall I do?" he asked in a voice without a trace of courage.

"I don't know, sir," replied the servant. "The basement door wouldn't help very much, would it?"

The basement door was in front also. "Idiot! Is there no way out at the rear?" he asked.

"Only over the fences, sir," said the servant, perfectly matter-of-fact. Having no imagination, his mind made no picture of the great captain of industry scrambling over back fences like a stray cat flying from a brick.

Dumont turned back and into his first-floor sitting-room. He unlocked his stand of brandy bottles, poured out an enormous drink and gulped it down. His stomach reeled, then his head. He went to the window and looked out--there must have been five hundred people in the street, and vehicles were making their way slowly and with difficulty, drivers gaping at the house and joking with the crowd; newsboys, bent sidewise to balance their huge bundles of papers, were darting in and out, and even through the thick plate glass he could hear: "All about Millionaire Dumont's disgrace!"

He went through to a rear window. No, there was a continuous wall, a high brick wall. A servant came and told him he was wanted at the telephone. It was Giddings, who said in a voice that was striving in vain to be calm against the pressure of some intense excitement: "You are coming down to-day, Mr. Dumont?"

"Why?" asked Dumont, snapping the word out as short and savage as the crack of a lash.

"There are disquieting rumors of a raid on us."

"Who's to do the raiding?"

"They say it's Patterson and Fanning-Smith and Cassell and Herron. It's a raid for control."

Dumont snorted scornfully. "Don't fret. We're all right. I'll be down soon." And he hung up the receiver, muttering: "The ass! I must kick him out! He's an old woman the instant I turn my back."

He had intended not to go down, but to shut himself in with the brandy bottle until nightfall. This news made his presence in the Street imperative. "They couldn't have sprung at me at a worse time," he muttered. "But I can take care of 'em!"

He returned to the library, took another drink, larger than the first. His blood began to pound through his veins and to rush along under the surface of his skin like a sheet of fire. Waves

of fury surged into his brain, making him dizzy, confusing his sight--he could scarcely refrain from grinding his teeth. He descended to the basement, his step unsteady.

"A ladder," he ordered in a thick voice.

He led the way to the rear wall. A dozen men-servants swarming about, tried to assist him. He ordered them aside and began to climb. As the upper part of his body rose above the wall-line he heard a triumphant shout, many voices crying: "There he is! There he is!"

The lot round the corner from his place was not built upon; and there, in the side street, was a rapidly swelling crowd, the camera-bearers hastily putting their instruments in position, the black cloths fluttering like palls or pirate flags. With a roaring howl he released his hold upon the ladder and shook both fists, his swollen face blazing between them. He tottered, fell backward, crashed upon the stone flooring of the area. His head struck with a crack that made the women-servants scream. The men lifted him and carried him into the house. He was not stunned; he tried to stand. But he staggered back into the arms of his valet and his butler.

"Brandy!" he gasped.

He took a third drink--and became unconscious. When the doctor arrived he was raving in a high fever. For years he had drunk to excess--but theretofore only when HE chose, never when his appetite chose, never when his affairs needed a clear brain. Now appetite, long lying in wait for him, had found him helpless in the clutches of rage and fear, and had stolen away his mind.

The news was telephoned to the office at half-past eleven o'clock. "It doesn't matter," said Giddings. "He'd only make things worse if he were to come now."

Giddings was apparently right. From a tower of strength, supporting alone, yet with ease, National Woolens, and the vast structure based upon it, Dumont had crumbled into an obstruction and a weakness. There is an abysmal difference between everybody knowing a thing privately and everybody knowing precisely the same thing publicly. In that newspaper exposure there was no fact of importance that was not known to the entire Street, to his chief supporters in his great syndicate of ranches, railroads, factories, steamship lines and selling agencies. But the tremendous blare of publicity acted like Joshua's horns at Jericho. The solid walls of his public reputation tottered, toppled, fell flat.

There had been a tight money-market for two weeks. Though there had been uneasiness as to all the small and many of the large "industrials," belief in National Woolens and in the stability of John Dumont had remained strong. But of all the cowards that stand sentinel for capital, the most craven is Confidence. At the deafening crash of the fall of Dumont's private character, Confidence girded its loins and tightened its vocal cords to be in readiness for a shrieking flight.

Dumont ruled, through a parent and central corporation, the National Woolens Company, which held a majority of the stock in each of the seventeen corporations constituting the trust. His control was in part through ownership of Woolens stock but chiefly through proxies sent him by thousands of small stock-holders because they had confidence in his abilities. To wrest control from him it was necessary for the raiders both to make him "unload" his own holdings of stock and to impair his reputation so that his supporters would desert him or stand aloof.

On the previous day National Woolens closed at eighty-two for the preferred and thirty-nine for the common. In the first hour of the day of the raid Giddings and the other members of Dumont's supporting group of financiers were able to keep it fairly steady at about five points below the closing price of the previous day, by buying all that was offered--the early offerings were large, but not overwhelming. The supporters of other industrials saw that the assault on Woolens was a menace to their stocks--if a strong industrial weakened, the weaker ones would inevitably suffer disaster in the frightened market that would surely result. They showed a disposition to rally to the support of the Dumont stocks.

At eleven o'clock Giddings began to hope that the raid was a failure, if indeed it had been a real raid. At eleven-twenty Herron played his trump card.

The National Industrial Bank is the huge barometer to which both speculative and investing Wall Street looks for guidance. Whom that bank protects is as safe as was the medieval fugitive who laid hold of the altar in the sanctuary; whom that bank frowns upon in the hour of stress is lost indeed if he have so much as a pin's-point area of heel that is vulnerable. Melville, president of the National Industrial, was a fanatically religious man, with as keen a nose for heretics as for rotten spots in collateral. He was peculiarly savage in his hatred of all matrimonial deviations. He was a brother of Fanshaw's mother; and she and Herron had been working upon him. But so long as Dumont's share in the scandal was not publicly attributed he remained obdurate--he never permitted his up-town creed or code to interfere with his down-town doings unless it became necessary--that is, unless it could be done without money loss. For up-town or down-town, to make money was always and in all circumstances the highest morality, to lose money the profoundest immorality.

At twenty minutes past eleven Melville and the president of the other banks of his chain called loans to Dumont and the Dumont supporting group to the amount of three millions and a quarter. Ten minutes later other banks and trust companies whose loans to Dumont and his allies either were on call or contained provisions permitting a demand for increased collateral, followed Melville's example and aimed and sped their knives for Dumont's vitals.

Giddings found himself face to face with unexpected and peremptory demands for eleven millions in cash and thirteen

millions in additional collateral securities. If he did not meet these demands forthwith the banks and trust companies, to protect themselves, would throw upon the market at whatever price they could get the thirty-odd millions of Woolens stocks which they held as collateral for the loans.

"What does this mean, Eaversole?" he exclaimed, with white, wrinkled lips, heavy circles suddenly appearing under his eyes. "Is Melville trying to ruin everything?"

"No," answered Eaversole, third vice-president of the company. "He's supporting the market, all except us. He says Dumont must be driven out of the Street. He says his presence here is a pollution and a source of constant danger."

The National Woolens supporting group was alone; it could get no help from any quarter, as every possible ally was frightened into his own breastworks for the defense of his own interests. Dumont, the brain and the will of the group, had made no false moves in business, had been bold only where his matchless judgment showed him a clear way; but he had not foreseen the instantaneous annihilation of his chief asset--his reputation.

Giddings sustained the unequal battle superbly. He was cool, and watchful, and effective. It is doubtful if Dumont himself could have done so well, handicapped as he would have been on that day by the Fanshaw scandal. Giddings cajoled and threatened, retreated slowly here, advanced intrepidly there. On the one side, he held back wavering banks and trust companies, persuading some that all was well, warning others that if they pressed him they would lose all. On the other side, he faced his powerful foes and made them quake as they saw their battalions of millions roll upon his unbroken line of battle only to break and disappear. At noon National Woolens preferred was at fifty-eight, the common at twenty-nine. Giddings was beginning to hope.

At three minutes past noon the tickers clicked out: "It is reported that John Dumont is dying."

As that last word jerked letter by letter from under the printing wheel the floor of the Stock Exchange became the rapids of a human Niagara. By messenger, by telegraph, by telephone, holders of National Woolens and other industrials, in the financial district, in all parts of the country, across the sea, poured in their selling orders upon the frenzied brokers. And all these forces of hysteria and panic, projected into that narrow, roofed-in space, made of it a chaos of contending demons. All stocks were caught in the upheaval; Melville's plans to limit the explosion were blown skyward, feeble as straws in a cyclone. Amid shrieks and howls and frantic tossings of arms and mad rushes and maniac contortions of faces, National Woolens and all the Dumont stocks bent, broke, went smashing down, down, down, every one struggling to unload.

Dumont's fortune was the stateliest of the many galleons that day driven on the rocks and wrecked. Dumont's crew was for the most part engulfed. Giddings and a few selected friends reached the

shore half-drowned and humbly applied at the wreckers' camp; they were hospitably received and were made as comfortable as their exhausted condition permitted.

John Dumont was at the mercy of Hubert Herron in his own company. If he lived he would be president only until the next annual meeting--less than two months away; and the Herron crowd had won over enough of his board of directors to make him meanwhile powerless where he had been autocrat.

XXV.

THE FALLEN KING.

Toward noon the next day Dumont emerged from the stupor into which Doctor Sackett's opiate had plunged him. At once his mind began to grope about for the broken clues of his business. His valet appeared.

"The morning papers," said Dumont.

"Yes, sir," replied the valet, and disappeared.

After a few seconds Culver came and halted just within the doorway. "I'm sorry, sir, but Doctor Sackett left strict orders that you were to be quiet. Your life depends on it."

Dumont scowled and his lower lip projected--the crowning touch in his most imperious expression. "The papers, all of 'em,--quick!" he commanded.

Culver took a last look at the blue-white face and bloodshot eyes to give him courage to stand firm. "The doctor'll be here in a few minutes," he said, bowed and went out.

Choking with impotent rage, Dumont rang for his valet and forced him to help him dress. He was so weak when he finished that only his will kept him from fainting. He took a stiff drink of the brandy--the odor was sickening to him and he could hardly force it down. But once down, it strengthened him.

"No, nothing to eat," he said thickly, and with slow but fairly steady step left his room and descended to the library. Culver was there--sat agape at sight of his master. "But you--you must not--" he began.

Dumont gave him an ugly grin. "But I will!" he said, and again drank brandy. He turned and went out and toward the front door, Culver following with stammering protests which he heeded not at all. On the sidewalk he hailed a passing hansom. "To the Edison Building," he said and drove off, Culver, bareheaded at the curb, looking dazedly after him. Before he reached Fifty-ninth Street he was half-sitting, half-reclining in the corner of the seat, his eyes closed and his senses sinking into a stupor from the fumes of the powerful doses of brandy. As the

hansom drove down the avenue many recognized him, wondered and pitied as they noted his color, his collapsed body, head fallen on one side, mouth open and lips greenish gray:. As the hansom slowly crossed the tracks at Twenty-third Street the heavy jolt roused him.

"The newspapers," he muttered, and hurled up through the trap in the roof an order to the driver to stop. He leaned over the doors and bought half a dozen newspapers of the woman at the Flat-iron stand. As the hansom moved on he glanced at the head-lines--they were big and staring, but his blurred eyes could not read them. He fell asleep again, his hands clasped loosely about the huge proclamations of yesterday's battle and his rout.

The hansom was caught in a jam at Chambers Street. The clamor of shouting, swearing drivers roused him. The breeze from the open sea, blowing straight up Broadway into his face, braced him like the tonic that it is. He straightened himself, recovered his train of thought, stared at one of the newspapers and tried to grasp the meaning of its head-lines. But they made only a vague impression on him.

"It's all lies," he muttered. "Lies! How could those fellows smash ME!" And he flung the newspapers out of the hansom into the faces of two boys seated upon the tail of a truck.

"You're drunk early," yelled one of the boys.

"That's no one-day jag," shouted the other. "It's a hang-over."

He made a wild, threatening gesture and, as his hansom drove on, muttered and mumbled to himself, vague profanity aimed at nothing and at everything. At the Edison Building he got out.

"Wait!" he said to the driver. He did not see the impudent smirk on the face of the elevator boy nor the hesitating, sheepish salutation of the door-man, uncertain how to greet the fallen king. He went straight to his office, unlocked his desk and, just in time to save himself from fainting, seized and half-emptied a flask of brandy he kept in a drawer. It had been there--but untouched ever since he came to New York and took those offices; he never drank in business hours.

His head was aching horribly and at every throb of his pulse a pain tore through him. He rang for his messenger.

"Tell Mr. Giddings I want to see him--you!" he said, his teeth clenched and his eyes blazing--he looked insane.

Giddings came. His conscience was clear--he had never liked Dumont, owed him nothing, yet had stood by him until further fidelity would have ruined himself, would not have saved Dumont, or prevented the Herron-Cassell raiders from getting control. Now that he could afford to look at his revenge-books he was deeply resenting the insults and indignities heaped upon him in the past five years. But he was unable to gloat, was moved to pity, at sight of the physical and mental wreck in that chair

which he had always seen occupied by the most robust of despots.

"Well," said Dumont in a dull, far-away voice, without looking at him. "What's happened?"

Giddings cast about for a smooth beginning but could find none. "They did us up--that's all," he said funereally.

Dumont lifted himself into a momentary semblance of his old look and manner. "You lie, damn you!" he shouted, his mouth raw and ragged as a hungry tiger's.

Giddings began to cringe, remembered the changed conditions, bounded to his feet.

"I'll tolerate such language from no man!" he exclaimed. "I wish you good morning, sir!" And he was on his way to the door.

"Come back!" commanded Dumont. And Giddings, the habit of implicit obedience to that voice still strong upon him, hesitated and half turned.

Dumont was more impressed with the truth of the cataclysm by Giddings' revolt than by the newspaper head-lines or by Giddings' words. And from somewhere in the depths of his reserve-self he summoned the last of his coolness and self-control. "Beg pardon, Giddings," said he. "You see I'm not well."

Giddings returned--he had taken orders all his life, he had submitted to this master slavishly; the concession of an apology mollified him and flattered him in spite of himself.

"Oh, don't mention it," he said, seating himself again. "As I was saying, the raid was a success. I did the best I could. Some called our loans and some demanded more collateral. And while I was fighting front and rear and both sides, bang came that lie about your condition. The market broke. All I could do was sell, sell, sell, to try to meet or protect our loans."

Giddings heard a sound that made him glance at Dumont. His head had fallen forward and he was snoring. Giddings looked long and pityingly.

"A sure enough dead one," he muttered, unconsciously using the slang of the Street which he habitually avoided. And he went away, closing the door behind him.

After half an hour Dumont roused himself--out of a stupor into a half-delirious dream.

"Must get cash," he mumbled, "and look after the time loans." He lifted his head and pushed back his hair from his hot forehead. "I'll stamp on those curs yet!"

He took another drink--his hands were so unsteady that he had to use both of them in lifting it to his lips. He put the flask in his pocket instead of returning it to the drawer. No one spoke to him, all pretended not to see him as he passed through the

offices on his way to the elevator. With glassy unseeing eyes he fumbled at the dash-board and side of the hansom; with a groan like a rheumatic old man's he lifted his heavy body up into the seat, dropped back and fell asleep. A crowd of clerks and messengers, newsboys and peddlers gathered and gaped, awed as they looked at the man who had been for five years one of the heroes of the Street, and thought of his dazzling catastrophe.

"What's the matter?" inquired a new-comer, apparently a tourist, edging his way into the outskirts of the crowd.

"That's Dumont, the head of the Woolens Trust," the curb-broker he addressed replied in a low tone. "He was raided yesterday--woke up in the morning worth a hundred millions, went to bed worth--perhaps five, maybe nothing at all."

At this exaggeration of the height and depth of the disaster, awe and sympathy became intense in that cluster of faces. A hundred millions to nothing at all, or at most a beggarly five millions--what a dizzy precipice! Great indeed must be he who could fall so far. The driver peered through the trap, wondering why his distinguished fare endured this vulgar scrutiny. He saw that Dumont was asleep, thrust down a hand and shook him. "Where to, sir?" he asked, as Dumont straightened himself.

"To the National Industrial Bank, you fool," snapped Dumont. "How many times must I tell you?"

"Thank you, sir," said the driver--without sarcasm, thinking steadfastly of his pay--and drove swiftly away.

Therefore, whenever he had gone to the National Industrial Bank he had been received as one king is received by another. Either eager and obsequious high officers of King Melville had escorted him directly to the presence, or King Melville, because he had a caller who could not be summarily dismissed, had come out apologetically to conduct King Dumont to another audience chamber. That day the third assistant cashier greeted him with politeness carefully graded to the due of a man merely moderately rich and not a factor in the game of high finance.

"Be seated, Mr. Dumont," he said, pointing to a chair just inside the railing--a seat not unworthy of a man of rank in the plutocratic hierarchy, but a man of far from high rank. "I'll see whether Mr. Melville's disengaged."

Dumont dropped into the chair and his heavy head was almost immediately resting upon his shirt-bosom. The third assistant cashier returned, roused him somewhat impatiently. "Mr. Melville's engaged," said he. "But Mr. Cowles will see you." Mr. Cowles was the third vice-president.

Dumont rose. The blood flushed into his face and his body shook from head to foot. "Tell Melville to go to hell," he jerked out, the haze clearing for a moment from his piercing, wicked eyes. And he stalked through the gateway in the railing. He turned. "Tell him I'll tear him down and grind him into the gutter within six months."

In the hansom again, he reflected or tried to reflect. But the lofty buildings seemed to cast a black shadow on his mind, and the roar and rush of the tremendous tide of traffic through that deep canon set his thoughts to whirling like drink-maddened bacchanals dancing round a punch-bowl. "That woman!" he exclaimed suddenly. "What asses they make of us men! And all these vultures--I'm not carrion yet. But THEY soon will be!" And he laughed and his thoughts began their crazy spin again.

A newsboy came, waving an extra in at the open doors of the hansom. "Dumont's downfall!" he yelled in his shrill, childish voice. "All about the big smash!"

Dumont snatched a paper and flung a copper at the boy.

"Gimme a tip on Woolens, Mr. Dumont," said the boy, with an impudent grin, balancing himself for flight. "How's Mrs. Fanshaw?"

The newspapers had made his face as familiar as the details of his private life. He shrank and quivered. He pushed up the trap. "Home!" he said, forgetting that the hansom and driver were not his own.

"All right, Mr. Dumont!" replied the driver. Dumont shrank again and sat cowering in the corner--the very calling him by his name, now a synonym for failure, disgrace, ridicule and contempt, seemed a subtle insult.

With roaring brain and twitching, dizzy eyes he read at the newspaper's account of his overthrow. And gradually there formed in his mind a coherent notion of how it had come to pass, of its extent; of why he found himself lying in the depths, the victim of humiliations so frightful that they penetrated even to him, stupefied and crazed with drink and fever though he was. His courage, his self-command were burnt up by the brandy. His body had at last revolted, was having its terrible revenge upon the mind that had so long misused it in every kind of indulgence.

"I'm done for--done for," he repeated audibly again and again, at each repetition looking round mentally for a fact or a hope that would deny this assertion--but he cast about in vain. "Yes, I'm done for." And flinging away the newspaper he settled back and ceased to try to think of his affairs. After a while tears rolled from under his blue eyelids, dropped haltingly down his cheeks, spread out upon his lips, tasted salt in his half-open mouth.

The hansom stopped before his brick and marble palace. The butler hurried out and helped him alight--not yet thirty-seven, he felt as if he were a dying old man. "Pay the cabby," he said and groped his way into the house and to the elevator and mechanically ran himself up to his floor. His valet was in his dressing-room. He waved him away. "Get out! And don't disturb me till I ring."

"The doctor--" began Mallow.

"Do as I tell you!"

When he was alone he poured out brandy and gulped it down a drink that might have eaten the lining straight out of a stomach less powerful than his. He went from door to door, locking them all. Then he seated himself in a lounging-chair before the long mirror. He stared toward the image of himself but was so dim-eyed that he could see nothing but spinning black disks. "Life's not such a good game even when a man's winning," he said aloud. "A rotten bad game when he's losing."

His head wobbled to fall forward but he roused himself. "Wife gone--" The tears flooded his eyes--tears of pity for himself, an injured and abandoned husband. "Wife gone," he repeated. "Friends gone--" He laughed sardonically. "No, never had friends, thank God, or I shouldn't have lasted this long. No such thing as friends--a man gets what he can pay for. Grip gone--luck gone! What's the use?"

He dozed off, presently to start into acute, shuddering consciousness. At the far end of the room, stirring, slowly oozing from under the divan was a--a Thing! He could not define its shape, but he knew that it was vast, that it was scaly, with many short fat legs tipped with claws; that its color was green, that its purpose was hideous, gleaming in craft from large, square, green-yellow eyes. He wiped the sticky sweat from his brow. "It's only the brandy," he said loudly, and the Thing faded, vanished. He drew a deep breath of relief.

He went to a case of drawers and stood before it, supporting himself by the handles of the second drawer. "Yes," he reflected, "the revolver's in that drawer." He released the handles and staggered back to his chair. "I'm crazy," he muttered, "crazy as a loon. I ought to ring for the doctor."

In a moment he was up again, but instead of going toward the bell he went to the drawers and opened the second one. In a compartment lay a pearl-handled, self-cocking revolver. He put his hand on it, shivered, drew his hand away--the steel and the pearl were cold. He closed the drawer with a quick push, opened it again slowly, took up the revolver, staggered over to his desk and laid it there. His face was chalk-white in spots and his eyes were stiff in their sockets. He rested his aching, burning, reeling head on his hands and stared at the revolver.

"But," he said aloud, as if contemptuously dismissing a suggestion, "why should I shoot myself? I can smash 'em all--to powder--grind 'em into the dirt."

He took up the revolver. "What'd be the use of smashing 'em?" he said wearily. He felt tired and sick, horribly sick.

He laid it down. "I'd better be careful," he thought. "I'm not in my right mind. I might--"

He took it in his hand and went to the mirror and put the muzzle against his temple. He laughed crazily. "A little pressure on

that trigger and--bang! I'd be in kingdom come and shouldn't give a damn for anybody." He caught sight of his eyes in the mirror and hastily dropped his arm to his side. "No, I'd never shoot myself in the temple. The heart'd be better. Just here"--and he pressed the muzzle into the soft material of his coat--"if I touched the trigger--"

And his finger did touch the trigger. Pains shot through his chest like cracks radiating in glass when a stone strikes it. He looked at his face--white, with wild eyes, with lips blue and ajar, the sweat streaming from his forehead.

"What have I done?" he shrieked, mad with the dread of death. "I must call for help." He turned toward the door, plunged forward, fell unconscious, the revolver flung half-way across the room.

When he came to his senses he was in his bed--comfortable, weak, lazy. With a slight effort he caught the thread of events. He turned his eyes and saw a nurse, seated at the head of his bed, reading. "Am I going to die?" he asked--his voice was thin and came in faint gusts.

"Certainly not," replied the nurse, putting down her book and standing over him, her face showing genuine reassurance and cheerfulness.

"You'll be well very soon. But you must lie quiet and not talk."

"Was it a bad wound?"

"The fever was the worst. The bullet glanced round just under the surface."

"It was an accident," he said, after a moment's thought. "I suppose everybody is saying I tried to kill myself."

"'Everybody' doesn't know anything about it. Almost nobody knows. Even the servants don't know. Your secretary sent them away, broke in and found you."

He closed his eyes and slept.

When he awoke again he felt that a long time had passed, that he was much better, that he was hungry. "Nurse!" he called.

The woman at the head of the bed rose and laid a cool hand upon his forehead. "How good that feels," he mumbled gratefully. "What nice hands you have, nurse," and he lifted his glance to her face. He stared wonderingly, confusedly. "I thought I was awake and almost well," he murmured. "And instead, I'm out of my head."

"Can I do anything for you?" It certainly was HER voice.

"Is it you, Pauline?" he asked, as if he feared a negative

answer.

"Yes--John."

A long silence, then he said: "Why did you come?"

"The doctor wrote me that--wrote me the truth."

"But haven't you heard? Haven't you seen the papers? Don't they say I'm ruined?"

"Yes, John."

He lay silent for several minutes. Then he asked hesitatingly: "And--when--do you--go back--West?"

"I have come to stay," she replied. Neither in her voice nor in her face was there a hint of what those five words meant to her.

He closed his eyes again. Presently a tear slid from under each lid and stood in the deep, wasted hollows of his eye-sockets.

XXVI.

A DESPERATE RALLY.

When he awoke again he felt that he should get well rapidly. He was weak, but it seemed the weakness of hunger rather than of illness. His head was clear, his nerves tranquil; his mind was as hungry for action as his body was for food.

"As soon as I've had something to eat," he said to himself, "I'll be better than for years. I needed this." And straightway he began to take hold of the outside world.

"Are you there, Pauline?" he asked, after perhaps half an hour during which his mind had swiftly swept the whole surface of his affairs.

The nurse rose from the lounge across the foot of the bed. "Your wife was worn out, Mr. Dumont," she began. "She has--"

"What day is it?" he interrupted.

"Thursday."

"Of the month, I mean."

"The seventeenth," she answered, smiling in anticipation of his astonishment.

But he said without change of expression,

"Then I've been ill three weeks and three days. Tell Mr. Culver

I wish to see him at once."

"But the doctor--"

"Damn the doctor," replied Dumont, good-naturedly. "Don't irritate me by opposing. I shan't talk with Culver a minute by the clock. What I say will put my mind at rest. Then I'll eat something and sleep for a day at least."

The nurse hesitated, but his eyes fairly forced her out of the room to fetch Culver. "Now remember, Mr. Dumont--less than a minute," she said. "I'll come back in just sixty seconds."

"Come in forty," he replied. When she had closed the door he said to Culver: "What are the quotations on Woolens?"

"Preferred twenty-eight; Common seven," answered Culver. "They've been about steady for two weeks."

"Good. And what's Great Lakes and Gulf?"

Culver showed his surprise. "I'll have to consult the paper," he said. "You never asked me for that quotation before. I'd no idea you'd want it." He went to the next room and immediately returned. "G. L. and G. one hundred and two."

Dumont smiled with a satisfied expression.

"Now--go down-town--what time is it?"

"Eight o'clock."

"Morning?"

"Yes, sir, morning."

"Go down-town at once and set expert accountants--get Evarts and Schuman--set them at work on my personal accounts with the Woolens Company. Tell everybody I'm expected to die, and know it, and am getting facts for making my will. And stay down-town yourself all day--find out everything you can about National Woolens and that raiding crowd and about Great Lakes and Gulf. The better you succeed in this mission the better it'll be for you. Thank you, by the way, for keeping my accident quiet. Find out how the Fanning-Smiths are carrying National Woolens. Find out--"

The door opened and the plain, clean figure of the nurse appeared. "The minute's up," she said.

"One second more, please. Close the door." When she had obeyed he went on: "See Tavistock--you know you must be careful not to let any one at his office know that you're connected with me. See him--ask him--no, telephone Tavistock to come at once--and you find out all you can independently--especially about the Fanning-Smiths and Great Lakes and Gulf."

"Very well," said Culver.

"A great deal depends on your success," continued Dumont--"a great deal for me, a great deal--a VERY great deal for you."

His look met Culver's and each seemed satisfied with what he saw. Then Culver went, saying to himself: "What makes him think the Fanning-Smiths were mixed up in the raid? And what on earth has G. L. and G. got to do with it? Gad, he's a WONDER!" The longer Culver lived in intimacy with Dumont the greater became to him the mystery of his combination of bigness and littleness, audacity and caution, devil and man. "It gets me," he often reflected, "how a man can plot to rob millions of people in one hour and in the next plan endowments for hospitals and colleges; despise public opinion one minute and the next be courting it like an actor. But that's the way with all these big fellows. And I'll know how to do it when I get to be one of 'em."

As the nurse reentered Dumont's bedroom he called out, lively as a boy: "SOMETHING to eat! ANYthing to eat! EVERYthing to eat!"

The nurse at first flatly refused to admit Tavistock. But at half-past nine he entered, tall, lean, lithe, sharp of face, shrewd of eye, rakish of mustache; by Dumont's direction he closed and locked the door. "Why!" he exclaimed, "you don't look much of a sick man. You're thin, but your color's not bad and your eyes are clear. And down-town they have you dying."

Dumont laughed. Tavistock instantly recognized in laugh and look Dumont's battle expression. "Dying--yes. Dying to get at 'em. Tavistock, we'll kick those fellows out of Wall Street before the middle of next week. How much Great Lakes is there floating on the market?"

Tavistock looked puzzled. He had expected to talk National Woolens, and this man did not even speak of it, seemed absorbed in a stock in which Tavistock did not know he had any interest whatever. "G. L. and G.?" he said. "Not much--perhaps thirty thousand shares. It's been quiet for a long time. It's an investment stock, you know."

Dumont smiled peculiarly. "I want a list of the stock-holders--not all, only those holding more than a thousand shares."

"There aren't many big holders. Most of the stock's in small lots in the middle West."

"So much the better."

"I'm pretty sure I can get you a fairly accurate list."

Tavistock, Dumont's very private and personal broker, had many curious ways of reaching into the carefully guarded books and other business secrets of brokers and of the enterprises listed on the New York Stock Exchange. He and Dumont had long worked together in the speculative parts of Dumont's schemes. Dumont

was the chief source of his rapidly growing fortune, though no one except Culver, not even Mrs. Tavistock, knew that they had business relations. Dumont moved through Tavistock secretly, and Tavistock in turn moved through other agents secretly. But for such precautions as these the great men of Wall Street would be playing with all the cards exposed for the very lambs to cock their ears at.

"I want it immediately," said Dumont. "Only the larger holders, you understand."

"Haste always costs. I'll have to get hold of a man who can get hold of some one high up in the Great Lakes dividend department."

"Pay what you must--ten--twenty thousand--more if necessary. But get it to-night!"

"I'll try."

"Then you'll get it."

He slept, with a break of fifteen minutes, until ten the next morning. Then Tavistock appeared with the list. "It was nearly midnight before my man could strike a bargain, so I didn't telephone you. The dividend clerk made a memory list. I had him verify it this morning as early as he could get at the books. He says at least a third of the road is held in small lots abroad. He's been in charge of the books for twenty years, and he says there have been more changes in the last two months than in all that time. He thinks somebody has sold a big block of the stock on the quiet."

Dumont smiled significantly. "I think I understand that," he said. He glanced at the list. "It's even shorter than I thought."

"You notice, one-third of the stock's tied up in the Wentworth estate," said Tavistock.

"Yes. And here's the name of Bowen's dividend clerk. Bowen is traveling in the far East. Probably he's left no orders about his Great Lakes--why should he when it's supposed to be as sound and steady as Government bonds? That means another fifty thousand shares out of the way for our purposes. Which of these names stand for the Fanning-Smiths?"

"I only recognize Scannell--James Fanning-Smith's private secretary. But there must be others, as he's down for only twenty-one thousand shares."

"Then he's the only one," said Dumont, "for the Fanning-Smiths have only twenty-one thousand shares at the present time. I know that positively."

"What!" Tavistock showed that he was astounded. "I knew James Fanning-Smith was an ass, but I never suspected him of such folly as that. So they are the ones that have been selling?"

"Yes--not only selling what they owned but also-- However, no matter. It's safe to say there are less than a hundred and fifty thousand shares for us to take care of. I want you to get me--right away--options for fifteen days on as many of these remaining big lots as possible. Make the best terms you can--anything up to one hundred and twenty-five--and offer five or even ten dollars a share forfeit for the option. Make bigger offers--fifteen--where it's necessary. Set your people to work at once. They've got the rest of to-day, all day to-morrow, all day Sunday. But I'd rather the whole thing were closed up by Saturday night. I'll be satisfied when you've got me control of a hundred thousand shares--that'll be the outside of safety."

"Yes, you're reasonably sure to win, if you can carry that and look after offerings of fifty thousand in the market. The options on the hundred thousand shares oughtn't to cost you much more than a million. The fifty thousand you'll have to buy in the market may cost you six or seven millions." Tavistock recited these figures carelessly. In reality he was watching Dumont shrewdly, for he had believed that the National Woolens raid had ruined him, had certainly put him out of the large Wall Street moves.

"In that small drawer, to the left, in the desk there," said Dumont, pointing. "Bring me the Inter-State National check-book, and pen and ink."

When he had the book he wrote eight checks, the first for fifty thousand, the next five for one hundred thousand each, the last two for two hundred and fifty thousand each. "The first check," he said, "you may use whenever you like. The others, except the last two, will be good after two o'clock to-day. The last two can be used any time after eleven to-morrow. And--don't forget! I'm supposed to be hopelessly ill--but then, no one must know you've seen me or know anything about me. Spread it as a rumor."

Tavistock went away convinced, enthusiastic. There was that in Dumont which inspired men to their strongest, most intelligent efforts. He was harsh, he was tyrannical, treacherous even--in a large way, often cynically ungrateful. But he knew how to lead, knew how to make men forget all but the passion for victory, and follow him loyally. Tavistock had seen his financial brain solve too many "unsolvable" problems not to have confidence in it.

"I might have known!" he reflected. "Why, those fellows apparently only scotched him. They got the Woolens Company away from him. He lets it go without a murmur when he sees he's beaten, and he turns his mind to grabbing a big railway as if Woolens had never existed."

Just after his elevated train passed Chatham Square on the way down-town Tavistock suddenly slapped his leg with noisy energy and exclaimed half-aloud, "By Jove, of course!" to the amusement of those near him in the car. He went on to himself: "Why didn't I see it before? Because it's so beautifully simple, like all the things the big 'uns do. He's a wonder. So

THAT'S what he's up to? Gad, what a breeze there'll be next week!"

At eleven o'clock Doctor Sackett came into Dumont's bedroom, in arms against his patient.

"You're acting like a lunatic. No business, I say--not for a week. Absolute quiet, Mr. Dumont, or I'll not answer for the consequences."

"I see you want to drive me back into the fever," replied Dumont. "But I'm bent on getting well. I need the medicine I've had this morning, and Culver's bringing me another dose. If I'm not better when he leaves, I agree to try your prescription of fret and fume."

"You are risking your life."

Dumont smiled. "Possibly. But I'm risking it for what's more than life to me, my dear Sackett."

"You'll excite yourself. You'll----"

"On the contrary, I shall calm myself. I'm never so calm and cheerful as when I'm fighting, unless it's when I'm getting ready to fight. There's something inside me--I don't know what--but it won't let me rest till it has pushed me into action. That's my nature. If any one asks how I am, say you've no hope of my recovery."

"I shall tell only the truth in that case," said Sackett, but with resignation--he was beginning to believe that for his extraordinary patient extraordinary remedies might be best.

Dumont listened to Culver's report without interrupting him once. Culver's position had theretofore been most disadvantageous to himself. He had been too near to Dumont, had been merged in Dumont's big personality. Whatever he did well seemed to Dumont merely the direct reflection of his own abilities; whatever he did ill seemed far more stupid than a similar blunder made by a less intimate subordinate--what excuse for Culver's going wrong with the guiding hand of the Great Man always upon him?

In this, his first important independent assignment, he had at last an opportunity to show his master what he could do, to show that he had not learned the Dumont methods parrot-fashion, but intelligently, that he was no mere reflecting asteroid to the Dumont sun, but a self-luminous, if lesser and dependent, star.

Dumont was in a peculiarly appreciative mood.

"Why, the fellow's got brains--GOOD brains," was his inward comment again and again as Culver unfolded the information he had collected--clear, accurate, non-essentials discarded, essentials given in detail, hidden points brought to the surface.

It was proof positive of Dumont's profound indifference to money that he listened without any emotion either of anger or of regret

to the first part of Culver's tale, the survey of the wreck--what had been forty millions now reduced to a dubious six. Dumont had neither time nor strength for emotion; he was using all his mentality in gaging what he had for the work in hand--just how long and how efficient was the broken sword with which he must face his enemies in a struggle that meant utter ruin to him if he failed. For he felt that if he should fail he would never again be able to gather himself together to renew the combat; either he would die outright or he would abandon himself to the appetite which had just shown itself dangerously near to being the strongest of the several passions ruling him.

When Culver passed to the Herron coterie and the Fanning-Smiths and Great Lakes and Gulf, Dumont was still motionless--he was now estimating the strength and the weaknesses of the enemy, and miscalculation would be fatal. At the end of three-quarters of an hour Culver stopped the steady, swift flow of his report--"That's all the important facts. There's a lot more but it would be largely repetition."

Dumont looked at him with an expression that made him proud. "Thanks, Culver. At the next annual meeting we'll elect you to Giddings' place. Please go back down-town and--" He rapidly indicated half a dozen points which Culver had failed to see and investigate--the best subordinate has not the master's eye; if he had, he would not be a subordinate.

Dumont waved his hand in dismissal and settled himself to sleep. When Culver began to stammer thanks for the promised promotion, he frowned.

"Don't bother me with that sort of stuff. The job's yours because you've earned it. It'll be yours as long as you can hold it down--or until you earn a better one. And you'll be loyal as Giddings was--just as long as it's to your interest and not a second longer. Otherwise you'd be a fool, and I'd not have you about me. Be off!"

He slept an hour and a half, then Pauline brought him a cup of beef extract--"A very small cup," he grumbled good-humoredly. "And a very weak, watery mess in it."

As he lay propped in his bed drinking it--slowly to make it last the longer--Pauline sat looking at him. His hands had been fat and puffy; she was filled with pity as she watched the almost scrawny hand holding the cup to his lips; there were hollows between the tendons, and the wrist was gaunt. Her gaze wandered to his face and rested there, in sympathy and tenderness. The ravages of the fever had been frightful--hollows where the swollen, sensual cheeks had been; the neck caved in behind and under the jaw-bones; loose skin hanging in wattles, deeply-set eyes, a pinched look about the nostrils and the corners of the mouth. He was homely, ugly even; except the noble curve of head and profile, not a trace of his former good looks--but at least that swinish, fleshy, fleshly expression was gone.

A physical wreck, battered, torn, dismantled by the storm and fire of disease! It was hard for her to keep back her tears.

Their eyes met and his instantly shifted. The rest of the world saw the man of force bent upon the possessions which mean fame and honor regardless of how they are got. He knew that he could deceive the world, that so long as he was rich and powerful it would refuse to let him undeceive it, though he might strive to show it what he was. But he knew that SHE saw him as he really was--knew him as only a husband and a wife can know each the other. And he respected her for the qualities which gave her a right to despise him, and which had forced her to exercise that right. He felt himself the superior of the rest of his fellow-beings, but her inferior; did she not successfully defy him; could she not, without a word, by simply resting her calm gaze upon him, make him shift and slink?

He felt that he must change the subject--not of their conversation, for they were not talking, but of their--her--thoughts. He did not know precisely what she was thinking of him, but he was certain that it was not anything favorable how could it be? In fact, fight though she did against the thought, into her mind as she looked, pitying yet shrinking, came his likeness to a wolf--starved and sick and gaunt, by weakness tamed into surface restraint, but in vicious teeth, in savage lips, in jaw made to crush for love of crushing, a wicked wolf, impatient to resume the life of the beast of prey.

By a mischance unavoidable in a mind filled as was his he began to tell of his revenge--of the exhibition of power he purposed to give, sudden and terrible. He talked of his enemies as a cat might of a mouse it was teasing in the impassable circle of its paws. She felt that they deserved the thunderbolt he said he was about to hurl into them, but she could not help feeling pity for them. If what he said of his resources and power were true, how feeble, how helpless they were--pygmies fatuously disporting themselves in the palm of a giant's hand, unconscious of where they were, of the cruel eyes laughing at them, of the iron muscles that would presently contract that hand and--she shuddered; his voice came to her in a confused murmur.

"If he does not stop I shall loathe him AGAIN!" she said to herself. Then to him: "Perhaps you'd like to see Langdon--he's in the drawing-room with Gladys."

"I sent for him two hours ago. Yes, tell him to come up at once."

As she took the cup he detained her hand. She beat down the impulse to snatch it away, let it lie passive. He pressed his lips upon it.

"I haven't thanked you for coming back," he said in a low voice, holding to her hand nervously.

"But you know it wasn't because I'm not grateful, don't you? I can hardly believe yet that it isn't a dream. I'd have said there wasn't a human being on earth who'd have done it--except your mother. No, not even you, only your mother."

At this tribute to her mother, unexpected, sincere, tears dimmed Pauline's eyes and a sob choked up into her throat.

"It was your mother in you that made you come," he went on.
"But you came--and I'll not forget it. You said you had come to stay--is that so, Pauline?"

She bent her head in assent.

"When I'm well and on top again--but there's nothing in words. All I'll say is, you're giving me a chance, and I'll make the best of it. I've learned my lesson."

He slowly released her hand. She stood there a moment, without speaking, without any definite thought. Then she left to send Langdon.

"Yes," Dumont reflected, "it was her duty. It's a woman's duty to be forgiving and gentle and loving and pure--they're made differently from men. It was unnatural, her ever going away at all. But she's a good woman, and she shall get what she deserves hereafter. When I settle this bill for my foolishness I'll not start another."

Duty--that word summed up his whole conception of the right attitude of a good woman toward a man. A woman who acted from love might change her mind; but duty was safe, was always there when a man came back from wanderings which were mere amiable, natural weaknesses in the male. Love might adorn a honeymoon or an escapade; duty was the proper adornment of a home.

"I've just been viewing the wreck with Culver," he said, as Langdon entered, dressed in the extreme of the latest London fashion.

"Much damage?"

"What didn't go in the storm was carried off by Giddings when he abandoned the ship. But the hull's there and--oh, I'll get her off and fix her up all right."

"Always knew Giddings was a rascal. He oozes piety and respectability. That's the worst kind you have down-town. When a man carries so much character in his face--it's like a woman who carries so much color in her cheeks that you know it couldn't have come from the inside."

"You're wrong about Giddings. He's honest enough. Any other man would have done the same in his place. He stayed until there was no hope of saving the ship."

"All lost but his honor--Wall Street honor, eh?"

"Precisely."

After a pause Langdon said: "I'd no idea you held much of your own stock. I thought you controlled through other people's proxies and made your profits by forcing the stock up or down and

getting on the other side of the market."

"But, you see, I believe in Woolens," replied Dumont. "And I believe in it still, Langdon!" His eyes had in them the look of the fanatic.

"That concern is breath and blood and life to me, and wife and children and parents and brothers and sisters. I've put my whole self into it. I conceived it. I brought it into the world. I nursed it and brought it up. I made it big and strong and great. It's mine, by heaven! MINE! And no man shall take it from me!"

He was sitting up, his face flushed, his eyes blazing. "Gad--he does look a wild beast!" said Langdon to himself. He would have said aloud, had Dumont been well: "I'm precious glad I ain't the creature those fangs are reaching for!" He was about to caution him against exciting himself when Dumont sank back with a cynical smile at his own outburst.

"But to get down to business," he went on. "I've eleven millions of the stock left--about a hundred and twenty thousand shares. Gladys has fifty thousand shares--how much have you got?"

"Less than ten thousand. And I'd have had none at all if my mind hadn't been full of other things as I was sailing. I forgot to tell my broker to sell."

Dumont was reflecting. Presently he said: "Those curs not only took most of my stock and forced the sale of most of my other securities; they've put me in such a light that outside stockholders wouldn't send me their proxies now. To get back control I must smash them, and I must also acquire pretty nearly half the shares, and hold them till I'm firm in the saddle again."

"You'd better devote yourself for the present to escaping the grave. Why bother about business? You've got enough--too much, as it is. Take a holiday--go away and amuse yourself."

Dumont smiled. "That's what I'm going to do, what I'm doing--amusing myself. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't live, if I didn't feel that I was on my way back to power. Now--in the present market I couldn't borrow on my Woolens stock. I've two requests to make of you."

"Anything that's possible."

"The first is, I want you to lend me four millions, or, rather, negotiate the loan for me, as if it were for yourself. I've got about that amount in Governments, in several good railways and in the property here. The place at Saint X is Pauline's, but the things I can put up would bring four millions and a half at least at forced sale. So, you'll be well secured. I'm asking you to do it instead of doing it myself because, if I'm to win out, the Herron crowd must think I'm done for and nearly dead."

Langdon was silent several minutes. At last he said: "What's your plan?"

Dumont looked irritated--he did not like to be questioned, to take any one into his confidence. But he restrained his temper and said: "I'm going to make a counter-raid. I know where to strike."

"Are you sure?"

Dumont frowned. "Don't disturb yourself," he said coldly. "I can arrange the loan in another way."

"I'm asking you only for your own sake, Jack," Langdon hastily interposed. "Of course you can have the money, and I don't want your security."

"Then I'll not borrow through you." Dumont never would accept a favor from any one. He regarded favors as profitable investments but ruinous debts.

"Oh--very well--I'll take the security," said Langdon. "When do you want the money?"

"It must be covered into my account at the Inter-State National--remember, NOT the National Industrial, but the Inter-State National. A million must be deposited to-day--the rest by ten o'clock to-morrow at the latest."

"I'll attend to it. What's your other request?"

"Woolens'll take another big drop on Monday and at least two hundred and fifty thousand shares'll be thrown on the market at perhaps an average price of eighteen--less rather than more. I want you quietly to organize a syndicate to buy what's offered. They must agree to sell it to me for, say, two points advance on what they pay for it. I'll put up--in your name--a million dollars in cash and forfeit it if I don't take the stock off their hands. As Woolens is worth easily double what it now stands at, they can't lose. Of course the whole thing must be kept secret."

Langdon deliberated this proposal. Finally he said: "I think brother-in-law Barrow and his partner and I can manage it."

"You can assure them they'll make from six hundred thousand to a million on a less than thirty days' investment of four millions and a half, with no risk whatever."

"Just about that," assented Langdon--he had been carefully brought up by his father to take care of a fortune and was cleverer at figures than he pretended.

"Do your, buying through Tavistock," continued Dumont. "Give him orders to take on Monday all offerings of National Woolens, preferred and common, at eighteen or less. He'll understand what to do."

"But I may be unable to get up the syndicate on such short notice."

"You must," said Dumont. "And you will. You can get a move on yourself when you try--I found that out when I was organizing my original combine. One thing more--very important. Learn for me all you can--without being suspected--about the Fanning-Smiths and Great Lakes."

He made Langdon go over the matters he was to attend to, point by point, before he would let him leave. He was asleep when the nurse, sent in by Langdon on his way out, reached his bed--the sound and peaceful sleep of a veteran campaigner whose nerves are trained to take advantage of every lull.

At ten the next morning he sent the nurse out of his room. "And close the doors," he said, "and don't come until I ring." He began to use the branch telephone at his bedside, calling up Langdon, and then Tavistock, to assure himself that all was going well. Next he called up in succession five of the great individual money-lenders of Wall Street, pledged them to secrecy and made arrangements for them to call upon him at his house at different hours that day and Sunday. Another might have intrusted the making of these arrangements to Culver or Langdon, but Dumont never let any one man know enough of his plan of battle to get an idea of the whole.

"Now for the ammunition," he muttered, when the last appointment was made. And he rang for Culver.

Culver brought him writing materials. "Take this order," he said, as he wrote, "to the Central Park Safety Deposit vaults and bring me from my compartment the big tin box with my initials in white--remember, IN WHITE--on the end of it."

Three-quarters of an hour later Culver returned, half-carrying, half-dragging the box. Dumont's eyes lighted up at sight of it. "Ah!" he said, in a sigh of satisfaction and relief. "Put it under the head of the bed here. Thanks. That's all."

The nurse came as Culver left, but he sent her away. He supported himself to the door, locked it. He took his keys from the night-stand, drew out the box and opened it. On the mass of stocks and bonds lay an envelope containing two lists--one, of the securities in the box that were the property of Gladys Dumont; the other, of the securities there that were the property of Laura Dumont, their mother.

His hands shook as he unfolded these lists, and a creaking in the walls or flooring made him start and glance round with the look of a surprised thief. But this weakness was momentary. He was soon absorbed in mentally arranging the securities to the best advantage for distribution among the money-lenders as collateral for the cash he purposed to stake in his game.

Such thought as he gave to the moral quality of what he was doing with his sister's and his mother's property without asking their consent was altogether favorable to himself. His was a

well-trained, "practical" conscience. It often anticipated his drafts upon it for moral support in acts that might at first blush seem criminal, or for soothing apologies for acts which were undeniably "not QUITE right." This particular act, conscience assured him, was of the highest morality--under his own code. For the code enacted by ordinary human beings to guide their foolish little selves he had no more respect than a lion would have for a moral code enacted by and for sheep. The sheep might assert that their code was for lions also; but why should that move the lions to anything but amusement? He had made his own code--not by special revelation from the Almighty, as did some of his fellow practitioners of high finance, but by especial command of his imperial "destiny." And it was a strict code--it had earned him his unblemished reputation for inflexible commercial honesty and commercial truthfulness. The foundation principle was his absolute right to the great property he had created. This being granted, how could there be immorality in any act whatsoever that might be necessary to hold or regain his kingdom? As well debate the morality of a mother in "commandeering" bread or even a life to save her baby from death.

His kingdom! His by discovery, his by adroit appropriation, his by intelligent development, his by the right of mental might--HIS! Stake his sister's and his mother's possessions for it? Their lives, if necessary!

Than John Dumont, president of the Woolens Monopoly, there was no firmer believer in the gospel of divine right--the divine right of this new race of kings, the puissant lords of trade.

When he had finished his preparations for the money-lenders he unlocked the door and sank into bed exhausted. Hardly had he settled himself when, without knocking, Gladys entered, Pauline just behind her. His face blanched and from his dry throat came a hoarse, strange cry--it certainly sounded like fright. "You startled me--that was all," he hastened to explain, as much to himself as to them. For, a something inside him had echoed the wondering inquiry in the two women's faces--a something that persisted in reverencing the moral code which his new code had superseded.

XXVII.

THE OTHER MAN'S MIGHT.

At eleven o'clock on Monday morning James, head of the Fanning-Smith family, president of Fanning-Smith and Company, and chairman of the Great Lakes and Gulf railway--to note his chief titles to eminence up-town and down--was seated in his grandfather's office, in his grandfather's chair, at his grandfather's desk. Above his head hung his grandfather's portrait; and he was a slightly modernized reproduction of it. As he was thus in every outward essential his grandfather over again, he and his family and the social and business world

assumed that he was the reincarnation of the crafty old fox who first saw the light of day through the chinks in a farm-hand's cottage in Maine and last saw it as it sifted through the real-lace curtains of his gorgeous bedroom in his great Madison Avenue mansion. But in fact James was only physically and titularly the representative of his grandfather. Actually he was typical of the present generation of Fanning-Smiths--a self-intoxicated, stupid and pretentious generation; a polo-playing and racing and hunting, a yachting and palace-dwelling and money-scattering generation; a business-despising and business-neglecting, an old-world aristocracy-imitating generation. He moved pompously through his two worlds, fashion and business, deceiving himself completely, every one else except his wife more or less, her not at all--but that was the one secret she kept.

James was the husband of Herron's daughter by his first wife, and Herron had induced him to finance the syndicate that had raided and captured National Woolens.

James was bred to conservatism. His timidity was of that wholesome strength which so often saves chuckle-heads from the legitimate consequences of their vanity and folly. But the spectacle of huge fortunes, risen overnight before the wands of financial magicians whose abilities he despised when he compared them with his own, was too much for timidity. He had been born with a large vanity, and it had been stuffed from his babyhood by all around him until it was become as abnormal as the liver of a Strasburg goose--and as supersensitive. It suffered acutely as these Jacks went climbing up their bean-stalk wealth to heights of magnificence from which the establishments and equipages of the Fanning-Smiths must seem poor to shabbiness. He sneered at them as "vulgar new-comers"; he professed abhorrence of their ostentation. But he--and Gertrude, his wife--envied them, talked of them constantly, longed to imitate, to surpass them.

In the fullness of time his temptation came. He shivered, shrank, leaped headlong--his wife pushing.

About ten days before the raid on National Woolens there had drifted in to Dumont through one of his many subterranean sources of information a rumor that the Fanning-Smiths had stealthily reduced their holdings of Great Lakes to twenty-one thousand shares and that the property was not so good as it had once been. He never permitted any Wall Street development to pass unexplained--he thought it simple prudence for a man with the care of a great financial and commercial enterprise to look into every dark corner of the Street and see what was hatching there. Accordingly, he sent an inquiry back along his secret avenue. Soon he learned that Great Lakes was sound, but the Fanning-Smiths had gone rotten; that they were gambling in the stock of the road they controlled and were supposed in large part to own; that they were secretly selling its stock "short"--that is, were betting it would go down--when there was nothing in the condition of the property to justify a fall. He reflected on this situation and reached these conclusions: "James Fanning-Smith purposes to pass the autumn dividend, which will cause the stock to drop. Then he will take his profits from the

shares he has sold short and will buy back control at the low price. He is a fool and a knave. Only an imbecile would thus trifle with an established property. A chance for some one to make a fortune and win a railroad by smashing the Fanning-Smiths." Having recorded in his indelible memory these facts and conclusions as to James Fanning-Smith's plunge from business into gambling, Dumont returned to his own exacting affairs.

He had himself begun the race for multi-millions as a gambler and had only recently become ALMOST altogether a business man. But he thought there was a radical difference between his case and Fanning-Smith's. To use courageous gambling as means to a foothold in business--he regarded that as wise audacity. To use a firm-established foothold in business as a means to gambling--he regarded that as the acme of reckless folly. Besides, when he marked the cards or loaded the dice for a great Wall Street game of "high finance," he did it with skill and intelligence; and Fanning-Smith had neither.

When the banking-house of Fanning-Smith and Company undertook to finance the raid on National Woolens it was already deep in the Great Lakes gamble. James was new to Wall Street's green table; and he liked the sensations and felt that his swindle on other gamblers and the public--he did not call it by that homely name, though he knew others would if they found him out--was moving smoothly. Still very, very deep down his self-confidence was underlaid with quicksand. But Herron was adroit and convincing to the degree attainable only by those who deceive themselves before trying to deceive others; and James' cupidity and conceit were enormous. He ended by persuading himself that his house, directed and protected by his invincible self, could carry with ease the burden of both loads. Indeed, the Great Lakes gamble now seemed to him a negligible trifle in the comparison--what were its profits of a few hundred thousands beside the millions that would surely be his when the great Woolens Monopoly, bought in for a small fraction of its value, should be controlled by a group of which he would be the dominant personality?

He ventured; he won. He was now secure--was not Dumont dispossessed, despoiled, dying?

At eleven o'clock on that Monday morning he was seated upon his embossed leather throne, under his grandfather's portrait, immersed in an atmosphere of self-adoration. At intervals he straightened himself, distended his chest, elevated his chin and glanced round with an air of haughty dignity, though there was none to witness and to be impressed. In Wall Street there is a fatuity which, always epidemic among the small fry, infects wise and foolish, great and small, whenever a parietic dream of an enormous haul at a single cast of the net happens to come true. This parietic fatuity now had possession of James; in imagination he was crowning and draping himself with multi-millions, power and fame. At intervals he had been calling up on the telephone at his elbow Zabriskie, the firm's representative on 'Change, and had been spurring him on to larger and more frequent "sales" of Great Lakes.

His telephone bell rang. He took down the receiver--"Yes, it's Mr. Fanning-Smith--oh--Mr. Fanshaw----" He listened, in his face for the first few seconds all the pitying amusement a small, vain man can put into an expression of superiority. "Thank you, Mr. Fanshaw," he said. "But really, it's impossible. WE are perfectly secure. No one would venture to disturb US." And he pursed his lips and swelled his fat cheeks in the look for which his father was noted. But, after listening a few seconds longer, his eyes had in them the beginnings of timidity.

He turned his head so that he could see the ticker-tape as it reeled off. His heavy cheeks slowly relaxed. "Yes, yes," he said hurriedly.

"I'll just speak to our Mr. Zabriskie. Good-by." And he rang off and had his telephone connected with the telephone Zabriskie was using at the Stock Exchange. All the while his eyes were on the ticker-tape. Suddenly he saw upon it where it was bending from under the turning wheel a figure that made him drop the receiver and seize it in both his trembling hands. "Great heavens!" he gasped. "Fanshaw may be right. Great Lakes one hundred and twelve--and only a moment ago it was one hundred and three."

His visions of wealth and power and fame were whisking off in a gale of terror. A new quotation was coming from under the wheel--Great Lakes one hundred and fifteen. In his eyes stared the awful thought that was raging in his brain--"This may mean----" And his vanity instantly thrust out Herron and Gertrude and pointed at them as the criminals who would be responsible if--he did not dare formulate the possibilities of that bounding price.

The telephone boy at the other end, going in search of Zabriskie, left the receiver off the hook and the door of the booth open. Into Fanning-Smith's ear came the tumult from the floor of the Exchange--shrieks and yells riding a roar like the breakers of an infernal sea. And on the ticker-tape James was reading the story of the cause, was reading how his Great Lakes venture was caught in those breakers, was rushing upon the rocks amid the despairing wails of its crew, the triumphant jeers of the wreckers on shore. Great Lakes one hundred and eighteen--tick--tick--tick--Great Lakes one hundred and twenty-three--tick--tick--tick--Great Lakes one hundred and thirty--tick--tick--tick--Great Lakes one hundred and thirty-five--

"It can't be true!" he moaned. "It CAN'T be true! If it is I'm ruined--all of us ruined!"

The roar in the receiver lessened--some one had entered the booth at the other end and had closed the door. "Well!" he heard in a sharp, impatient voice--Zabriskie's.

"What is it, Ned--what's the matter? Why didn't you tell me?" Fanning-Smith's voice was like the shrill shriek of a coward in a perilous storm. It was in itself complete explanation of Zabriskie's neglect to call upon him for orders.

"Don't ask me. Somebody's rocketing Great Lakes--taking all offerings. Don't keep me here. I'm having a hard enough time, watching this crazy market and sending our orders by the roundabout way. Got anything to suggest?"

Tick--tick--tick--Commander-in-chief Fanning-Smith watched the crawling tape in fascinated horror--Great Lakes one hundred and thirty-eight. It had spelled out for him another letter of that hideous word, Ruin. All the moisture of his body seemed to be on the outside; inside, he was dry and hot as a desert. If the price went no higher, if it did not come down, nearly all he had in the world would be needed to settle his "short" contracts. For he would have to deliver at one hundred and seven, more than two hundred thousand shares which he had contracted to sell; and to get them for delivery he would have to pay one hundred and thirty-eight dollars a share. A net loss of more than six millions!

"You must get that price down--you must! You MUST!" quavered James.

"Hell!" exclaimed Zabriskie--he was the youngest member of the firm, a son of James' oldest sister. "Tell me how, and I'll do it."

"You're there--you know what to do," pleaded James. "And I order you to get that price down!"

"Don't keep me here, talking rot. I've been fighting--and I'm going to keep on."

James shivered. Fighting! There was no fight in him--all his life he had got everything without fighting. "Do your best," he said. "I'm very ill to-day. I'm--"

"Good-by--" Zabriskie had hung up the receiver.

James sat staring at the tape like a paralytic staring at death. The minutes lengthened into an hour--into two hours. No one disturbed him--when the battle is on who thinks of the "honorary commander"? At one o'clock he shook himself, brushed his hand over his eyes--quotations of Woolens were reeling off the tape, alternating with quotations of Great Lakes.

"Zabriskie is selling our Woolens," he thought. Then, with a blinding flash the truth struck through his brain. He gave a loud cry between a sob and a shriek and, flinging his arms at full length upon his desk, buried his face between them and burst into tears.

"Ruined! Ruined! Ruined!" And his shoulders, his whole body, shook like a child in a paroxysm.

A long, long ring at the telephone. Fanning-Smith, irritated by the insistent jingling so close to his ear, lifted himself and answered--the tears were guttering his swollen face; his lips and eyelids were twitching.

"Well?" he said feebly.

"We've got 'em on the run," came the reply in Zabriskie's voice, jubilant now.

"Who?"

"Don't know who--whoever was trying to squeeze us. I had to throw over some Woolens--but I'll pick it up again--maybe to-day."

Fanning-Smith could hear the roar of the Exchange--wilder, fiercer than three hours before, but music to him now. He looked sheepishly at the portrait of his grandfather. When its eyes met his he flushed and shifted his gaze guiltily. "Must have been something I ate for breakfast," he muttered to the portrait and to himself in apologetic explanation of his breakdown.

In a distant part of the field all this time was posted the commander-in-chief of the army of attack. Like all wise commanders in all well-conducted battles, he was far removed from the blinding smoke, from the distracting confusion. He had placed himself where he could hear, see, instantly direct, without being disturbed by trifling reverse or success, by unimportant rumors to vast proportions blown.

To play his game for dominion or destruction John Dumont had had himself arrayed in a wine-colored, wadded silk dressing-gown over his white silk pajamas and had stretched himself on a divan in his sitting-room in his palace. A telephone and a stock-ticker within easy reach were his field-glasses and his aides--the stock-ticker would show him second by second the precise posture of the battle; the telephone would enable him to direct it to the minutest manoeuver.

The telephone led to the ear of his chief of staff, Tavistock, who was at his desk in his privatest office in the Mills Building, about him telephones straight to the ears of the division commanders. None of these knew who was his commander; indeed, none knew that there was to be a battle or, after the battle was on, that they were part of one of its two contending armies. They would blindly obey orders, ignorant who was aiming the guns they fired and at whom those guns were aimed. Such conditions would have been fatal to the barbaric struggles for supremacy which ambition has waged through all the past; they are ideal conditions for these modern conflicts of the market which more and more absorb the ambitions of men. Instead of shot and shell and regiments of "cannon food," there are battalions of capital, the paper certificates of the stored-up toil or trickery of men; instead of mangled bodies and dead, there are minds in the torment of financial peril or numb with the despair of financial ruin. But the stakes are the same old stakes--power and glory and wealth for a few, thousands on thousands dragged or cozened into the battle in whose victory they share scantily, if at all, although they bear its heaviest losses on both sides.

It was half-past eight o'clock when Dumont put the receiver to his ear and greeted Tavistock in a strong, cheerful voice. "Never felt better in my life," was his answer to Tavistock's inquiry as to his health. "Even old Sackett admits I'm in condition. But he says I must have no irritations--so, be careful to carry out orders."

He felt as well as he said. His body seemed the better for its rest and purification, for its long freedom from his occasional but terrific assaults upon it, for having got rid of the superfluous flesh which had been swelling and weighting it.

He made Tavistock repeat all the orders he had given him, to assure himself he had not been misunderstood. As he listened to the rehearsal of his own shrewd plans his eyes sparkled. "I'll bag the last----of them," he muttered, and his lips twisted into a smile at which Culver winced.

When the ticker clicked the first quotation of Great Lakes Dumont said: "Now, clear out, Culver! And shut the door after you, and let no one interrupt me until I call." He wished to have no restraint upon his thoughts, no eyes to watch his face, no ears to hear what the fortune of the battle might wring from him.

As the ticker pushed out the news of the early declines and recoveries in Great Lakes, Tavistock leading the Fanning-Smith crowd on to make heavier and heavier plunges, Dumont could see in imagination the battle-field--the floor of the Stock Exchange--as plainly as if he were there.

The battle began with a languid cannonade between the two seemingly opposed parts of Dumont's army. Under cover of this he captured most of the available actual shares of Great Lakes--valuable aids toward making his position, his "corner," impregnable. But before he had accomplished his full purpose Zabriskie, nominal lieutenant-commander, actual commander of the Fanning-Smith forces, advanced to give battle. Instead of becoming suspicious at the steadiness of the price under his attacks upon it, Zabriskie was lured on to sell more of those Great Lakes shares which he did not have. And he beamed from his masked position as he thought of the batteries he was holding in reserve for his grand movement to batter down the price of the stock late in the day, and capture these backers of the property that was supposed to be under the protection of the high and honorable Fanning-Smiths.

He was still thinking along this line, as he stood aloof and apparently disinterested, when Dumont began to close in upon him. Zabriskie, astonished by this sudden tremendous fire, was alarmed when under its protection the price advanced. He assaulted in force with large selling orders; but the price pushed on and the fierce cannonade of larger and larger buying orders kept up. When Great Lakes had mounted in a dozen bounds from one hundred and seven to one hundred and thirty-nine, he for the first time realized that he was facing not an unorganized speculating public but a compact army, directed by a single mind to a single purpose. "A lunatic--a lot of lunatics," he said, having not the faintest suspicion of the reason for the creation of these

conditions of frenzy. Still, if this rise continued or was not reversed the Fanning-Smiths would be ruined--by whom? "Some of those Chicago bluffers," he finally decided. "I must throw a scare into them."

He could have withdrawn from the battle then with a pitiful remnant of the Fanning-Smiths and their associates--that is, he thought he could, for he did not dream of the existence of the "corner." But he chose the opposite course. He flung off his disguise and boldly attacked the stock with selling orders openly in the name of the Fanning-Smiths.

"When they see us apparently unloading our own ancestral property I think they'll take to their heels," he said. But his face was pale as he awaited the effect of his assault.

The price staggered, trembled. The clamor of the battle alarmed those in the galleries of the Stock Exchange--Zabriskie's brokers selling, the brokers of the mysterious speculator buying, the speculating public through its brokers joining in on either side; men shrieking into each other's faces as they danced round and round the Great Lakes pillar. The price went down, went up, went down, down, down--Zabriskie had hurled selling orders for nearly fifty thousand shares at it and Dumont had commanded his guns to cease firing. He did not dare take any more offerings; he had reached the end of the ammunition he had planned to expend at that particular stage of the battle.

The alarm spread and, although Zabriskie ceased selling, the price continued to fall under the assaults of the speculating public, mad to get rid of that which its own best friends were so eagerly and so frankly throwing over. Down, down, down to one hundred and twenty, to one hundred and ten, to one hundred and five----

Zabriskie telephoned victory to his nominal commander, lifting him, weak and trembling, from the depths into which he had fallen, to an at least upright position upon his embossed leather throne. Then Zabriskie began stealthily to cover his appallingly long line of "shorts" by making purchases at the lowest obtainable prices--one hundred and four--one hundred and three--one hundred and one--ninety-nine--one hundred and six!

The price rebounded so rapidly and so high that Zabriskie was forced to stop his retreat. Dumont, noting the celerity with which the enemy were escaping under cover of the demoralization, had decided no longer to delay the move for which he had saved himself. He had suddenly exploded under the falling price mine after mine of buying orders that blew it skyward. Zabriskie's retreat was cut off.

But before he had time to reason out this savage renewal of the assault by that mysterious foe whom he thought he had routed, he saw a new and more dreadful peril. Brackett, his firm's secret broker, rushed to him and, to make himself heard through the hurly-burly, shouted into his ear:

"Look what's doing in Woolens!"

Dumont had ordered a general assault upon his enemies, front, rear and both flanks. His forces were now attacking not only through Great Lakes but also through Woolens. Two apparently opposing sets of his brokers were trading in Woolens, were hammering the price down, down, a point, an eighth, a half, a quarter, at a time. The sweat burst out all over Zabriskie's body and his eyes rolled wildly. He was caught among four fires:

To continue to sell Great Lakes in face of its rising price--that was ruin. To cease to sell it and so let its price go up to where he could not buy when settlement time came--that was ruin. To sell Woolens, to help batter down its price, to shrink the value of his enormous investment in it--ruin again. To buy Woolens in order to hold up its price, to do it when he would need all obtainable cash to extricate him from the Great Lakes entanglement--ruin, certain ruin.

His judgment was gone; his brute instinct of fighting was dominant; he began to strike out wildly, his blows falling either nowhere or upon himself.

At the Woolens post he was buying in the effort to sustain its price, buying stock that might be worthless when he got it--and that he might not be able to pay for. At the Great Lakes post he was selling in the effort to force the price down, selling more and more of a stock he did not have and---- At last the thought flashed into his befuddled brain: "There may be a corner in Great Lakes. What if there were no stock to be had?"

He struck his hands against the sides of his head. "Trapped!" he groaned, then bellowed in Brackett's ear. "Sell Woolens--do the best you can to keep the price up, but sell at any price! We must have money--all we can get! And tell Farley"--Farley was Brackett's partner--"to buy Great Lakes--buy all he can get--at any price. Somebody's trying to corner us!"

He felt--with an instinct he could not question--that there was indeed a corner in Great Lakes, that he and his house and their associates were caught. Caught with promises to deliver thousands upon thousands of shares of Great Lakes, when Great Lakes could be had only of the mysterious cornerer, and at whatever price he might choose to ask!

"If we've got to go down," he said to himself, "I'll see that it's a tremendous smash anyhow, and that we ain't alone in it." For he had in him the stuff that makes a man lead a forlorn hope with a certain joy in the very hopelessness of it.

The scene on the day of Dumont's downfall was a calm in comparison with the scene which Dumont, sitting alone among the piled-up coils of ticker-tape, was reconstructing from its, to him, vivid second-by-second sketchings.

The mysterious force which had produced a succession of earthquakes moved horribly on, still in mystery impenetrable, to produce a cataclysm. In the midst of the chaos two vast whirlpools formed--one where Great Lakes sucked down men and

fortunes, the other where Woolens drew some down to destruction, flung others up to wealth. Then Rumor, released by Tavistock when Dumont saw that the crisis had arrived, ran hot foot through the Exchange, screaming into the ears of the brokers, shrieking through the telephones, howling over the telegraph wires, "A corner! A corner! Great Lakes is cornered!" Thousands besides the Fanning-Smith coterie had been gambling in Great Lakes, had sold shares they did not have. And now all knew that to get them they must go to the unknown, but doubtless merciless, master-gambler--unless they could save themselves by instantly buying elsewhere before the steel jaws of the corner closed and clinched.

Reason fled, and self-control. The veneer of civilization was torn away to the last shred; and men, turned brute again, gave themselves up to the elemental passions of the brute.

In the quiet, beautiful room in upper Fifth Avenue was Dumont in his wine-colored wadded silk dressing-gown and white silk pajamas. The floor near his lounge was littered with the snake-like coils of ticker-tape. They rose almost to his knees as he sat and through telephone and ticker drank in the massacre of his making, glutted himself with the joy of the vengeance he was taking--on his enemies, on his false or feeble friends, on the fickle public that had trampled and spat upon him. His wet hair was hanging in strings upon his forehead. His face was flushed and his green-gray eyes gleamed like a mad dog's. At intervals a jeer or a grunt of gratified appetite ripped from his mouth or nose. Like a great lean spider he lay hid in the center of that vast net of electric wires, watching his prey writhe helpless. Pauline, made uneasy by his long isolation, opened his door and looked--glanced, rather. As she closed it, in haste to shut from view that spectacle of a hungry monster at its banquet of living flesh, Culver saw her face. Such an expression an angel might have, did it chance to glance down from the battlements of heaven and, before it could turn away, catch a glimpse of some orgy in hell.

But Dumont did not hear the door open and close. He was at the climax of his feast.

Upon his two maelstroms, sucking in the wreckage from a dozen other explosions as well as from those he had directly caused, he could see as well as if he were among the fascinated, horrified spectators in the galleries of the Exchange, the mangled flotsam whirling and descending and ascending. The entire stock list, the entire speculating public of the country was involved. And expression of the emotions everywhere was by telegraph and telephone concentrated in the one hall, upon the faces and bodies of those few hundred brokers. All the passions which love of wealth and dread of want breed in the human animal were there finding vent--all degrees and shades and modes of greed, of hate, of fear, of despair. It was like a shipwreck where the whole fleet is flung upon the reefs, and the sailors, drunk and insane, struggle with death each in his own awful way. It was like the rout where frenzied victors ride after and among frenzied vanquished to shoot and stab and saber.

And while this battle, precipitated by the passions of a few "captains of industry," raged in Wall Street and filled the nation with the clamor of ruined or triumphant gamblers, ten-score thousand toilers in the two great enterprises directly involved toiled tranquilly on--herding sheep and shearing them, weaving cloths and dyeing them, driving engines, handling freight, conducting trains, usefully busy, adding to the sum of human happiness, subtracting from the sum of human misery.

At three o'clock Dumont sank back among his cushions and pillows. His child, his other self, his Woolens Monopoly, was again his own; his enemies were under his heel, as much so as those heaps and coils of ticker-tape he had been churning in his excitement. "I'm dead tired," he muttered, his face ghastly, his body relaxed in utter exhaustion.

He closed his eyes. "I must sleep--I've earned it. To-morrow"--a smile flitted round his mouth--"I'll hang their hides where every coyote and vulture can see."

Toward four o'clock in came Doctor Sackett and Culver. The room was flooded with light--the infinite light of the late-spring afternoon reflected on the white enamel and white brocade of walls and furniture. On the floor in the heaps and coils of ticker-tape lay Dumont.

In his struggles the tape had wound round and round his legs, his arms, his neck. It lay in a curling, coiling mat, like a serpent's head, upon his throat, where his hands clutched the collar of his pajamas.

Sackett knelt beside him, listening at his chest, feeling for his pulse in vain. And Culver stood by, staring stupidly at the now worthless instrument of his ambition for wealth and power.

XXVIII.

AFTER THE LONG WINTER.

Within two hours Langdon, in full control, had arranged with Tavistock to make the imperiled victory secure. Thus, not until the next day but one did it come out that the cataclysm had been caused by a man ruined and broken and with his back against death's door to hold it shut; that Dumont himself had turned the triumphing host of his enemies into a flying mob, in its panic flinging away its own possessions as well as its booty.

Perhaps the truth never would have been known, perhaps Langdon would have bribed Tavistock to silence and would have posed as the conquering genius, had he found out a day earlier how Dumont had put himself in funds. As it was, this discovery did not come too late for him to seize the opportunity that was his through Dumont's secret methods, Pauline's indifference to wealth and his own unchecked authority. He has got many an hour of--strictly

private--mental gymnastics out of the moral problem he saw, in his keeping for himself and Gladys the spoils he gathered up. He is inclined to think he was intelligent rather than right; but, knowing his weakness for self-criticism, he never gives a positive verdict against himself. That, however, is unimportant, as he is not the man to permit conscience to influence conduct in grave matters.

He feels that, in any case, he did not despoil Pauline or Gardiner. For, after he had told her what Dumont did--and to protect himself he hastened to tell it--she said: "Whatever there may be, it's all for Gardiner. I waive my own rights, if I have any. But you must give me your word of honor that you won't let anything tainted pass to him." Langdon, judging with the delicacy of a man of honor put on honor, was able to find little such wealth.

He gives himself most of the credit for Gardiner's turning out so well--"Inherited riches are a hopeless handicap," he often says to Gladys when they are talking over the future of their children.

Pauline--

The first six months of her new life, of her resumed life, she spent in Europe with her father and mother and Gardiner. Late in the fall they were back at Saint X, at the old house in Jefferson Street. In the following June came Scarborough. She was in the garden, was waiting for him, was tying up a tall rose, whose splendid, haughty head had bent under the night's rain.

He was quite near her when she heard his step and turned. He stood, looked at her--the look she had seen that last afternoon at Battle Field. He came slowly up and took both her hands.

"After all the waiting and longing and hoping," he said, "at last--you! I can't put it into words--except to say--just--Pauline!"

She drew a long breath; her gaze met his. And in her eyes he saw a flame that had never shone clearly there before--the fire of her own real self, free and proud. "Once you told me about your father and mother--how he cared--cared always."

"I remember," he answered.

"Well--I--I," said Pauline, "I care as SHE must have cared when she gave him herself--and YOU."

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