

Dwelling Place of Light, the — Volume 2 eBook

Dwelling Place of Light, the — Volume 2 by Winston Churchill

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By WINSTON CHURCHILL

Volume 2

CHAPTER IX

At certain moments during the days that followed the degree of tension her relationship with Ditmar had achieved tested the limits of Janet's ingenuity and powers of resistance. Yet the sense of mastery at being able to hold such a man in leash was by no means unpleasurable to a young woman of her vitality and spirit. There was always the excitement that the leash might break—and then what? Here was a situation, she knew instinctively, that could not last, one fraught with all sorts of possibilities, intoxicating or abhorrent to contemplate; and for that very reason fascinating. When she was away from Ditmar and tried to think about it she fell into an abject perplexity, so full was it of anomalies and contradictions, of conflicting impulses; so far beyond her knowledge and experience. For Janet had been born in an age which is rapidly discarding blanket morality and taboos, which has as yet to achieve the morality of scientific knowledge, of the individual instance. Tradition, convention, the awful examples portrayed for gain in the movies, even her mother's pessimistic attitude in regard to the freedom with which the sexes mingle to-day were powerless to influence her. The thought, however, that she might fundamentally resemble her sister Lise, despite a fancied superiority, did occasionally shake her and bring about a revulsion against Ditmar. Janet's problem was in truth, though she failed so to specialize it, the supreme problem of our time: what is the path to self-realization? how achieve emancipation from the commonplace?

Was she in love with Ditmar? The question was distasteful, she avoided it, for enough of the tatters of orthodox Christianity clung to her to cause her to feel shame when she contemplated the feelings he aroused in her. It was when she asked herself what his intentions were that her resentment burned, pride and a sense of her own value convinced her that he had deeply insulted her in not offering marriage. Plainly, he did not intend to offer marriage; on the other hand, if he had done so, a profound, self-respecting and moral instinct in her would, in her present mood, have led her to refuse. She felt a fine scorn for the woman who, under the circumstances, would insist upon a bond and all a man's worldly goods in return for that which it was her privilege to give freely; while the notion of servility, of economic dependence—though she did not so phrase it—repelled her far more than the possibility of social ruin.

This she did not contemplate at all; her impulse to leave Hampton and Ditmar had nothing to do with that....

Away from Ditmar, this war of inclinations possessed her waking mind, invaded her dreams. When she likened herself to the other exploited beings he drove to run his mills and fill his orders,—of whom Mr. Siddons had spoken—her resolution to leave Hampton gained such definite ascendancy that her departure seemed only a matter of hours.

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In this perspective Ditmar appeared so ruthless, his purpose to use her and fling her away so palpable, that she despised herself for having hesitated. A longing for retaliation consumed her; she wished to hurt him before she left. At such times, however, unforeseen events invariably intruded to complicate her feelings and alter her plans. One evening at supper, for instance, when she seemed at last to have achieved the comparative peace of mind that follows a decision after struggle, she gradually became aware of an outburst from Hannah concerning the stove, the condition of which for many months had been a menace to the welfare of the family. Edward, it appeared, had remarked mildly on the absence of beans.

"Beans!" Hannah cried. "You're lucky to have any supper at all. I just wish I could get you to take a look at that oven—there's a hole you can put your hand through, if you've a mind to. I've done my best, I've made out to patch it from time to time, and to-day I had Mr. Tiernan in. He says it's a miracle I've been able to bake anything. A new one'll cost thirty dollars, and I don't know where the money's coming from to buy it. And the fire-box is most worn through."

"Well, mother, we'll see what we can do," said Edward.

"You're always seeing what you can do, but I notice you never do anything," retorted Hannah; and Edward had the wisdom not to reply. Beside his place lay a lengthy, close-written letter, and from time to time, as he ate his canned pears, his hand turned over one of its many sheets.

"It's from Eben Wheeler, says he's been considerably troubled with asthma," he observed presently. "His mother was a Bumpus, a daughter of Caleb—descended from Robert, who went from Dolton to Tewksbury in 1816, and fought in the war of 1812. I've told you about him. This Caleb was born in '53, and he's living now with his daughter's family in Detroit.... Son-in-law's named Nott, doing well with a construction company. Now I never could find out before what became of Robert's descendants. He married Sarah Styles" (reading painfully) "and they had issue, John, Robert, Anne, Susan, Eliphalet. John went to Middlebury, Vermont, and married "

Hannah, gathering up the plates, clattered them together noisily.

"A lot of good it does us to have all that information about Eben Wheeler's asthma!" she complained. "It'll buy us a new stove, I guess. Him and his old Bumpus papers! If the house burned down over our heads that's all he'd think of."

As she passed to and fro from the dining-room to the kitchen Hannah's lamentations continued, grew more and more querulous. Accustomed as Janet was to these frequent arraignments of her father's inefficiency, it was gradually borne in upon her now—despite a preoccupation with her own fate—that the affair thus plaintively voiced by her

mother was in effect a family crisis of the first magnitude. She was stirred anew to anger and revolt against a

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life so precarious and sordid as to be threatened in its continuity by the absurd failure of a stove, when, glancing at her sister, she felt a sharp pang of self-conviction, of self-disgust. Was she, also, like that, indifferent and self-absorbed? Lise, in her evening finery, looking occasionally at the clock, was awaiting the hour set for a rendezvous, whiling away the time with the Boston evening sheet whose glaring red headlines stretched across the page. When the newspaper fell to her lap a dreamy expression clouded Lise's eyes. She was thinking of some man! Quickly Janet looked away, at her father, only to be repelled anew by the expression, almost of fatuity, she discovered on his face as he bent over the letter once more. Suddenly she experienced an overwhelming realization of the desperation of Hannah's plight,—the destiny of spending one's days, without sympathy, toiling in the confinement of these rooms to supply their bodily needs. Never had a destiny seemed so appalling. And yet Janet resented that pity. The effect of it was to fetter and inhibit; from the moment of its intrusion she was no longer a free agent, to leave Hampton and Ditmar when she chose. Without her, this family was helpless. She rose, and picked up some of the dishes. Hannah snatched them from her hands.

"Leave 'em alone, Janet!" she said with unaccustomed sharpness. "I guess I ain't too feeble to handle 'em yet."

And a flash of new understanding came to Janet. The dishes were vicarious, a substitute for that greater destiny out of which Hannah had been cheated by fate. A substitute, yes, and perhaps become something of a mania, like her father's Bumpus papers.... Janet left the room swiftly, entered the bedroom, put on her coat and hat, and went out. Across the street the light in Mr. Tiernan's shop was still burning, and through the window she perceived Mr. Tiernan himself tilted back in his chair, his feet on the table, the tip of his nose pointed straight at the ceiling. When the bell betrayed the opening of the door he let down his chair on the floor with a bang.

"Why, it's Miss Janet!" he exclaimed. "How are you this evening, now? I was just hoping some one would pay me a call."

Twinkling at her, he managed, somewhat magically, to dispel her temper of pessimism, and she was moved to reply:—"You know you were having a beautiful time, all by yourself."

"A beautiful time, is it? Maybe it's because I was dreaming of some young lady a-coming to pay me a visit."

"Well, dreams never come up to expectations, do they?"

"Then it's dreaming I am, still," retorted Mr. Tiernan, quickly.

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Janet laughed. His tone, though bantering, was respectful. One of the secrets of Mr. Tiernan's very human success was due to his ability to estimate his fellow creatures. His manner of treating Janet, for instance, was quite different from that he employed in dealing with Lise. In the course of one interview he had conveyed to Lise, without arousing her antagonism, the conviction that it was wiser to trust him than to attempt to pull wool over his eyes. Janet had the intelligence to trust him; and to-night, as she faced him, the fact was brought home to her with peculiar force that this wiry-haired little man was the person above all others of her immediate acquaintance to seek in time of trouble. It was his great quality. Moreover, Mr. Tiernan, even in his morning greetings as she passed, always contrived to convey to her, in some unaccountable fashion, the admiration and regard in which he held her, and the effect of her contact with him was invariably to give her a certain objective image of herself, an increased self-confidence and self-respect. For instance, by the light dancing in Mr. Tiernan's eyes as he regarded her, she saw herself now as the mainstay of the helpless family in the clay-yellow flat across the street. And there was nothing, she was convinced, Mr. Tiernan did not know about that family. So she said:—"I've come to see about the stove."

"Sure," he replied, as much as to say that the visit was not unexpected. "Well, I've been thinking about it, Miss Janet. I've got a stove here I know'll suit your mother. It's a Reading, it's almost new. Ye'd better be having a look at it yourself."

He led her into a chaos of stoves, grates, and pipes at the back of the store.

"It's in need of a little polish," he added, as he turned on a light, "but it's sound, and a good baker, and economical with coal." He opened the oven and took off the lids.

"I'm afraid I don't know much about stoves," she told him. "But I'll trust your judgment. How much is it?" she inquired hesitatingly.

He ran his hand through his corkscrewed hair, his familiar gesture.

"Well, I'm willing to let ye have it for twenty-five dollars. If that's too much—mebbe we can find another."

"Can you put it in to-morrow morning?" she asked.

"I can that," he said. She drew out her purse. "Ye needn't be paying for it all at once," he protested, laying a hand on her arm. "You won't be running away."

"Oh, I'd rather—I have the money," she declared hurriedly; and she turned her back that he might not perceive, when she had extracted the bills, how little was left in her purse.

"I'll wager ye won't be wanting another soon," he said, as he escorted her to the door. And he held it open, politely, looking after her, until she had crossed the street, calling out a cheerful "Goodnight" that had in it something of a benediction. She avoided the

dining-room and went straight to bed, in a strange medley of feelings. The self-sacrifice had brought a certain self-satisfaction not wholly unpleasant. She had been equal to the situation, and a part of her being approved of this,—a part which had been suppressed in another mood wherein she had become convinced that self-realization lay elsewhere. Life was indeed a bewildering thing....

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The next morning, at breakfast, though her mother's complaints continued, Janet was silent as to her purchase, and she lingered on her return home in the evening because she now felt a reluctance to appear in the role of protector and preserver of the family. She would have preferred, if possible, to give the stove anonymously. Not that the expression of Hannah's gratitude was maudlin; she glared at Janet when she entered the dining-room and exclaimed: "You hadn't ought to have gone and done it!"

And Janet retorted, with almost equal vehemence:—"Somebody had to do it—didn't they? Who else was there?"

"It's a shame for you to spend your money on such things. You'd ought to save it you'll need it," Hannah continued illogically.

"It's lucky I had the money," said Janet.

Both Janet and Hannah knew that these recriminations, from the other, were the explosive expressions of deep feeling. Janet knew that her mother was profoundly moved by her sacrifice. She herself was moved by Hannah's plight, but tenderness and pity were complicated by a renewed sense of rebellion against an existence that exacted such a situation.

"I hope the stove's all right, mother," she said. "Mr. Tiernan seemed to think it was a good one."

"It's a different thing," declared Hannah. "I was just wondering this evening, before you came in, how I ever made out to cook anything on the other. Come and see how nice it looks."

Janet followed her into the kitchen. As they stood close together gazing at the new purchase Janet was uncomfortably aware of drops that ran a little way in the furrows of Hannah's cheeks, stopped, and ran on again. She seized her apron and clapped it to her face.

"You hadn't ought to be made to do it!" she sobbed.

And Janet was suddenly impelled to commit an act rare in their intercourse. She kissed her, swiftly, on the cheek, and fled from the room....

Supper was an ordeal. Janet did not relish her enthronement as a heroine, she deplored and even resented her mother's attitude toward her father, which puzzled her; for the studied cruelty of it seemed to belie her affection for him. Every act and gesture and speech of Hannah's took on the complexion of an invidious reference to her reliability as compared with Edward's worthlessness as a provider; and she contrived in some sort to make the meal a sacrament in commemoration of her elder daughter's act.

"I guess you notice the difference in that pork," she would exclaim, and when he praised it and attributed its excellence to Janet's gift Hannah observed: "As long as you ain't got a son, you're lucky to have a daughter like her!"

Janet squirmed. Her father's acceptance of his comparative worthlessness was so abject that her pity was transferred to him, though she scorned him, as on former occasions, for the self-depreciation that made him powerless before her mother's reproaches. After the meal was over he sat listlessly on the sofa, like a visitor whose presence is endured, pathetically refraining from that occupation in which his soul found refreshment and peace, the compilation of the Bumpus genealogy. That evening the papers remained under the lid of the desk in the corner, untouched.

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What troubled Janet above all, however, was the attitude of Lise, who also came in for her share of implied reproach. Of late Lise had become an increased source of anxiety to Hannah, who was unwisely resolved to make this occasion an object lesson. And though parental tenderness had often moved her to excuse and defend Lise for an increasing remissness in failing to contribute to the household expenses, she was now quite relentless in her efforts to wring from Lise an acknowledgment of the nobility of her sister's act, of qualities in Janet that she, Lise, might do well to cultivate. Lise was equally determined to withhold any such acknowledgment; in her face grew that familiar mutinous look that Hannah invariably failed to recognize as a danger signal; and with it another—the sophisticated expression of one who knows life and ridicules the lack of such knowledge in others. Its implication was made certain when the two girls were alone in their bedroom after supper. Lise, feverishly occupied with her toilet, on her departure broke the silence there by inquiring:—"Say, if I had your easy money, I might buy a stove, too. How much does Ditmar give you, sweetheart?"

Janet, infuriated, flew at her sister. Lise struggled to escape.

"Leave me go" she whimpered in genuine alarm, and when at length she was released she went to the mirror and began straightening her hat, which had flopped to one side of her head. "I didn't mean nothin', I was only kiddie' you—what's the use of gettin' nutty over a jest?"

"I'm not like-you," said Janet.

"I was only kiddin', I tell you," insisted Lise, with a hat pin in her mouth. "Forget it."

When Lise had gone out Janet sat down in the rocking-chair and began to rock agitatedly. What had really made her angry, she began to perceive, was the realization of a certain amount of truth in her sister's intimation concerning Ditmar. Why should she have, in Lise, continually before her eyes a degraded caricature of her own aspirations and ideals? or was Lise a mirror—somewhat tarnished, indeed—in which she read the truth about herself? For some time Janet had more than suspected that her sister possessed a new lover—a lover whom she refrained from discussing; an ominous sign, since it had been her habit to dangle her conquests before Janet's eyes, to discuss their merits and demerits with an engaging though cynical freedom. Although the existence of this gentleman was based on evidence purely circumstantial, Janet was inclined to believe him of a type wholly different from his predecessors; and the fact that his attentions were curiously intermittent and irregular inclined her to the theory that he was not a resident of Hampton. What was he like? It revolted her to reflect that he might in some ways possibly resemble Ditmar. Thus he became the object of a morbid speculation, especially at such times as this, when Lise attired herself in her new winter finery and went forth to

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meet him. Janet, also, had recently been self-convicted of sharing with Lise the same questionable tendency toward self-adornment to please the eye of man. The very next Saturday night after she had indulged in that mad extravagance of the blue suit, Lise had brought home from the window of The Paris in Faber Street a hat that had excited the cupidity and admiration of Miss Schuler and herself, and in front of which they had stood languishing on three successive evenings. In its acquisition Lise had expended almost the whole of a week's salary. Its colour was purple, on three sides were massed drooping lilac feathers, but over the left ear the wide brim was caught up and held by a crescent of brilliant paste stones. Shortly after this purchase—the next week, in fact,—The Paris had alluringly and craftily displayed, for the tempting sum of \$6.29, the very cloak ordained by providence to “go” with the hat. Miss Schuler declared it would be a crime to fail to take advantage of such an opportunity but the trouble was that Lise had had to wait for two more pay-days and endure the suspense arising from the possibility that some young lady of taste and means might meanwhile become its happy proprietor. Had not the saleslady been obdurate, Lise would have had it on credit; but she did succeed, by an initial payment the ensuing Saturday, in having it withdrawn from public gaze. The second Saturday Lise triumphantly brought the cloak home; a velvet cloak,—if the eyes could be believed,—velvet bordering on plush, with a dark purple ground delicately and artistically spotted with a lilac to match the hat feathers, and edged with a material which—if not too impudently examined and no questions asked—might be mistaken, by the uninitiated male, for the fur of a white fox. Both investments had been made, needless to say, on the strength of Janet's increased salary; and Lise, when Janet had surprised her before the bureau rapturously surveying the combination, justified herself with a defiant apology.

“I just had to have something—what with winter coming on,” she declared, seizing the hand mirror in order to view the back. “You might as well get your clothes chick, while you're about it—and I didn't have to dig up twenty bones, neither—nor anything like it—” a reflection on Janet's most blue suit and her abnormal extravagance. For it was Lise's habit to carry the war into the enemy's country. “Sadie's dippy about it—says it puts her in mind of one of the swells snapshotted in last Sunday's supplement. Well, dearie, how does the effect get you?” and she wheeled around for her sister's inspection.

“If you take my advice, you'll be careful not to be caught out in the rain.”

“What's chewin' you now?” demanded Lise. She was not lacking in imagination of a certain sort, and Janet's remark did not fail in its purpose of summoning up a somewhat abject image of herself in wet velvet and bedraggled feathers—an image suggestive of a certain hunted type of woman Lise and her kind held in peculiar horror. And she was the more resentful because she felt, instinctively, that the memory of this suggestion would never be completely eradicated: it would persist, like a canker, to mar the completeness of her enjoyment of these clothes. She swung on Janet furiously.

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"I get you, all right!" she cried. "I guess I know what's eatin' you! You've got money to burn and you're sore because I spend mine to buy what I need. You don't know how to dress yourself any more than one of them Polak girls in the mills, and you don't want anybody else to look nice."

And Janet was impelled to make a retort of almost equal crudity:—"If I were a man and saw you in those clothes I wouldn't wait for an introduction. You asked me what I thought. I don't care about the money!" she exclaimed passionately. "I've often told you you were pretty enough without having to wear that kind of thing—to make men stare at you."

"I want to know if I don't always look like a lady! And there's no man living would try to pick me up more than once." The nasal note in Lise's voice had grown higher and shriller, she was almost weeping with anger. "You want me to go 'round lookin' like a floorwasher."

"I'd rather look like a floorwasher than—than another kind of woman," Janet declared.

"Well, you've got your wish, sweetheart," said Lise. "You needn't be scared anybody will pick you up."

"I'm not," said Janet....

This quarrel had taken place a week or so before Janet's purchase of the stove. Hannah, too, was outraged by Lise's costume, and had also been moved to protest; futile protest. Its only effect on Lise was to convince her of the existence of a prearranged plan of persecution, to make her more secretive and sullen than ever before.

"Sometimes I just can't believe she's my daughter," Hannah said dejectedly to Janet when they were alone together in the kitchen after Lise had gone out. "I'm fond of her because she's my own flesh and blood—I'm ashamed of it, but I can't help it. I guess it's what the minister in Dolton used to call a visitation. I suppose I deserve it, but sometimes I think maybe if your father had been different he might have been able to put a stop to the way she's going on. She ain't like any of the Wenches, nor any of the Bumpuses, so far's I'm able to find out. She just don't seem to have any notion about right and wrong. Well, the world has got all jumbled up—it beats me."

Hannah wrung out the mop viciously and hung it over the sink.

"I used to hope some respectable man would come along, but I've quit hopin'. I don't know as any respectable man would want Lise, or that I could honestly wish him to have her."

“Mother!” protested Janet. Sometimes, in those conversations, she was somewhat paradoxically impelled to defend her sister.

“Well, I don’t,” insisted Hannah, “that’s a fact. I’ll tell you what she looks like in that hat and cloak—a bad woman. I don’t say she is—I don’t know what I’d do if I thought she was, but I never expected my daughter to look like one.”

“Oh, Lise can take care of herself,” Janet said, in spite of certain recent misgivings.

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"This town's Sodom and Gomorrah rolled into one," declared Hannah who, from early habit, was occasionally prone to use scriptural parallels. And after a moment's silence she inquired: "Who's this man that's payin' her attention now?"

"I don't know," replied Janet, "I don't know that there's anybody."

"I guess there is," said Hannah. "I used to think that that Wiley was low enough, but I could see him. It was some satisfaction. I could know the worst, anyhow.... I guess it's about time for another flood."

This talk had left Janet in one of these introspective states so frequent in her recent experience. Her mother had used the words "right" and "wrong." But what was "right," or "wrong?" There was no use asking Hannah, who—she perceived—was as confused and bewildered as herself. Did she refuse to encourage Mr. Ditmar because it was wrong? because, if she acceded to his desires, and what were often her own, she would be punished in an after life? She was not at all sure whether she believed in an after life,—a lack of faith that had, of late, sorely troubled her friend Eda Rawle, who had "got religion" from an itinerant evangelist and was now working off, in a "live" church, some of the emotional idealism which is the result of a balked sex instinct in young unmarried women of a certain mentality and unendowed with good looks. This was not, of course, Janet's explanation of the change in her friend, of whom she now saw less and less. They had had arguments, in which neither gained any ground. For the first time in their intercourse, ideas had come between them, Eda having developed a surprising self-assertion when her new convictions were attacked, a dogged loyalty to a scheme of salvation that Janet found neither inspiring nor convincing. She resented being prayed for, and an Eda fervent in good works bored her more than ever. Eda was deeply pained by Janet's increasing avoidance of her company, yet her heroine-worship persisted. Her continued regard for her friend might possibly be compared to the attitude of an orthodox Baptist who has developed a hobby, let us say, for Napoleon Bonaparte.

Janet was not wholly without remorse. She valued Eda's devotion, she sincerely regretted the fact, on Eda's account as well as her own, that it was a devotion of no use to her in the present crisis nor indeed in any crisis likely to confront her in life: she had felt instinctively from the first that the friendship was not founded on, mental harmony, and now it was brought home to her that Eda's solution could never be hers. Eda would have been thrilled on learning of Ditmar's attentions, would have advocated the adoption of a campaign leading up to matrimony. In matrimony, for Eda, the soul was safe. Eda would have been horrified that Janet should have dallied with any other relationship; God would punish her. Janet, in her conflict between alternate longing and repugnance, was not concerned with the laws and retributions of God. She felt, indeed, the need of counsel, and knew not where to turn for it, —the modern need for other than supernatural sanctions. She did not resist her desire for Ditmar because she believed, in the orthodox sense, that it was wrong, but because it involved a loss of self-respect, a

surrender of the personality from the very contemplation of which she shrank. She was a true daughter of her time.

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On Friday afternoon, shortly after Ditmar had begun to dictate his correspondence, Mr. Holster, the agent of the Clarendon Mill, arrived and interrupted him. Janet had taken advantage of the opportunity to file away some answered letters when her attention was distracted from her work by the conversation, which had gradually grown louder. The two men were standing by the window, facing one another, in an attitude that struck her as dramatic. Both were vital figures, dominant types which had survived and prevailed in that upper world of unrelenting struggle for supremacy into which, through her relation to Ditmar, she had been projected, and the significance of which she had now begun to realize. She surveyed Holster critically. He was short, heavily built, with an almost grotesque width of shoulder, a muddy complexion, thick lips, and kinky, greasy black hair that glistened in the sun. His nasal voice was complaining, yet distinctly aggressive, and he emphasized his words by gestures. The veins stood out on his forehead. She wondered what his history had been. She compared him to Ditmar, on whose dust-grey face she was quick to detect a look she had seen before—a contraction of the eyes, a tightening of the muscles of the jaw. That look, and the peculiarly set attitude of the body accompanying it, aroused in her a responsive sense of championship.

"All right, Ditmar," she heard the other exclaim. "I tell you again you'll never be able to pull it off."

Ditmar's laugh was short, defiant.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Why not! Because the fifty-four hour law goes into effect in January."

"What's that got to do with it?" Ditmar demanded.

"You'll see—you'll remember what I told you fellows at the conference after that bill went through and that damned demagogue of a governor insisted on signing it. I said, if we tried to cut wages down to a fifty-four hour basis we'd have a strike on our hands in every mill in Hampton,—didn't I? I said it would cost us millions of dollars, and make all the other strikes we've had here look like fifty cents. Didn't I say that? Hammond, our president, backed me up, and Rogers of the wool people. You remember? You were the man who stood out against it, and they listened to you, they voted to cut down the pay and say nothing about it. Wait until those first pay envelopes are opened after that law goes into effect. You'll see what'll happen! You'll never be able to fill that Bradlaugh order in God's world."

"Oh hell," retorted Ditmar, contemptuously. "You're always for lying down, Holster. Why don't you hand over your mill to the unions and go to work on a farm? You might as well, if you're going to let the unions run the state. Why not have socialism right now,

and cut out the agony? When they got the politicians to make the last cut from fifty-six to fifty-four and we kept on payin' 'em for fifty-six, against my advice, what happened?

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Did they thank us? I guess not. Were they contented? Not on your life. They went right on agitating, throwing scares into the party conventions and into the House and Senate Committees,—and now it's fifty-four hours. It'll be fifty in a couple of years, and then we'll have to scrap our machinery and turn over the trade to the South and donate our mills to the state for insane asylums."

"No, if we handle this thing right, we'll have the public on our side. They're getting sick of the unions now."

Ditmar went to the desk for a cigar, bit it off, and lighted it.

"The public!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "A whole lot of good they'll do us."

Holster approached him, menacingly, until the two men stood almost touching, and for a moment it seemed to Janet as if the agent of the Clarendon were ready to strike Ditmar. She held her breath, her blood ran faster,—the conflict between these two made an elemental appeal.

"All right—remember what I say—wait and see where you come out with that order." Holster's voice trembled with anger. He hesitated, and left the office abruptly. Ditmar stood gazing after him for a moment and then, taking his cigar from his mouth, turned and smiled at Janet and seated himself in his chair. His eyes, still narrowed, had in them a gleam of triumph that thrilled her. Combat seemed to stimulate and energize him.

"He thought he could bluff me into splitting that Bradlaugh order with the Clarendon," Ditmar exclaimed. "Well, he'll have to guess again. I've got his number." He began to turn over his letters. "Let's see, where were we? Tell Caldwell not to let in any more idiots, and shut the door."

Janet obeyed, and when she returned Ditmar was making notes with a pencil on a pad. The conversation with Holster had given her a new idea of Ditmar's daring in attempting to fill the Bradlaugh order with the Chippering Mills alone, had aroused in her more strongly than ever that hot loyalty to the mills with which he had inspired her; and that strange surge of sympathy, of fellow-feeling for the operatives she had experienced after the interview with Mr. Siddons, of rebellion against him, the conviction that she also was one of the slaves he exploited, had wholly disappeared. Ditmar was the Chippering Mills, and she, somehow, enlisted once again on his side.

"By the way," he said abruptly, "you won't mention this—I know."

"Won't mention what?" she asked.

“This matter about the pay envelopes—that we don’t intend to continue giving the operatives fifty-six hours’ pay for fifty-four when this law goes into effect. They’re like animals, most of ’em, they don’t reason, and it might make trouble if it got out now. You understand. They’d have time to brood over it, to get the agitators started. When the time comes they may kick a little, but they’ll quiet down. And it’ll teach ’em a lesson.”

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"I never mention anything I hear in this office," she told him.

"I know you don't," he assured her, apologetically. "I oughtn't to have said that—it was only to put you on your guard, in case you heard it spoken of. You see how important it is, how much trouble an agitator might make by getting them stirred up? You can see what it means to me, with this order on my hands. I've staked everything on it."

"But—when the law goes into effect? when the operatives find out that they are not receiving their full wages—as Mr. Holster said?" Janet inquired.

"Why, they may grumble a little—but I'll be on the lookout for any move. I'll see to that. I'll teach 'em a lesson as to how far they can push this business of shorter hours and equal pay. It's the unskilled workers who are mostly affected, you understand, and they're not organized. If we can keep out the agitators, we're all right. Even then, I'll show 'em they can't come in here and exploit my operatives."

In the mood in which she found herself his self-confidence, his aggressiveness continued to inspire and even to agitate her, to compel her to accept his point of view.

"Why," he continued, "I trust you as I never trusted anybody else. I've told you that before. Ever since you've been here you've made life a different thing for me—just by your being here. I don't know what I'd do without you. You've got so much sense about things—about people,—and I sometimes think you've got almost the same feeling about these mills that I have. You didn't tell me you went through the mills with Caldwell the other day," he added, accusingly.

"I—I forgot," said Janet. "Why should I tell—you?" She knew that all thought of Holster had already slipped from his mind. She did not look up. "If you're not going to finish your letters," she said, a little faintly, "I've got some copying to do."

"You're a deep one," he said. And as he turned to the pile of correspondence she heard him sigh. He began to dictate. She took down his sentences automatically, scarcely knowing what she was writing; he was making love to her as intensely as though his words had been the absolute expression of his desire instead of the commonplace mediums of commercial intercourse. Presently he stopped and began fumbling in one of the drawers of his desk.

"Where is the memorandum I made last week for Percy and Company?"

"Isn't it there?" she asked.

But he continued to fumble, running through the papers and disarranging them until she could stand it no longer.

“You never know where to find anything,” she declared, rising and darting around the desk and bending over the drawer, her deft fingers rapidly separating the papers. She drew forth the memorandum triumphantly.

“There!” she exclaimed. “It was right before your eyes.”

As she thrust it at him his hand closed over hers. She felt him drawing her, irresistibly.

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"Janet!" he said. "For God's sake—you're killing me—don't you know it? I can't stand it any longer!"

"Don't!" she whispered, terror-stricken, straining away from him. "Mr. Ditmar—let me go!"

A silent struggle ensued, she resisting him with all the aroused strength and fierceness of her nature. He kissed her hair, her neck,—she had never imagined such a force as this, she felt herself weakening, welcoming the annihilation of his embrace.

"Mr. Ditmar!" she cried. "Somebody will come in."

Her fingers sank into his neck, she tried to hurt him and by a final effort flung herself free and fled to the other side of the room.

"You little—wildcat!" she heard him exclaim, saw him put his handkerchief to his neck where her fingers had been, saw a red stain on it. "I'll have you yet!"

But even then, as she stood leaning against the wall, motionless save for the surging of her breast, there was about her the same strange, feral inscrutableness. He was baffled, he could not tell what she was thinking. She seemed, unconquered, to triumph over her disarray and the agitation of her body. Then, with an involuntary gesture she raised her hands to her hair, smoothing it, and without seeming haste left the room, not so much as glancing at him, closing the door behind her.

She reached her table in the outer office and sat down, gazing out of the window. The face of the world—the river, the mills, and the bridge—was changed, tinged with a new and unreal quality. She, too, must be changed. She wasn't, couldn't be the same person who had entered that room of Ditmar's earlier in the afternoon! Mr. Caldwell made a commonplace remark, she heard herself answer him. Her mind was numb, only her body seemed swept by fire, by emotions—emotions of fear, of anger, of desire so intense as to make her helpless. And when at length she reached out for a sheet of carbon paper her hand trembled so she could scarcely hold it. Only by degrees was she able to get sufficient control of herself to begin her copying, when she found a certain relief in action—her hands flying over the keys, tearing off the finished sheets, and replacing them with others. She did not want to think, to decide, and yet she knew—something was trying to tell her that the moment for decision had come. She must leave, now. If she stayed on, this tremendous adventure she longed for and dreaded was inevitable. Fear and fascination battled within her. To run away was to deny life; to remain, to taste and savour it. She had tasted it—was it sweet?—that sense of being swept away, engulfed by an elemental power beyond them both, yet in them both? She felt him drawing her to him, and she struggling yet inwardly longing to yield. And the scarlet stain on his handkerchief—when she thought of that her blood throbbed, her face burned.

At last the door of the inner office opened, and Ditmar came out and stood by the rail. His voice was queer, scarcely recognizable.

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"Miss Bumpus—would you mind coming into my room a moment, before you leave?" he said.

She rose instantly and followed him, closing the door behind her, but standing at bay against it, her hand on the knob.

"I'm not going to touch you—you needn't be afraid," he said. Reassured by the unsteadiness of his voice she raised her eyes to perceive that his face was ashy, his manner nervous, apprehensive, conciliatory,—a Ditmar she had difficulty in recognizing. "I didn't mean to frighten, to offend you," he went on. "Something got hold of me. I was crazy, I couldn't help it—I won't do it again, if you'll stay. I give you my word."

She did not reply. After a pause he began again, repeating himself.

"I didn't mean to do it. I was carried away—it all happened before I knew. I—I wouldn't frighten you that way for anything in the world."

Still she was silent.

"For God's sake, speak to me!" he cried. "Say you forgive me—give me another chance!"

But she continued to gaze at him with widened, enigmatic eyes—whether of reproach or contempt or anger he could not say. The situation transcended his experience. He took an uncertain step toward her, as though half expecting her to flee, and stopped.

"Listen!" he pleaded. "I can't talk to you here. Won't you give me a chance to explain—to put myself right? You know what I think of you, how I respect and—admire you. If you'll only let me see you somewhere—anywhere, outside of the office, for a little while, I can't tell you how much I'd appreciate it. I'm sure you don't understand how I feel—I couldn't bear to lose you. I'll be down by the canal—near the bridge—at eight o'clock to-night. I'll wait for you. You'll come? Say you'll come, and give me another chance!"

"Aren't you going to finish your letters?" she asked.

He stared at her in sheer perplexity. "Letters!" he exclaimed. "Damn the letters! Do you think I could write any letters now?"

As a faint ray in dark waters, a gleam seemed to dance in the shadows of her eyes, yet was gone so swiftly that he could not be sure of having seen it. Had she smiled?

"I'll be there," he cried. "I'll wait for you."

She turned from him, opened the door, and went out.

That evening, as Janet was wiping the dishes handed her by her mother, she was repeating to herself “Shall I go—or shan’t I?”—just as if the matter were in doubt. But in her heart she was convinced of its predetermination by some power other than her own volition. With this feeling, that she really had no choice, that she was being guided and impelled, she went to her bedroom after finishing her task. The hands of the old dining-room clock pointed to quarter of eight, and Lise had already made her toilet and departed. Janet opened the wardrobe, looked at the new blue suit hanging so neatly on its wire holder, hesitated,

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and closed the door again. Here, at any rate, seemed a choice. She would not wear that, to-night. She tidied her hair, put on her hat and coat, and went out; but once in the street she did not hurry, though she knew the calmness she apparently experienced to be false: the calmness of fatality, because she was obeying a complicated impulse stronger than herself—an impulse that at times seemed mere curiosity. Somewhere, removed from her immediate consciousness, a storm was raging; she was aware of a disturbance that reached her faintly, like the distant throbbing of the looms she heard when she turned from Faber into West Street. She had not been able to eat any supper. That throbbing of the looms in the night! As it grew louder and louder the tension within her increased, broke its bounds, set her heart to throbbing too—throbbing wildly. She halted, and went on again, precipitately, but once more slowed her steps as she came to West Street and the glare of light at the end of the bridge; at a little distance, under the chequered shadows of the bare branches, she saw something move—a man, Ditmar. She stood motionless as he hurried toward her.

“You’ve come! You’ve forgiven me?” he asked.

“Why were you—down there?” she asked.

“Why? Because I thought—I thought you wouldn’t want anybody to know—”

It was quite natural that he should not wish to be seen; although she had no feeling of guilt, she herself did not wish their meeting known. She resented the subterfuge in him, but she made no comment because his perplexity, his embarrassment were gratifying to her resentment, were restoring her self-possession, giving her a sense of power.

“We can’t stay here,” he went on, after a moment. “Let’s take a little walk—I’ve got a lot to say to you. I want to put myself right.” He tried to take her arm, but she avoided him. They started along the canal in the direction of the Stanley Street bridge. “Don’t you care for me a little?” he demanded.

“Why should I?” she parried.

“Then—why did you come?”

“To hear what you had to say.”

“You mean—about this afternoon?”

“Partly,” said Janet.

“Well—we’ll talk it all over. I wanted to explain about this afternoon, especially. I’m sorry—”

“Sorry!” she exclaimed.

The vehemence of her rebuke—for he recognized it as such—took him completely aback. Thus she was wont, at the most unexpected moments, to betray the passion within her, the passion that made him sick with desire. How was he to conquer a woman of this type, who never took refuge in the conventional tactics of her sex, as he had known them?

“I didn’t mean that,” he explained desperately. “My God—to feel you, to have you in my arms—! I was sorry because I frightened you. But when you came near me that way I just couldn’t help it. You drove me to it.”

“Drove you to it!”

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"You don't understand, you don't know how—how wonderful you are. You make me crazy. I love you, I want you as I've never wanted any woman before—in a different way. I can't explain it. I've got so that I can't live without you." He flung his arm toward the lights of the mills. "That—that used to be everything to me, I lived for it. I don't say I've been a saint—but I never really cared anything about any woman until I knew you, until that day I went through the office and saw you what you were. You don't understand, I tell you. I'm sorry for what I did to-day because it offended you—but you drove me to it. Most of the time you seem cold, you're like an iceberg, you make me think you hate me, and then all of a sudden you'll be kind, as you were the other night, as you seemed this afternoon—you make me think I've got a chance, and then, when you came near me, when you touched my hand—why, I didn't know what I was doing. I just had to have you. A man like me can't stand it."

"Then I'd better go away," she said. "I ought to have gone long ago."

"Why?" he cried. "Why? What's your reason? Why do you want to ruin my life? You've—you've woven yourself into it—you're a part of it. I never knew what it was to care for a woman before, I tell you. There's that mill," he repeated, naively. "I've made it the best mill in the country, I've got the biggest order that ever came to any mill—if you went away I wouldn't care a continental about it. If you went away I wouldn't have any ambition left. Because you're a part of it, don't you see? You—you sort of stand for it now, in my mind. I'm not literary, I can't express what I'd like to say, but sometimes I used to think of that mill as a woman—and now you've come along—" Ditmar stopped, for lack of adequate eloquence.

She smiled in the darkness at his boyish fervour,—one of the aspects of the successful Ditmar, the Ditmar of great affairs, that appealed to her most strongly. She was softened, touched; she felt, too, a responsive thrill to such a desire as his. Yet she did not reply. She could not. She was learning that emotion is never simple. And some inhibition, the identity of which was temporarily obscured still persisted, pervading her consciousness....

They were crossing the bridge at Stanley Street, now deserted, and by common consent they paused in the middle of it, leaning on the rail. The hideous chocolate factory on the point was concealed by the night,—only the lights were there, trembling on the surface of the river. Against the flushed sky above the city were silhouetted the high chimneys of the power plant. Ditmar's shoulder touched hers. He was still pleading, but she seemed rather to be listening to the symphony of the unseen waters falling over the dam. His words were like that, suggestive of a torrent into which she longed to fling herself, yet refrained, without knowing why. Her hands tightened on the rail; suddenly she let it

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go, and led the way toward the unfrequented district of the south side. It was the road to Silliston, but she had forgotten that. Ditmar, regaining her side, continued his pleading. He spoke of his loneliness, which he had never realized. He needed her. And she experienced an answering pang. It still seemed incredible that he, too, who had so much, should feel that gnawing need for human sympathy and understanding that had so often made her unhappy. And because of the response his need aroused in her she did not reflect whether he could fulfil her own need, whether he could ever understand her; whether, at any time, she could unreservedly pour herself out to him.

"I don't see why you want me," she interrupted him at last. "I've never had any advantages, I don't know anything. I've never had a chance to learn. I've told you that before."

"What difference does that make? You've got more sense than any woman I ever saw," he declared.

"It makes a great deal of difference to me," she insisted—and the sound of these words on her own lips was like a summons arousing her from a dream. The sordidness of her life, its cruel lack of opportunity in contrast with the gifts she felt to be hers, and on which he had dwelt, was swept back into her mind. Self-pity, dignity, and inherent self-respect struggled against her woman's desire to give; an inherited racial pride whispered that she was worthy of the best, but because she had lacked the chance, he refrained from offering her what he would have laid at the feet of another woman.

"I'll give you advantages—there's nothing I wouldn't give you. Why won't you come to me? I'll take care of you."

"Do you think I want to be taken care of?" She wheeled on him so swiftly that he started back. "Is that what you think I want?"

"No, no," he protested, when he recovered his speech.

"Do you think I'm after—what you can give me?" she shot at him. "What you can buy for me?"

To tell the truth, he had not thought anything about it, that was the trouble. And her question, instead of enlightening him, only added to his confusion and bewilderment.

"I'm always getting in wrong with you," he told her, pathetically. "There isn't anything I'd stop at to make you happy, Janet, that's what I'm trying to say. I'd go the limit."

"Your limit!" she exclaimed.

“What do you mean?” he demanded. But she had become inarticulate —cryptic, to him. He could get nothing more out of her.

“You don’t understand me—you never will!” she cried, and burst into tears—tears of rage she tried in vain to control. The world was black with his ignorance. She hated herself, she hated him. Her sobs shook her convulsively, and she scarcely heard him as he walked beside her along the empty road, pleading and clumsily seeking to comfort her. Once or twice she felt his hand on her shoulders.... And then, unlooked for and

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unbidden, pity began to invade her. Absurd to pity him! She fought against it, but the thought of Ditmar reduced to abjectness gained ground. After all, he had tried to be generous, he had done his best, he loved her, he needed her—the words rang in her heart. After all, he did not realize how could she expect him to realize? and her imagination conjured up the situation in a new perspective. Her sobs gradually ceased, and presently she stopped in the middle of the road and regarded him. He seemed utterly miserable, like a hurt child whom she longed to comfort. But what she said was: —“I ought to be going home.”

“Not yet!” he begged. “It’s early. You say I don’t understand you, Janet—my God, I wish I did! It breaks me all up to see you cry like that.”

“I’m sorry,” she said, after a moment. “I—I can’t make you understand. I guess I’m not like anybody else I’m queer—I can’t help it. You must let me go, I only make you unhappy.”

“Let you go!” he cried—and then in utter self-forgetfulness she yielded her lips to his. A sound penetrated the night, she drew back from his arms and stood silhouetted against the glare of the approaching headlight of a trolley car, and as it came roaring down on them she hailed it. Ditmar seized her arm.

“You’re not going—now?” he said hoarsely.

“I must,” she whispered. “I want to be alone—I want to think. You must let me.”

“I’ll see you to-morrow?”

“I don’t know—I want to think. I’m—I’m tired.”

The brakes screamed as the car came joltingly to a stop. She flew up the steps, glancing around to see whether Ditmar had followed her, and saw him still standing in the road. The car was empty of passengers, but the conductor must have seen her leaving a man in this lonely spot. She glanced at his face, white and pinched and apathetic—he must have seen hundreds of similar episodes in the course of his nightly duties. He was unmoved as he took her fare. Nevertheless, at the thought that these other episodes might resemble hers, her face flamed—she grew hot all over. What should she do now? She could not think. Confused with her shame was the memory of a delirious joy, yet no sooner would she give herself up, trembling, to this memory when in turn it was penetrated by qualms of resentment, defiling its purity. Was Ditmar ashamed of her?... When she reached home and had got into bed she wept a little, but her tears were neither of joy nor sorrow. Her capacity for both was exhausted. In this

strange mood she fell asleep nor did she waken when, at midnight, Lise stealthily crept in beside her.

CHAPTER X

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Ditmar stood staring after the trolley car that bore Janet away until it became a tiny speck of light in the distance. Then he started to walk toward Hampton; in the unwonted exercise was an outlet for the pent-up energy her departure had thwarted; and presently his body was warm with a physical heat that found its counterpart in a delicious, emotional glow of anticipation, of exultant satisfaction. After all, he could not expect to travel too fast with her. Had he not at least gained a signal victory? When he remembered her lips—which she had indubitably given him!—he increased his stride, and in what seemed an incredibly brief time he had recrossed the bridge, covered the long residential blocks of Warren Street, and gained his own door.

The house was quiet, the children having gone to bed, and he groped his way through the dark parlour to his den, turning on the electric switch, sinking into an armchair, and lighting a cigar. He liked this room of his, which still retained something of that flavour of a refuge and sanctuary it had so eminently possessed in the now forgotten days of matrimonial conflict. One of the few elements of agreement he had held in common with the late Mrs. Ditmar was a similarity of taste in household decoration, and they had gone together to a great emporium in Boston to choose the furniture and fittings. The lamp in the centre of the table was a bronze column supporting a hemisphere of heavy red and emerald glass, the colours woven into an intricate and bizarre design, after the manner of the art nouveau—so the zealous salesman had informed them. Cora Ditmar, when exhibiting this lamp to admiring visitors, had remembered the phrase, though her pronunciation of it, according to the standard of the Sorbonne, left something to be desired. The table and chairs, of heavy, shiny oak marvellously and precisely carved by machines, matched the big panels of the wainscot. The windows were high in the wall, thus preventing any intrusion from the clothes-yard on which they looked. The bookcases, protected by leaded panes, held countless volumes of the fiction from which Cora Ditmar had derived her knowledge of the great world outside of Hampton, together with certain sets she had bought, not only as ornaments, but with a praiseworthy view to future culture,—such as Whitmarsh's Library of the Best Literature. These volumes, alas, were still uncut; but some of the pages of the novels—if one cared to open them—were stained with chocolate. The steam radiator was a decoration in itself, the fireplace set in the red and yellow tiles that made the hearth. Above the oak mantel, in a gold frame, was a large coloured print of a Magdalen, doubled up in grief, with a glory of loose, Titian hair, chosen by Ditmar himself as expressing the nearest possible artistic representation of his ideal of the female form. Cora Ditmar's objections on the score of voluptuousness and of insufficient clothing had been vain. She had recognized no immorality

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of sentimentality in the art itself; what she felt, and with some justice, was that this particular Magdalen was unrepentant, and that Ditmar knew it. And the picture remained an offence to her as long as she lived. Formerly he had enjoyed the contemplation of this figure, reminding him, as it did, of mellowed moments in conquests of the past; suggesting also possibilities of the future. For he had been quick to discount the attitude of bowed despair, the sop flung by a sensuous artist to Christian orthodoxy. He had been sceptical about despair—feminine despair, which could always be cured by gifts and baubles. But to-night, as he raised his eyes, he felt a queer sensation marring the ecstatic perfection of his mood. That quality in the picture which so long had satisfied and entranced him had now become repellent, an ugly significant reflection of something—something in himself he was suddenly eager to repudiate and deny. It was with a certain amazement that he found himself on his feet with the picture in his hand, gazing at the empty space where it had hung. For he had had no apparent intention of obeying that impulse. What should he do with it? Light the fire and burn it—frame and all? The frame was an integral part of it. What would his housekeeper say? But now that he had actually removed it from the wall he could not replace it, so he opened the closet door and thrust it into a corner among relics which had found refuge there. He had put his past in the closet; yet the relief he felt was mingled with the peculiar qualm that follows the discovery of symptoms never before remarked. Why should this woman have this extraordinary effect of making him dissatisfied with himself? He sat down again and tried to review the affair from that first day when he had surprised in her eyes the flame dwelling in her. She had completely upset his life, increasingly distracted his mind until now he could imagine no peace unless he possessed her. Hitherto he had recognized in his feeling for her nothing but that same desire he had had for other women, intensified to a degree never before experienced. But this sudden access of morality—he did not actually define it as such—was disquieting. And in the feverish, semi-objective survey he was now making of his emotional tract he was discovering the presence of other disturbing symptoms such as an unwonted tenderness, a consideration almost amounting to pity which at times he had vaguely sensed yet never sought imaginatively to grasp. It bewildered him by hampering a ruthlessness hitherto absolute. The fierceness of her inflamed his passion, yet he recognized dimly behind this fierceness an instinct of self-protection—and he thought of her in this moment as a struggling bird that fluttered out of his hands when they were ready to close over her. So it had been to-night. He might have kept her, prevented her from taking the car. Yet he had let her go! There came again, utterly to blot this out, the memory of her lips.

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Even then, there had been something sorrowful in that kiss, a quality he resented as troubling, a flavour that came to him after the wildness was spent. What was she struggling against? What was behind her resistance? She loved him! It had never before occurred to him to enter into the nature of her feelings, having been so preoccupied with and tortured by his own. This realization, that she loved him, as it persisted, began to make him uneasy, though it should, according to all experience, have been a reason for sheer exultation. He began to see that with her it involved complications, responsibilities, disclosures, perhaps all of those things he had formerly avoided and resented in woman. He thought of certain friends of his who had become tangled up—of one in particular whose bank account had been powerless to extricate him.... And he was ashamed of himself.

In view of the nature of his sex experience, of his habit of applying his imagination solely to matters of business rather than to affairs of the heart,—if his previous episodes may be so designated,—his failure to surmise that a wish for marriage might be at the back of her resistance is not so surprising as it may seem; he laid down, half smoked, his third cigar. The suspicion followed swiftly on his recalling to mind her vehement repudiation of his proffered gifts did he think she wanted what he could buy for her! She was not purchasable—that way. He ought to have known it, he hadn't realized what he was saying. But marriage! Literally it had never occurred to him to image her in a relation he himself associated with shackles. One of the unconscious causes of his fascination was just her emancipation from and innocence of that herd-convention to which most women—even those who lack wedding rings—are slaves. The force of such an appeal to a man of Ditmar's type must not be underestimated. And the idea that she, too, might prefer the sanction of the law, the gilded cage as a popular song which once had taken his fancy illuminatingly expressed it—seemed utterly incongruous with the freedom and daring of her spirit, was a sobering shock. Was he prepared to marry her, if he could obtain her in no other way? The question demanded a survey of his actual position of which he was at the moment incapable. There were his children! He had never sought to arrive at even an approximate estimate of the boy and girl as factors in his life, to consider his feelings toward them; but now, though he believed himself a man who gave no weight to social considerations—he had scorned this tendency in his wife—he was to realize the presence of ambitions for them. He was young, he was astonishingly successful; he had reason to think, with his opportunities and the investments he already had made, that he might some day be moderately rich; and he had at times even imagined himself in later life as the possessor of one of those elaborate country places to be glimpsed from the high roads in

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certain localities, which the sophisticated are able to recognize as the seats of the socially ineligible, but which to Ditmar were outward and visible emblems of success. He liked to think of George as the inheritor of such a place, as the son of a millionaire, as a “college graduate,” as an influential man of affairs; he liked to imagine Amy as the wife of such another. In short, Ditmar’s wife had left him, as an unconscious legacy, her aspirations for their children’s social prestige....

The polished oak grandfather’s clock in the hall had struck one before he went to bed, mentally wearied by an unwonted problem involving, in addition to self-interest, an element of ethics, of affection not wholly compounded of desire.

He slept soundly, however. He was one of those fortunate beings who come into the world with digestive organs and thyroid glands in that condition which—so physiologists tell us—makes for a sanguine temperament. And his course of action, though not decided upon, no longer appeared as a problem; it differed from a business matter in that it could wait. As sufficient proof of his liver having rescued him from doubts and qualms he was able to whistle, as he dressed, and without a tremor of agitation, the forgotten tune suggested to his consciousness during the unpleasant reverie of the night before,—“Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage!” It was Saturday. He ate a hearty breakfast, joked with George and Amy, and refreshed, glowing with an expectation mingled with just the right amount of delightful uncertainty that made the great affairs of life a gamble, yet with the confidence of the conqueror, he walked in sunlight to the mill. In view of this firm and hopeful tone of his being he found it all the more surprising, as he reached the canal, to be seized by a trepidation strong enough to bring perspiration to his forehead. What if she had gone! He had never thought of that, and he had to admit it would be just like her. You never could tell what she would do.

Nodding at Simmons, the watchman, he hurried up the iron-shod stairs, gained the outer once, and instantly perceived that her chair beside the window was empty! Caldwell and Mr. Price stood with their heads together bending over a sheet on which Mr. Price was making calculations.

“Hasn’t Miss Bumpus come yet?” Ditmar demanded. He tried to speak naturally, casually, but his own voice sounded strange, seemed to strike the exact note of sickening apprehension that suddenly possessed him. Both men turned and looked at him in some surprise.

“Good-morning, Mr. Ditmar,” Caldwell said. “Why, yes, she’s in your room.”

“Oh!” said Ditmar.

“The Boston office has just been calling you—they want to know if you can’t take the nine twenty-two,” Caldwell went on. “It’s about that lawsuit. It comes into court Monday morning, and Mr. Sprole is there, and they say they have to see you. Miss Bumpus has the memorandum.”

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Ditmar looked at his watch.

"Damn it, why didn't they let me know yesterday?" he exclaimed. "I won't see anybody, Caldwell—not even Orcutt—just now. You understand. I've got to have a little time to do some letters. I won't be disturbed—by any one—for half an hour."

Caldwell nodded.

"All right, Mr. Ditmar."

Ditmar went into his office, closing the door behind him. She was occupied as usual, cutting open the letters and laying them in a pile with the deftness and rapidity that characterized all she did.

"Janet!" he exclaimed.

"There's a message for you from Boston. I've made a note of it," she replied.

"I know—Caldwell told me. But I wanted to see you before I went—I had to see you. I sat up half the night thinking of you, I woke up thinking of you. Aren't you glad to see me?"

She dropped the letter opener and stood silent, motionless, awaiting his approach—a pose so eloquent of the sense of fatality strong in her as to strike him with apprehension, unused though he was to the appraisal of inner values. He read, darkly, something of this mystery in her eyes as they were slowly raised to his, he felt afraid; he was swept again by those unwonted emotions of pity and tenderness—but when she turned away her head and he saw the bright spot of colour growing in her cheek, spreading to her temple, suffusing her throat, when he touched the soft contour of her arm, his passion conquered.... Still he was acutely conscious of a resistance within her—not as before, physically directed against him, but repudiating her own desire. She became limp in his arms, though making no attempt to escape, and he knew that the essential self of her he craved still evaded and defied him. And he clung to her the more desperately—as though by crushing her peradventure he might capture it.

"You're hurting me," she said at last, and he let her go, standing by helplessly while she went through the movements of readjustment instinctive to women. Even in these he read the existence of the reservation he was loth to acknowledge.

"Don't you love me?" he said.

"I don't know."

"You do!" he said. "You—you proved it—I know it."

She went a little away from him, picking up the paper cutter, but it lay idle in her hand.

“For God’s sake, tell me what’s the matter!” he exclaimed. “I can’t stand this. Janet, aren’t you happy?”

She shook her head.

“Why not? I love you. I—I’ve never been so happy in my life as I was this morning. Why aren’t you happy—when we love each other?”

“Because I’m not.”

“Why not? There’s nothing I wouldn’t do to make you happy—you know that. Tell me!”

“You wouldn’t understand. I couldn’t make you understand.”

“Is it something I’ve done?”

“You don’t love me,” she said. “You only want me. I’m not made that way, I’m not generous enough, I guess. I’ve got to have work to do.”

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"Work to do! But you'll share my work—it's nothing without you."

She shook her head. "I knew you couldn't understand. You don't realize how impossible it is. I don't blame you—I suppose a man can't."

She was not upbraiding him, she spoke quietly, in a tone almost lifeless, yet the emotional effect of it was tremendous.

"But," he began, and stopped, and was swept on again by an impulse that drowned all caution, all reason. "But you can help me—when we are married."

"Married!" she repeated. "You want to marry me?"

"Yes, yes—I need you." He took her hands, he felt them tremble in his, her breath came quickly, but her gaze was so intent as seemingly to penetrate to the depths of him. And despite his man's amazement at her hesitation now that he had offered her his all, he was moved, disturbed, ashamed as he had never been in his life. At length, when he could stand no longer the suspense of this inquisition, he stammered out: "I want you to be my wife."

"You've wanted to marry me all along?" she asked.

"I didn't think, Janet. I was mad about you. I didn't know you."

"Do you know me now?"

"That's just it," he cried, with a flash of clairvoyance, "I never will know you—it's what makes you different from any woman I've ever seen. You'll marry me?"

"I'm afraid," she said. "Oh, I've thought over it, and you haven't. A woman has to think, a man doesn't, so much. And now you're willing to marry me, if you can't get me any other way." Her hand touched his coat, checking his protest. "It isn't that I want marriage—what you can give me—I'm not like that, I've told you so before. But I couldn't live as your—mistress."

The word on her lips shocked him a little—but her courage and candour thrilled him.

"If I stayed here, it would be found out. I wouldn't let you keep me. I'd have to have work, you see, or I'd lose my self-respect—it's all I've got—I'd kill myself." She spoke as calmly as though she were reviewing the situation objectively. "And then, I've thought that you might come to believe you really wanted to marry me—you wouldn't realize what you were doing, or what might happen if we were married. I've tried to tell you that, too, only you didn't seem to understand what I was saying. My father's only a gatekeeper, we're poor—poorer than some of the operatives in the mill, and the people you know here in Hampton wouldn't understand. Perhaps you think you wouldn't care,

but—” she spoke with more effort, “there are your children. When I’ve thought of them, it all seems impossible. I’d make you unhappy—I couldn’t bear it, I wouldn’t stay with you. You see, I ought to have gone away long ago.”

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Believing, as he did, that marriage was the goal of all women, even of the best, the immediate capitulation he had expected would have made matters far less difficult. But these scruples of hers, so startlingly his own, her disquieting insight into his entire mental process had a momentary checking effect, summoned up the vague presage of a future that might become extremely troublesome and complicated. His very reluctance to discuss with her the problem she had raised warned him that he had been swept into deep waters. On the other hand, her splendid resistance appealed to him, enhanced her value. And accustomed as he had been to a lifelong self-gratification, the thought of being balked in this supreme desire was not to be borne. Such were the shades of his feeling as he listened to her.

"That's nonsense!" he exclaimed, when she had finished. "You're a lady—I know all about your family, I remember hearing about it when your father came here—it's as good as any in New England. What do you suppose I care, Janet? We love each other—I've got to have you. We'll be married in the spring, when the rush is over."

He drew her to him once more, and suddenly, in the ardour of that embrace, he felt her tenseness suddenly relax—as though, against her will—and her passion, as she gave her lips, vied with his own. Her lithe body trembled convulsively, her cheeks were wet as she clung to him and hid her face in his shoulder. His sensations in the presence of this thing he had summoned up in her were incomprehensible, surpassing any he had ever known. It was no longer a woman he held in his arms, the woman he craved, but something greater, more fearful, the mystery of sorrow and suffering, of creation and life—of the universe itself.

"Janet—aren't you happy?" he said again.

She released herself and smiled at him wistfully through her tears.

"I don't know. What I feel doesn't seem like happiness. I can't believe in it, somehow."

"You must believe in it," he said.

"I can't,—perhaps I may, later. You'd better go now," she begged. "You'll miss your train."

He glanced at the office clock. "Confound it, I have to. Listen! I'll be back this evening, and I'll get that little car of mine—"

"No, not to-night—I don't want to go—to-night."

"Why not?"

"Not to-night," she repeated.

“Well then, to-morrow. To-morrow’s Sunday. Do you know where the Boat Club is on the River Boulevard? I’ll be there, to-morrow morning at ten. I’d come for you, to your house,” he added quickly, “but we don’t want any one to know, yet—do we?”

She shook her head.

“We must keep it secret for a while,” he said. “Wear your new dress—the blue one. Good-bye—sweetheart.”

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He kissed her again and hurried out of the office.... Boarding the train just as it was about to start, he settled himself in the back seat of the smoker, lit a cigar, inhaling deep breaths of the smoke and scarcely noticing an acquaintance who greeted him from the aisle. Well, he had done it! He was amazed. He had not intended to propose marriage, and when he tried to review the circumstances that had led to this he became confused. But when he asked himself whether indeed he were willing to pay such a price, to face the revolution marriage—and this marriage in particular—would mean in his life, the tumult in his blood beat down his incipient anxieties. Besides, he possessed the kind of mind able to throw off the consideration of possible consequences, and by the time the train had slowed down in the darkness of the North Station in Boston all traces of worry had disappeared. The future would take care of itself.

For the Bumpus family, supper that evening was an unusually harmonious meal. Hannah's satisfaction over the new stove had by no means subsided, and Edward ventured, without reproof, to praise the restored quality of the pie crust. And in contrast to her usual moroseness and self-absorption, even Lise was gay—largely because her pet aversion, the dignified and allegedly amorous Mr. Waiters, floor-walker at the Bagatelle, had fallen down the length of the narrow stairway leading from the cashier's cage. She became almost hysterical with glee as she pictured him lying prone beneath the counter dedicated to lingerie, draped with various garments from the pile that toppled over on him. "Ruby Nash picked a brassiere off his whiskers!" Lise shrieked. "She gave the pile a shove when he landed. He's got her number all right. But say, it was worth the price of admission to see that old mutt when he got up, he looked like Santa Claus. All the girls in the floor were there we nearly split trying to keep from giving him the ha-ha. And Ruby says, sympathetic, as she brushed him off, 'I hope you ain't hurt, Mr. Waiters.' He was sore! He went around all afternoon with a bunch on his coco as big as a potato." So vivid was Lise's account of this affair which apparently she regarded as compensation for many days of drudgery—that even Hannah laughed, though deploring a choice of language symbolic of a world she feared and detested.

"If I talked like you," said Lise, "they wouldn't understand me."

Janet, too, was momentarily amused, drawn out of that reverie in which she had dwelt all day, ever since Ditmar had left for Boston. Now she began to wonder what would happen if she were suddenly to announce "I'm going to marry Mr. Ditmar." After the first shock of amazement, she could imagine her father's complete and complacent acceptance of the news as a vindication of an inherent quality in the Bumpus blood. He would begin to talk about the family. For, despite what might have been deemed a somewhat disillusionizing experience, in

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the depths of his being he still believed in the Providence who had presided over the perilous voyage of the Mayflower and the birth of Peregrine White, whose omniscient mind was peculiarly concerned with the family trees of Puritans. And what could be a more striking proof of the existence of this Providence, or a more fitting acknowledgment on his part of the Bumpus virtues, than that Janet should become the wife of the agent of the Chippering Mills? Janet smiled. She was amused, too, by the thought that Lise's envy would be modified by the prospect of a heightened social status; since Lise, it will be remembered, had her Providence likewise. Hannah's god was not a Providence, but one deeply skilled in persecution, in ingenious methods of torture; one who would not hesitate to dangle baubles before the eyes of his children—only to snatch them away again. Hannah's pessimism would persist as far as the altar, and beyond!

On the whole, such was Janet's notion of the Deity, though deep within her there may have existed a hope that he might be outwitted; that, by dint of energy and brains, the fair things of life might be obtained despite a malicious opposition. And she loved Ditmar. This must be love she felt, this impatience to see him again, this desire to be with him, this agitation possessing her so utterly that all day long she had dwelt in an unwonted state like a somnambulism: it must be love, though not resembling in the least the generally accepted, virginal ideal. She saw him as he was, crude, powerful, relentless in his desire; his very faults appealed. His passion had overcome his prudence, he had not intended to propose, but any shame she felt on this score was put to flight by a fierce exultation over the fact that she had brought him to her feet, that he wanted her enough to marry her. It was wonderful to be wanted like that! But she could not achieve the mental picture of herself as Ditmar's wife—especially when, later in the evening, she walked up Warren Street and stood gazing at his house from the opposite pavement. She simply could not imagine herself living in that house as its mistress. Notwithstanding the testimony of the movies, such a Cinderella-like transition was not within the realm of probable facts; things just didn't happen that way.

She recalled the awed exclamation of Eda when they had walked together along Warren Street on that evening in summer: "How would you like to live there!"—and hot with sudden embarrassment and resentment she had dragged her friend onward, to the corner. In spite of its size, of the spaciousness of existence it suggested, the house had not appealed to her then. Janet did not herself realize or estimate the innate if undeveloped sense of form she possessed, the artist-instinct that made her breathless on first beholding Silliston Common. And then the vision of Silliston had still been bright; but now the light of a slender moon was as a gossamer silver veil through which she beheld the house, as in a stage setting, softening and obscuring its lines, lending it qualities of dignity and glamour that made it seem remote, unreal, unattainable. And she felt a sudden, overwhelming longing, as though her breast would burst....

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Through the drawn blinds the lights in the second storey gleamed yellow. A dim lamp burned in the deep vestibule, as in a sanctuary. And then, as though some supernaturally penetrating ray had pierced a square hole in the lower walls, a glimpse of the interior was revealed to her, of the living room at the north end of the house. Two figures chased one another around the centre table—Ditmar's children! Was Ditmar there? Impelled irresistibly by a curiosity overcoming repugnance and fear, she went forward slowly across the street, gained the farther pavement, stepped over the concrete coping, and stood, shivering violently, on the lawn, feeling like an interloper and a thief, yet held by morbid fascination. The children continued to romp. The boy was strong and swift, the girl stout and ungainly in her movements, not mistress of her body; he caught her and twisted her arm, roughly—Janet could hear her cries through the window—when an elderly woman entered, seized him, struggling with him. He put out his tongue at her, but presently released his sister, who stood rubbing her arm, her lips moving in evident recrimination and complaint. The faces of the two were plain now; the boy resembled Ditmar, but the features of the girl, heavy and stamped with self-indulgence, were evidently reminiscent of the woman who had been his wife. Then the shade was pulled down, abruptly; and Janet, overcome by a sense of horror at her position, took to flight....

When, after covering the space of a block she slowed down and tried to imagine herself as established in that house, the stepmother of those children, she found it impossible. Despite the fact that her attention had been focussed so strongly on them, the fringe of her vision had included their surroundings, the costly furniture, the piano against the farther wall, the music rack. Evidently the girl was learning to play. She felt a renewed, intenser bitterness against her own lot: she was aware of something within her better and finer than the girl, than the woman who had been her mother had possessed—that in her, Janet, had lacked the advantages of development. Could it—could it ever be developed now? Had this love which had come to her brought her any nearer to the unknown realm of light she craved?...

CHAPTER XI

Though December had come, Sunday was like an April day before whose sunlight the night-mists of scruples and morbid fears were scattered and dispersed. And Janet, as she fared forth from the Fillmore Street flat, felt resurging in her the divine recklessness that is the very sap of life. The future, save of the immediate hours to come, lost its power over her. The blue and white beauty of the sky proclaimed all things possible for the strong; and the air was vibrant with the sweet music of bells, calling her to happiness. She was going to meet happiness, to meet love—to meet Ditmar! The trolley

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which she took in Faber Street, though lagging in its mission, seemed an agent of that happiness as it left the city behind it and wound along the heights beside the tarvia roadway above the river, bright glimpses of which she caught through the openings in the woods. And when she looked out of the window on her right she beheld on a little forested rise a succession of tiny “camps” built by residents of Hampton whose modest incomes could not afford more elaborate summer places; camps of all descriptions and colours, with queer names that made her smile: “The Cranny,” “The Nook,” “Snug Harbour,” “Buena Vista,”—of course,—which she thought pretty, though she did not know its meaning; and another, in German, equally perplexing, “Klein aber Mein.” Though the windows of these places were now boarded up, though the mosquito netting still clung rather dismally to the porches, they were mutely suggestive of contentment and domestic joy.

Scarcely had she alighted from the car at the rendezvous he had mentioned, beside the now deserted boathouse where in the warm weather the members of the Hampton Rowing Club disported themselves, when she saw an automobile approaching—and recognized it as the gay “roadster” Ditmar had exhibited to her that summer afternoon by the canal; and immediately Ditmar himself, bringing it to a stop and leaping from it, stood before her in the sunlight, radiating, as it seemed, more sunlight still. With his clipped, blond moustache and his straw-coloured hair—as yet but slightly grey at the temples—he looked a veritable conquering berserker in his huge coat of golden fur. Never had he appeared to better advantage.

“I was waiting for you,” he said, “I saw you in the car.” Turning to the automobile, he stripped the tissue paper from a cluster of dark red roses with the priceless long stems of which Lise used to rave when she worked in the flower store. And he held the flowers against her suit her new suit she had worn for this meeting.

“Oh,” she cried, taking a deep, intoxicating breath of their fragrance. “You brought these—for me?”

“From Boston—my beauty!”

“But I can’t wear all of them!”

“Why not?” he demanded. “Haven’t you a pin?”

She produced one, attaching them with a gesture that seemed habitual, though the thought of their value-revealing in some degree her own worth in his eyes-unnerved her. She was warmly conscious of his gaze. Then he turned, and opening a compartment at the back of the car drew from it a bright tweed motor coat warmly lined.

“Oh, no!” she protested, drawing back. “I’ll—I’ll be warm enough.” But laughingly, triumphantly, he seized her and thrust her arms in the sleeves, his fingers pressing against her. Overcome by shyness, she drew away from him.

“I made a pretty good guess at the size—didn’t I, Janet?” he cried, delightedly surveying her. “I couldn’t forget it!” His glance grew more concentrated, warmer, penetrating.

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"You mustn't look at me like that!" she pleaded with lowered eyes.

"Why not—you're mine—aren't you? You're mine, now."

"I don't know. There are lots of things I want to talk about," she replied, but her protest sounded feeble, unconvincing, even to herself. He fairly lifted her into the automobile—it was a caress, only tempered by the semi-publicity of the place. He was giving her no time to think—but she did not want to, think. Starting the engine, he got in and leaned toward her.

"Not here!" she exclaimed.

"All right—I'll wait," he agreed, tucking the robe about her deftly, solicitously, and she sank back against the seat, surrendering herself to the luxury, the wonder of being cherished, the caressing and sheltering warmth she felt of security and love, the sense of emancipation from discontent and sordidness and struggle. For a moment she closed her eyes, but opened them again to behold the transformed image of herself reflected in the windshield to confirm the illusion—if indeed it were one! The tweed coat seemed startlingly white in the sunlight, and the woman she saw, yet recognized as herself, was one of the fortunately placed of the earth with power and beauty at her command! And she could no longer imagine herself as the same person who the night before had stood in front of the house in Warren Street. The car was speeding over the smooth surface of the boulevard; the swift motion, which seemed to her like that of flying, the sparkling air, the brightness of the day, the pressure of Ditmar's shoulder against hers, thrilled her. She marvelled at his sure command over the machine, that responded like a live thing to his touch. On the wide, straight stretches it went at a mad pace that took her breath, and again, in turning a corner or passing another car, it slowed down, purring in meek obedience. Once she gasped: "Not so fast! I can't stand it."

He laughed and obeyed her. They glided between river and sky across the delicate fabric of a bridge which but a moment before she had seen in the distance. Running through the little village on the farther bank, they left the river.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"Oh, for a little spin," he answered indulgently, turning into a side road that wound through the woods and suddenly stopping. "Janet, we've got this day—this whole day to ourselves." He seized and drew her to him, and she yielded dizzily, repaying the passion of his kiss, forgetful of past and future while he held her, whispering brokenly endearing phrases.

"You'll ruin my roses," she protested breathlessly, at last, when it seemed that she could no longer bear this embrace, nor the pressure of his lips. "There! you see you're

crushing them!" She undid them, and buttoning the coat, held them to her face. Their odour made her faint: her eyes were clouded.

"Listen, Claude!" she said at last,—it was the first time she had called him so—getting free. "You must be sensible! some one might come along."

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"I'll never get enough of you!" he said. "I can't believe it yet." And added irrelevantly: "Pin the roses outside."

She shook her head. Something in her protested against this too public advertisement of their love.

"I'd rather hold them," she answered. "Let's go on." He started the car again. "Listen, I want to talk to you, seriously. I've been thinking."

"Don't I know you've been thinking!" he told her exuberantly. "If I could only find out what's always going on in that little head of yours! If you keep on thinking you'll dry up, like a New England school-marm. And now do you know what you are? One of those dusky red roses just ready to bloom. Some day I'll buy enough to smother you in 'em."

"Listen!" she repeated, making a great effort to calm herself, to regain something of that frame of mind in which their love had assumed the proportions of folly and madness, to summon up the scruples which, before she had left home that morning, she had resolved to lay before him, which she knew would return when she could be alone again. "I have to think—you won't," she exclaimed, with a fleeting smile.

"Well, what is it?" he assented. "You might as well get it off now."

And it took all her strength to say: "I don't see how I can marry you. I've told you the reasons. You're rich, and you have friends who wouldn't understand—and your children—they wouldn't understand. I—I'm nothing, I know it isn't right, I know you wouldn't be happy. I've never lived—in the kind of house you live in and known the kind of people you know, I shouldn't know what to do."

He took his eyes off the road and glanced down at her curiously. His smile was self-confident, exultant.

"Now do you feel better—you little Puritan?" he said.

And perforce she smiled in return, a pucker appearing between her eyebrows.

"I mean it," she said. "I came out to tell you so. I know—it just isn't possible."

"I'd marry you to-day if I could get a license," he declared. "Why, you're worth any woman in America, I don't care who she is, or how much money she has."

In spite of herself she was absurdly pleased.

"Now that is over, we won't discuss it again, do you understand? I've got you," he said, "and I mean to hold on to you."

She sighed. He was driving slowly now along the sandy road, and with his hand on hers she simply could not think. The spell of his nearness, of his touch, which all nature that morning conspired to deepen, was too powerful to be broken, and something was calling to her, "Take this day, take this day," drowning out the other voice demanding an accounting. She was living—what did it all matter? She yielded herself to the witchery of the hour, the sheer delight of forthfaring into the unknown.

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They turned away from the river, crossing the hills of a rolling country now open, now wooded, passing white farmhouses and red barns, and ancient, weather-beaten dwellings with hipped roofs and “lean-tos” which had been there in colonial days when the road was a bridle-path. Cows and horses stood gazing at them from warm paddocks, where the rich, black mud glistened, melted by the sun; chickens scratched and clucked in the barnyards or flew frantically across the road, sometimes within an ace of destruction. Janet flinched, but Ditmar would laugh, gleefully, boyishly.

“We nearly got that one!” he would exclaim. And then he had to assure her that he wouldn’t run over them.

“I haven’t run over one yet,—have I?” he would demand.

“No, but you will, it’s only luck.”

“Luck!” he cried derisively. “Skill! I wish I had a dollar for every one I got when I was learning to drive. There was a farmer over here in Chester—” and he proceeded to relate how he had had to pay for two turkeys. “He got my number, the old hayseed, he was laying for me, and the next time I went back that way he held me up for five dollars. I can remember the time when a man in a motor was an easy mark for every reuben in the county. They got rich on us.”

She responded to his mood, which was wholly irresponsible, exuberant, and they laughed together like children, every little incident assuming an aspect irresistibly humorous. Once he stopped to ask an old man standing in his dooryard how far it was to Kingsbury.

“Wal, mebbe it’s two mile, they mostly call it two,” said the patriarch, after due reflection, gathering his beard in his band. “Mebbe it’s more.” His upper lip was blue, shaven, prehensile.

“What did you ask him for, when you know?” said Janet, mirthfully, when they had gone on, and Ditmar was imitating him. Ditmar’s reply was to wink at her. Presently they saw another figure on the road.

“Let’s see what he’ll say,” Ditmar proposed. This man was young, the colour of mahogany, with glistening black hair and glistening black eyes that regarded the too palpable joyousness of their holiday humour in mute surprise.

“I no know—stranger,” he said.

“No speaka Portugueso?” inquired Ditmar, gravely.

“The country is getting filthy with foreigners,” he observed, when he had started the car. “I went down to Plymouth last summer to see the old rock, and by George, it seemed as

if there wasn't anybody could speak American on the whole cape. All the Portuguese islands are dumped there —cranberry pickers, you know."

"I didn't know that," said Janet.

"Sure thing!" he exclaimed. "And when I got there, what do you think? there was hardly enough of the old stone left to stand on, and that had a fence around it like an exhibit in an exposition. It had all been chipped away by souvenir hunters."

She gazed at him incredulously.

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"You don't believe me! I'll take you down there sometime. And another thing, the rock's high and dry—up on the land. I said to Charlie Crane, who was with me, that it must have been a peach of a jump for old Miles Standish and Priscilla what's her name."

"How I'd love to see the ocean again!" Janet exclaimed.

"Why, I'll take you—as often as you like," he promised. "We'll go out on it in summer, up to Maine, or down to the Cape."

Her enchantment was now so great that nothing seemed impossible.

"And we'll go down to Plymouth, too, some Sunday soon, if this weather keeps up. If we start early enough we can get there for lunch, easy. We'll see the rock. I guess some of your ancestors must have come over with that Mayflower outfit—first cabin, eh? You look like it."

Janet laughed. "It's a joke on them, if they did. I wonder what they'd think of Hampton, if they could see it now. I counted up once, just to tease father—he's the seventh generation from Ebenezer Bumpus, who came to Dolton. Well, I proved to him he might have one hundred and twenty-six other ancestors besides Ebenezer and his wife."

"That must have jarred him some," was Ditmar's comment. "Great old man, your father. I've talked to him—he's a regular historical society all by himself. Well, there must be something in it, this family business. Now, you can tell he comes from fine old American stock—he looks it."

Janet flushed. "A lot of good it does!" she exclaimed.

"I don't know," said Ditmar. "It's something to fall back on—a good deal. And he hasn't got any of that nonsense in his head about labour unions—he's a straight American. And you look the part," he added. "You remind me—I never thought of it until now—you remind me of a picture of Priscilla I saw once in a book of poems Longfellow's, you know. I'm not much on literature, but I remember that, and I remember thinking she could have me. Funny isn't it, that you should have come along? But you've got more ginger than the woman in that picture. I'm the only man that ever guessed it isn't that so?" he asked jealously.

"You're wonderful!" retorted Janet, daringly.

"You just bet I am, or I couldn't have landed you," he asserted. "You're chock full of ginger, but it's been all corked up. You're so prim—so Priscilla." He was immensely pleased with the adjective he had coined, repeating it. "It's a great combination. When I think of it, I want to shake you, to squeeze you until you scream."

"Then please don't think of it," she said.

“That’s easy!” he exclaimed, mockingly.

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At a quarter to one they entered a sleepy village reminiscent of a New England of other days. The long street, deeply shaded in summer, was bordered by decorous homes, some of which had stood there for a century and a half; others were of the Mansard period. The high school, of strawberry-coloured brick, had been the pride and glory of the Kingsbury of the '70s: there were many churches, some graceful and some hideous. At the end of the street they came upon a common, surrounded by stone posts and a railing, with a monument in the middle of it, and facing the common on the north side was a rambling edifice with many white gables, in front of which, from an iron arm on a post, swung a quaint sign, "Kingsbury Tavern." In revolutionary and coaching days the place had been a famous inn; and now, thanks to the enterprise of a man who had foreseen the possibilities of an era of automobiles, it had become even more famous. A score of these modern vehicles were drawn up before it under the bare, ancient elms; there was a scene of animation on the long porch, where guests strolled up and down or sat in groups in the rocking-chairs which the mild weather had brought forth again. Ditmar drew up in line with the other motors, and stopped.

"Well, here we are!" he exclaimed, as he pulled off his gauntlets. "I guess I could get along with something to eat. How about you? They treat you as well here as any place I know of in New England."

He assumed their lunching together at a public place as a matter of course to which there could not possibly be an objection, springing out of the car, removing the laprobe from her knees, and helping her to alight. She laid the roses on the seat.

"Aren't you going to bring them along?" he demanded.

"I'd rather not," she said. "Don't you think they'll be safe here?"

"Oh, I guess so," he replied. She was always surprising him; but her solicitation concerning them was a balm, and he found all such instinctive acts refreshing.

"Afraid of putting up too much of a front, are you?" he asked smilingly.

"I'd rather leave them here," she replied. As she walked beside Ditmar to the door she was excited, unwontedly self-conscious, painfully aware of inspection by the groups on the porch. She had seen such people as these hurrying in automobiles through the ugliness of Faber Street in Hampton toward just such delectable spots as this village of Kingsbury—people of that world of freedom and privilege from which she was excluded; Ditmar's world. He was at home here. But she? The delusion that she somehow had been miraculously snatched up into it was marred by their glances. What were they thinking of her? Her face was hot as she passed them and entered the hall, where more people were gathered. But Ditmar's complacency, his ease and self-confidence, his manner of owning the place, as it were, somewhat reassured her. He went up to the

desk, behind which, stood a burly, red-complexioned man who greeted him effusively, yet with the air of respect accorded the powerful.

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"Hullo, Eddie," said Ditmar. "You've got a good crowd here to-day. Any room for me?"

"Sure, Mr. Ditmar, we can always make room for you. Well, I haven't laid eyes on you for a dog's age. Only last Sunday Mr. Crane was here, and I was asking him where you'd been keeping yourself."

"Why, I've been busy, Eddie. I've landed the biggest order ever heard of in Hampton. Some of us have to work, you know; all you've got to do is to loaf around this place and smoke cigars and rake in the money."

The proprietor of the Kingsbury Tavern smiled indulgently at this persiflage.

"Let me present you to Miss Bumpus," said Ditmar. "This is my friend, Eddie Hale," he added, for Janet's benefit. "And when you've eaten his dinner you'll believe me when I say he's got all the other hotel men beaten a mile."

Janet smiled and flushed. She had been aware of Mr. Hale's discreet glance.

"Pleased to meet you, Miss Bumpus," he said, with a somewhat elaborate bow.

"Eddie," said Ditmar, "have you got a nice little table for us?"

"It's a pity I didn't know you was coming, but I'll do my best," declared Mr. Hale, opening the door in the counter.

"Oh, I guess you can fix us all right, if you want to, Eddie."

"Mr. Ditmar's a great joshier," Mr. Hale told Janet confidentially as he escorted them into the dining-room. And Ditmar, gazing around over the heads of the diners, spied in an alcove by a window a little table with tilted chairs.

"That one'll do," he said.

"I'm sorry, but it's engaged," apologized Mr. Hale.

"Forget it, Eddie—tell 'em they're late," said Ditmar, making his way toward it.

The proprietor pulled out Janet's chair.

"Say," he remarked, "it's no wonder you get along in business."

"Well, this is cosy, isn't it?" said Ditmar to Janet when they were alone. He handed her the menu, and snapped his fingers for a waitress.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming to this place?" she asked.

"I wanted to surprise you. Don't you like it?"

"Yes," she replied. "Only—"

"Only, what?"

"I wish you wouldn't look at me like that—here."

"All right. I'll try to be good until we get into the car again. You watch me! I'll behave as if we'd been married ten years."

He snapped his fingers again, and the waitress hurried up to take their orders.

"Kingsbury's still dry, I guess," he said to the girl, who smiled sympathetically, somewhat ruefully. When she had gone he began to talk to Janet about the folly, in general, of prohibition, the fuse oil distributed on the sly. "I'll bet I could go out and find half a dozen rum shops within a mile of here!" he declared.

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Janet did not doubt it. Ditmar's aplomb, his faculty of getting what he wanted, had amused and distracted her. She was growing calmer, able to scrutinize, at first covertly and then more boldly the people at the other tables, only to discover that she and Ditmar were not the objects of the universal curiosity she had feared. Once in a while, indeed, she encountered and then avoided the glance of some man, felt the admiration in it, was thrilled a little, and her sense of exhilaration returned as she regained her poise. She must be nice looking—more than that—in her new suit. On entering the tavern she had taken off the tweed coat, which Ditmar had carried and laid on a chair. This new and amazing adventure began to go to her head like wine....

When luncheon was over they sat in a sunny corner of the porch while Ditmar smoked his cigar. His digestion was good, his spirits high, his love-making—on account of the public nature of the place—surreptitious yet fervent. The glamour to which Janet had yielded herself was on occasions slightly troubled by some new and enigmatic element to be detected in his voice and glances suggestive of intentions vaguely disquieting. At last she said:

"Oughtn't we to be going home?"

"Home!" he ridiculed the notion. "I'm going to take you to the prettiest road you ever saw—around by French's Lower Falls. I only wish it was summer."

"I must be home before dark," she told him. "You see, the family don't know where I am. I haven't said anything to them about—about this."

"That's right," he said, after a moment's hesitation:

"I didn't think you would. There's plenty of time for that—after things get settled a little— isn't there?"

She thought his look a little odd, but the impression passed as they walked to the motor. He insisted now on her pinning the roses on the tweed coat, and she humoured him. The winter sun had already begun to drop, and with the levelling rays the bare hillsides, yellow and brown in the higher light, were suffused with pink; little by little, as the sun fell lower, imperceptible clouds whitened the blue cambric of the sky, distant copses were stained lilac. And Janet, as she gazed, wondered at a world that held at once so much beauty, so much joy and sorrow,—such strange sorrow as began to invade her now, not personal, but cosmic. At times it seemed almost to suffocate her; she drew in deep breaths of air: it was the essence of all things—of the man by her side, of herself, of the beauty so poignantly revealed to her.

Gradually Ditmar became conscious of this detachment, this new evidence of an extraordinary faculty of escaping him that seemed unimpaired. Constantly he tried by leaning closer to her, by reaching out his hand, to reassure himself that she was at least



physically present. And though she did not resent these tokens, submitting passively, he grew perplexed and troubled; his optimistic atheism concerning things unseen was actually shaken by the impression she conveyed of beholding realities hidden from him. Shadows had begun to gather in the forest, filmy mists to creep over the waters. He asked if she were cold, and she shook her head and sighed as one coming out of a trance, smiling at him.

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"It's been a wonderful day!" she said.

"The greatest ever!" he agreed. And his ardour, mounting again, swept away the unwonted mood of tenderness and awe she had inspired in him, made him bold to suggest the plan which had been the subject of an ecstatic contemplation.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said, "we'll take a little run down to Boston and have dinner together. We'll be there in an hour, and back by ten o'clock."

"To Boston!" she repeated. "Now?"

"Why not?" he said, stopping the car. "Here's the road—it's a boulevard all the way."

It was not so much the proposal as the passion in his voice, in his touch, the passion to which she felt herself responding that filled her with apprehension and dismay, and yet aroused her pride and anger.

"I told you I had to be home," she said.

"I'll have you home by ten o'clock; I promise. We're going to be married, Janet," he whispered.

"Oh, if you meant to marry me you wouldn't ask me to do this!" she cried. "I want to go back to Hampton. If you won't take me, I'll walk."

She had drawn away from him, and her hand was on the door. He seized her arm.

"For God's sake, don't take it that way!" he cried, in genuine alarm. "All I meant was—that we'd have a nice little dinner. I couldn't bear to leave you, it'll be a whole week before we get another day. Do you suppose I'd—I'd do anything to insult you, Janet?"

With her fingers still tightened over the door-catch she turned and looked at him.

"I don't know," she said slowly. "Sometimes I think you would. Why shouldn't you? Why should you marry me? Why shouldn't you try to do with me what you've done with other women? I don't know anything about the world, about life. I'm nobody. Why shouldn't you?"

"Because you're not like the other women—that's why. I love you—won't you believe it?" He was beside himself with anxiety. "Listen—I'll take you home if you want to go. You don't know how it hurts me to have you think such things!"

"Well, then, take me home," she said. It was but gradually that she became pacified. A struggle was going on within her between these doubts of him he had stirred up again

and other feelings aroused by his pleadings. Night fell, and when they reached the Silliston road the lights of Hampton shone below them in the darkness.

“You’d better let me out here,” she said. “You can’t drive me home.”

He brought the car to a halt beside one of the small wooden shelters built for the convenience of passengers.

“You forgive me—you understand, Janet?” he asked.

“Sometimes I don’t know what to think,” she said, and suddenly clung to him. “I—I forgive you. I oughtn’t to suspect such things, but I’m like that. I’m horrid and I can’t help it.” She began to unbutton the coat he had bought for her.

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"Aren't you going to take it?" he said. "It's yours."

"And what do you suppose my family would say if I told them Mr. Ditmar had given it to me?"

"Come on, I'll drive you home, I'll tell them I gave it to you, that we're going to be married," he announced recklessly.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed in consternation. "You couldn't. You said so yourself—that you didn't want, any one to know, now. I'll get on the trolley."

"And the roses?" he asked.

She pressed them to her face, and chose one. "I'll take this," she said, laying the rest on the seat....

He waited until he saw her safely on the trolley car, and then drove slowly homeward in a state of amazement. He had been on the verge of announcing himself to the family in Fillmore Street as her prospective husband! He tried to imagine what that household was like; and again he found himself wondering why she had not consented to his proposal. And the ever-recurring question presented itself—was he prepared to go that length? He didn't know. She was beyond him, he had no clew to her, she was to him as mysterious as a symphony. Certain strains of her moved him intensely—the rest was beyond his grasp.... At supper, while his children talked and laughed boisterously, he sat silent, restless, and in spite of their presence the house seemed appallingly empty.

When Janet returned home she ran to her bedroom, and taking from the wardrobe the tissue paper that had come with her new dress, and which she had carefully folded, she wrapped the rose in it, and put it away in the back of a drawer. Thus smothered, its fragrance stifled, it seemed emblematic, somehow, of the clandestine nature of her love....

The weeks that immediately followed were strange ones. All the elements of life that previously had been realities, trivial yet fundamental, her work, her home, her intercourse with the family, became fantastic. There was the mill to which she went every day: she recognized it, yet it was not the same mill, nor was Fillmore Street the Fillmore Street of old. Nor did the new and feverish existence over whose borderland she had been transported seem real, save in certain hours she spent in Ditmar's company, when he made her forget—hers being a temperament to feel the weight of an unnatural secrecy. She was aware, for instance, that her mother and even her father thought her conduct odd, were anxious as to her absences on certain nights and on Sundays. She offered no explanation. It was impossible. She understood that the reason why they refrained from questioning her was due to a faith in her integrity as well



as to a respect for her as a breadwinner who had earned a right to independence. And while her suspicion of Hannah's anxiety troubled her, on the occasions when she thought of it, Lise's attitude disturbed her even more. From Lise she had been prepared for suspicion, arraignment, ridicule. What a vindication if it were disclosed that she, Janet, had a lover—and that lover Ditmar! But Lise said nothing. She was remote, self-absorbed. Hannah spoke about it on the evenings Janet stayed at home.

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She would not consent to meet Ditmar every evening. Yet, as the days succeeded one another, Janet was often astonished by the fact that their love remained apparently unsuspected by Mr. Price and Caldwell and others in the office. They must have noticed, on some occasions, the manner in which Ditmar looked at her; and in business hours she had continually to caution him, to keep him in check. Again, on the evening excursions to which she consented, though they were careful to meet in unfrequented spots, someone might easily have recognized him; and she did not like to ponder over the number of young women in the other offices who knew her by sight. These reflections weighed upon her, particularly when she seemed conscious of curious glances. But what caused her the most concern was the constantly recurring pressure to which Ditmar himself subjected her, and which, as time went on, she found increasingly difficult to resist. He tried to take her by storm, and when this method failed, resorted to pleadings and supplications even harder to deny because of the innate feminine pity she felt for him. To recount these affairs would be a mere repetition of identical occurrences. On their second Sunday excursion he had actually driven her, despite her opposition, several miles on the Boston road; and her resistance only served to inflame him the more. It seemed, afterwards, as she sat unnerved, a miracle that she had stopped him. Then came reproaches: she would not trust him; they could not be married at once; she must understand that!—an argument so repugnant as to cause her to shake with sobs of inarticulate anger. After this he would grow bewildered, then repentant, then contrite. In contrition—had he known it—he was nearest to victory.

As has been said, she did not intellectualize her reasons, but the core of her resistance was the very essence of an individuality having its roots in a self-respecting and self-controlling inheritance—an element wanting in her sister Lise. It must have been largely the thought of Lise, the spectacle of Lise—often perhaps unconsciously present that dominated her conduct; yet reinforcing such an ancestral sentiment was another, environmental and more complicated, the result in our modern atmosphere of an undefined feminism apt to reveal itself in many undesirable ways, but which in reality is a logical projection of the American tradition of liberty. To submit was not only to lose her liberty, to become a dependent, but also and inevitably, she thought, to lose Ditmar's love....

No experience, however, is emotionally continuous, nor was their intimacy by any means wholly on this plane of conflict. There were hours when, Ditmar's passion leaving spent itself, they achieved comradeship, in the office and out of it; revelations for Janet when he talked of himself, relating the little incidents she found most illuminating. And thus by degrees she was able to build up a new and truer estimate of

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him. For example, she began to perceive that his life outside of his interest in the mills, instead of being the romance of privileged joys she had once imagined, had been almost as empty as her own, without either unity or direction. Her perception was none the less keen because definite terms were wanting for its expression. The idea of him that first had captivated her was that of an energized and focussed character controlling with a sure hand the fortunes of a great organization; of a power in the city and state, of a being who, in his leisure moments, dwelt in a delectable realm from which she was excluded. She was still acutely conscious of his force, but what she now felt was its lack of direction—save for the portion that drove the Chippering Mills. The rest of it, like the river, flowed away on the line of least resistance to the sea.

As was quite natural, this gradual discovery of what he was—or of what he wasn't—this truer estimate, this partial disillusionment, merely served to deepen and intensify the feeling he had aroused in her; to heighten, likewise, the sense of her own value by confirming a belief in her possession of certain qualities, of a kind of fibre he needed in a helpmate. She dwelt with a woman's fascination upon the prospect of exercising a creative influence—even while she acknowledged the fearful possibility of his power in unguarded moments to overwhelm and destroy her. Here was another incentive to resist the gusts of his passion. She could guide and develop him by helping and improving herself. Hope and ambition throbbed within her, she felt a contempt for his wife, for the women who had been her predecessors. He had not spoken of these, save once or twice by implication, but with what may seem a surprising leniency she regarded them as consequences of a life lacking in content. If only she could keep her head, she might supply that content, and bring him happiness! The thought of his children troubled her most, but she was quick to perceive that he got nothing from them; and even though it were partly his own fault, she was inclined to lay the heavier blame on the woman who had been their mother. The triviality, the emptiness of his existence outside of the walls of the mill made her heart beat with pure pity. For she could understand it.

One of the many, and often humorous, incidents that served to bring about this realization of a former aimlessness happened on their second Sunday excursion. This time he had not chosen the Kingsbury Tavern, but another automobilists' haunt, an enlightening indication of established habits involving a wide choice of resorts. While he was paying for luncheon and chatting with the proprietor, Ditmar snatched from the change he had flung down on the counter a five dollar gold coin.

"Now how in thunder did that get into my right-hand pocket? I always keep it in my vest," he exclaimed; and the matter continued to disturb him after they were in the automobile. "It's my lucky piece. I guess I was so excited at the prospect of seeing you when I dressed this morning I put it into my change. Just see what you do to me!"

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"Does it bring you luck?" she inquired smilingly.

"How about you! I call you the biggest piece of luck I ever had."

"You'd better not be too sure," she warned him.

"Oh, I'm not worrying. I has that piece in my pocket the day I went down to see old Stephen Chippering, when he made me agent, and I've kept it ever since. And I'll tell you a funny thing—it's enough to make any man believe in luck. Do you remember that day last summer I was tinkering with the car by the canal and you came along?"

"The day you pretended to be tinkering," she corrected him.

He laughed. "So you were on to me?" he said. "You're a foxy one!"

"Anyone could see you were only pretending. It made me angry, when I thought of it afterwards."

"I just had to do it—I wanted to talk to you. But listen to what I'm going to tell you! It's a miracle, all right,—happening just at that time—that very morning. I was coming back to Boston from New York on the midnight, and when the train ran into Back Bay and I was putting on my trousers the piece rolled out among the bed clothes. I didn't know I'd lost it until I sat down in the Parker House to eat my breakfast, and I suddenly felt in my pocket. It made me sick to think it was gone. Well, I started to telephone the Pullman office, and then I made up my mind I'd take a taxi and go down to the South Station myself, and just as I got out of the cab there was the nigger porter, all dressed up in his glad rags, coming out of the station! I knew him, I'd been on his car lots of times. 'Say, George,' I said, 'I didn't forget you this morning, did I?'

"'No, suh,' said George, 'you done give me a quarter.'

"'I guess you're mistaken, George,' says I, and I fished out a ten dollar bill. You ought to have seen that nigger's eyes."

"'What's this for, Mister Ditmar?' says he.

"'For that lucky gold piece you found in lower seven,' I told him. 'We'll trade.'

"'Was you in lower seven?—so you was!' says George. Well, he had it all right—you bet he had it. Now wasn't that queer? The very day you and I began to know each other!"

"Wonderful!" Janet agreed. "Why don't you put it on your watch chain?"

“Well, I’ve thought of that,” he replied, with the air of having considered all sides of the matter. “But I’ve got that charm of the secret order I belong to—that’s on my chain. I guess I’ll keep it in my vest pocket.”

“I didn’t know you were so superstitious,” she mocked.

“Pretty nearly everybody’s superstitious,” he declared. And she thought of Lise.

“I’m not. I believe if things are going to happen well, they’re going to happen. Nothing can prevent it.”

“By thunder” he exclaimed, struck by her remark. “You are like that You’re different from any person I ever knew...”

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From such anecdotes she pieced together her new Ditmar. He spoke of a large world she had never seen, of New York and Washington and Chicago, where he intended to take her. In the future he would never travel alone. And he told her of his having been a delegate to the last National Republican Convention, explaining what a delegate was. He gloried in her innocence, and it was pleasant to dazzle her with impressions of his cosmopolitanism. In this, perhaps, he was not quite so successful as he imagined, but her eyes shone. She had never even been in a sleeping car! For her delectation he launched into an enthusiastic description of these vehicles, of palatial compartment cars, of limited, transcontinental trains, where one had a stenographer and a barber at one's disposal.

"Neither of them would do me any good," she complained.

"You could go to the manicure," he said.

There had been in Ditmar's life certain events which, in his anecdotal moods, were magnified into matters of climacteric importance; high, festal occasions on which it was sweet to reminisce, such as his visit as Delegate at Large to that Chicago Convention. He had travelled on a special train stocked with cigars and White Seal champagne, in the company of senators and congressmen and ex-governors, state treasurers, collectors of the port, mill owners, and bankers to whom he referred, as the French say, in terms of their "little" names. He dwelt on the magnificence of the huge hotel set on the borders of a lake like an inland sea, and related such portions of the festivities incidental to "the seeing of Chicago" as would bear repetition. No women belonged to this realm; no women, at least, who were to be regarded as persons. Ditmar did not mention them, but no doubt they existed, along with the cigars and the White Seal champagne, contributing to the amenities. And the excursion, to Janet, took on the complexion of a sort of glorified picnic in the course of which, incidentally, a President of the United States had been chosen. In her innocence she had believed the voters to perform this function. Ditmar laughed.

"Do you suppose we're going to let the mob run this country?" he inquired. "Once in a while we can't get away with it as we'd like, we have to take the best we can."

Thus was brought home to her more and more clearly that what men strove and fought for were the joys of prominence, privilege, and power. Everywhere, in the great world, they demanded and received consideration. It was Ditmar's boast that if nobody else could get a room in a crowded New York hotel, he could always obtain one. And she was fain to concede—she who had never known privilege—a certain intoxicating quality to this eminence. If you could get the power, and refused to take it, the more fool you! A topsy-turvy world, in which the stupid toiled day by day, week by week, exhausting their energies and craving joy, while others adroitly carried

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off the prize; and virtue had apparently as little to do with the matter as fair hair or a club foot. If Janet had ever read Darwin, she would have recognized in her lover a creature rather wonderfully adapted to his environment; and what puzzled her, perhaps, was the riddle that presents itself to many better informed than herself—the utter absence in this environment of the sign of any being who might be called God. Her perplexities—for she did have them—took the form of an instinctive sense of inadequacy, of persistently recurring though inarticulate convictions of the existence of elements not included in Ditmar's categories—of things that money could not buy; of things, too, alas! that poverty was as powerless to grasp. Stored within her, sometimes rising to the level of consciousness, was that experience at Silliston in the May weather when she had had a glimpse—just a glimpse! of a garden where strange and precious flowers were in bloom. On the other hand, this mysterious perception by her of things unseen and hitherto unguessed, of rays of delight in the spectrum of values to which his senses were unattuned, was for Ditmar the supreme essence of her fascination. At moments he was at once bewildered and inebriated by the rare delicacy of fabric of the woman whom he had somehow stumbled upon and possessed.

Then there were the hours when they worked together in the office. Here she beheld Ditmar at his best. It cannot be said that his infatuation for her was ever absent from his consciousness: he knew she was there beside him, he betrayed it continually. But here she was in the presence of what had been and what remained his ideal, the Chippering Mill; here he acquired unity. All his energies were bent toward the successful execution of the Bradlaugh order, which had to be completed on the first of February. And as day after day went by her realization of the magnitude of the task he had undertaken became keener. Excitement was in the air. Ditmar seemed somehow to have managed to infuse not only Orcutt, the superintendent, but the foremen and second hands and even the workers with a common spirit of pride and loyalty, of interest, of determination to carry off this matter triumphantly. The mill seemed fairly to hum with effort. Janet's increasing knowledge of its organization and processes only served to heighten her admiration for the confidence Ditmar had shown from the beginning. It was superb. And now, as the probability of the successful execution of the task tended more and more toward certainty, he sometimes gave vent to his boyish, exuberant spirits.

"I told Holster, I told all those croakers I'd do it, and by thunder I will do it, with three days' margin, too! I'll get the last shipment off on the twenty-eighth of January. Why, even George Chippering was afraid I couldn't handle it. If the old man was alive he wouldn't have had cold feet." Then Ditmar added, half jocularly, half seriously, looking down on her as she sat with her note-book, waiting for him to go on with his dictation: "I guess you've had your share in it, too. You've been a wonder, the way you've caught on and taken things off my shoulders. If Orcutt died I believe you could step right into his shoes."

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"I'm sure I could step into his shoes," she replied. "Only I hope he won't die."

"I hope he won't, either," said Ditmar. "And as for you—"

"Never mind me, now," she said.

He bent over her.

"Janet, you're the greatest girl in the world."

Yes, she was happiest when she felt she was helping him, it gave her confidence that she could do more, lead him into paths beyond which they might explore together. She was useful. Sometimes, however, he seemed to her oversanguine; though he had worked hard, his success had come too easily, had been too uniform. His temper was quick, the prospect of opposition often made him overbearing, yet on occasions he listened with surprising patience to his subordinates when they ventured to differ from his opinions. At other times Janet had seen him overrule them ruthlessly; humiliate them. There were days when things went wrong, when there were delays, complications, more matters to attend to than usual. On one such day, after the dinner hour, Mr. Orcutt entered the office. His long, lean face wore a certain expression Janet had come to know, an expression that always irritated Ditmar—the conscientious superintendent having the unfortunate faculty of exaggerating annoyances by his very bearing. Ditmar stopped in the midst of dictating a peculiarly difficult letter, and looked up sharply.

"Well," he asked, "what's the trouble now?"

Orcutt seemed incapable of reading storm signals. When anything happened, he had the air of declaring, "I told you so."

"You may remember I spoke to you once or twice, Mr. Ditmar, of the talk over the fifty-four hour law that goes into effect in January."

"Yes, what of it?" Ditmar cut in. "The notices have been posted, as the law requires."

"The hands have been grumbling, there are trouble makers among them. A delegation came to me this noon and wanted to know whether we intended to cut the pay to correspond to the shorter working hours."

"Of course it's going to be cut," said Ditmar. "What do they suppose? That we're going to pay 'em for work they don't do? The hands not paid by the piece are paid practically by the hour, not by the day. And there's got to be some limit to this thing. If these damned demagogues in the legislature keep on cutting down the hours of women and children every three years or so—and we can't run the mill without the women and children—we might as well shut down right now. Three years ago, when they made it

fifty-six hours, we were fools to keep up the pay. I said so then, at the conference, but they wouldn't listen to me. They listened this time. Holster and one or two others croaked, but we shut 'em up. No, they won't get any more pay, not a damned cent."

Orcutt had listened patiently, lugubriously.

"I told them that."

"What did they say?"

"They said they thought there'd be a strike."

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"Pooh! Strike!" exclaimed Ditmar with contemptuous violence. "Do you believe that? You're always borrowing trouble, you are. They may have a strike at one mill, the Clarendon. I hope they do, I hope Holster gets it in the neck—he don't know how to run a mill anyway. We won't have any strike, our people understand when they're well off, they've got all the work they can do, they're sending fortunes back to the old country or piling them up in the banks. It's all bluff."

"There was a meeting of the English branch of the I. W. W. last night. A committee was appointed," said Orcutt, who as usual took a gloomy satisfaction in the prospect of disaster.

"The I. W. W.! My God, Orcutt, don't you know enough not to come in here wasting my time talking about the I. W. W.? Those anarchists haven't got any organization. Can't you get that through your head?"

"All right," replied Orcutt, and marched off. Janet felt rather sorry for him, though she had to admit that his manner was exasperating. But Ditmar's anger, instead of cooling, increased: it all seemed directed against the unfortunate superintendent.

"Would you believe that a man who's been in this mill twenty-five years could be such a fool?" he demanded. "The I. W. W.! Why not the Ku Klux? He must think I haven't anything to do but chin. I don't know why I keep him here, sometimes I think he'll drive me crazy."

His eyes seemed to have grown small and red, as was always the case when his temper got the better of him. Janet did not reply, but sat with her pencil poised over her book.

"Let's see, where was I?" he asked. "I can't finish that letter now. Go out and do the others."

Mundane experience, like a badly mixed cake, has a tendency to run in streaks, and on the day following the incident related above Janet's heart was heavy. Ditmar betrayed an increased shortness of temper and preoccupation; and the consciousness that her love had lent her a clairvoyant power to trace the source of his humours though these were often hidden from or unacknowledged by himself—was in this instance small consolation. She saw clearly enough that the apprehensions expressed by Mr. Orcutt, whom he had since denounced as an idiotic old woman, had made an impression, aroused in him the ever-abiding concern for the mill which was his life's passion and which had been but temporarily displaced by his infatuation with her. That other passion was paramount. What was she beside it? Would he hesitate for a moment to sacrifice her if it came to a choice between them? The tempestuousness of these thoughts, when they took possession of her, hinting as they did of possibilities in her nature hitherto unguessed and unrevealed, astonished and frightened her; she sought

to thrust them away, to reassure herself that his concern for the successful delivery of the Bradlaugh order was natural. During the morning, in the intervals between interviews

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with the superintendents, he was self-absorbed, and she found herself inconsistently resenting the absence of those expressions of endearment—the glances and stolen caresses—for indulgence in which she had hitherto rebuked him: and though pride came to her rescue, fuel was added to her feeling by the fact that he did not seem to notice her coolness. Since he failed to appear after lunch, she knew he must be investigating the suspicions Orcutt had voiced; but at six o'clock, when he had not returned, she closed up her desk and left the office. An odour of cheap perfume pervading the corridor made her aware of the presence of Miss Lottie Myers.

“Oh, it's you!” said that young woman, looking up from the landing of the stairs. “I might have known it you never make a get-away until after six, do you?”

“Oh, sometimes,” said Janet.

“I stayed as a special favour to-night,” Miss Myers declared. “But I'm not so stuck on my job that I can't tear myself away from it.”

“I don't suppose you are,” said Janet.

For a moment Miss Myers looked as if she was about to be still more impudent, but her eye met Janet's, and wavered. They crossed the bridge in silence. “Well, ta-ta,” she said. “If you like it, it's up to you. Five o'clock for mine,”—and walked away, up the canal, swinging her hips defiantly. And Janet, gazing after her, grew hot with indignation and apprehension. Her relations with Ditmar were suspected, after all, made the subject of the kind of comment indulged in, sotto voce, by Lottie Myers and her friends at the luncheon hour. She felt a mad, primitive desire to run after the girl, to spring upon and strangle her and compel her to speak what was in her mind and then retract it; and the motor impulse, inhibited, caused a sensation of sickness, of unhappiness and degradation as she turned her steps slowly homeward. Was it a misinterpretation, after all—what Lottie Myers had implied and feared to say?...

In Fillmore Street supper was over, and Lise, her face contorted, her body strained, was standing in front of the bureau “doing” her hair, her glance now seeking the mirror, now falling again to consult a model in one of those periodicals of froth and fashion that cause such numberless heart burnings in every quarter of our democracy, and which are filled with photographs of “prominent” persons at race meetings, horse shows, and resorts, and with actresses, dancers,—and mannequins. Janet's eyes fell on the open page to perceive that the coiffure her sister so painfully imitated was worn by a young woman with an insolent, vapid face and hard eyes, whose knees were crossed, revealing considerably more than an ankle. The picture was labelled, “A dance at Palm Beach—A flashlight of Mrs. ‘Trudy’ Gascoigne-Schell,”—one of those mysterious, hybrid names which, in connection with the thoughts of New York and the visible rakish

image of the lady herself, cause involuntary shudders down the spine of the reflecting American provincial. Some such responsive quiver, akin to disgust, Janet herself experienced.

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"It's the very last scream," Lise was saying. "And say, if I owned a ball dress like that I'd be somebody's Lulu all right! Can I have the pleasure of the next maxixe, Miss Bumpus?" With deft and rapid fingers she lead parted her hair far on the right side and pulled it down over the left eyebrow, twisted it over her ear and tightly around her head, inserting here and there a hairpin, seizing the hand mirror with the cracked back, and holding it up behind her. Finally, when the operation was finished to her satisfaction she exclaimed, evidently to the paragon in the picture, "I get you!" Whereupon, from the wardrobe, she produced a hat. "You sure had my number when you guessed the feathers on that other would get draggled," she observed in high good humour, generously ignoring their former unpleasantness on the subject. When she had pinned it on she bent mockingly over her sister, who sat on the bed. "How d'you like my new toque? Peekaboo! That's the way the guys rubberneck to see if you're good lookin'."

Lise was exalted, feverish, apparently possessed by some high secret; her eyes shone, and when she crossed the room she whistled bars of ragtime and executed mincing steps of the maxixe. Fumbling in the upper drawer for a pair of white gloves (also new), she knocked off the corner of the bureau her velvet bag; it opened as it struck the floor, and out of it rolled a lilac vanity case and a yellow coin. Casting a suspicious, lightning glance at Janet, she snatched up the vanity case and covered the coin with her foot.

"Lock the doors!" she cried, with an hysteric giggle. Then removing her foot she picked up the coin surreptitiously. To her amazement her sister made no comment, did not seem to have taken in the significance of the episode. Lise had expected a tempest of indignant, searching questions, a "third degree," as she would have put it. She snapped the bag together, drew on her gloves, and, when she was ready to leave, with characteristic audacity crossed the room, taking her sister's face between her hands and kissing her.

"Tell me your troubles, sweetheart!" she said—and did not wait to hear them.

Janet was incapable of speech—nor could she have brought herself to ask Lise whether or not the money had been earned at the Bagatelle, and remained miraculously unspent. It was possible, but highly incredible. And then, the vanity case and the new hat were to be accounted for! The sight of the gold piece, indeed, had suddenly revived in Janet the queer feeling of faintness, almost of nausea she had experienced after parting with Lottie Myers. And by some untoward association she was reminded of a conversation she had had with Ditmar on the Saturday afternoon following their first Sunday excursion, when, on opening her pay envelope, she had found twenty dollars.

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"Are you sure I'm worth it?" she had demanded—and he had been quite sure. He had added that she was worth more, much more, but that he could not give her as yet, without the risk of comment, a sum commensurate with the value of her services.... But now she asked herself again, was she worth it? or was it merely—part of her price? Going to the wardrobe and opening a drawer at the bottom she searched among her clothes until she discovered the piece of tissue paper in which she had wrapped the rose rescued from the cluster he had given her. The petals were dry, yet they gave forth, still, a faint, reminiscent fragrance as she pressed them to her face. Janet wept....

The following morning as she was kneeling in a corner of the room by the letter files, one of which she had placed on the floor, she recognized his step in the outer office, heard him pause to joke with young Caldwell, and needed not the visual proof—when after a moment he halted on the threshold—of the fact that his usual, buoyant spirits were restored. He held a cigar in his hand, and in his eyes was the eager look with which she had become familiar, which indeed she had learned to anticipate as they swept the room in search of her. And when they fell on her he closed the door and came forward impetuously. But her exclamation caused him to halt in bewilderment.

"Don't touch me!" she said.

And he stammered out, as he stood over her:—"What's the matter?"

"Everything. You don't love me—I was a fool to believe you did."

"Don't love you!" he repeated. "My God, what's the trouble now? What have I done?"

"Oh, it's nothing you've done, it's what you haven't done, it's what you can't do. You don't really care for me—all you care for is this mill —when anything happens here you don't know I'm alive."

He stared at her, and then an expression of comprehension, of intense desire grew in his eyes; and his laugh, as he flung his cigar out of the open window and bent down to seize her, was almost brutal. She fought him, she tried to hurt him, and suddenly, convulsively pressed herself to him.

"You little tigress!" he said, as he held her. "You were jealous—were you—jealous of the mill?" And he laughed again. "I'd like to see you with something really to be jealous about. So you love me like that, do you?"

She could feel his heart beating against her.

"I won't be neglected," she told him tensely. "I want all of you—if I can't have all of you, I don't want any. Do you understand?"

"Do I understand? Well, I guess I do."

“You didn’t yesterday,” she reproached him, somewhat dazed by the swiftness of her submission, and feeling still the traces of a lingering resentment. She had not intended to surrender. “You forgot all about me, you didn’t know I was here, much less that I was hurt. Oh, I was hurt! And you—I can tell at once when anything’s wrong with you—I know without your saying it.”



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He was amazed, he might indeed have been troubled and even alarmed by this passion he had aroused had his own passion not been at the flood. And as he wiped away her tears with his handkerchief he could scarcely believe his senses that this was the woman whose resistance had demanded all his force to overcome. Indeed, although he recognized the symptoms she betrayed as feminine, as having been registered—though feebly compared to this! by incidents in his past, precisely his difficulty seemed to be in identifying this complex and galvanic being as a woman, not as something almost fearful in her significance, outside the bounds of experience....

Presently she ceased to tremble, and he drew her to the window. The day was as mild as autumn, the winter sun like honey in its mellowness; a soft haze blurred the outline of the upper bridge.

"Only two more days until Sunday," he whispered, caressingly, exultantly....

CHAPTER XII

It had been a strange year in Hampton, unfortunate for coal merchants, welcome to the poor. But Sunday lacked the transforming touch of sunshine. The weather was damp and cold as Janet set out from Fillmore Street. Ditmar, she knew, would be waiting for her, he counted on her, and she could not bear to disappoint him, to disappoint herself. And all the doubts and fears that from time to time had assailed her were banished by this impulse to go to him, to be with him. He loved her! The words, as she sat in the trolley car, ran in her head like the lilt of a song. What did the weather matter?

When she alighted at the lonely cross-roads snow had already begun to fall. But she spied the automobile, with its top raised, some distance down the lane, and in a moment she was in it, beside him, wrapped in the coat she had now come to regard as her own. He buttoned down the curtains and took her in his arms.

"What shall we do to-day," she asked, "if it snows?"

"Don't let that worry you, sweetheart," he said. "I have the chains on, I can get through anything in this car."

He was in high, almost turbulent spirits as he turned the car and drove it out of the rutty lane into the state road. The snow grew thicker and thicker still, the world was blotted out by swiftly whirling, feathery flakes that melted on the windshield, and through the wet glass Janet caught distorted glimpses of black pines and cedars beside the highway.

The ground was spread with fleece. Occasionally, and with startling suddenness, other automobiles shot like dark phantoms out of the whiteness, and like phantoms disappeared. Presently, through the veil, she recognized Silliston—a very different



Silliston from that she had visited on the fragrant day in springtime, when the green on the common had been embroidered with dandelions, and the great elms whose bare branches were now fantastically traced against the flowing veil of white —heavy with leaf. Vignettes emerged—only to fade!—of the old-world houses whose quaint beauty had fascinated and moved her. And she found herself wondering what had become of the strange man she had mistaken for a carpenter. All that seemed to have taken place in a past life. She asked Ditmar where he was going.

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"Boston," he told her. "There's no other place to go."

"But you'll never get back if it goes on snowing like this."

"Well, the trains are still running," he assured her, with a quizzical smile. "How about it, little girl?" It was a term of endearment derived, undoubtedly, from a theatrical source, in which he sometimes indulged.

She did not answer. Surprisingly, to-day, she did not care. All she could think of, all she wanted was to go on and on beside him with the world shut out—on and on forever. She was his—what did it matter? They were on their way to Boston! She began, dreamily, to think about Boston, to try to restore it in her imagination to the exalted place it had held before she met Ditmar; to reconstruct it from vague memories of childhood when, in two of the family peregrinations, she had crossed it. Traces remained of emotionally-toned impressions acquired when she had walked about the city holding Edward's hand—of a long row of stately houses with forbidding fronts, set on a hillside, of a wide, tree-covered space where children were playing. And her childish verdict, persisting to-day, was one of inaccessibility, impenetrability, of jealously guarded wealth and beauty. Those houses, and the treasures she was convinced they must contain, were not for her! Some of the panes of glass in their windows were purple—she remembered a little thing like that, and asking her father the reason! He hadn't known. This purple quality had somehow steeped itself into her memory of Boston, and even now the colour stood for the word, impenetrable. That was extraordinary. Even now! Well, they were going to Boston; if Ditmar had said they were going to Bagdad it would have been quite as credible—and incredible. Wherever they were going, it was into the larger, larger life, and walls were to crumble before them, walls through which they would pass, even as they rent the white veil of the storm, into regions of beauty....

And now the world seemed abandoned to them alone, so empty, so still were the white villages flitting by; so empty, so still the great parkway of the Fells stretching away and away like an enchanted forest under the snow, like the domain of some sleeping king. And the flakes melted silently into the black waters. And the wide avenue to which they came led to a sleeping palace! No, it was a city, Somerville, Ditmar told her, as they twisted in and out of streets, past stores, churches and fire-engine houses, breasted the heights, descended steeply on the far side into Cambridge, and crossed the long bridge over the Charles. And here at last was Boston—Beacon Street, the heart or funnel of it, as one chose. Ditmar, removing one of the side curtains that she might see, with just a hint in his voice of a reverence she was too excited to notice, pointed out the stern and respectable facades of the twin Chippering mansions standing side by side. Save for these shrines—for

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such in some sort they were to him—the Back Bay in his eyes was nothing more than a collection of houses inhabited by people whom money and social position made unassailable. But to-day he, too, was excited. Never had he been more keenly aware of her sensitiveness to experience; and he to whom it had not occurred to wonder at Boston wondered at her, who seemed able to summon forth a presiding, brooding spirit of the place from out of the snow. Deep in her eyes, though they sparkled, was the reflection of some mystic vision; her cheeks were flushed. And in her delight, vicariously his own, he rejoiced; in his trembling hope of more delight to come, which this mentorship would enhance,—despite the fast deepening snow he drove her up one side of Commonwealth Avenue and down the other, encircling the Common and the Public Garden; stopping at the top of Park Street that she might gaze up at the State House, whose golden dome, seen through the veil, was tinged with blue. Boston! Why not Russia? Janet was speechless for sheer lack of words to describe what she felt....

At length he brought the car to a halt opposite an imposing doorway in front of which a glass roof extended over the pavement, and Janet demanded where they were.

“Well, we’ve got to eat, haven’t we?” Ditmar replied. She noticed that he was shivering.

“Are you cold?” she inquired with concern.

“I guess I am, a little,” he replied. “I don’t know why I should be, in a fur coat. But I’ll be warm soon enough, now.”

A man in blue livery hurried toward them across the sidewalk, helping them to alight. And Ditmar, after driving the car a few paces beyond the entrance, led her through the revolving doors into a long corridor, paved with marble and lighted by bulbs glowing from the ceiling, where benches were set against the wall, overspread by the leaves of potted plants set in the intervals between them.

“Sit down a moment,” he said to her. “I must telephone to have somebody take that car, or it’ll stay there the rest of the winter.”

She sat down on one of the benches. The soft light, the warmth, the exotic odour of the plants, the well-dressed people who trod softly the strip of carpet set on the marble with the air of being at home—all contributed to an excitement, intense yet benumbing. She could not think. She didn’t want to think—only to feel, to enjoy, to wring the utmost flavour of enchantment from these new surroundings; and her face wore the expression of one in a dream. Presently she saw Ditmar returning followed by a boy in a blue uniform.

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"All right," he said. At the end of the corridor was an elevator in which they were shot to one of the upper floors; and the boy, inserting a key in a heavy mahogany door, revealed a sitting-room. Between its windows was a table covered with a long, white cloth reaching to the floor, on which, amidst the silverware and glass, was set a tall vase filled with dusky roses. Janet, drawing in a deep breath of their fragrance, glanced around the room. The hangings, the wall-paper, the carpet, the velvet upholstery of the mahogany chairs, of the wide lounge in the corner were of a deep and restful green; the marble mantelpiece, with its English coal grate, was copied—had she known it—from a mansion of the Georgian period. The hands of a delicate Georgian clock pointed to one. And in the large mirror behind the clock she beheld an image she supposed, dreamily, to be herself. The bell boy was taking off her coat, which he hung, with Ditmar's, on a rack in a corner.

"Shall I light the fire, sir?" he asked.

"Sure," said Ditmar. "And tell them to hurry up with lunch."

The boy withdrew, closing the door silently behind him.

"We're going to have lunch here!" Janet exclaimed.

"Why not? I thought it would be nicer than a public dining-room, and when I got up this morning and saw what the weather was I telephoned." He placed two chairs before the fire, which had begun to blaze. "Isn't it cosy?" he said, taking her hands and pulling her toward him. His own hands trembled, the tips of his fingers were cold.

"You are cold!" she said.

"Not now—not now," he replied. The queer vibrations were in his voice that she had heard before. "Sweetheart! This is the best yet, isn't it? And after that trip in the storm!"

"It's beautiful!" she murmured, gently drawing away from him and looking around her once more. "I never was in a room like this."

"Well, you'll be in plenty more of them," he exulted. "Sit down beside the fire, and get warm yourself."

She obeyed, and he took the chair at her side, his eyes on her face. As usual, she was beyond him; and despite her exclamations of surprise, of appreciation and pleasure she maintained the outward poise, the inscrutability that summed up for him her uniqueness in the world of woman. She sat as easily upright in the delicate Chippendale chair as though she had been born to it. He made wild surmises as to what she might be thinking. Was she, as she seemed, taking all this as a matter of course? She imposed on him an impelling necessity to speak, to say anything—it did not matter what—and he

began to dwell on the excellences of the hotel. She did not appear to hear him, her eyes lingering on the room, until presently she asked:—"What's the name of this hotel?"

He told her.

"I thought they only allowed married people to come, like this, in a private room."

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"Oh!" he began—and the sudden perception that she had made this statement impartially added to his perplexity. "Well," he was able to answer, "we're as good as married, aren't we, Janet?" He leaned toward her, he put his hand on hers. "The manager here is an old friend of mine. He knows we're as good as married."

"Another old friend!" she queried. And the touch of humour, in spite of his taut nerves, delighted him.

"Yes, yes," he laughed, rather uproariously. "I've got 'em everywhere, as thick as landmarks."

"You seem to," she said.

"I hope you're hungry," he said.

"Not very," she replied. "It's all so strange—this day, Claude. It's like a fairy story, coming here to Boston in the snow, and this place, and—and being with you."

"You still love me?" he cried, getting up.

"You must know that I do," she answered simply, raising her face to his. And he stood gazing down into it, with an odd expression she had never seen before.... "What's the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing—nothing," he assured her, but continued to look at her. "You're so—so wonderful," he whispered, "I just can't believe it."

"And if it's hard for you," she answered, "think what it must be for me!" And she smiled up at him.

Ditmar had known a moment of awe.... Suddenly he took her face between his hands and pressed his rough cheek against it, blindly. His hands trembled, his body was shaken, as by a spasm.

"Why, you're still cold, Claude!" she cried anxiously.

And he stammered out: "I'm not—it's you—it's having you!"

Before she could reply to this strange exclamation, to which, nevertheless, some fire in her leaped in response, there came a knock at the door, and he drew away from her as he answered it. Two waiters entered obsequiously, one bearing a serving table, the other holding above his head a large tray containing covered dishes and glasses.

"I could do with a cocktail!" Ditmar exclaimed, and the waiter smiled as he served them. "Here's how!" he said, giving her a glass containing a yellow liquid.

She tasted it, made a grimace, and set it down hastily.

“What’s the trouble?” he asked, laughing, as she hurried to the table and took a drink of water.

“It’s horrid!” she cried.

“Oh, you’ll get over that idea,” he told her. “You’ll be crazy about ’em.”

“I never want to taste another,” she declared.

He laughed again. He had taken his at a swallow, but almost nullifying its effect was this confirmation—if indeed he had needed it—of the extent of her inexperience. She was, in truth, untouched by the world —the world in which he had lived. He pulled out her chair for her and she sat down, confronted by a series of knives, forks, and spoons on either side of a plate of oysters. Oysters served in this fashion, needless to say, had never formed part of the menu in Fillmore Street, or in any Hampton restaurant where she had lunched. But she saw that Ditmar had chosen a little fork with three prongs, and she followed his example.

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"You mustn't tell me you don't like Cotuits!" he exclaimed.

She touched one, delicately, with her fork.

"They're alive!" she exclaimed, though the custom of consuming them thus was by no means unknown to her. Lise had often boasted of a taste for oysters on the shell, though really preferring them smothered with red catsup in a "cocktail."

"They're alive, but they don't know it. They won't eat you," Ditmar replied gleefully. "Squeeze a little lemon on one." Another sort of woman, he reflected, would have feigned a familiarity with the dish.

She obeyed him, put one in her mouth, gave a little shiver, and swallowed it quickly.

"Well?" he said. "It isn't bad, is it?"

"It seems so queer to eat anything alive, and enjoy it," she said, as she ate the rest of them.

"If you think they're good here you ought to taste them on the Cape, right out of the water," he declared, and went on to relate how he had once eaten a fabulous number in a contest with a friend of his, and won a bet. He was fond of talking about wagers he had won. Betting had lent a zest to his life. "We'll roll down there together some day next summer, little girl. It's a great place. You can go in swimming three times a day and never feel it. And talk about eating oysters, you can't swallow 'em as fast as a fellow I know down there, Joe Pusey, can open 'em. It's some trick to open 'em."

He described the process, but she—scarcely listened. She was striving to adjust herself to the elements of a new and revolutionary experience; to the waiters who came and went, softly, deferentially putting hot plates before her, helping her to strange and delicious things; a creamy soup, a fish with a yellow sauce whose ingredients were artfully disguised, a breast of guinea fowl, a salad, an ice, and a small cup of coffee. Instincts and tastes hitherto unsuspected and ungratified were aroused in her. What would it be like always to be daintily served, to eat one's meals in this leisurely and luxurious manner? As her physical hunger was satisfied by the dainty food, even as her starved senses drank in the caressing warmth and harmony of the room, the gleaming fire, the heavy scent of the flowers, the rose glow of the lights in contrast to the storm without,—so the storm flinging itself against the windows, powerless to reach her, seemed to typify a former existence of cold, black mornings and factory bells and harsh sirens, of toil and limitations. Had her existence been like that? or was it a dream, a nightmare from which she had awakened at last? From time to time, deep within her, she felt persisting a conviction that that was reality, this illusion, but she fought it down. She wanted—oh, how she wanted to believe in the illusion!

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Facing her was the agent, the genius, the Man who had snatched her from that existence, who had at his command these delights to bestow. She loved him, she belonged to him, he was to be her husband—yet there were moments when the glamour of this oddly tended to dissolve, when an objective vision intruded and she beheld herself, as though removed from the body, lunching with a strange man in a strange place. And once it crossed her mind—what would she think of another woman who did this? What would she think if it were Lise? She could not then achieve a sense of identity; it was as though she had partaken of some philtre lulling her, inhibiting her power to grasp the fact in its enormity. And little by little grew on her the realization of what all along she had known, that the spell of these surroundings to which she had surrendered was an expression of the man himself. He was the source of it. More and more, as he talked, his eyes troubled and stirred her; the touch of his hand, as he reached across the table and laid it on hers, burned her. When the waiters had left them alone she could stand the strain no longer, and she rose and strayed about the room, examining the furniture, the curtains, the crystal pendants, faintly pink, that softened and diffused the light; and she paused before the grand piano in the corner.

“I’d like to be able to play!” she said.

“You can learn,” he told her.

“I’m too old!”

He laughed. And as he sat smoking his eyes followed her ceaselessly.

Above the sofa hung a large print of the Circus Maximus, with crowded tiers mounting toward the sky, and awninged boxes where sat the Vestal Virgins and the Emperor high above a motley, serried group on the sand. At the mouth of a tunnel a lion stood motionless, menacing, regarding them. The picture fascinated Janet.

“It’s meant to be Rome, isn’t it?” she asked.

“What? That? I guess so.” He got up and came over to her. “Sure,” he said. “I’m not very strong on history, but I read a book once, a novel, which told how those old fellows used to like to see Christians thrown to the lions just as we like to see football games. I’ll get the book again—we’ll read it together.”

Janet shivered.... “Here’s another picture,” he said, turning to the other side of the room. It was, apparently, an engraved copy of a modern portrait, of a woman in evening dress with shapely arms and throat and a small, aristocratic head. Around her neck was hung a heavy rope of pearls.

“Isn’t she beautiful!” Janet sighed.

“Beautiful!” He led her to the mirror. “Look!” he said. “I’ll buy you pearls, Janet, I want to see them gleaming against your skin. She can’t compare to you. I’ll—I’ll drape you with pearls.”

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"No, no," she cried. "I don't want them, Claude. I don't want them. Please!" She scarcely knew what she was saying. And as she drew away from him her hands went out, were pressed together with an imploring, supplicating gesture. He seized them. His nearness was suffocating her, she flung herself into his arms, and their lips met in a long, swooning kiss. She began instinctively but vainly to struggle, not against him — but against a primal thing stronger than herself, stronger than he, stronger than codes and conventions and institutions, which yet she craved fiercely as her being's fulfilment. It was sweeping them dizzily —whither? The sheer sweetness and terror of it!

"Don't, don't!" she murmured desperately. "You mustn't!"

"Janet—we're going to be married, sweetheart,—just as soon as we can. Won't you trust me? For God's sake, don't be cruel. You're my wife, now—"

His voice seemed to come from a great distance. And from a great distance, too, her own in reply, drowned as by falling waters.

"Do you love me?—will you love me always—always?"

And he answered hoarsely, "Yes—always—I swear it, Janet." He had found her lips again, he was pulling her toward a door on the far side of the room, and suddenly, as he opened it, her resistance ceased....

The snow made automobiling impossible, and at half past nine that evening Ditmar had escorted Janet to the station in a cab, and she had taken the train for Hampton. For a while she sat as in a trance. She knew that something had happened, something portentous, cataclysmic, which had irrevocably changed her from the Janet Bumpus who had left Hampton that same morning—an age ago. But she was unable to realize the metamorphosis. In the course of a single day she had lived a lifetime, exhausted the range of human experience, until now she was powerless to feel any more. The car was filled with all sorts and conditions of people returning to homes scattered through the suburbs and smaller cities north of Boston—a mixed, Sunday-night crowd; and presently she began, in a detached way, to observe them. Their aspects, their speech and manners had the queer effect of penetrating her consciousness without arousing the emotional judgments of approval or disapproval which normally should have followed. Ordinarily she might have felt a certain sympathy for the fragile young man on the seat beside her who sat moodily staring through his glasses at the floor: and the group across the aisle would surely have moved her to disgust. Two couples were seated vis-a-vis, the men apparently making fun of a "pony" coat one of the girls was wearing. In spite of her shrieks, which drew general attention, they pulled it from her back—an operation regarded by the conductor himself with tolerant amusement. Whereupon her companion, a big, blond Teuton with an inane guffaw, boldly thrust an arm about her waist and held her while he presented the tickets. Janet beheld all this as one sees dancers through a glass, without hearing the music.

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Behind her two men fell into conversation.

"I guess there's well over a foot of snow. I thought we'd have an open winter, too."

"Look out for them when they start in mild!"

"I was afraid this darned road would be tied up if I waited until morning. I'm in real estate, and there's a deal on in my town I've got to watch every minute...."

Even the talk between two slouch-hatted millhands, foreigners, failed at the time to strike Janet as having any significance. They were discussing with some heat the prospect of having their pay reduced by the fifty-four hour law which was to come into effect on Monday. They denounced the mill owners.

"They speed up the machine and make work harder," said one. "I think we goin' to have a strike sure."

"Bad sisson too to have strike," replied the second pessimistically. "It will be cold winter, now."

Across the black square of the window drifted the stray lights of the countryside, and from time to time, when the train stopped, she gazed out, unheeding, at the figures moving along the dim station platforms. Suddenly, without premeditation or effort, she began to live over again the day, beginning with the wonders, half revealed, half hidden, of that journey through the whiteness to Boston.... Awakened, listening, she heard beating louder and louder on the shores of consciousness the waves of the storm which had swept her away—waves like crashing chords of music. She breathed deeply, she turned her face to the window, seeming to behold reflected there, as in a crystal, all her experiences, little and great, great and little. She was seated once more leaning back in the corner of the carriage on her way to the station, she felt Ditmar's hand working in her own, and she heard his voice pleading forgiveness—for her silence alarmed him. And she heard herself saying:—"It was my fault as much as yours."

And his vehement reply:—"It wasn't anybody's fault—it was natural, it was wonderful, Janet. I can't bear to see you sad."

To see her sad! Twice, during the afternoon and evening, he had spoken those words—or was it three times? Was there a time she had forgotten? And each time she had answered: "I'm not sad." What she had felt indeed was not sadness,—but how could she describe it to him when she herself was amazed and dwarfed by it? Could he not feel it, too? Were men so different?... In the cab his solicitation, his tenderness were only to be compared with his bewilderment, his apparent awe of the feeling he himself had raised up in her, and which awed her, likewise. She had actually felt that bewilderment of his when, just before they had reached the station, she had responded

passionately to his last embrace. Even as he returned her caresses, it had been conveyed to her amazingly by the quality of his touch. Was it a lack all women felt in men? and were these, even in supreme moments, merely the perplexed transmitters of life?—not life itself? Her thoughts did not gain this clarity, though she divined the secret. And yet she loved him—loved him with a fierceness that frightened her, with a tenderness that unnerved her....

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At the Hampton station she took the trolley, alighting at the Common, following the narrow path made by pedestrians in the heavy snow to Fillmore Street. She climbed the dark stairs, opened the dining-room door, and paused on the threshold. Hannah and Edward sat there under the lamp, Hannah scanning through her spectacles the pages of a Sunday newspaper. On perceiving Janet she dropped it hastily in her lap.

"Well, I was concerned about you, in all this storm!" she exclaimed. "Thank goodness you're home, anyway. You haven't seen Lise, have you?"

"Lise?" Janet repeated. "Hasn't she been home?"

"Your father and I have been alone all day long. Not that it is so uncommon for Lise to be gone. I wish it wasn't! But you! When you didn't come home for supper I was considerably worried."

Janet sat down between her mother and father and began to draw off her gloves.

"I'm going to marry Mr. Ditmar," she announced.

For a few moments the silence was broken only by the ticking of the old-fashioned clock.

"Mr. Ditmar!" said Hannah, at length. "You're going to marry Mr. Ditmar!"

Edward was still inarticulate. His face twitched, his eyes watered as he stared at her.

"Not right away," said Janet.

"Well, I must say you take it rather cool," declared Hannah, almost resentfully. "You come in and tell us you're going to marry Mr. Ditmar just like you were talking about the weather."

Hannah's eyes filled with tears. There had been indeed an unconscious lack of consideration in Janet's abrupt announcement, which had fallen like a spark on the dry tinder of Hannah's hope. The result was a suffocating flame. Janet, whom love had quickened, had a swift perception of this. She rose quickly and took Hannah in her arms and kissed her. It was as though the relation between them were reversed, and the daughter had now become the mother and the comforter.

"I always knew something like this would happen!" said Edward. His words incited Hannah to protest.

"You didn't anything of the kind, Edward Bumpus," she exclaimed.

“Just to think of Janet livin’ in that big house up in Warren Street!” he went on, unheeding, jubilant. “You’ll drop in and see the old people once in a while, Janet, you won’t forget us?”

“I wish you wouldn’t talk like that, father,” said Janet.

“Well, he’s a fine man, Claude Ditmar, I always said that. The way he stops and talks to me when he passes the gate—”

“That doesn’t make him a good man,” Hannah declared, and added: “If he wasn’t a good man, Janet wouldn’t be marrying him.”

“I don’t know whether he’s good or not,” said Janet.

“That’s so, too,” observed Hannah, approvingly. “We can’t any of us tell till we’ve tried ’em, and then it’s too late to change. I’d like to see him, but I guess he wouldn’t care to come down here to Fillmore Street.” The difference between Ditmar’s social and economic standing and their own suggested appalling complications to her mind. “I suppose I won’t get a sight of him till after you’re married, and not much then.”

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"There's plenty of time to think about that, mother," answered Janet.

"I'd want to have everything decent and regular," Hannah insisted. "We may be poor, but we come of good stock, as your father says."

"It'll be all right—Mr. Ditmar will behave like a gentleman," Edward assured her.

"I thought I ought to tell you about it," Janet said, "but you mustn't mention it, yet, not even to Lise. Lise will talk. Mr. Ditmar's very busy now,—he hasn't made any plans."

"I wish Lise could get married!" exclaimed Hannah, irrelevantly. "She's been acting so queer lately, she's not been herself at all."

"Now there you go, borrowing trouble, mother," Edward exclaimed. He could not take his eyes from Janet, but continued to regard her with benevolence. "Lise'll get married some day. I don't suppose we can expect another Mr. Ditmar...."

"Well," said Hannah, presently, "there's no use sitting up all night." She rose and kissed Janet again. "I just can't believe it," she declared, "but I guess it's so if you say it is."

"Of course it's so," said Edward.

"I so want you should be happy, Janet," said Hannah....

Was it so? Her mother and father, the dwarfed and ugly surroundings of Fillmore Street made it seem incredible once more. And—what would they say if they knew what had happened to her this day? When she had reached her room, Janet began to wonder why she had told her parents. Had it not been in order to relieve their anxiety—especially her mother's—on the score of her recent absences from home? Yes, that was it, and because the news would make them happy. And then the mere assertion to them that she was to marry Ditmar helped to make it more real to herself. But, now that reality was fading again, she was unable to bring it within the scope of her imagination, her mind refused to hold one remembered circumstance long enough to coordinate it with another: she realized that she was tired—too tired to think any more. But despite her exhaustion there remained within her, possessing her, as it were overshadowing her, unrelated to future or past, the presence of the man who had awakened her to an intensity of life hitherto unconceived. When her head touched the pillow she fell asleep....

When the bells and the undulating scream of the siren awoke her, she lay awhile groping in the darkness. Where was she? Who was she? The discovery of the fact that the nail of the middle finger on her right hand was broken, gave her a clue. She had broken that nail in reaching out to save something—a vase of roses—that was it!—a vase of roses on a table with a white cloth. Ditmar had tipped it over. The sudden flaring up of this trivial incident served to re-establish her identity, to light a fuse along

which her mind began to run like fire, illuminating redly all the events of the day before. It was sweet to lie thus, to possess, as her very own, these precious, passionate memories of life lived at last to fulness, to feel that she had irrevocably given herself and taken—all. A longing to see Ditmar again invaded her: he would take an early train, he would be at the office by nine. How could she wait until then?

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With a movement that had become habitual, subconscious, she reached out her hand to arouse her sister. The coldness of the sheets on the right side of the bed sent a shiver through her—a shiver of fear.

“Lise!” she called. But there was no answer from the darkness. And Janet, trembling, her heart beating wildly, sprang from the bed, searched for the matches, and lit the gas. There was no sign of Lise; her clothes, which she had the habit of flinging across the chairs, were nowhere to be seen. Janet’s eyes fell on the bureau, marked the absence of several knick-knacks, including a comb and brush, and with a sudden sickness of apprehension she darted to the wardrobe and flung open the doors. In the bottom were a few odd garments, above was the hat with the purple feather, now shabby and discarded, on the hooks a skirt and jacket Lise wore to work at the Bagatelle in bad weather. That was all.... Janet sank down in the rocking-chair, her hands clasped together, overwhelmed by the sudden apprehension of the tragedy that had lurked, all unsuspected, in the darkness: a tragedy, not of Lise alone, but in which she herself was somehow involved. Just why this was so, she could not for the moment declare. The room was cold, she was clad only in a nightdress, but surges of heat ran through her body. What should she do? She must think. But thought was impossible. She got up and closed the window and began to dress with feverish rapidity, pausing now and again to stand motionless. In one such moment there entered her mind an incident that oddly had made little impression at the time of its occurrence because she, Janet, had been blinded by the prospect of her own happiness—that happiness which, a few minutes ago, had seemed so real and vital a thing! And it was the memory of this incident that suddenly threw a glaring, evil light on all of Lise’s conduct during the past months—her accidental dropping of the vanity case and the gold coin! Now she knew for a certainty what had happened to her sister.

Having dressed herself, she entered the kitchen, which was warm, filled with the smell of frying meat. Streaks of grease smoke floated fantastically beneath the low ceiling, and Hannah, with the frying-pan in one hand and a fork in the other, was bending over the stove. Wisps of her scant, whitening hair escaped from the ridiculous, tightly drawn knot at the back of her head; in the light of the flickering gas-jet she looked so old and worn that a sudden pity smote Janet and made her dumb —pity for her mother, pity for herself, pity for Lise; pity that lent a staggering insight into life itself. Hannah had once been young, desirable, perhaps, swayed by those forces which had swayed her. Janet wondered why she had never guessed this before, and why she had guessed it now. But it was Hannah who, looking up and catching sight of Janet’s face, was quick to divine the presage in it and gave voice to the foreboding that had weighed on her for many weeks.

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"Where's Lise?"

And Janet could not answer. She shook her head. Hannah dropped the fork, the handle of the frying pan and crossed the room swiftly, seizing Janet by the shoulders.

"Is she gone? I knew it, I felt it all along. I thought she'd done something she was afraid to tell about—I tried to ask her, but I couldn't—I couldn't! And now she's gone. Oh, my God, I'll never forgive myself!"

The unaccustomed sight of her mother's grief was terrible. For an instant only she clung to Janet, then becoming mute, she sat down in the kitchen chair and stared with dry, unseeing eyes at the wall. Her face twitched. Janet could not bear to look at it, to see the torture in her mother's eyes. She, Janet, seemed suddenly to have grown old herself, to have lived through ages of misery and tragedy.... She was aware of a pungent odour, went to the stove, picked up the fork, and turned the steak. Now and then she glanced at Hannah. Grief seemed to have frozen her. Then, from the dining-room she heard footsteps, and Edward stood in the doorway.

"Well, what's the matter with breakfast?" he asked. From where he stood he could not see Hannah's face, but gradually his eyes were drawn to her figure. His intuition was not quick, and some moments passed before the rigidity of the pose impressed itself upon him.

"Is mother sick?" he asked falteringly.

Janet went to him. But it was Hannah who spoke.

"Lise has gone," she said.

"Lise—gone," Edward repeated. "Gone where?"

"She's run away—she's disgraced us," Hannah replied, in a monotonous, dulled voice.

Edward did not seem to understand, and presently Janet felt impelled to break the silence.

"She didn't come home last night, father."

"Didn't come home? Mebbe she spent the night with a friend," he said.

It seemed incredible, at such a moment, that he could still be hopeful.

"No, she's gone, I tell you, she's lost, we'll never lay eyes on her again. My God, I never thought she'd come to this, but I might have guessed it. Lise! Lise! To think it's my Lise!"

Hannah's voice echoed pitifully through the silence of the flat. So appealing, so heartbroken was the cry one might have thought that Lise, wherever she was, would have heard it. Edward was dazed by the shock, his lower lip quivered and fell. He walked over to Hannah's chair and put his hand on her shoulder.

"There, there, mother," he pleaded. "If she's gone, we'll find her, we'll bring her back to you."

Hannah shook her head. She pushed back her chair abruptly and going over to the stove took the fork from Janet's hand and put the steak on the dish.

"Go in there and set down, Edward," she said. "I guess we've got to have breakfast just the same, whether she's gone or not."

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It was terrible to see Hannah, with that look on her face, going about her tasks automatically. And Edward, too, seemed suddenly to have become aged and broken; his trust in the world, so amazingly preserved through many vicissitudes, shattered at last. He spilled his coffee when he tried to drink, and presently he got up and wandered about the room, searching for his overcoat. It was Janet who found it and helped him on with it. He tried to say something, but failing, departed heavily for the mill. Janet began to remove the dishes from the table.

"You've got to eat something, too, before you go to work," said Hannah.

"I've had all I want," Janet replied.

Hannah followed her into the kitchen. The scarcely touched food was laid aside, the coffee-pot emptied, Hannah put the cups in the basin in the sink and let the water run. She turned to Janet and seized her hands convulsively.

"Let me do this, mother," said Janet. She knew her mother was thinking of the newly-found joy that Lise's disgrace had marred, but she released her hands, gently, and took the mop from the nail on which it hung.

"You sit down, mother," she said.

Hannah would not. They finished the dishes together in silence while the light of the new day stole in through the windows. Janet went into her room, set it in order, made up the bed, put on her coat and hat and rubbers. Then she returned to Hannah, who seized her.

"It ain't going to spoil your happiness?"

But Janet could not answer. She kissed her mother, and went out, down the stairs into the street. The day was sharp and cold and bracing, and out of an azure sky the sun shone with dazzling brightness on the snow, which the west wind was whirling into little eddies of white smoke, leaving on the drifts delicate scalloped designs like those printed by waves on the sands of the sea. They seemed to Janet that morning hatefully beautiful. In front of his tin shop, whistling cheerfully and labouring energetically with a shovel to clean his sidewalk, was Johnny Tiernan, the tip of his pointed nose made very red by the wind.

"Good morning, Miss Bumpus," he said. "Now, if you'd only waited awhile, I'd have had it as clean as a parlour. It's fine weather for coal bills."

She halted.

"Can I see you a moment, Mr. Tiernan?"

Johnny looked at her.

"Why sure," he said. Leaning his shovel against the wall, he gallantly opened the door that she might pass in before him and then led the way to the back of the shop where the stove was glowing hospitably. He placed a chair for her. "Now what can I be doing to serve you?" he asked.

"It's about my sister," said Janet.

"Miss Lise?"

"I thought you might know what man she's been going with lately," said Janet.

Mr. Tiernan had often wondered how much Janet knew about her sister. In spite of a momentary embarrassment most unusual in him, the courage of her question made a strong appeal, and his quick sympathies suspected the tragedy behind her apparent calmness. He met her magnificently.

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"Why," he said, "I have seen Miss Lise with a fellow named Duval—Howard Duval—when he's been in town. He travels for a Boston shoe house, Humphrey and Gillmount."

"I'm afraid Lise has gone away with him," said Janet. "I thought you might be able to find out something about him, and—whether any one had seen them. She left home yesterday morning."

For an instant Mr. Tiernan stood silent before her, his legs apart, his fingers running through his bristly hair.

"Well, ye did right to come straight to me, Miss Janet. It's me that can find out, if anybody can, and it's glad I am to help you. Just you stay here—make yourself at home while I run down and see some of the boys. I'll not be long—and don't be afraid I'll let on about it."

He seized his overcoat and departed. Presently the sun, glinting on the sheets of tin, started Janet's glance straying around the shop, noting its disorderly details, the heaped-up stovepipes, the littered work-bench with the shears lying across the vise. Once she thought of Ditmar arriving at the office and wondering what had happened to her.... The sound of a bell made her jump. Mr. Tiernan had returned.

"She's gone with him," said Janet, not as a question, but as one stating a fact.

Mr. Tiernan nodded.

"They took the nine-thirty-six for Boston yesterday morning. Eddy Colahan was at the depot."

Janet rose. "Thank you," she said simply.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"I'm going to Boston," she answered. "I'm going to find out where she is."

"Then it's me that's going with you," he announced.

"Oh no, Mr. Tiernan!" she protested. "I couldn't let you do that."

"And why not?" he demanded. "I've got a little business there myself. I'm proud to go with you. It's your sister you want, isn't it?"

"Yes."

“Well, what would you be doing by yourself—a young lady? How will you find your sister?”

“Do you think you can find her?”

“Sure I can find her,” he proclaimed, confidently. He had evidently made up his mind that casual treatment was what the affair demanded. “Haven’t I good friends in Boston?” By friendship he swayed his world: nor was he completely unknown—though he did not say so—to certain influential members of his race of the Boston police department. Pulling out a large nickel watch and observing that they had just time to catch the train, he locked up his shop, and they set out together for the station. Mr. Tiernan led the way, for the path was narrow. The dry snow squeaked under his feet.

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After escorting her to a seat on the train, he tactfully retired to the smoking car, not to rejoin her until they were on the trestle spanning the Charles River by the North Station. All the way to Boston she had sat gazing out of the window at the blinding whiteness of the fields, incapable of rousing herself to the necessity of thought, to a degree of feeling commensurate with the situation. She did not know what she would say to Lise if she should find her; and in spite of Mr. Tiernan's expressed confidence, the chances of success seemed remote. When the train began to thread the crowded suburbs, the city, spreading out over its hills, instead of thrilling her, as yesterday, with a sense of dignity and power, of opportunity and emancipation, seemed a labyrinth with many warrens where vice and crime and sorrow could hide. In front of the station the traffic was already crushing the snow into filth. They passed the spot where, the night before, the carriage had stopped, where Ditmar had bidden her good-bye. Something stirred within her, became a shooting pain.... She asked Mr. Tiernan what he intended to do.

"I'm going right after the man, if he's here in the city," he told her. And they boarded a street car, which almost immediately shot into the darkness of the subway. Emerging at Scollay Square, and walking a few blocks, they came to a window where guns, revolvers, and fishing tackle were displayed, and on which was painted the name, "Timothy Mulally." Mr. Tiernan entered.

"Is Tim in?" he inquired of one of the clerks, who nodded his head towards the rear of the store, where a middle-aged, grey-haired Irishman was seated at a desk under a drop light.

"Is it you, Johnny?" he exclaimed, looking up.

"It's meself," said Mr. Tiernan. "And this is Miss Bumpus, a young lady friend of mine from Hampton."

Mr. Mulally rose and bowed.

"How do ye do, ma'am," he said.

"I've got a little business to do for her," Mr. Tiernan continued. "I thought you might offer her a chair and let her stay here, quiet, while I was gone."

"With pleasure, ma'am," Mr. Mulally replied, pulling forward a chair with alacrity. "Just sit there comfortable—no one will disturb ye."

When, in the course of half an hour, Mr. Tiernan returned, there was a grim yet triumphant look in his little blue eyes, but it was not until Janet had thanked Mr. Mulally for his hospitality and they had reached the sidewalk that he announced the result of his quest.

“Well, I caught him. It’s lucky we came when we did—he was just going out on the road again, up to Maine. I know where Miss Lise is.”

“He told you!” exclaimed Janet.

“He told me indeed, but it wasn’t any joy to him. He was all for bluffing at first. It’s easy to scare the likes of him. He was as white as his collar before I was done with him. He knows who I am, all right he’s heard of me in Hampton,” Mr. Tiernan added, with a pardonable touch of pride.

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"What did you say?" inquired Janet, curiously.

"Say?" repeated Mr. Tiernan. "It's not much I had to say, Miss Janet. I was all ready to go to Mr. Gillmount, his boss. I'm guessing he won't take much pleasure on this trip."

She asked for no more details.

CHAPTER XIII

Once more Janet and Mr. Tiernan descended into the subway, taking a car going to the south and west, which finally came out of the tunnel into a broad avenue lined with shabby shops, hotels and saloons, and long rows of boarding—and rooming-houses. They alighted at a certain corner, walked a little way along a street unkempt and dreary, Mr. Tiernan scrutinizing the numbers until he paused in front of a house with a basement kitchen and snow-covered, sandstone steps. Climbing these, he pulled the bell, and they stood waiting in the twilight of a half-closed vestibule until presently shuffling steps were heard within; the door was cautiously opened, not more than a foot, but enough to reveal a woman in a loose wrapper, with an untidy mass of bleached hair and a puffy face like a fungus grown in darkness.

"I want to see Miss Lise Bumpus," Mr. Tiernan demanded.

"You've got the wrong place. There ain't no one of that name here," said the woman.

"There ain't! All right," he insisted aggressively, pushing open the door in spite of her. "If you don't let this young lady see her quick, there's trouble coming to you."

"Who are you?" asked the woman, impudently, yet showing signs of fear.

"Never mind who I am," Mr. Tiernan declared. "I know all about you, and I know all about Duval. If you don't want any trouble you won't make any, and you'll take this young lady to her sister. I'll wait here for you, Miss Janet," he added.

"I don't know nothing about her—she rented my room that's all I know," the woman replied sullenly. "If you mean that couple that came here yesterday—"

She turned and led the way upstairs, mounting slowly, and Janet followed, nauseated and almost overcome by the foul odours of dead cigarette smoke which, mingling with the smell of cooking cabbage rising from below, seemed the very essence and reek of hitherto unimagined evil. A terror seized her such as she had never known before, an almost overwhelming impulse to turn and regain the air and sunlight of the day. In the dark hallway of the second story the woman knocked at the door of a front room.

“She’s in there, unless she’s gone out.” And indeed a voice was heard petulantly demanding what was wanted—Lise’s voice! Janet hesitated, her hand on the knob, her body fallen against the panels. Then, as she pushed open the door, the smell of cigarette smoke grew stronger, and she found herself in a large bedroom, the details of which were instantly photographed on her mind—the dingy claret-red walls, the crayon over the mantel

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of a buxom lady in a décolleté costume of the '90's, the outspread fan concealing the fireplace, the soiled lace curtains. The bed was unmade, and on the table beside two empty beer bottles and glasses and the remains of a box of candy—suggestive of a Sunday purchase at a drug store—she recognized Lise's vanity case. The effect of all this, integrated at a glance, was a paralyzing horror. Janet could not speak. She remained gazing at Lise, who paid no attention to her entrance, but stood with her back turned before an old-fashioned bureau with a marble top and raised sides. She was dressed, and engaged in adjusting her hat. It was not until Janet pronounced her name that she turned swiftly.

"You!" she exclaimed. "What the—what brought you here?"

"Oh, Lise!" Janet repeated.

"How did you get here?" Lise demanded, coming toward her. "Who told you where I was? What business have you got sleuthing 'round after me like this?"

For a moment Janet was speechless once more, astounded that Lise could preserve her effrontery in such an atmosphere, could be insensible to the evils lurking in this house—evils so real to Janet that she seemed actually to feel them brushing against her.

"Lise, come away from here," she pleaded, "come home with me!"

"Home!" said Lise, defiantly, and laughed. "What do you take me for? Why would I be going home when I've been trying to break away for two years? I ain't so dippy as that—not me! Go home like a good little girl and march back to the Bagatelle and ask 'em to give me another show standing behind a counter all day. Nix! No home sweet home for me! I'm all for easy street when it comes to a home like that."

Heartless, terrific as the repudiation was, it struck a self-convicting, almost sympathetic note in Janet. She herself had revolted against the monotony and sordidness of that existence She herself! She dared not complete the thought, now.

"But this!" she exclaimed.

"What's the matter with it?" Lise demanded. "It ain't Commonwealth Avenue, but it's got Fillmore Street beat a mile. There ain't no whistles hereto get you out of bed at six a.m., for one thing. There ain't no geezers, like Walters, to nag you 'round all day long. What's the matter with it?"

Something in Lise's voice roused Janet's spirit to battle.

“What’s the matter with it?” she cried. “It’s hell—that’s the matter with it. Can’t you see it? Can’t you feel it? You don’t know what it means, or you’d come home with me.”

“I guess I know what it means as well as you do,” said Lise, sullenly. “We’ve all got to croak sometime, and I’d rather croak this way than be smothered up in Hampton. I’ll get a run for my money, anyway.”

“No, you don’t know what it means,” Janet repeated, “or you wouldn’t talk like that. Do you think this man will support you, stick to you? He won’t, he’ll desert you, and you’ll have to go on the streets.”

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A dangerous light grew in Lise's eyes.

"He's as good as any other man, he's as good as Ditmar," she said. "They're all the same, to girls like us."

Janet's heart caught, it seemed to stop beating. Was this a hazard on Lise's part, or did she speak from knowledge? And yet what did it matter whether Lise knew or only suspected, if her words were true, if men were all alike? Had she been a dupe as well as Lise? and was the only difference between them now the fact that Lise was able, without illusion, to see things as they were, to accept the consequences, while she, Janet, had beheld visions and dreamed dreams? was there any real choice between the luxurious hotel to which Ditmar had taken her and this detestable house? Suddenly, seemingly by chance, her eyes fell on the box of drug-store candy from which the cheap red ribbon had been torn, and by some odd association of ideas it suggested and epitomized Lise's Sunday excursion with a mama hideous travesty on the journey of wonders she herself had taken. Had that been heaven, and this of Lise's, hell?... And was. Lise's ambition to be supported in idleness and luxury to be condemned because she had believed her own to be higher? Did not both lead to destruction? The weight that had lain on her breast since the siren had awakened her that morning and she had reached out and touched the chilled, empty sheets now grew almost unsupportable.

"It's true," said Janet, "all men are the same."

Lise was staring at her.

"My God!" she exclaimed. "You?"

"Yes-me," cried Janet.—"And what are you going to do about it? Stay here with him in this filthy place until he gets tired of you and throws you out on the street? Before I'd let any man do that to me I'd kill him."

Lise began to whimper, and suddenly buried her face in the pillow. But a new emotion had begun to take possession of Janet—an emotion so strong as to give her an unlookedfor sense of detachment. And the words Lise had spoken between her sobs at first conveyed no meaning.

"I'm going to have a baby...."

Lise was going to have a child! Why hadn't she guessed it? A child! Perhaps she, Janet, would have a child! This enlightenment as to Lise's condition and the possibility it suggested in regard to herself brought with it an overwhelming sympathy which at first she fiercely resented then yielded to. The bond between them, instead of snapping, had inexplicably strengthened. And Lise, despite her degradation, was more than ever

her sister! Forgetting her repugnance to the bed, Janet sat down beside Lise and put an arm around her.

“He said he’d marry me, he swore he was rich—and he was a spender all right. And then some guy came up to me one night at Gruber’s and told me he was married already.”

“What?” Janet exclaimed.

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"Sure! He's got a wife and two kids here in Boston. That was a twenty-one round knockout! Maybe I didn't have something to tell him when he blew into Hampton last Friday! But he said he couldn't help it—he loved me." Lise sat up, seemingly finding relief in the relation of her wrongs, dabbing her eyes with a cheap lace handkerchief. "Well, while he'd been away—this thing came. I didn't know what was the matter at first, and when I found out I was scared to death, I was ready to kill myself. When I told him he was scared too, and then he said he'd fix it. Say, I was a goat to think he'd marry me!" Lise laughed hysterically.

"And then—" Janet spoke with difficulty, "and then you came down here?"

"I told him he'd have to see me through, I'd start something if he didn't. Say, he almost got down on his knees, right there in Gruber's! But he came back inside of ten seconds—he's a jollier, for sure, he was right there with the goods, it was because he loved me, he couldn't help himself, I was his cutie, and all that kind of baby talk."

Lise's objective manner of speaking about her seducer amazed Janet.

"Do you love him?" she asked.

"Say, what is love?" Lise demanded. "Do you ever run into it outside of the movies? Do I love him? Well, he's a good looking and a fancy dresser, he ain't a tight wad, and he can start a laugh every minute. If he hadn't put it over on me I wouldn't have been so sore. I don't know he ain't so bad. He's weak, that's the trouble with him."

This was the climax! Lise's mental processes, her tendency to pass from wild despair to impersonal comment, her inability, her courtesan's temperament that prevented her from realizing tragedy for more than a moment at a time—even though the tragedy were her own—were incomprehensible to Janet.

"Get on to this," Lise adjured her. "When I first was acquainted with him he handed me a fairy tale that he was taking five thousand a year from Humphrey and Gillmount, he was going into the firm. He had me razzle-dazzled. He's some hypnotizes as a salesman, too, they say. Nothing was too good for me; I saw myself with a house on the avenue shopping in a limousine. Well, he blew up, but I can't help liking him."

"Liking him!" cried Janet passionately. "I'd kill him that's what I'd do."

Lise regarded her with unwilling admiration.

"That's where you and me is different," she declared. "I wish I was like that, but I ain't. And where would I come in? Now you're wise why I can't go back to Hampton. Even if I was stuck on the burg and cryin' my eyes out for the Bagatelle I couldn't go back."

"What are you going to do?" Janet demanded.

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"Well," said Lise, "he's come across—I'll say that for him. Maybe it's because he's scared, but he's stuck on me, too. When you dropped in I was just going down town to get a pair of patent leathers, these are all wore out," she explained, twisting her foot, "they ain't fit for Boston. And I thought of lookin' at blouses—there's a sale on I was reading about in the paper. Say, it's great to be on easy street, to be able to stay in bed until you're good and ready to get up and go shopping, to gaze at the girls behind the counter and ask the price of things. I'm going to Walling's and give the salesladies the ha-ha—that's what I'm going to do."

"But—?" Janet found words inadequate.

Lise understood her.

"Oh, I'm due at the doctor's this afternoon."

"Where?"

"The doctor's. Don't you get me?—it's a private hospital." Lise gave a slight shudder at the word, but instantly recovered her sang-froid. "Howard fixed it up yesterday—and they say it ain't very bad if you take it early."

For a space Janet was too profoundly shocked to reply.

"Lise! That's a crime!" she cried.

"Crime, nothing!" retorted Lise, and immediately became indignant. "Say, I sometimes wonder how you could have lived all these years without catching on to a few things! What do you take me for! What'd I do with a baby?"

What indeed! The thought came like an avalanche, stripping away the veneer of beauty from the face of the world, revealing the scarred rock and crushed soil beneath. This was reality! What right had society to compel a child to be born to degradation and prostitution? to beget, perhaps, other children of suffering? Were not she and Lise of the exploited, of those duped and tempted by the fair things the more fortunate enjoyed unscathed? And now, for their natural cravings, their family must be disgraced, they must pay the penalty of outcasts! Neither Lise nor she had had a chance. She saw that, now. The scorching revelation of life's injustice lighted within her the fires of anarchy and revenge. Lise, other women might submit tamely to be crushed, might be lulled and drugged by bribes: she would not. A wild desire seized her to get back to Hampton.

"Give me the address of the hospital," she said.

"Come off!" cried Lise, in angry bravado. "Do you think I'm going to let you butt into this? I guess you've got enough to do to look out for your own business."



Janet produced a pencil from her bag, and going to the table tore off a piece of the paper in which had been wrapped the candy box.

“Give me the address,” she insisted.

“Say, what are you going to do?”

“I want to know where you are, in case anything happens to you.”

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"Anything happens! What do you mean?" Janet's words had frightened Lise, the withdrawal of Janet's opposition bewildered her. But above all, she was cowed by the sudden change in Janet herself, by the attitude of steely determination eloquent of an animus persons of Lise's type are incapable of feeling, and which to them is therefore incomprehensible. "Nothing's going to happen to me," she whined. "The place is all right—he'd be scared to send me there if it wasn't. It costs something, too. Say, you ain't going to tell 'em at home?" she cried with a fresh access of alarm.

"If you do as I say, I won't tell anybody," Janet replied, in that odd, impersonal tone her voice had acquired. "You must write me as soon—as soon as it is over. Do you understand?"

"Honest to God I will," Lise assured her.

"And you mustn't come back to a house like this."

"Where'll I go?" Lise asked.

"I don't know. We'll find out when the time comes," said Janet, significantly.

"You've seen him!" Lise exclaimed.

"No," said Janet, "and I don't want to see him unless I have to. Mr. Tiernan has seen him. Mr. Tiernan is downstairs now, waiting for me."

"Johnny Tiernan! Is Johnny Tiernan downstairs?"

Janet wrote the address, and thrust the slip of paper in her bag.

"Good-bye, Lise," she said. "I'll come down again I'll come down whenever you want me." Lise suddenly seized her and clung to her, sobbing. For a while Janet submitted, and then, kissing her, gently detached herself. She felt, indeed, pity for Lise, but something within her seemed to have hardened—something that pity could not melt, possessing her and thrusting her on to action. She knew not what action. So strong was this thing that it overcame and drove off the evil spirits of that darkened house as she descended the stairs to join Mr. Tiernan, who opened the door for her to pass out. Once in the street, she breathed deeply of the sunlit air. Nor did she observe Mr. Tiernan's glance of comprehension.... When they arrived at the North Station he said:—"You'll be wanting a bite of dinner, Miss Janet," and as she shook her head he did not press her to eat. He told her that a train for Hampton left in ten minutes. "I think I'll stay in Boston the rest of the day, as long as I'm here," he added.

She remembered that she had not thanked him, she took his hand, but he cut her short.

“It’s glad I was to help you,” he assured her. “And if there’s anything more I can do, Miss Janet, you’ll be letting me know—you’ll call on Johnny Tiernan, won’t you?”

He left her at the gate. He had intruded with no advice, he had offered no comment that she had come downstairs alone, without Lise. His confidence in her seemed never to have wavered. He had respected, perhaps partly imagined her feelings, and in spite of these now a sense of gratitude to him stole over her, mitigating the intensity of their bitterness. Mr. Tiernan alone seemed stable in a chaotic world. He was a man.

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No sooner was she in the train, however, than she forgot Mr. Tiernan utterly. Up to the present the mental process of dwelling upon her own experience of the last three months had been unbearable, but now she was able to take a fearful satisfaction in the evolving of parallels between her case and Lise's. Despite the fact that the memories she had cherished were now become hideous things, she sought to drag them forth and compare them, ruthlessly, with what must have been the treasures of Lise. Were her own any less tawdry? Only she, Janet, had been the greater fool of the two, the greater dupe because she had allowed herself to dream, to believe that what she had done had been for love, for light! because she had not listened to the warning voice within her! It had always been on the little, unpremeditated acts of Ditmar that she had loved to linger, and now, in the light of Lise's testimony, of Lise's experience, she saw them all as false. It seemed incredible, now, that she had ever deceived herself into thinking that Ditmar meant to marry her, that he loved her enough to make her his wife. Nor was it necessary to summon and marshal incidents to support this view, they came of themselves, crowding one another, a cumulative and appalling array of evidence, before which she stood bitterly amazed at her former stupidity. And in the events of yesterday, which she pitilessly reviewed, she beheld a deliberate and prearranged plan for her betrayal. Had he not telephoned to Boston for the rooms, rehearsed in his own mind every detail of what had subsequently happened? Was there any essential difference between the methods of Ditmar and Duval? Both were skilled in the same art, and Ditmar was the cleverer of the two. It had only needed her meeting with Lise, in that house, to reveal how he had betrayed her faith and her love, sullied and besmirched them. And then came the odd reflection,—how strange that that same Sunday had been so fateful for herself and Lise!

The agony of these thoughts was mitigated by the scorching hatred that had replaced her love, the desire for retaliation, revenge. Occasionally, however, that stream of consciousness was broken by the recollection of what she had permitted and even advised her sister to do; and though the idea of the place to which Lise was going sickened her, though she achieved a certain objective amazement at the transformation in herself enabling her to endorse such a course, she was glad of having endorsed it, she rejoiced that Lise's child would not be born into a world that had seemed—so falsely—fair and sweet, and in reality was black and detestable. Her acceptance of the act—for Lise—was a function of the hatred consuming her, a hatred which, growing in bigness, had made Ditmar merely the personification of that world. From time to time her hands clenched, her brow furrowed, powerful waves of heat ran through her, the craving for action became so intense she could scarcely refrain from rising in her seat.

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By some odd whim of the weather the wind had backed around into the east, gathering the clouds once more. The brilliancy of the morning had given place to greyness, the high slits of windows seemed dirtier than ever as the train pulled into the station at Hampton, shrouded in Gothic gloom. As she left the car Janet was aware of the presence on the platform of an unusual number of people; she wondered vaguely, as she pushed her way through them, why they were there, what they were talking about? One determination possessed her, to go to the Chippering Mill, to Ditmar. Emerging from the street, she began to walk rapidly, the change from inaction to exercise bringing a certain relief, starting the working of her mind, arousing in her a realization of the necessity of being prepared for the meeting. Therefore, instead of turning at Faber Street, she crossed it. But at the corner of the Common she halted, her glance drawn by a dark mass of people filling the end of Hawthorne Street, where it was blocked by the brick-coloured facade of the Clarendon Mill. In the middle distance men and boys were running to join this crowd. A girl, evidently an Irish-American mill hand of the higher paid sort, hurried toward her from the direction of the mill itself. Janet accosted her.

"It's the strike," she explained excitedly, evidently surprised at the question. "The Polaks and the Dagoes and a lot of other foreigners quit when they got their envelopes—stopped their looms and started through the mill, and when they came into our room I left. I didn't want no trouble with 'em. It's the fifty-four hour law—their pay's cut two hours. You've heard about it, I guess."

Janet nodded.

"They had a big mass meeting last night in Maxwell Hall," the girl continued, "the foreigners—not the skilled workers. And they voted to strike. They tell me they're walking out over at the Patuxent, too."

"And the Chippering?" asked Janet, eagerly.

"I don't know—I guess it'll spread to all of 'em, the way these foreigners are going on—they're crazy. But say," the girl added, "it ain't right to cut our pay, either, is it? They never done it two years ago when the law came down to fifty-six."

Janet did not wait to reply. While listening to this explanation, excitement had been growing in her again, and some fearful, overpowering force of attraction emanating from that swarm in the distance drew her until she yielded, fairly running past the rows of Italian tenements in their strange setting of snow, not to pause until she reached the fruit shop where she and Eda had eaten the olives. Now she was on the outskirts of the crowd that packed itself against the gates of the Clarendon. It spread over the width of East Street, growing larger every minute, until presently she was hemmed in. Here and there hoarse shouts of approval and cheers arose in response to invisible orators haranging their audiences in weird, foreign tongues; tiny American

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flags were waved; and suddenly, in one of those unforeseen and incomprehensible movements to which mobs are subject, a trolley car standing at the end of the Hawthorne Street track was surrounded, the desperate clanging of its bell keeping pace with the beating of Janet's heart. A dark Sicilian, holding aloft the green, red, and white flag of Italy, leaped on the rear platform and began to speak, the Slav conductor regarding him stupidly, pulling the bellcord the while. Three or four policemen fought their way to the spot, striving to clear the tracks, bewildered and impotent in the face of the alien horde momentarily growing more and more conscious of power.

Janet pushed her way deeper and deeper into the crowd. She wanted to savour to the full its wrath and danger, to surrender herself to be played upon by these sallow, stubby-bearded exhorters, whose menacing tones and passionate gestures made a grateful appeal, whose wild, musical words, just because they were uncomprehended, aroused in her dim suggestions of a race-experience not her own, but in which she was now somehow summoned to share. That these were the intruders whom she, as a native American, had once resented and despised did not occur to her. The racial sense so strong in her was drowned in a sense of fellowship. Their anger seemed to embody and express, as nothing else could have done, the revolt that had been rising, rising within her soul; and the babel to which she listened was not a confusion of tongues, but one voice lifted up to proclaim the wrongs of all the duped, of all the exploited and oppressed. She was fused with them, their cause was her cause, their betrayers her betrayers.

Suddenly was heard the cry for which she had been tensely but unconsciously awaiting. Another cry like that had rung out in another mob across the seas more than a century before. "Ala Bastille!" became "To the Chippering!" Some man shouted it out in shrill English, hundreds repeated it; the Sicilian leaped from the trolley car, and his path could be followed by the agitated progress of the alien banner he bore. "To the Chippering!" It rang in Janet's ears like a call to battle. Was she shouting it, too? A galvanic thrill ran through the crowd, an impulse that turned their faces and started their steps down East Street toward the canal, and Janet was irresistibly carried along. Nay, it seemed as if the force that second by second gained momentum was in her, that she herself had released and was guiding it! Her feet were wet as she ploughed through the trampled snow, but she gave no thought to that. The odour of humanity was in her nostrils. On the left a gaunt Jew pressed against her, on the right a solid Ruthenian woman, one hand clasping her shawl, the other holding aloft a miniature emblem of New World liberty. Her eyes were fixed on the grey skies, and from time to time her lips were parted in some strange, ancestral chant that could be heard above the shouting. All about Janet were dark, awakening faces....

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It chanced that an American, a college graduate, stood gazing down from a point of vantage upon this scene. He was ignorant of anthropology, psychology, and the phenomena of environment; but bits of “knowledge” —which he embodied in a newspaper article composed that evening stuck wax-like in his brain. Not thus, he deplored, was the Anglo-Saxon wont to conduct his rebellions. These Czechs and Slavs, Hebrews and Latins and Huns might have appropriately been clad in the skins worn by the hordes of Attila. Had they not been drawn hither by the renown of the Republic’s wealth? And how essentially did they differ from those other barbarians before whose bewildered, lustful gaze had risen the glittering palaces on the hills of the Tiber? The spoils of Rome! The spoils of America! They appeared to him ferocious, atavistic beasts as they broke into the lumberyard beneath his window to tear the cordwood from the piles and rush out again, armed with billets....

Janet, in the main stream sweeping irresistibly down the middle of the street, was carried beyond the lumberyard into the narrow roadway beside the canal—presently to find herself packed in the congested mass in front of the bridge that led to the gates of the Chippering Mill. Across the water, above the angry hum of human voices could be heard the whirring of the looms, rousing the mob to a higher pitch of fury. The halt was for a moment only. The bridge rocked beneath the weight of their charge, they battered at the great gates, they ran along the snow-filled tracks by the wall of the mill. Some, in a frenzy of passion, hurled their logs against the windows; others paused, seemingly to measure the distance and force of the stroke, thus lending to their act a more terrible and deliberate significance. A shout of triumph announced that the gates, like a broken dam, had given way, and the torrent poured in between the posts, flooding the yard, pressing up the towered stairways and spreading through the compartments of the mill. More ominous than the tumult seemed the comparative silence that followed this absorption of the angry spirits of the mob. Little by little, as the power was shut off, the antiphonal throbbing of the looms was stilled. Pinioned against the parapet above the canal—almost on that very spot where, the first evening, she had met Ditmar—Janet awaited her chance to cross. Every crashing window, every resounding blow on the panels gave her a fierce throb of joy. She had not expected the gates to yield—her father must have insecurely fastened them. Gaining the farther side of the canal, she perceived him flattened against the wall of the gatehouse shaking his fist in the faces of the intruders, who rushed past him unheeding. His look arrested her. His face was livid, his eyes were red with anger, he stood transformed by a passion she had not believed him to possess. She had indeed heard him give vent to a mitigated indignation against foreigners in general, but now the old-school Americanism in which he had been bred, the Americanism of individual rights, of respect for the convention of property, had suddenly sprung into flame. He was ready to fight for it, to die for it. The curses he hurled at these people sounded blasphemous in Janet’s ears.

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"Father!" she cried. "Father!"

He looked at her uncomprehendingly, seemingly failing to recognize her.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded, seizing her and attempting to draw her to the wall beside him. But she resisted. There sprang from her lips an unpremeditated question: "Where is Mr. Ditmar?" She was, indeed, amazed at having spoken it.

"I don't know," Edward replied distractedly. "We've been looking for him everywhere. My God, to think that this should happen with me at the gates!" he lamented. "Go home, Janet. You can't tell what'll happen, what these fiends will do, you may get hurt. You've got no business here." Catching sight of a belated and breathless policeman, he turned from her in desperation. "Get 'em out! Far God's sake, can't you get 'em out before they ruin the machines?"

But Janet waited no longer. Pushing her way frantically through the people filling the yard she climbed the tower stairs and made her way into one of the spinning rooms. The frames were stilled, the overseer and second hands, thrust aside, looked on helplessly while the intruders harangued, cajoled or threatened the operatives, some of whom were cowed and already departing; others, sullen and resentful, remained standing in the aisles; and still others seemed to have caught the contagion of the strike. Suddenly, with reverberating strokes, the mill bells rang out, the electric gongs chattered, the siren screeched, drowning the voices. Janet did not pause, but hurried from room to room until, in passing through an open doorway in the weaving department she ran into Mr. Caldwell. He halted a moment, in surprise at finding her there, calling her by name. She clung to his sleeve, and again she asked the question:

"Where's Mr. Ditmar?"

Caldwell shook his head. His answer was the same as Edward's. "I don't know," he shouted excitedly above the noise. "We've got to get this mob out before they do any damage."

He tore himself away, she saw him expostulating with the overseer, and then she went on. These tower stairs, she remembered, led to a yard communicating by a little gate with the office entrance. The door of the vestibule was closed, but the watchman, Simmons, recognizing her, permitted her to enter. The offices were deserted, silent, for the bells and the siren had ceased their clamour; the stenographers and clerks had gone. The short day was drawing to a close, shadows were gathering in the corners of Ditmar's room as she reached the threshold and gazed about her at the objects there so poignantly familiar. She took off her coat. His desk was littered with books and papers, and she started, mechanically, to set it in order, replacing the schedule books on the shelves, sorting out the letters and putting them in the basket. She could not herself

have told why she should take up again these trivial tasks as though no cataclysmic events had intervened

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to divide forever the world of yesterday from that of to-morrow. With a movement suggestive of tenderness she was picking up Ditmar's pen to set it in the glass rack when her ear caught the sound of voices, and she stood transfixed, listening intently. There were footsteps in the corridor, the voices came nearer; one, loud and angered, she detected above the others. It was Ditmar's! Nothing had happened to him! Dropping the pen, she went over to the window, staring out over the grey waters, trembling so violently that she could scarcely stand.

She did not look around when they entered the room Ditmar, Caldwell, Orcutt, and evidently a few watchmen and overseers. Some one turned on the electric switch, darkening the scene without. Ditmar continued to speak in vehement tones of uncontrolled rage.

"Why in hell weren't those gates bolted tight?" he demanded. "That's what I want to know! There was plenty of time after they turned the corner of East Street. You might have guessed what they would do. But instead of that you let 'em into the mill to shut off the power and intimidate our own people." He called the strikers an unprintable name, and though Janet stood, with her back turned, directly before him, he gave no sign of being aware of her presence.

"It wasn't the gatekeeper's fault," she heard Orcutt reply in a tone quivering with excitement and apprehension. "They really didn't give us a chance—that's the truth. They were down Canal Street and over the bridge before we knew it."

"It's just as I've said a hundred times," Ditmar retorted. "I can't afford to leave this mill a minute, I can't trust anybody—" and he broke out in another tirade against the intruders. "By God, I'll fix 'em for this—I'll crush 'em. And if any operatives try to walkout here I'll see that they starve before they get back—after all I've done for 'em, kept the mill going in slack times just to give 'em work. If they desert me now, when I've got this Bradlaugh order on my hands—" Speech became an inadequate expression of his feelings, and suddenly his eye fell on Janet. She had turned, but her look made no impression on him. "Call up the Chief of Police," he said.

Automatically she obeyed, getting the connection and handing him the receiver, standing by while he denounced the incompetence of the department for permitting the mob to gather in East Street and demanded deputies. The veins of his forehead were swollen as he cut short the explanations of the official and asked for the City Hall. In making an appointment with the Mayor he reflected on the management of the city government. And when Janet by his command obtained the Boston office, he gave the mill treasurer a heated account of the afternoon's occurrences, explaining circumstantially how, in his absence at a conference in the Patuxent Mill, the mob had

gathered in East Street and attacked the Chippering; and he urged the treasurer to waste

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no time in obtaining a force of detectives, in securing in Boston and New York all the operatives that could be hired, in order to break the impending strike. Save for this untimely and unreasonable revolt he was bent on stamping out, for Ditmar the world to-day was precisely the same world it had been the day before. It seemed incredible to Janet that he could so regard it, could still be blind to the fact that these workers whom he was determined to starve and crush if they dared to upset his plans and oppose his will were human beings with wills and passions and grievances of their own. Until to-day her eyes had been sealed. In agony they had been opened to the panorama of sorrow and suffering, of passion and evil; and what she beheld now as life was a vast and terrible cruelty. She had needed only this final proof to be convinced that in his eyes she also was but one of those brought into the world to minister to his pleasure and profit. He had taken from her, as his weed, the most precious thing a woman has to give, and now that she was here again at his side, by some impulse incomprehensible to herself—in spite of the wrong he had done her!—had sought him out in danger, he had no thought of her, no word for her, no use save a menial one: he cared nothing for any help she might be able to give, he had no perception of the new light which had broken within her soul.... The telephoning seemed interminable, yet she waited with a strange patience while he talked with Mr. George Chippering and two of the most influential directors. These conversations had covered the space of an hour or more. And perhaps as a result of self-suggestion, of his repeated assurances to Mr. Semple, to Mr. Chippering, and the directors of his ability to control the situation, Ditmar's habitual self-confidence was gradually restored. And when at last he hung up the instrument and turned to her, though still furious against the strikers, his voice betrayed the joy of battle, the assurance of victory.

"They can't bluff me, they'll have to guess again. It's that damned Holster—he hasn't any guts—he'd give in to 'em right now if I'd let him. It's the limit the way he turned the Clarendon over to them. I'll show him how to put a crimp in 'em if they don't turn up here to-morrow morning."

He was so magnificently sure of her sympathy! She did, not reply, but picked up her coat from the chair where she had laid it.

"Where are you going?" he demanded. And she replied laconically, "Home."

"Wait a minute," he said, rising and taking a step toward her.

"You have an appointment with the Mayor," she reminded him.

"I know," he said, glancing at the clock over the door. "Where have you been?—where were you this morning? I was worried about you, I—I was afraid you might be sick."

“Were you?” she said. “I’m all right. I had business in Boston.”

“Why didn’t you telephone me? In Boston?” he repeated.

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She nodded. He started forward again, but she avoided him.

“What’s the matter?” he cried. “I’ve been worried about you all day —until this damned strike broke loose. I was afraid something had happened.”

“You might have asked my father,” she said.

“For God’s sake, tell me what’s the matter!”

His desire for her mounted as his conviction grew more acute that something had happened to disturb a relationship which, he had congratulated himself, after many vicissitudes and anxieties had at last been established. He was conscious, however, of irritation because this whimsical and unanticipated grievance of hers should have developed at the moment when the caprice of his operatives threatened to interfere with his cherished plans—for Ditmar measured the inconsistencies of humanity by the yardstick of his desires. Her question as to why he had not made inquiries of her father added a new element to his disquietude. As he stood thus, worried, exasperated, and perplexed, the fact that there was in her attitude something ominous, dangerous, was slow to dawn on him. His faculties were wholly unprepared for the blow she struck him.

“I hate you!” she said. She did not raise her voice, but the deliberate, concentrated conviction she put into the sentence gave it the dynamic quality of a bullet. And save for the impact of it—before which he physically recoiled—its import was momentarily without meaning.

“What?” he exclaimed, stupidly.

“I might have known you never meant to marry me,” she went on. Her hands were busy with the buttons of her coat.

“All you want is to use me, to enjoy me and turn me out when you get tired of me—the way you’ve done with other women. It’s just the same with these mill hands, they’re not human beings to you, they’re—they’re cattle. If they don’t do as you like, you turn them out; you say they can starve for all you care.”

“For God’s sake, what do you mean?” he demanded. “What have I done to you, Janet? I love you, I need you!”

“Love me!” she repeated. “I know how men of your sort love—I’ve seen it—I know. As long as I give you what you want and don’t bother you, you love me. And I know how these workers feel,” she cried, with sudden, passionate vehemence. “I never knew before, but I know now. I’ve been with them, I marched up here with them from the Clarendon when they battered in the gates and smashed your windows—and I wanted to smash your windows, too, to blow up your mill.”

“What are you saying? You came here with the strikers? you were with that mob?” asked Ditmar, astoundedly.

“Yes, I was in that mob. I belong there, with them, I tell you—I don’t belong here, with you. But I was a fool even then, I was afraid they’d hurt you, I came into the mill to find you, and you—and you acted as if you’d never seen me before. I was a fool, but I’m glad I came—I’m glad I had a chance to tell you this.”

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"My God—won't you trust me?" he begged, with a tremendous effort to collect himself. "You trusted me yesterday. What's happened to change you? Won't you tell me? It's nothing I've done—I swear. And what do you mean when you say you were in that mob? I was almost crazy when I came back and found they'd been here in this mill—can't you understand? It wasn't that I didn't think of you. I'd been worrying about you all day. Look at this thing sensibly. I love you, I can't get along without you—I'll marry you. I said I would, I meant it I'll marry you just as soon as I can clean up this mess of a strike. It won't take long."

"Don't touch me!" she commanded, and he recoiled again. "I'll tell you where I've been, if you want to know,—I've been to see my sister in—in a house, in Boston. I guess you know what kind of a house I mean, you've been in them, you've brought women to them,—just like the man that brought her there. Would you marry me now—with my sister there? And am I any different from her? You you've made me just like her." Her voice had broken, now, into furious, uncontrolled weeping—to which she paid no heed.

Ditmar was stunned; he could only stare at her.

"If I have a child," she said, "I'll—I'll kill you—I'll kill myself."

And before he could reply—if indeed he had been able to reply—she had left the office and was running down the stairs....

CHAPTER XIV

What was happening to Hampton? Some hundreds of ignorant foreigners, dissatisfied with the money in their pay envelopes, had marched out of the Clarendon Mill and attacked the Chippering and behold, the revered structure of American Government had quivered and tumbled down like a pack of cards! Despite the feverish assurances in the Banner "extra" that the disturbance was merely local and temporary, solid citizens became panicky, vaguely apprehending the release of elemental forces hitherto unrecognized and unknown. Who was to tell these solid, educated business men that the crazy industrial Babel they had helped to rear, and in which they unconsciously dwelt, was no longer the simple edifice they thought it? that Authority, spelled with a capital, was a thing of the past? that human instincts suppressed become explosives to displace the strata of civilization and change the face of the world? that conventions and institutions, laws and decrees crumble before the whirlwind of human passions? that their city was not of special, but of universal significance? And how were these, who still believed themselves to be dwelling under the old dispensation, to comprehend that environments change, and changing demand new and terrible Philosophies? When night fell on that fateful Tuesday the voice of Syndicalism had been raised in a temple dedicated to ordered, Anglo-Saxon liberty—the Hampton City Hall.

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Only for a night and a day did the rebellion lack both a leader and a philosophy. Meanwhile, in obedience to the unerring instinct for drama peculiar to great metropolitan dailies, newspaper correspondents were alighting from every train, interviewing officials and members of labour unions and mill agents: interviewing Claude Ditmar, the strongest man in Hampton that day. He at least knew what ought to be done, and even before his siren broke the silence of the morning hours in vigorous and emphatic terms he had informed the Mayor and Council of their obvious duty. These strikers were helots, unorganized scum; the regular unions—by comparison respectable—held aloof from them. Here, in effect, was his argument: a strong show of force was imperative; if the police and deputies were inadequate, request the Governor to call out the local militia; but above all, waste no time, arrest the ringleaders, the plotters, break up all gatherings, keep the streets clear. He demanded from the law protection of his property, protection for those whose right to continue at work was inalienable. He was listened to with sympathy and respect—but nothing was done! The world had turned upside down indeed if the City Government of Hampton refused to take the advice of the agent of the Chippering Mill! American institutions were a failure! But such was the fact. Some unnamed fear, outweighing their dread of the retributions of Capital, possessed these men, made them supine, derelict in the face of their obvious duty.

By the faint grey light of that bitter January morning Ditmar made his way to the mill. In Faber Street dark figures flitted silently across the ghostly whiteness of the snow, and gathered in groups on the corners; seeking to avoid these, other figures hurried along the sidewalks close to the buildings, to be halted, accosted, pleaded with—threatened, perhaps. Picketing had already begun! The effect of this pantomime of the eternal struggle for survivals which he at first beheld from a distance, was to exaggerate appallingly the emptiness of the wide street, to emphasize the absence of shoppers and vehicles; and a bluish darkness lurked in the stores, whose plate glass windows were frosted in quaint designs. Where were the police? It was not fear that Ditmar felt, he was galvanized and dominated by anger, by an overwhelming desire for action; physical combat would have brought him relief, and as he quickened his steps he itched to seize with his own hands these foreigners who had dared to interfere with his cherished plans, who had had the audacity to challenge the principles of his government which welcomed them to its shores. He would have liked to wring their necks. His philosophy, too, was environmental. And beneath this wrath, stimulating and energizing it the more, was the ache in his soul from the loss for which he held these enemies responsible. Two days ago happiness and achievement had both been within his grasp. The only woman—so now it seemed—he

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had ever really wanted! What had become of her? What obscure and passionate impulse had led her suddenly to defy and desert him, to cast in her lot with these insensate aliens? A hundred times during the restless, inactive hours of a sleepless night this question had intruded itself in the midst of his scheming to break the strike, as he reviewed, word by word, act by act, that almost incomprehensible revolt of hers which had followed so swiftly—a final, vindictive blow of fate—on that other revolt of the workers. At moments he became confused, unable to separate the two. He saw her fire in that other.... Her sister, she had said, had been disgraced; she had defied him to marry her in the face of that degradation—and this suddenly had sickened him. He had let her go. What a fool he had been to let her go! Had she herself been—! He did not finish this thought. Throughout the long night he had known, for a certainty, that this woman was a vital part of him, flame of his flame. Had he never seen her he would have fought these strikers to their knees, but now the force of this incentive was doubled. He would never yield until he had crushed them, until he had reconquered her.

He was approaching one of the groups of strikers, and unconsciously he slowed his steps. The whites of his eyes reddened. The great coat of golden fur he wore gave to his aspect an added quality of formidableness. There were some who scattered as he drew near, and of the less timorous spirits that remained only a few raised dark, sullen glances to encounter his, which was unflinching, passionately contemptuous. Throughout the countless generations that lay behind them the instinct of submission had played its dominant, phylogenetic role. He was the Master. The journey across the seas had not changed that. A few shivered—not alone because they were thinly clad. He walked on, slowly, past other groups, turned the corner of West Street, where the groups were more numerous, while the number of those running the gantlet had increased. And he heard, twice or thrice, the word “Scab!” cried out menacingly. His eyes grew redder still as he spied a policeman standing idly in a doorway.

“Why in hell don’t you do your duty?” he demanded. “What do you mean by letting them interfere with these workers?”

The man flinched. He was apologetic. “So long as they’re peaceable, Mr. Ditmar—those are my orders. I do try to keep ’em movin’.”

“Your orders? You’re a lot of damned cowards,” Ditmar replied, and went on. There were mutterings here; herded together, these slaves were bolder; and hunger and cold, discouragement at not being able to stop the flow toward the mills were having their effect. By the frozen canal, the scene of the onslaught of yesterday, the crowd had grown comparatively thick, and at the corner of the lodging-house row Ditmar halted a moment, unnoticed save by a few who nudged one another and murmured.

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He gave them no attention, he was trying to form an estimate of the effect of the picketing on his own operatives. Some came with timid steps; others, mostly women, fairly ran; still others were self-possessed, almost defiant—and such he marked. There were those who, when the picketers held them by the sleeve, broke precipitately from their annoyers, and those who hesitated, listening with troubled faces, with feelings torn between dread of hunger for themselves and their children and sympathy with the revolt. A small number joined the ranks of the picketers. Ditmar towered above these foreigners, who were mostly undersized: a student of human nature and civilization, free from industrial complexes, would from that point of vantage have had much to gather from the expressions coming within his view, but to Ditmar humanity was a means to an end. Suddenly, from the cupolas above the battlement of the mill, the bells shattered the early morning air, the remnant of the workers hastened across the canal and through the guarded gates, which were instantly closed. Ditmar was left alone among the strikers. As he moved toward the bridge they made a lane for him to pass; one or two he thrust out of his way. But there were mutterings, and from the sidewalk he heard a man curse him.

Perhaps we shall understand some day that the social body, also, is subject to the operation of cause and effect. It was not what an ingenuous orthodoxy, keeping alive the fate of the ancient city from which Lot fled, would call the wrath of heaven that visited Hampton, although a sermon on these lines was delivered from more than one of her pulpits on the following Sunday. Let us surmise, rather, that a decrepit social system in a moment of lowered vitality becomes an easy prey to certain diseases which respectable communities are not supposed to have. The germ of a philosophy evolved in decadent Europe flies across the sea to prey upon a youthful and vigorous America, lodging as host wherever industrial strife has made congenial soil. In four and twenty hours Hampton had “caught” Syndicalism. All day Tuesday, before the true nature of the affection was developed, prominent citizens were outraged and appalled by the supineness of their municipal phagocytes. Property, that sacred fabric of government, had been attacked and destroyed, law had been defied, and yet the City Hall, the sanctuary of American tradition, was turned over to the alien mob for a continuous series of mass meetings. All day long that edifice, hitherto chastely familiar with American doctrine alone, with patriotic oratory, with perorations that dwelt upon the wrongs and woes of Ireland—part of our national propaganda—all day long that edifice rang with strange, exotic speech, sometimes guttural, often musical, but always impassioned, weirdly cadenced and intoned. From the raised platform, in place of the shrewd, matter-of-fact New England politician alive to the vote—getting powers

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of Fourth of July patriotism, in place of the vehement but fun-loving son of Erin, men with wild, dark faces, with burning black eyes and unkempt hair, unshaven, flannel skirted—made more alien, paradoxically, by their conventional, ready-made American clothes—gave tongue to the inarticulate aspirations of the peasant drudge of Europe. From lands long steeped in blood they came, from low countries by misty northern seas, from fair and ancient plains of Lombardy, from Guelph and Ghibelline hamlets in the Apennines, from vine-covered slopes in Sicily and Greece; from the Balkans, from Caucasus and Carpathia, from the mountains of Lebanon, whose cedars lined the palaces of kings; and from villages beside swollen rivers that cross the dreary steppes. Each peasant listened to a recital in his own tongue—the tongue in which the folklore, the cradle sayings of his race had been preserved—of the common wrongs of all, of misery still present, of happiness still unachieved in this land of liberty and opportunity they had found a mockery; to appeals to endure and suffer for a common cause. But who was to weld together this medley of races and traditions, to give them the creed for which their passions were prepared, to lead into battle these ignorant and unskilled from whom organized labour held aloof? Even as dusk was falling, even as the Mayor, the Hon. Michael McGrath, was making from the platform an eloquent plea for order and peace, promising a Committee of Arbitration and thinking about soldiers, the leader and the philosophy were landing in Hampton.

The “five o’clock” edition of the Banner announced him, Antonio Antonelli, of the Industrial Workers of the World! An ominous name, an ominous title,—compared by a well-known publicist to the sound of a fire-bell in the night. The Industrial Workers, not of America, but of the World! No wonder it sent shivers down the spine of Hampton! The writer of the article in the Banner was unfamiliar with the words “syndicalism” and “sabotage,” or the phrase “direct action,” he was too young to know the history of the Knights, he had never heard of a philosophy of labour, or of Sorel or Pouget, but the West he had heard of,—the home of lawlessness, of bloodshed, rape, and murder. For obvious reasons he did not betray this opinion, but for him the I.W.W. was born in the West, where it had ravaged and wrecked communities. His article was guardedly respectful, but he ventured to remind his readers that Mr. Antonelli had been a leader in some of these titanic struggles between crude labour and capital—catastrophes that hitherto had seemed to the citizens of Hampton as remote as Kansas cyclones....

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Some of the less timorous of the older inhabitants, curious to learn what doctrine this interloper had to proclaim, thrust their way that evening into the City Hall, which was crowded, as the papers said, “to suffocation.” Not prepossessing, this modern Robespierre; younger than he looked, for life had put its mark on him; once, in the days of severe work in the mines, his body had been hard, and now had grown stout. In the eyes of a complacent, arm-chair historian he must have appeared one of the, strange and terrifying creatures which, in times of upheaval, are thrust from the depths of democracies to the surface, with gifts to voice the longings and passions of those below. He did not blink in the light; he was sure of himself, he had a creed and believed in it; he gazed around him with the leonine stare of the conqueror, and a hush came over the hall as he arose. His speech was taken down verbatim, to be submitted to the sharpest of legal eyes, when was discovered the possession of a power—rare among agitators—to pour forth in torrents apparently unpremeditated appeals, to skirt the border of sedition and never transgress it, to weigh his phrases before he gave them birth, and to remember them. If he said an incendiary thing one moment he qualified it the next; he justified violence only to deprecate it; and months later, when on trial for his life and certain remarks were quoted against him, he confounded his prosecutors by demanding the contexts. Skilfully, always within the limits of their intelligence, he outlined to his hearers his philosophy and proclaimed it as that of the world’s oppressed. Their cause was his—the cause of human progress; he universalized, it. The world belonged to the “producer,” if only he had the courage to take possession of his own....

Suddenly the inspirer was transformed into the man of affairs who calmly proposed the organization of a strike committee, three members of which were to be chosen by each nationality. And the resolution, translated into many tongues, was adopted amidst an uproar of enthusiasm. Until that moment the revolt had been personal, local, founded on a particular grievance which had to do with wages and the material struggle for existence. Now all was changed; now they were convinced that the deprivation and suffering to which they had pledged themselves were not for selfish ends alone, but also vicarious, dedicated to the liberation of all the downtrodden of the earth. Antonelli became a saviour; they reached out to touch him as he passed; they trooped into the snowy street, young men and old, and girls, and women holding children in their arms, their faces alight with something never known or felt before.

Such was Antonelli to the strikers. But to those staid residents of Hampton who had thought themselves still to be living in the old New England tradition, he was the genius of an evil dream. Hard on his heels came a nightmare troop, whose coming brought to the remembrance of the imaginative the old nursery rhyme:—“Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark, The beggars are come to town.”

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It has, indeed, a knell-like ring. Do philosophies tend also to cast those who adopt them into a mould? These were of the self-same breed, indubitably the followers of Antonelli. The men wore their hair long, affected, like their leader, soft felt hats and loose black ties that fell over the lapels of their coats. Loose morals and loose ties! The projection of these against a Puritan background ties symbolical of everything the Anglo-Saxon shudders at and abhors; of anarchy and mob rule, of bohemia and vagabondia, of sedition and murder, of Latin revolutions and reigns of terror; of sex irregularity—not of the clandestine sort to be found in decent communities—but of free love that flaunts itself in the face of an outraged public. For there were women in the band. All this, and more, the invaders suggested—atheism, unfamiliarity with soap and water, and, more vaguely, an exotic poetry and art that to the virile of American descent is saturated with something indefinable yet abhorrent. Such things are felt. Few of the older citizens of Hampton were able to explain why something rose in their gorges, why they experienced a new and clammy quality of fear and repulsion when, on the day following Antonelli's advent, these strangers arrived from nowhere to install themselves—with no baggage to speak of—in Hampton's more modest but hitherto respectable hostelries. And no sooner had the city been rudely awakened to the perilous presence, in overwhelming numbers, of ignorant and inflammable foreigners than these turned up and presumed to lead the revolt, to make capital out of it, to interpret it in terms of an exotic and degenerate creed. Hampton would take care of itself—or else the sovereign state within whose borders it was would take care of it. And his Honour the Mayor, who had proclaimed his faith in the reasonableness of the strikers, who had scorned the suggestions of indignant inhabitants that the Governor be asked for soldiers, twenty-four hours too late arranged for the assembly of three companies of local militia in the armory, and swore in a hundred extra police.

The hideous stillness of Fillmore Street was driving Janet mad. What she burned to do was to go to Boston and take a train for somewhere in the West, to lose herself, never to see Hampton again. But—there was her mother. She could not leave Hannah in these empty rooms, alone; and Edward was to remain at the mill, to eat and sleep there, until the danger of the strike had passed. A messenger had come to fetch his clothes. After leaving Ditmar in the office of the mill, Janet crept up the dark stairs to the flat and halted in the hallway. Through the open doorway of the dining-room she saw Hannah seated on the horsehair sofa—for the first time within memory idle at this hour of the day. Nothing else could have brought home to her like this the sheer tragedy of their plight. Until then Janet had been sustained by anger and excitement, by physical action. She thought Hannah was staring at her; after a moment it seemed that the widened pupils were fixed in fascination on something beyond, on the Thing that had come to dwell here with them forever.

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Janet entered the room. She sat down on the sofa and took her mother's hand in hers. And Hannah submitted passively. Janet could not speak. A minute might have passed, and the silence, which neither had broken, acquired an intensity that to Janet became unbearable. Never had the room been so still! Her glance, raised instinctively to the face of the picture-clock, saw the hands pointing to ten. Every Monday morning, as far back as she could recall, her father had wound it before going to work—and to-day he had forgotten. Getting up, she opened the glass door, and stood trying to estimate the hour: it must be, she thought, about six. She set the hands, took the key from the nail above the shelf, wound up the weight, and started the pendulum. And the sound of familiar ticking was a relief, releasing at last her inhibited powers of speech.

"Mother," she said, "I'll get some supper for you."

On Hannah, these simple words had a seemingly magical effect. Habit reasserted itself. She started, and rose almost briskly.

"No you won't," she said, "I'll get it. I'd ought to have thought of it before. You must be tired and hungry."

Her voice was odd and thin. Janet hesitated a moment, and ceded.

"Well, I'll set the dishes on the table, anyway."

Janet had sought refuge, wistfully, in the commonplace. And when the meal was ready she strove to eat, though food had become repulsive.

"You must take something, mother," she said.

"I don't feel as if I ever wanted to eat anything again," she replied.

"I know," said Janet, "but you've got to." And she put some of the cold meat, left over from Sunday's dinner, on Hannah's plate. Hannah took up a fork, and laid it down again. Suddenly she said:—"You saw Lise?"

"Yes," said Janet.

"Where is she?"

"In a house—in Boston."

"One of—those houses?"

"I—I don't know," said Janet. "I think so."

"You went there?"



“Mr. Tiernan went with me.”

“She wouldn’t come home?”

“Not—not just now, mother.”

“You left her there, in that place? You didn’t make her come home?”

The sudden vehemence of this question, the shrill note of reproach in Hannah’s voice that revealed, even more than the terrible inertia from which she had emerged, the extent of her suffering, for the instant left Janet utterly dismayed. “Oh mother!” she exclaimed. “I tried—I—I couldn’t.”

Hannah pushed back her chair.

“I’ll go to her, I’ll make her come. She’s disgraced us, but I’ll make her. Where is she? Where is the house?”

Janet, terrified, seized her mother’s arm. Then she said:—“Lise isn’t there any more—she’s gone away.”

“Away and you let her go away? You let your sister go away and be a—a woman of the town? You never loved her—you never had any pity for her.”

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Tears sprang into Janet's eyes—tears of pity mingled with anger. The situation had grown intolerable! Yet how could she tell Hannah where Lise was!

"You haven't any right to say that, mother!" she cried. "I did my best. She wouldn't come. I—I can't tell you where she's gone, but she promised to write, to send me her address."

"Lise" Hannah's cry seemed like the uncomprehending whimper of a stricken child, and then a hidden cadence made itself felt, a cadence revealing to Janet with an eloquence never before achieved the mystery of mother love, and by some magic of tone was evoked a new image of Lise—of Lise as she must be to Hannah. No waywardness, no degradation or disgrace could efface it. The infant whom Hannah had clutched to her breast, the woman, her sister, whom Janet had seen that day were one—immutably one. This, then, was what it meant to be a mother! All the years of deadening hope had not availed to kill the craving—even in this withered body it was still alive and quick. The agony of that revelation was scarcely to be borne. And it seemed that Lise, even in the place where she was, must have heard that cry and heeded it. And yet—the revelation of Lise's whereabouts, of Lise's contemplated act Janet had nearly been goaded into making, died on her lips. She could not tell Hannah! And Lise's child must not come into a world like this. Even now the conviction remained, fierce, exultant, final. But if Janet had spoken now Hannah would not have heard her. Under the storm she had begun to rock, weeping convulsively.... But gradually her weeping ceased. And to Janet, helplessly watching, this process of congealment was more terrible even than the release that only an unmitigated violence of grief had been able to produce. In silence Hannah resumed her shrunken duties, and when these were finished sat awhile, before going to bed, her hands lying listless in her lap. She seemed to have lived for centuries, to have exhausted the gamut of suffering which, save for that one wild outburst, had been the fruit of commonplace, passive, sordid tragedy that knows no touch of fire....

The next morning Janet was awakened by the siren. Never, even in the days when life had been routine and commonplace, had that sound failed to arouse in her a certain tremor of fear; with its first penetrating shriek, terror invaded her: then, by degrees, overcoming her numbness, came an agonizing realization of tragedy to be faced. The siren blew and blew insistently, as though it never meant to stop; and now for the first time she seemed to detect in it a note of futility. There were those who would dare to defy it. She, for one, would defy it. In that reflection she found a certain fierce joy. And she might lie in bed if she wished—how often had she longed to! But she could not. The room was cold, appallingly empty and silent as she hurried into her clothes. The dining-room lamp was lighted, the table set, her mother was bending

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over the stove when she reached the kitchen. After the pretence of breakfast was gone through Janet sought relief in housework, making her bed, tidying her room. It was odd, this morning, how her notice of little, familiar things had the power to add to her pain, brought to mind memories become excruciating as she filled the water pitcher from the kitchen tap she found herself staring at the nick broken out of it when Lise had upset it. She recalled Lise's characteristically flippant remark. And there was the streak in the wall-paper caused one night by the rain leaking through the roof. After the bed was made and the room swept she stood a moment, motionless, and then, opening the drawer in the wardrobe took from it the rose which she had wrapped in tissue paper and hidden there, and with a perverse desire as it were to increase the bitterness consuming her, to steep herself in pain, she undid the parcel and held the withered flower to her face. Even now a fragrance, faint yet poignant, clung to it.... She wrapped it up again, walked to the window, hesitated, and then with a sudden determination to destroy this sole relic of her happiness went to the kitchen and flung it into the stove. Hannah, lingering over her morning task of cleaning, did not seem to notice the act. Janet turned to her.

"I think I'll go out for a while, mother," she said.

"You'd ought to," Hannah replied. "There's no use settin' around here."

The silence of the flat was no longer to be endured. And Janet, putting on her coat and hat, descended the stairs. Not once that morning had her mother mentioned Lise; nor had she asked about her own plans—about Ditmar. This at least was a relief; it was the question she had feared most. In the street she met the postman.

"I have a letter for you, Miss Janet," he said. And on the pink envelope he handed her, in purple ink, she recognized the unformed, childish handwriting of Lise. "There's great doings down at the City Hall," the postman added "the foreigners are holding mass meetings there." Janet scarcely heard him as she tore open the envelope. "Dear Janet," the letter ran. "The doctor told me I had a false alarm, there was nothing to it. Wouldn't that jar you? Boston's a slow burg, and there's no use of my staying here now. I'm going to New York, and maybe I'll come back when I've had a look at the great white way. I've got the coin, and I gave him the mit to-night. If you haven't anything better to do, drop in at the Bagatelle and give Walters my love, and tell them not to worry at home. There's no use trying to trail me. Your affectionate sister Lise."

Janet thrust the letter in her pocket. Then she walked rapidly westward until she came to the liver-coloured facade of the City Hall, opposite the Common. Pushing through the crowd of operatives lingering on the pavement in front of it, she entered the building....