



Global Grey Ebooks

**TWENTY TALES BY
TWENTY WOMEN**

ANONYMOUS

TWENTY TALES BY TWENTY WOMEN

ANONYMOUS



Twenty Tales by Twenty Women by Anonymous.

First published in 1903.

This ebook edition was created and published by Global Grey on the 6th September 2022.

The artwork used for the cover is '*Crying Girl on the Sofa*'
painted by Peder Knudsen.

This book can be found on the site here:

globalgreyebooks.com/twenty-tales-by-twenty-women-ebook.html

©Global Grey 2022

globalgreyebooks.com

Contents

Preface

Introduction

A Woman's Anguish

1. The Diary Of A Chicago Girl

2. The Life Story Of A Southern Widow

3. A Story Of The Chicago Ghetto

4. A Woman Of Thirty-Eight

5. A Forecast

6. A Daughter Of Proud Kentucky

7. My Lover's Bequest

8. The Victim Of A Drug

9. What Happened To A Girl Who Flirted

10. Sold At A Fixed Price

11. A Story Of Suicide Bridge

12. Two Babes And Two Mothers

13. Not Guilty

14. My Lover's Daughter

15. As Told To A Clergyman

16. A Story Of Stage Life

17. A Trip Across The Lake

18. One Woman's Way

19. A Story Of The Levee

20. A Scientific Phenomenon

Preface

“It may be weeds I’ve gathered, too;
But even weeds may be as fragrant,
With some sweet memory.
As the fairest flower.”

Without apology this book goes forth. If it is productive of some good, it will have fulfilled its mission.

In presenting this work it is with a feeling of restitution. If I have digressed from, or stormed the barricaded citadel of formal literature, I have done so without hesitation, simply complying with an obeisance to civility toward my fellow men. I have pictured life as a man of the world is sometimes forced to see it, and not altogether as angels would transcribe it.

If the manner in which the subjects are hereinafter treated and woven into stories, meets the approval of the public, the work will have served to indicate the power and simplicity of truth.—The Author.

“All truth is precious, if not divine,
And what dilates the pow’rs must needs refine.”

Introduction

“Without women, the beginning of our life would be helpless; the middle, devoid of pleasure, and the end of consolation.”

“The very first

Of human life must spring from woman’s breast,
 Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
 Your first tears quench’d by her, and your last sighs
 Too often breathed out in a woman’s hearing,
 When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
 Of watching the last hour of him who led them.”

In London alone there are eighty thousand fallen women, and, while the number is infinitely smaller in Chicago, they all have a history, an excuse to offer, and a tale to tell.

We have resided upon this terrestrial sphere just long enough to know that the reformation of a fallen woman rivals the labors of Hercules. All men have a physical nature and must meet people who appeal to it.

The conditions are such that there has arisen in society, a figure that is certainly the most mournful, and, in some respects, the most awful, upon which the eye of the moralist can dwell. That unhappy being, whose very name it is a shame to speak; who counterfeits, with a cold heart, the transports of affection and submits herself as the passive instrument of lust; who is scorned and insulted as the vilest of her sex, and doomed, for the most part, to disease and abject wretchedness of men, then death.

Who will pity her? A poor unknown, who shall be lowered into a grave of cold clay (and possibly in the potter’s field), among slimy, creeping things that feed on foul air and putrid masses. Not even a slab to say, “Here lies.”

With dreamy eyes and rum dulled brain, her companions take in the scene without warning. They shrink not from the horrors of the charnel house or the maggot filled grave; sin fascinates them as the cursed death giving flame does the foolish moth. They continue to cultivate avarice, defy all laws of nature and modesty, all rules of etiquette, and break down all barriers which ordinarily defend pure womanhood.

“She is a rag and a bone and a hank of hair.”

Women of this class feel that they are social outcasts, that their sins are as scarlet; they believe that they are past reform.

Herself, the supreme type of vice, she is usually the most efficient guardian of virtue. But for her, the unchallenged purity of countless homes would be polluted, and not a few, who, in the pride of their untested chastity, think of her with an indignant shudder, would have known the agony of remorse and despair.

On that one degraded and ignoble form are concentrated the passions that might have filled the world with shame.

She remains while creeds and civilization rise and fall, the eternal priestess of humanity, blasted for the sins of the world.

It is not our intention to perorate and dissertate on a theory calculated to turn the world into a miniature heaven, for we don't believe for the fractional part of a moment that a general reformation of the fallen is practicable or possible. It is not unusual that the men who deplore so loudly the existence of soiled doves are the very men who are responsible for their existence.

The only practicable solution that we may be tempted to offer, would be for society to brand the men with the stigma of its contempt, the same as it does the women, when he sinks himself below her level in an attempt to pervert her purity.

If the immoral men were ostracized from polite society with the same despatch that a weak woman is, society would be composed almost entirely of women.

The world's fallen women are divided into two classes:

The woman whose nature is depraved, who is too coarse to realize or heed the depth of her own infamy, and the woman whose circumstances have forced her to a life of shame. Of the former, it is useless to take heed for she understands nothing outside of her own depravity, and looks upon reformation as a thing to be avoided. Fortunately she constitutes but a small percentage of the half-world.

The reclamation of the other woman is almost as utterly impossible for the reason that she has realized and suffered too much. We have homes of refuge for the friendless, retreats for the fallen, and hospitals for the poor, but after all the red tape formula for admittance has been complied with, they dispense only the cold crusts of charity.

Where can a woman turn, whose suffering soul is tottering on the brink of the world's damnation? To whom shall she turn for the tender touch of Christian pity, the charity of a human undertaking half divine? Surely, not to the church that "Bows the knee to pomp that loves to varnish guilt;" not to the women of merciless hearts and useless lives who boast of chastity because of frozen veins; not to public charities who advertise her squalor and her shame; not to the worldly man, whose aid is; almost invariably extended in return for favors their families know not of, but she turns to the hell of the world's lost souls when men no longer find her a convenience.

The modest woman of mental refinement finds a rival in the person with a good figure (no matter how blatant), who is able to set the pace that lures the men.

Whatever her personal merits may be, her position precludes the possibility of her re-entering social circles that would be agreeable to her. She sees the girls about her who have smothered their moral scruples, wearing good clothes, going to entertainments and receiving the attentions of gentlemen who have no hesitancy in being parted from their money, if value is received, and it is small wonder if she, too, takes the initial step that leads to the "crib" in the "tenderloin."

After having established the reputation of being "game," there is no dearth of so called respectable men who are willing to be "kind" to her. The men who are responsible for these conditions are not the rough men of the lower classes, but the professional men, the men in business; many with families and nice homes, who represent the respectable element in the community.

If all the ancient prudes and wind-jammers, who are so intensely interested in the fallen, would give their support to the decent men who give their employes living wages, instead of straining their corsets to wedge in next to the bargain counter in the department stores, whose scale of wages breeds prostitution and moral depravity, they might discover in the next

decade, more self-supporting, decent women, and less fair faces flushed with lust in the glare of the red light “brothel.”

In presenting this work to the public it is not the intention of the author to bruise the hearts of fond parents, who may be able to recall sad occurrences, after having read the following chapters; nor to censure the subjects, whose life stories are told in the following narrations; not to bring down unjust criticism on the head of any class; but rather to point out in a measure, the reasons most apparent to a man of the world, for licentious crime.

If asked why I have chosen Chicago as the field from which to gather data for this volume, my answer would be, “because of its great population”; because to it visitors flock from every part of the United States and many foreign countries; because it is nearer to the center of population than any other large city, hence more often sought by wayward girls from the surrounding territory, and the inducements which are held out to the pleasure-loving public, whether those in quest of enjoyment be saint or sinner, wolf or lamb, in gay Chicago are conducive to the character of amusement and excitement necessary to the life of those whose stories are herein told.

This book will claim its right to life by detailing the life story of each one of these children of God, from the child-life in a quiet, peaceful home in some rural hamlet, through the trials and vicissitudes of unfortunate or misspent life.

This book, unlike the Bible, is all written in Chicago. The twenty disciples come from twenty different places. They, endeavoring to lose their identity in the whirl of racy life and excitement, seek the phantom happiness in this great city. For a time all goes well. Gaiety and mirth mingle, and fortune conspires with pleasure to mislead the novice; then the scenes grow old; happiness eludes the grasp; tawdry garments no longer please the eye; the tinsel tarnishes; disappointed hope begets despair, and then a few grains of a friendly drug or the cold waves, of the lake offer rest and relief. The city becomes pregnant with these poor unfortunates, tortured by regret and shame, goaded down by necessity and the scorn of former friends. Then there is birth—this book is born. It goes out into the world to tell the naked truth for the good of mankind.

While this work is prepared from a truly moral standpoint, let it be known that it is the intention to entertain as well as to instruct, to deal with bare facts in order that the reader will thoroughly understand the situation as it exists.

Should the reader, while in the act of drinking in the words of these crushed flowers, find an instance wherein, by the recital of her story, by sheer accident or otherwise, recognize the possessor of that story, do not, for the love of humanity, be so unkind as to say, “I told you so.”

You may know, aye adore, some man whose fault it is that that particular girl was placed in the position which makes the tale of her life so miserably sad to some and yet so racy and full of color to others. If, after having read the story of his wrong-doing, together with the pain he has caused, he does not develop into a different sort of a man, put him down as an iniquitous night-bird, fit to flit and hoot by night in search of prey; one in whom a spark of manhood never glows and whose crimes and abominations are myriad, marking him as a loathsome creature, who fears the truth and shuns the light of day; one whose conscience is seared beyond redemption and who possesses no conception of charity, pity, sorrow or regret.

It is a pitiable and cruel fact that the great source from which the ranks of scarlet are replenished, are young women from the country, who, disgraced in their own community, fly from home to escape the infamy and rush to the city with anger, desperation and revolt in

their hearts. Oh, that society would punish more severely the respectable seducers and destroyers of innocent women.

Another lamentable fact is that those who enter into this diabolical traffic, are seldom saved. We have avoided no labor or pains in our researches on this subject, and we wish all who read this to mark well our words.

When a woman once enters a house of prostitution and leads the life of those who dwell there, it is too late for redemption and there is no hope for her. When a woman once nerves herself for the fatal plunge, a change comes over her whole character and, sustained by outraged love, transformed into hate by miscalculating but indomitable pride, revenge and the excitement of her new environments, her fate is fixed, her doom is sealed.

Hence this book, "TWENTY TALES BY TWENTY WOMEN."

A Woman's Anguish

"Sitting alone by the window, watching the moonlit street;
 Bending my head to listen to the well known sounds of your feet;
 I have been wondering, darling, how I could hear the pain,
 When I watched with sighs and tear-wet eyes and waited your coming in vain.
 "For I know the day approaches when you will tire of me,
 When by the door I may watch and wait for the form I will not see;
 When the love that is now my heaven, the kisses that make my life,
 You will bestow on another, and that other will be your wife.
 "You will grow tired of serving, though you do not call it so;
 You will long for a love that is pure, the love that we two know.
 God knows that I loved you dearly, with a passion strong and pure,
 But you will grow tired and leave me though I gave up all for you.
 "I was pure as the morning when I first looked upon your face;
 I knew I never could reach you, on your high exalted place,
 But I looked and loved and worshiped, as a flower might worship a star,
 But your eyes shone down on me and you seemed so far, so far.
 "And then I knew that you loved me, loved me with all your heart,

But we could not stand at the altar, we were so far apart;
 If a star would wed a flower, the star must drop from the sky,
 Or the flower, in trying to reach it, would droop on its stalk and die.
 "And you said that you loved me dearly, and swore by the heaven above,
 That the Lord and all His angels would sanction and bless our love,
 And I was weak, not wicked, my love was pure and true,
 And sin itself seemed a virtue, when only shared by you.
 "We have been happy together, though, under a cloud of sin;
 But I know that the day approaches when my chastening will begin.
 You have been faithful and tender, but you will not always be,
 And I think I had better leave you while your thoughts are kind of me.
 "Oh, God! I could never bear it; it would madden my brain, I know;
 So while you love me dearly, I think I had better go.
 It is sweeter to feel my darling, to know as I fall asleep,

That some one will mourn and miss me, that some one is left to weep.
“That to die as I would in the future, to fall in the street some day,
Unknown, unwept and forgotten, when you have cast me away;
Perhaps the blood of the Savior can wash my garments clean;
Perchance I may drink the water that flows through the pastures green.
“Perchance we may meet in heaven, and walk in the streets above,

With nothing to grieve or part us, since our sinning was all through love.
God says, ‘Love one another,’ and down to the depths of hell
Will he send the soul of a woman, because she loved and fell.
“Perchance if we had never met, I had been spared this last regret,
This endless striving to forget; and yet, I could not bear the pain
Of never seeing you again.
Ah, leave me not, I love but thee; blessing or curse whiche’er thou be;
Oh, be as thou hast been to me, forever and forever.”
And so in the moonlight he found her, as around her beautiful clay
(Lifeless and pallid as marble, for her spirit had flown away),
The farewell words she had written she held to her cold, white breast,
And the buried blade of a dagger told how she had done the rest.

1. The Diary Of A Chicago Girl

This story is a copy of the diary kept by a wealthy Chicago girl, who was found dead in her room.

“When lovely woman stoops to folly
 And finds too late that men betray,
 What charm can soothe her melancholy?
 What art can wash her guilt away?
 “The only art her guilt to cover,
 To hide her shame from every eye,
 To give repentance to her lover,
 And wring his bosom, is—to die.”

January 1.

I, Louise Montgomery, twenty-five years of age, and in full possession of all my faculties, do hereby affirm that I will herein chronicle all the noteworthy happenings of my life for the period of one year.

Little diary, I am surprised that I, having reached the mature age of twenty-five, should become so sentimental as to wish to keep a diary. What has prompted me I cannot say. Time may reveal it.

The old year has just passed into eternity and the New Year has but commenced his reign as I write. Yes, a new year with all its possibilities. I hope at the end of this year I may look back upon it as the one bright year of my life. I have not made a thousand good resolutions, as I have done hitherto, but mean to meet the trials and temptations of each day as bravely as possible.

I am not in love yet, little diary, and I want you to bear witness to this fact. There is a man whom you do not know, and to whom I shall introduce you now, for if I can convert him to my way of thinking by the end of this year, I shall not have lived in vain, and I shall have much to tell you about him as the days go by.

He is married, this man of whom I speak. That in itself would preclude the possibility of my loving him now, or falling in love with him in the future.

He has a lovely wife and one child. He speaks of her often and dwells on her excellent qualities, until I too love her.

He loves her? Maybe he does, but I fear he does not, not to the fullest extent. It must be my work of this year to teach him the error of his way. He has never by word or action intimated that he cares for me, but I am sensible, not conceited, and know he is—well, he likes to tell how happy he is, too well. People who are thoroughly happy give no thought to the opinion of the world, but live only in the sunshine of their beloved’s presence. I think my task will be a delightful one. He is awfully good looking, very tall and well developed, polished and withal so interesting. It was strange how we became interested in one another the very first night of our meeting. That Thanksgiving ball will be a memorable one. How striking he looked in his full dress suit and how perfectly he dances! I wonder what New Year

resolutions he has made. I mean to ask him, if he is at the dance tonight. No, I guess I won't either; men are conceited and he might think I had been giving him rather more thought than mere casual acquaintance would warrant. Perhaps he doesn't realize his danger. Well, I must retire now to pleasant dreams.

January 2.

Oh, what a grand time I had last night. I was the belle of the ball and Mr. Forsythe said he never saw me so radiant. I felt a little as if I ought not to allow him to say it, but I couldn't really find a reason for criticising him for what many others said, and then, too, if I assume that he is doing wrong, when he may never have thought of it, I shall spoil all my chances for doing good. I know I did look my best, for that clinging black crepe gown is most becoming. I wonder how Nell is progressing with her affair. Somehow she doesn't seem to me to be looking very happy.

January 6.

I didn't intend to neglect you so soon, my father confessor, but I have been so busy and so tired at night that I couldn't keep my eyes open, and I want you to be as much of a credit to me in appearances as my own deeds are to be.

There has been nothing of vital importance to set down here this time. I had a long talk with Nell Sears today and I conjectured correctly about her being unhappy. She is engaged to Professor Kurtz, but he says it is impossible for him to marry her publicly, as long as he teaches in the University, for they would discharge him. That seems queer to me. I think I shall investigate the matter for my own satisfaction, for who knows, a Professor might propose to me sometime. He wants her to marry him quietly, and she doesn't want to do it I wouldn't if I were she. A society girl in her position would run a great risk, I think.

January 10.

I had a long talk with Mr. Forsythe today. When I told him I was going away tomorrow he looked sad, and said he should miss me very much. You see it was this way. We met by sheer accident at the silk counter at Field's. He was matching some silk for his wife, and I was searching for something suitable for a new evening gown. He helped me select an exquisite thing, all pink and silver. I think I overstepped my limit as to price, but I didn't like to "haggle" when he was standing there. He said I would be the center of attraction wherever I wore that, and some other complimentary trifles, not worth mentioning. By the time we had concluded our purchases it was luncheon hour and he insisted on my going up to the tea-room with him.

He asked me if I would write to him while I was away; that it would be such a pleasure to hear how I was enjoying myself. I gave a reluctant consent after he said, "If you knew how much good it would do me, you would not refuse."

I wish I knew whether I did right or not.

January 25.

Detroit is such a lovely city and I am having such a royal, good time, that I have neglected thee, my little white-faced friend.

Florence has kept me going every minute. I met a Mr. Ford last night and of all the men I have met since coming here I like him the best. He loves music, poetry and flowers, and we are very congenial.

I have been here two weeks and have not kept my promise to Mr. Forsythe to write. I must do so tonight, so farewell, my friend, for tonight.

February 1.

I received such a delightful letter from Mr. Forsythe this afternoon. Such poetical sentiments, such pen pictures! It was certainly the most beautiful letter I ever received. I wonder what he could have thought of my poor, little missive. Still it is worth something to have inspired such a beautiful reply. I wonder how soon I ought to answer. I should like to get another from him soon, but I wouldn't have him know it for the world.

February 15.

I had another letter from Mr. Forsythe today. It was just a note inquiring for Mrs. Madden's address. It makes me smile. Men aren't so very sharp after all. As if I couldn't see that the inquiry was only an excuse to write to me and a gentle reminder of the fact that I owe him a letter.

February 23.

Well, whom do you suppose was at the ball tonight? I was never so surprised in my life. It was a club dance and Mr. Forsythe was there. I did not know he was in the city. Oh, what a grand waltz we had! He said business had called him East and he thought he would stop at Detroit for a day before going on to New York.

Of course we know it was some one who wore a pink gown and has brown eyes, don't we?

He is dear, he looked down into my eyes and said, "What beautiful unfathomed depths your soul has, though I can get but a peep at it through those eyes."

I can't help it, I like to hear him say those things, although I ought not to allow it and I know it. He is coming to call this afternoon.

February 25.

Well, he was here and Florence thought he was lovely. She came in for a few moments and then excused herself, so we had the time all to ourselves. I don't know how I dared to do it, but it seemed as if something impelled me to, and I said, "Mr. Forsythe, I don't believe you are as happy as you say you are. If you were you would not encourage yourself so much."

He was silent what seemed to me an interminable length of time and I thought, "Now, my lady, you have spoiled your chances to do a good work, by a word inopportune spoken." But I was wrong. He came over to me and sat down beside me on the couch. He took my hand in his and said, "Miss Montgomery, you are right, but you are the only one who has discerned it, or at least the only one who has said so."

Then I told him I was sorry I had been so abrupt, but he assured me that it was all right and that he was glad I had spoken because now he would feel free to talk the whole matter over with me.

He said his wife was good and kind, in fact, I don't know that he said anything but nice things, now that I stop to think of it.

But, little diary, I think I have discovered the trouble. I don't believe she understands him. She doesn't appreciate the depth of his nature. It may be no fault of hers; she associates with him daily and feels herself so much a part of him that she has ceased to analyze him. It is not that he has ceased to be interesting to her, for she loves him devotedly, but it is the nature of a man to desire commendation and encouragement. He doesn't wish it to be taken for granted that he is doing well, but wishes to hear words, words.

A deep bond of sympathy exists between us. I understand and he feels that I understand. Oh, I am sure now that I can do good!

March 1.

Well, little diary, you and I are going to return to Chicago Wednesday, back to our home and our work. I am not going to send Mr. Forsythe any word, but will surprise him by appearing in person at Mrs. Carter's party Friday night I wonder how he will look and what he will say.

March 7.

The last words I wrote the other night were, "I wonder how he will look, what he will say." His face was a study, pleasure and surprise the dominant emotions. He said only three words as he clasped my hand in his. "Welcome home, Louise." Louise! How he drew out the syllables. I never before realized that my name was musical. I asked him how all the family were and he said well and happy. Then he said Mrs. Forsythe was there and he wanted us to meet. She is lovely, and as they came up to me she was looking at him so fondly and proudly, I could see the devotion in her eyes. I couldn't help feeling a sharp twinge of my conscience as I stood chatting to her, but I should not, for my intentions are the best, and if she knew all the circumstances she would commend me, I know.

March 16.

Sister and I were among several guests at Mr. and Mrs. Forsythe's box party last night and Robert managed to have the chair next mine, and when "the lights were dim and low" he found my hand and gave it a gentle squeeze and said, "I want to have a long talk with you soon, without fear of interruption, and I know of no way this can be had unless you meet me down town and take dinner with me."

I asked him if he thought it was right, and he said, "You know I would not ask you to do anything I thought was wrong."

So I have promised to go. I wonder what in the world he is going to tell me.

March 27.

We had dinner at Rector's at four o'clock today. Robert told me that he loved me. I was dumbfounded and must have shown it plainly. I asked him if he was in the habit of making love to young women. His lips quivered and he said, "I don't blame you for being offended, but I swear to you that this is the first time I ever told a woman I loved her when I had not the right to do so. I am sorry, so sorry, I have told you, for I might have gone on suffering alone, and you would have never been the wiser, while now I have made you unhappy, too. Can you forgive me?"

He leaned over toward me and looked into my eyes so eagerly for an affirmative answer that—well, how could I refuse forgiveness, and then, you know, my work must be considered.

April 2.

Nell had an "All Fool's" party last night, and such pranks as we played! Of course Robert was not there, because only the young people were there, and it seemed rather strange; in fact, I know I missed him, but this is only for you to know, my faithful. Mr. Ford was there and he is awfully nice, knows just what to do to make a girl comfortable. I am going to the opera with him tonight. I shall enjoy it immensely with him, I know.

April 14.

O dear! Robert is jealous of Mr. Ford. He happened to be at the opera that night and saw us. He says he did not mean to be too observing, but that he loved me so well that he couldn't keep his eyes off me, and that Mr. Ford must be in love with me, too, from the attention he bestowed upon me.

April 26.

Florence has been here since the 15th on a shopping expedition and we have had no end of fun. She insists on my returning with her and so I think we will go, you and I.

May 15.

Have been here two weeks and had a wire today from Robert. He will be here the 17th, to remain a few days. I am just wondering what I can do with Mr. Ford while he is here, for I shall have to devote every minute to Robert, and that won't please Mr. Ford very well. Oh, dear! I'm always getting my wires crossed.

May 17.

I met Robert at the train today and before I could say a word he had put his arm around me and kissed me, right on the lips. His first kiss, May 17th.

May 20.

Robert was here tonight and Florence had gone to the theater, we were left alone. He took me in his arms and kissed me again and again and every kiss thrilled me like an electric shock. I felt the blood tingling to the ends of my fingers. I never felt so strange in my life. I pulled away from him as soon as I could, but, oh, those kisses. They seemed to intoxicate me. I felt as if I had been transported to Elysian fields, and could die happy right there with my lips pressed to his. We had such a nice visit. He says I am his guiding star, and that everything has gone better since he knew me. I told him that he must never forget his wife and he assured me that he would not, could not when he had such a sweet reminder, even if she were not always so good and kind. He said, too, that she could not satisfy the longings in his soul which had been there for years, until he met me. That a man must have love, sympathy and encouragement to fill his life and make it complete.

June 4.

I had a telegram from New York this morning. It was from Robert asking me to meet him there. I—shall I go or shall I not?

June 6.

I have decided to go. I had some shopping to do anyway, and I can do better there than here or in Chicago.

June 10.

When I arrived here, Robert had a beautiful suite of rooms engaged for me at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. He told me more about his life at home, and its deficiencies, and that his health was failing him. I am dreadfully worried about him, he looks badly. I wonder what I ought to do? If she only knew how he felt and that she was the cause of it, she might do differently, but it is such a delicate matter, I am afraid to interfere. I pity him so much. He is coming to see me tonight. He has said no word, but the hungry look in his eyes speaks to my heart more forcibly than words. He will take me in his arms again tonight, and once more I shall feel the thrill when our lips meet in one long kiss, and maybe I shall say, "Robert, take me for your own, if it will restore you to health."

June 12.

Robert came. We talked over the whole matter. I asked him if there was anyone else in his life. He said *no!* That he had never loved anyone but me. Then—then, I put myself in his arms and said, “Robert, take me!” He said, “Little girl, are you sure you want to make the sacrifice?” I said, “Yes.” I gave myself willingly for pity’s sake, not for love, because I do not love him. Then our compact was sealed with a kiss. Our lips met, and soon I was all his.

How can I entrust this to you, my silent friend? How can I sully your white pages with a relation of my conduct. The world would call me bad if it knew. I should not be the highly respected Louise Montgomery, that I have always been, and all because I have chosen to bring happiness to one who was dying for love.

I wonder if I can go back to the old scenes and feel the same; feel that I am worthy to mingle with the old friends. Yet why should I feel thus? If anyone is wronged it is I. It must be the imaginings of a super-sensitive conscience, or the result of early training which makes me feel unworthy. I wonder what our Rector would say if he could look down into my heart and see; can it be possible that there are others in our set who are as guilty—I must not think it, much less write it. But after all, I do not regret. I have made a sacrifice for a worthy cause.

June 30.

Back home again and getting ready to go away for the summer. Have seen Robert three times since I returned, and we seem to grow nearer and dearer to each other.

July 10.

Petoskey never seemed one-half so beautiful to me as it does this season. Even the people are nicer. The men are kind and attentive but towering over and above them all, I can see the face of the one man I love. Yes, little diary, I love him now, he has woven himself into my very nature even in this short time. “I could not forget you, dear Robert, if all these men were kings and princes, for you are my prince and my king. Your dear letters are such a comfort to me, and I am so happy in your love, even though I know there is no future.”

How I miss him! It is always he who thinks of the little things that go to make up a woman’s life.

July 31.

My sweetheart is coming today. I am counting the hours. Just three hours and twenty minutes and I shall be with him once more. What a perfect day this. Nature seems to reflect my joy.

August 1.

We are going for a long drive today, through the fragrant pine woods. We will be alone for the first time since he came. I can feel those dear arms about me, those full, soft lips on mine, even now.

August 14.

Robert is going today, and with him goes the brightness. We have had such a glorious two weeks of constant companionship. We will be reunited soon, though, for he is going up into Canada to find a quiet, country home where we can spend the best month of the whole year—beautiful, hazy October. I am supposed to be going to New York.

“Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.”

September 3.

Florence is here and I have taken her into my confidence, not from choice, but because it seemed necessary. I am sure she loves me just as well as before, but she says it is wrong, all

wrong. That I am making the greatest mistake of my life; that no man is worthy of the sacrifice, and that in time, even though he is true now, he will weary of me. Ugh! “She made me to shudder and grow sick at heart.” But I do not believe it. Is he not my “Roumald,” I his “Clarimonde”? How many times he has said, “To know you is to know all women.” And that satiety itself I set on fire.

September 30.

At last, at last! I leave on the North-West today for the “Soo,” where Robert joins me, and together we go to Collinwood, on Georgian Bay.

He found a beautiful country home near there, which is ideally quiet and overlooks the Bay.

October 2.

We are on our way. Oh, the joy of this trip, the perfect contentment. Robert’s face has been radiant with happiness all day. When I see him in his strength, and manly beauty, enjoying God’s choicest gift, good health, and know that I am the cause, should I not rejoice?

October 16.

What an ideal spot! It beggars description. We are so happy. Sometimes we stroll together through the woods, where the warm tinted Autumn leaves make a soft carpet for our feet. When we tire, we sit down and he reads to me by the hour. What a beautiful world! I never dreamed of such tender solicitude as he shows me in every action. At night if I stir or murmur in my sleep, he awakens me by drawing me closer to his heart and saying, “What is it, pet, are you in pain?” I laugh at him and tell him he must not be so foolish. He says in reply that he loves me every minute of the day and night, that his thoughts are filled with me, whether waking or sleeping, and that he loves to waken me for he is sure of two soft arms stealing around his neck in a warm embrace, and two red lips seeking his.

November 1.

Oh, dear! It is all over, this, the very happiest month of my life. As we were about to leave the room where we have been so happy for the last time, he clasped me to his breast and sobbed like a baby and I wept with him. Oh, dear! how can I ever give him up again to those to whom he belongs?

November 6.

At home once more. I am so lonely and desolate. Little diary, I wonder if this is punishment. Yet, if I have done no wrong, why should I think this is punishment?

November 23.

Dear God! If I might have been spared this great agony! Anything but this! My idol shattered and my heart broken. He was not true, and I trusted him so implicitly! How could he deceive me so? There was another woman who entered his life before he ever met me. She either heard or imagined that he had transferred his affections to me and came to me with all, asking me to give him up, because he is all she has in the world. She has no home, no one to care for her and supply her wants as I have. How could he do it? How could he do it? Not quite a year. Oh, the agony of it!

I went to him with her statement and he said it was true, but that he never loved her. I cannot believe him. I cannot believe anyone or anything now. I have no one I can tell. I must suffer all alone. Florence is the only one and I would die before I would tell her. My pride won’t allow me to admit his perfidy to anyone. I cannot bear to have the world think ill of him, even

now. How can I live and bear it? I will not. I cannot. I will end it all. Goodbye, little diary, my only faithful friend. You, too, might have proved false had you the power. Goodbye.

2. The Life Story Of A Southern Widow

NOT QUITE THE SAME.

“Not quite the same the springtime seems to me,
 Since that sad season when in separate ways
 Our paths diverged. There are no more such days
 As dawned for us in that last time when we
 Dwelt in the realm of dreams, illusive dreams;
 Spring may be just as fair now, but it seems
 Not quite the same.”

“Ah, good evening, Mr. Philmore! I have been expecting you. Have this chair, please.”

As I took the proffered seat I gazed steadily at my hostess. A woman in possession of all her natural charms, a picture of health, a vision of grace and an example of nobility. Time had softened her features; the sweetness of childhood had grown tenfold in the process of matronly perfection. The erectness of carriage, the finely traced features, the shapely hand and dainty foot, so highly arched, denoted the purest type of refinement, while no artist conceived more graceful curves than those which were so plainly noticeable as one ran one's eyes from head to feet; gowned in some soft, clinging black silk, the contour of her figure was a feast for the eyes of gods. The soft, dulcet tones in which she plainly articulated, were of sufficient sweetness to attract one to her if that were the only charm which she could bring to bear.

Nothing had been left undone in the furnishing of the elegant house in which she lived; rich draperies adorned the walls, tapestry of the rarest quality fittingly relieved the handsome oriental rugs and handsomely frescoed ceilings. Potted plants placed here and there sent out such a fragrant odor that it was almost impossible for one to believe that it was midwinter and that the mercury hovered uncomfortably near zero. The bric-a-brac and pictures were so well selected and artistically arranged that one could readily see the rare good taste and culture which was a dominant feature in the appointment of the entire establishment. The cheeriness seemed to add a halo to the surroundings; the perfect harmony with which all things were blended seemed to soften one's nature to a sense of responsibility toward things infinite.

Large, liquid brown eyes rested softly on me, and the satiny complexion of Mrs. Penway glowed with such a beaming radiance of congeniality that despite her forty or more years, I felt as though I were basking in the sunshine of youthful smiles. Coupled with all the beauty and symmetry there was a distinct imprint of sadness on her features, which was readily detected. They were not the hardened lines which denote misery and want as associates to suffering, not the expression of hardship, but rather that “resigned to duty” look.

After commenting on the weather and general topics of the day I came to the point by asking Mrs. Penway if she had her narration written.

“No; I think, Mr. Philmore, that I shall recite the incidents to you as they transpired and ask you to be kind enough to arrange the statement into sentences best suited to your purpose.”

“Very well, I will do the best I can to tell the tale in a readable manner.”

“To begin with, I am a native of Southern Missouri. My parents being Scotch, I feel that my ancestry is traceable through a long line of descendants. My father was engaged in the lumber business. It was his custom to buy large tracts of timber land, then placing his mill at convenient points he would proceed to convert all the available timber into marketable lumber. Money proved to be the blessing and curse, which was eventually the cause of more suffering than one cares to bear.

“Years ago my father purchased a body of land in Arkansas, covering an area of twelve thousand acres. In the transaction he became financially involved to such an extent that he was compelled to go for assistance to some of the large dealers to whom he was in the habit of selling the greater part of his output. At this call for aid a man came to our home to talk the matter over. He had the appearance of being a man of fifty years of age; he was wealthy, very wealthy; he remained there for ten days, during which time he seemed to grow very fond of me as a child and would often pat me on the head, coaxingly calling me his little girl.

“After he had gone, I overheard my parents talking. Father said, ‘Well, that is a load off my mind.’ ‘And one off mine,’ said my mother. Then she broke down and cried. Between the sobs I could gather but little. However, I heard her say, ‘I know she will never be happy.’

“I had not the slightest idea to whom she referred. Next morning she called me to her. ‘Dear,’ she said, ‘you are going away.’

“‘Oh, where to?’ I cried in my childish delight and anticipation of travel.

“Noting my eagerness and mistaking it for joy at leaving home, my mother, with tears streaming down her dear white face, said, ‘Are you happy to think of it?’

“‘No, not that, mother,’ said I, ‘but I should like to see and learn of things which I have heard so much about and have known so little.’

“‘Well, dear, you are to go away from us and go into school. We, your father and I, have concluded that it is best.’

“‘But mamma, won’t that cost a great deal of money?’

“‘Yes, but your father now has his affairs in shape so that he can afford to educate you.’

“As my mother finished this last sentence a fresh torrent of tears sprang from her eyes. It was all a mystery to me, for I had known of my father’s difficulties; I could not understand the sudden turn of affairs. I quickly resolved upon a plan which would at least enlighten me; there was in the employ of my father a young man by the name of Landrie Grayson, everyone called him ‘Lannie.’ He was a trusted man of affairs; things which other men were never consulted upon were always brought to Lannie for his advice. Lannie could explain to me the cause of this sudden resolution on the part of my parents.

“Lannie stood quite six feet tall, while his broad shoulders looked as though he could carry with ease and grace the burdens which might quickly crush other men out of all semblance of humanity. If his blue eyes were tender, they were only a relief from the firmly set jaws, which plainly said, ‘I will,’ without so much as a movement of the rather thin lips. I knew that Lannie would know and tell me, for he was honest; he had been in the family for years; I had learned to lean upon him as a brother, and as I sought him out from among the whirling pullies, singing saws, and swiftly crawling belts that day, I felt proud to think that I had at different times during my infancy sat on one of those square shoulders or clung tenaciously to that sinewy neck, as Lannie had waded through slough and brush, taking me from place to place in the forest; he had killed the snakes and chased away the wild boars that would so frighten me in childhood, and when young squirrels were susceptible to capture he would

always keep the cage well filled with every known variety with which the woods abounded. If Lannie was the strong rod on which I learned to lean, wherein was I to blame?

“Lannie saw me as I wistfully watched and waited, then giving some orders (for he was papa’s foreman), he came to where I was standing and said, ‘What is it, Ailene?’

“Lannie, I want to tell you something.’ I think the tremor of my childish voice impressed Lannie, for he asked me to go to the office, a rough affair, but there were chairs there, and we could be alone and away from the clanging saws and flying dust.

“Now tell me what it is, little one,’ said Lannie, as he closed the door and took up a handful of curls which had crowded out from under the gingham bonnet which I wore.

“Lannie, I am going away,’ said I.

“I know it,’ replied Lannie.

“You; who told you?’

“I heard the bargain.’

“Bargain; what’s that, Lannie?’

“I heard your father say that you could go.’

“Oh, did you hear him tell mamma?’

“No, I heard him tell the old man with the white side whiskers.’

“Do you know where I am going to, Lannie?’

“I only know that you are going away to school; the rich old man is to select the place and you are to be sent there, and—’

“Lannie turned to the window without finishing the sentence. Presently he resumed his speech again by asking if I was glad. I did not know what the change in Lannie’s voice meant then, but I could not fail to notice it.

“Yes, I want to go and learn to be a lady, but—I—don’t like to go away and leave mamma and—’

“And who, Ailene?’

“You, Lannie. I will be lonely with a whole lot of dressed up children and mean old teachers around.’

“Before I had closed my sentence Lannie had drawn me to him and was kissing me fondly.

“Oh, little girl, you don’t know how much Lannie will miss you, and to think I won’t see you any more.’

“Why, Lannie, why do you say that? I won’t stay always.’

“No, but you see, little one, the rich man wants you for his own; he is only waiting for you to be educated and grow into full womanhood. Then you are to be his.’

“Hasn’t he any little girls of his own?’

“No, you poor dear, you don’t know what I mean; what it all means.’

“No, tell me, Lannie, for if it is not nice and good I don’t want to do anything but just stay here.’

“Well, it’s this, Ailene; may God grant that you will forgive me for disturbing your young heart, but your father came near losing all he had. He applied to a firm for financial aid; the old gentleman who was here furnished the much needed assistance under these conditions: That you be educated at his expense and then he will marry you for he has fallen in love with you.’

“Oh, the ugly old thing! I don’t want to marry him. I hate him. I don’t want to marry anybody. I want to stay where you are,’ I cried.

“Yes, dear, I know, but a great deal depends on you, for you were not to know it yet, and as I have been a witness to the contract and have been sworn to secrecy you must not tell anyone that you know.’

“But I won’t go.’

“Yes, pet, you must go and remember that you are only fifteen now; you are not expected to marry your father’s benefactor until you are nineteen or twenty, changes may take place before the time arrives for you to give up all hope.’

“It was a sad leave taking for more than me; I shall never forget the pained expression in my mother’s face and the stern, sad look of my father as I waved my hand from the car window.

“Lannie had carried a little basket of luncheon to the station for me, and when I opened it on the train late that afternoon I found a handful of wild flowers wrapped in a piece of the “Lumberman’s Journal,” which I knew Lannie to be a regular subscriber of; there under the glass cover are those same flowers, withered and faded beyond recognition, but the sweet memory which clings to them makes them more precious to me than all the blossoms this world contains.

“I had four years of school life with everything that money could buy, kind friends, pleasant surroundings and indulgent teachers.

“But oh, how I longed for mother, for the woods, the vines and moss, the whirr of saws, and the scream of the mill whistle and for Lannie. Oh, for one hour in the tangled forest with strong, brave Lannie would have paid me for all the suffering which I had to bear.

“At last the day arrived when Lannie’s reckoning proved correct; my father and Mr. Penway came to visit me at school; they quickly told me what the plans were, and for me to go on with a repetition of the details would only bore you. Mr. Penway made love to me in a manner that I then supposed was perfectly correct, but I have since been led to believe that his manner courtship was stereotyped, but it made no difference. I was the price of a home and a fortune, I saw it all; if I refused, my father’s years of labor would be lost, and he would be penniless and my mother homeless. I felt as though children were brought into the world much the same as horses, cattle and hogs, that a fixed sum might be realized on them.

“We were married in a hotel in St. Louis. All of the luxuries were supplied, gowns of rarest and most exquisite texture, and as I rudely told one of my bridesmaids, every article was there which is needed at a first class funeral except the casket and hearse.

“Music, ushers with stately tread, presents and flowers, great clusters of potted plants, waving ferns, roses, pure white lilies, narcissus, orange blossoms, loads of each, in full view; yes, and wrapped in a bit of white silk, nestled inside my clothing next to my heart, were a handful of withered wild flowers, which during four years had kept fresh in my memory.

“We went to Europe, spent the winter in sunny Italy. At times I did imagine I was happy, then the ghost of something, I knew not what, arose before me and all I could see was a contract, wherein so many dollars in hand paid, had been exchanged for a human form, which

was so like ice that the purchaser could only gaze on his possession with a feeling that he, at least, got it first hand, without it ever having been placed on the bargain counter. I had no conception of what married life was, and I fear my husband was a poor teacher. Many fine pictures and rare ornaments found their way into the great pile of treasures and relics which we gathered with no thought of cost. Mr. Penway was a connoisseur, but not a lover. He was proud of me. I was introduced to many of the noble families; I was catered to by those whose station in life was apparently so far above me that I shuddered when I thought of a saw mill. We returned from our trip abroad, only to be ushered into a house of magnificence; that is, so far as grandeur was concerned. Servants to do my bidding, carriages at my command; all, everything that money could buy, but not one bit of love; not a word of that soul sustaining love.

“One year of this, and Mr. Penway was called to Europe again, this time on business. I had been in regular correspondence with my parents, and they insisted on my coming home for a visit during Mr. Penway’s sojourn abroad. I went and for the first time in nearly six years met Lannie. My first impulse was to throw myself into his arms, regardless of the presence of my parents, but I managed to control myself. However, during my stay there, I naturally roamed in the woods, through the mills; in that way saw much of Lannie. Dear old Lannie. With the same clock-like regularity he performed his duties; the same broad shoulders and the same tender blue eyes. If time had wrought changes in him, it was for the better. He seemed so mature with the full soft beard that covered his face. His words were all uttered in kindness. I asked my parents about him, and they told me how he had applied himself to my father’s interests, not losing a day from the confining duties of business and labor; in fact, he was the mainstay. If the head sawyer was sick or off duty, Lannie laid the master hand on the lever and the saws and the dust flew as the lumber piles grew higher and higher. If the engineer or fireman was absent, it was Lannie’s touch that put the machinery in motion, and his willing hands that heaved the great slabs into the furnace to make the steam. If any of the little colony were sick and needed attention, it was Lannie who kept the lonely vigil through the dark and solemn hours of blackest night, and when morning came he, mighty as the sun, shone all day, beaming with good nature; and when (as was often the case) the fever so prevalent in the swamps claimed a victim, it was Lannie’s gentle hands that folded the arms across the quiet breast and closed the staring eyes. It was his soothing, reassuring words which brought comfort to the poor mother whose heart bled in sorrow for her darling child; it was Lannie who would put his great, strong arms around the father and husband, as the clods fell with that sickening thud on the rough box that contained all that was left of the dearest treasure they had ever known; again, it was Lannie who took into his arms the fatherless children and told them that the father of all was God. In this way Lannie had lived, pouring out the generous love of his great warm nature, while I—Ugh! I shudder to think of it. I had been encased in a sheet of ice trying to freeze my emotion, trying to smother my heart throbs, lest, like some wild beast which in search of freedom and prey, plunges through the iron bars of its cage, it would bound through my breast, tearing and breaking the cords and crushing the coat of mail beyond repair.

“Is it any wonder that that very thing occurred? Are you surprised to learn that my poor, heavy, tugging heart was torn by force from the delicate tendrils and with one wild plunge left the enclosure which it had so long occupied? With a suddenness born of despair, I packed and left, no one knew why, and I was too proud and self-reliant to tell.

“I arrived home only to undergo days of torture and nights of sobbing misery. In about a week after my arrival I had a letter from my mother saying that Lannie was going to leave them. He had, by his frugal methods, saved a tidy sum, and, true to the teachings of the lumber camp, had invested in a tract of land, which at the time of purchase was almost

valueless, but recently a railroad had been surveyed and was now being built through his broad acres, and Lannie was a rich man. He was coming to Chicago to buy machinery and set up in business of his own, and of course Lannie had been so good and nice always that he seemed just like one of the family, and if it was not too much trouble and embarrassment to have a countryman around, it would be nice for me to ask Lannie to spend a part of the time during his stay in the city at my house, etc.

“Oh, joys of Heaven and earth! Lannie here, and in my house. Oh, Lannie, Lannie! We can be all alone—with that thought some horrible, creeping feeling seized me and I was soon dripping with cold perspiration. Horrors upon horrors! No—no, I could never do that. The fury of Hell would be visited upon me, just as sure as that temptation was put before me. What could I do? For the first time since I was married I prayed. I asked God to give me strength of mind and body to direct me as I should go. After that I grew calmer, called my maid, instructed her to write my mother and tell her that I had concluded to sail for Liverpool and join Mr. Penway. Then we hurriedly began to pack. To get away—get away, run, fly, anything to escape that which was bound to overtake me if I stayed, was the only thought of my mind.

“Luncheon was served early. The train for New York left at three p.m. I would have time to send a cablegram to Mr. Penway, buy a few little trifles and then as fast as steam could carry me I would go from the gulf which seemed about to swallow me.

“I had just left the dining room, as the bell rang. The butler announced a gentleman. I felt a pallor spread from my face to my neck; my breast felt clammy; the flesh on my arms seemed to crawl; my usually plump hand looked pale and thin, as I tremblingly took the card. My voice frightened me as I said ‘Not in’ to the waiting statue of ebony, at the same time tossing the little card onto a table without looking at it. It went short of the mark and as it fluttered to the floor turned over, my eyes were fastened on the name, ‘Landrie Grayson.’

“Fever drove away the chill which had almost overcome me. No, no! I could not do it! It was just as impossible for me to turn Lannie away then as it is now to bring him back. With a bound, I was in the hall; the next leap put me alongside the stately, marching figure in livery; a dash and I was pulling and tugging at the great door, then I looked into those honest eyes of blue.

“‘I thought I would call on you, Ailene,’ said Lannie, as we entered the drawing room.

“‘Yes, Lannie, it was so good of you to come; and now, Lannie, you must be hungry. It is high noon, as you used to say,’ and without further ado I rang and ordered dinner served at once, for I knew that the people at home always had twelve o’clock dinner. That dinner was the best I ever tasted in my life. How I changed in a few moments from a dull, heavy hearted creature of nervous misery, back to the old happy stage of girlhood. We had dinner, and I did not send my baggage away.

“When Lannie explained to me that he was stopping at a hotel, I said: ‘Lannie, you cannot stay at a hotel in Chicago; you must make this your home.’

“‘No, Ailene, I will be busy, and could not think of putting you to any inconvenience.’

“‘But, Lannie, please do stay here. I am—’ I did not finish my sentence. I don’t think Lannie knew what I was about to utter. If he did know that I was on the point of telling him that I was alone, he paid no attention to it. Again that nightmare overcame me; I was speechless. Lannie thought I was hurt or offended because he refused my hospitality.

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do, Ailene,’ he said. ‘We will go to some theater tonight. I will spend tomorrow evening here with you and then we will plan for the other days that I am to remain in the city.’

“In spite of the fact that some of my dearest friends and members of the same social circle in which I moved attended the play that night and indulged in not a little whispering and smiling as they turned their eyes on us, I was proud. If Lannie did appear a little out of place, he was dear, true Lannie, just the same. The spirit which I knew to be encased in that noble character made up for all deficiencies in dress and manners. Each act was well received by the vast audience. As for me, the most interesting time of the performance was between acts, for it was then I could talk to Lannie and hear his voice. I saw little of the actors, for I was busy feasting my eyes on my companion. I studied his eyes, his face, and his feelings as he drank in the scenes which were enacted to the strains of music. That night my dreams were fraught with visions of strong men, happy children and contented women.

“The next day dragged slowly enough, but at last, with happy delight, I welcomed the hour of Lannie’s coming. We dined, I played and sang, Lannie told me of all the things that had transpired since I had left the forest. At eleven o’clock Lannie arose to go, all too soon for me. I begged him to stay; I laid my hand on his arm and looking straight into his strong, clear face, said: ‘Lannie, oh, Lannie, don’t you know that I love you? Can’t you see that I am dying to be taken into your arms and receive that strong yet tender embrace which I know awaits the woman you love?’

“Poor Lannie! He was dumfounded; he was white as death; not a muscle moved, not a word from those firm set lips; just a tender, pleading look from the eyes which I loved so well.

“‘Lannie, speak to me,’ I cried. ‘Oh, dearest, give me some relief, say some kind word to me or I shall surely die.’ I threw myself into his arms. I pulled him down onto the divan and clung to him as though my life depended upon it. Oh, the emotion of the soul! I sometimes think that if the world knew what a woman must suffer at such times, it would not be so unkind. I was wild, and when Lannie freed his hands from my passionate clutch and tenderly lifted me from my knees to a position beside him, my joy knew no bounds. Oh, to think that he had once again taken me in his arms. Having gotten me to a position which seemed to please him, he put his dear face to mine and kissed me. The flight of time has never erased the memory of that thrill. Love, devotion, strength, happiness, all, all I say, went surging through me like an avalanche. ‘More, more, Lannie,’ I cried, and forgot all suffering as I, in my reclining position, could see the shadow of his great form as he bent over me again. I felt his burning lips on my brow, my cheek, my lips twitched in their feverish desire to be blessed with that lingering caress which is so soothing, yet so maddening. I think I must have fainted, for when I opened my eyes, Lannie was gone.

“Next day I received a note from him saying good-bye, and that he would not call again. A tigress is not easily held at bay. My blood was aroused; my soul was fired. The lava was molten in the volcano and must find its way through the crest, no matter how many souls perished in the flood of fire. I was wild, methodically wild, and so determined was I in my purpose that I wrote him a note saying:

“*Dear Lannie:*

“This leaves me sick abed; please come to me. Oh, Lannie, do; I need you so much.

“Your Own Ailene.’

“I went to my room, had my maid dress my hair carefully, then retired. Moments seemed as hours; hours as days. I was feverish and delirious. My maid insisted on calling a physician, but I would not hear to it. I gave orders to be left alone. The breeze fanned the lace curtains at the windows in a merry ripple; the soft mellow light of the setting sun shed a glow of golden hue throughout the room. My temples throbbed, my pulse fluttered, my eyes burned, as I bravely battled to kill time. Then the thought: What if he should not come? Cold sweat took the place of parching fever, and so I passed the early evening, going from one paroxysm to another. At last the bell rang, then that voice as I heard Lannie say, ‘Thank you,’ to the maid as she opened the door. My clean white gown was badly rumped, my well dressed hair was in a confusion of disorder from the feverish tossing of the day, but I forgot all that; I forgot my appearances, feelings, manners, everything, only that Lannie was with me again. As he bent over my bed with anxious questions, I was quite happy. Suddenly reaching out my arms, I clasped them around his neck. Oh, the holy emotions, the rage of my love knew no master. I clung to him; he tried to free himself, but no, no! I would rather have died than give him up. Great, strong Lannie of Herculean strength, one who could have held a horse, or felled an ox by a blow of his strong right arm; one who could withstand the ravages of pestilence and disease; one on whom weak men looked with that feeling of admiration born of awe; one whose strength, broad judgment, and kindly temperament made him easily the master of any and all situations. But with all his bravery and fortitude, all his battles, all his years of duration, he had never been called upon to wage war upon a woman whose soul was starving for the loving caress, which is so dear to a lonely heart. He was as wax in my hands, as I clutched him fiercely yet fondly. ‘Oh, Lannie, Lannie! say that you love me,’ I cried, all the time raining kisses on his dear face, while he acquiesced in mute silence. With his eyes dilated, his nostrils distended, his lips drawn and white, he fought the silent battle which led to his defeat. In his years of physical building he had never been called upon to withstand the onslaught which I now brought to bear upon him; he had never been drilled in the tactics necessary to repel the attacks of passion. I could see my victory coming; the light of his eyes told me that the world was fast melting away. Then suddenly he clasped me to his dear self, saying, ‘Oh, Ailene, what is it? Why can I not go away from you? Yes, little girl, I love you, I love you.’

“‘Kiss me, Lannie. There, dear; yes, that is right, Lannie! Hold me in your arms. Now, dearest, we are happy.’

“Then, while tears of joy dimmed my eyes, in the madness of passion, my future was molded. As the poisonous little reptile stings the lion, who is king of the forest, and causes him to writhe in death’s agony, so did the lecherous fangs of passion fasten themselves into poor Lannie’s pure, white soul, sending the venomous poison into a heretofore healthful system.

“If I could but live that hour over again. If I erred the sin was tempered with love.

“I know, in the way that sins are reckoned,

This thought is a sin of the deepest dye;

But, I know, too, if an angel beckoned,

Standing close by the throne on high,

And you a-down by the gates infernal,

Should open your loving arms and smile,

I would turn my back on things supernal,

To lie on your breast a little while,

To know for an hour you were mine completely.

Mine in body and soul, my own—

I would bear unending tortures sweetly,

With not a murmur and not a moan.”

—*Wilcox.*

“Lannie went away. Our parting was like the clinging vine being torn from the stone wall. In ten weeks my husband arrived home. Ten days later he was the victim of a railroad accident and I was left a widow. I waited and longed for the love of my life, to take his place beside me, but Lannie did not come. At last, in sheer desperation, I wrote him. This was his answer:

“*Dear Friend:*

“I am pained to write you as I shall, but you cannot expect me to come to you. You know my ideas of purity so well, that I am surprised to be asked to call. I do love you, always have, and shall continue to do so, but I fear the sweetness of our love has been blighted by the madness of folly. This little verse is very expressive, I think:

“A flower I feign would pluck today,

From the garden above her dust,

Not the pure, white lily of soulless sin,

Nor the blood-red rose of lust,

But the blossom of holy love.”

“I shall always be interested in your welfare and shall ever seek to do you good. Yours devotedly,

“Lannie.”

“The blow was cruel, but ‘As a man soweth, so shall he also reap.’ The same applies to women.

“The next important event of my life was the announcement of the insolvency of my husband’s estate. He had died leaving me penniless; even the holdings my father had placed with him as security for his loan were swept away into the chasm with the other unrecoverable assets.”

“But you live well.”

“Yes; that is all on account of Lannie. He seemed to know the condition of Mr. Penway’s finances, and it was a tract of land that Mr. Penway was forced to sell that Lannie bought. He built mills, homes for the men, a comfortable home for my parents on his land, and when the crash came, transferred them to it. Then he came to the city and arranged with an attorney that I should have an annuity and I must accept it, the conditions being that if I refused my mother and father would be asked to relinquish their home. He bought this house, he pays the bills and I dare not refuse until my parents have gone to their home above.”

“Not quite the same am I. My inner being

Reasons and knows that all is for the best.

Yet vague regrets stir always in my breast,

As my soul’s eyes turn sadly backward, seeing

The vanished self that evermore must be
This side of what we call eternity,
Not quite the same.”

3. A Story Of The Chicago Ghetto

PUNISHMENT.

“Nor custom, nor example, nor vast numbers
Of such as do offend, make less the sin;
For each particular crime a strict account
Will be exacted; and that comfort, which
The damn’d pretend, follows in misery,
Takes nothing from their torments; every one
Must suffer in himself the measure of his wickedness.”

—*Massinger*.

The wind howled, then carrying with it bits of paper, flurries of snow and great quantities of smoke and soot, it seemed to sink into the darkness with a dismal moan, which resembled the wailing of some great wild beast in search of its mate.

Shops with their dim lights, which looked like tiny sparks clinging to a black wall, lined the street; tin signs creaked and crashed like miniature thunder; small pieces of shutters flopped against the sides of the weather beaten houses, only to swing into the breeze with each fresh gust, there to quiver on their rusty hinges until a weird, screeching, grating sound denoted that age and elements were victors and one more piece of some antiquated structure had cast anchor and would soon be used to infuse warmth into the body of some poor, unfortunate dweller in the immediate vicinity. The uncertainty of the board walks in this locality caused the pedestrian, whose lot it was to venture here for the first time, to use great care in setting down and picking up his feet.

Half-clad children were there; some with small and precious packages of edibles clutched tightly in their begrimed and reddened hands, some laboring with a plank, which on account of the frozen slush that stuck to it, made it twice their weight; some fighting and sprawling in the filth of the narrow street for the possession of a two-pound lump of coal, that had been jostled from a wagon, while many of them clung tenaciously to the threadbare, misfit garments in which they were clad, with an apparent fear that the wind would use the tattered rags in whipping them to death. The flickering rays of the few and irregular gas lamps which the city had placed at long intervals, did not add cheer to the locality; they only made it more possible for a stranger to realize to a greater extent the squalor which existed there.

Such is a poorly drawn picture of the Ghetto of Chicago.

When compared to the commodious home on the lake front, with its coils of pipes conducting steam into every nook and corner, making even the cellar a place of comfort, the rich rugs, the substantial furnishing of oak and mahogany, the bright lights, the dear little mother, the happy children, the music, pictures and flowers, the well filled larder and comfortable clothing we all enjoy, it is inclined to cause one to forget to complain.

It was no pleasant task, but it was a duty. I have set out to tell the life story of twenty different women, and to get these stories from the lips of the principals, it behooves me to appear to them in person, even though at times I am compelled to freeze myself against all

humanity; and, again, so stirred with pity and aroused with sympathy, that I have frequently come away from hovels with just enough change in my pockets for car fare home.

This night, after searching for blocks and burning many matches in a vain endeavor to find the number which I had been given, I was led to the point of my investigation by an old man, who was on his way home from his day's begging and peddling. He was a kindly Hebrew. "Dis is de blace," said he, with an instinctive stretching out of the right hand, palm upward. "Bud, meester, I don't tink dey vill be ad home," he added, as I laid a half dollar in the still outstretched hand.

"Ah, oh vait! I vill see for you."

With that he shambled around the side of the tumble-down house, while I stamped my feet on the frozen cinders to keep up circulation, all the time thinking the old man was correct, for there was no sign of life anywhere about the house. Finally he came back.

"Yes, dey vas dere, but you see, meester, Saturday nights iss a bat time to found 'em home."

"Why?"

"Oh, it iss a goot time to find tings; so many grocery wagons on de streets und der vas some stores vat gif de peebles de rotten cabbages, und abbles und lots of vilted tings. You see, meester, we haf a hard time to eat."

The old man was an artist. His eyes shone with that everlasting thrift so characteristic of his race, and somehow I could not get away without handing him another quarter. Then, receiving his instructions as to getting into the house, I took up that part of my labor. I managed to keep myself separated from the piles of ashes and tin cans until I reached a rear door. The house was on the corner and was a basement affair, the first part being brick up to the level of the street, from that on up to the top it was frame. The house had been built before the street was filled in, so that when that operation took place one side and one end of the brick wall, being the parts of the house that were exposed to the street, had become submerged in a mixture of old bricks, pieces of bottles, mud and other rubbish that was from time to time scraped off the business portion of the street.

It was difficult to distinguish my hard and vigorous rapping from the violent rattle of the door. Finally I heard a sound as though something was being dragged across the floor, then the door was pulled half way open and I was asked to enter.

A tin lamp with a badly smoked chimney (or rather part of a chimney, for a large hole in the side represented nearly one-third of the surface) caused flickering, gloomy shadows to move about the room; a rough pine box with shelves served for a cupboard, in which there were a few battered tin pans, some broken handled knives and bent forks; a pile of straw in the corner, with some soiled remnants of blankets and quilts served for a bed. The warmth of the room was furnished by a badly broken cook stove; pieces of wood and coal mixed, laid on the grate, while in the oven and on the top of the stove were frozen chunks of mud with small pieces of coal all through them; wood covered with snow and ice, which had been put there to thaw out, so as to be usable; the formation of the sizzling steam as the water ran from this store of fuel did nothing to add a pleasant odor to that which arose from the conglomeration of filth which had been gathered from street and alley and was being roasted until it should give up bits of coal, which were as rare and precious to the half frozen inmates of this hole in the ground, as the bright shining metal is to the gold miner as he sees his piles of quartz crushed in the process of separation.

"Is this Mrs. Densmore?" I asked, as I shook the snow from my long ulster.

“No, this ain’t Mis Dinsmore,” growled the voice of the woman who stood in front of me.

“I am sorry,” said I, “for I wanted to find her very much.”

“Well, I guess you won’t find her.”

“Can you tell me where she is?”

“No, an’ if I could I wouldn’t. What do you want of her, anyway? Hain’t she had enough trouble, without some new thing bobbin’ up?”

“I fear you misunderstand me; I want to see her for her own good.”

“Yes, I s’pose so. I know what you want and you won’t git her, neither. She’s all I got, an’ she loves me, if I am pore and miserable.”

I expressed my surprise at her remarks and followed up with the assurance that I knew she was the object of my search, but I said:

“If you will tell me where I can get something to eat, I will first satisfy the inner man, then I want to have a long talk with you.”

“My Lord, man, you don’t spect to find nothin’ to eat here, do you? Fer if you do, sir, you’re much mistaken. In the first place this hain’t no hotel nor ‘caffey.’ Why, we hain’t had a square meal in three months; fact; not sence her monkey died.”

“Whose monkey? Who is ‘her’?”

“Oh, that’s it, eh? Well, I guess you know.”

“No, indeed, I don’t know what you mean, but if you will tell me where to find something fit for a man to take into his stomach, I will go and eat and bring you something.”

“Oh, will you? Well, jes’ go to the next corner south, turn to the left and you will find ‘Peggy Pete’s’ place; I guess you can git about anything you want.”

Following her directions, I soon found myself in a shop where every conceivable thing that a man could think of, was kept for sale. A stenciled bill of fare occupied a conspicuous place above the oilcloth covered lunch counter, telling in detail what was ready to serve; everything from tripe, all along, including such delicacies as pickled pig’s feet, fried liver, wienerwursts and winding up with the announcement that hot soup could be obtained at ten cents per gallon.

The proprietor was a one-eyed, one-legged man of fat and greasy proportions and when I ordered a pound of ham, three loaves of bread, a pound of butter, a dozen eggs, some coffee, and finished by calling for cream, he looked at me in a way that surely strained his one organ of vision.

“Goin’ to eat it here?” he asked, as he limped around selecting the articles as I ordered them.

“No, I will take them along.” At this information he shot a quick gleaming look at me, then hastily grabbing the packages off the counter, laid them back on the shelf safely out of my reach, as he said, “Anything else?”

“Yes, I want you to make me a gallon of soup, good oyster soup, and put lots of oysters in it.”

“Now look here, feller, you needn’t git smart,” said the robust and reddened merchant.

Then, as he pointed to the sign, he added: “That means shank soup. You can’t come no shenanigan on me; if you want oyster soup, yew can have it, but it will cost yer fifty cents per gal.”

“All right; I want it.”

A wait of twenty minutes and the soup was ready.

“Now, let me have some crackers, and how much do I owe you?” said I, as I slowly counted a few pieces of silver which I drew from my pocket.

“A dollar forty,” said the man, as he reached out for the money with one hand, while the other rested affectionately on the little pile of bundles as they lay beside the gallon apple can into which he had poured the soup.

“Come in again,” said he, as he saw me start to leave after putting six silver quarters into his hand and not waiting for change. Then a thought struck me.

“Have you any lamp chimneys?”

“Yes, good ones, too; fifteen, or two for a quarter.”

“Give me two,” said I.

“Guess your jist settin’ up housekeepin’, ain’t yer?” said Pete, as he hobbled ahead of me to open the door. Having noticed the landmarks, I found my way back without difficulty. If I lied when I told the woman that I had lunched at “Peggy Pete’s” it was my own lie and I will suffer for it.

My first move was to place one of the glass cylinders on the lamp. The improvement in the light added a cheeriness, which was partly in keeping with the steaming oyster soup. With the better light I was able to obtain a more distinct view of the woman.

Tall, dark and gaunt, her claw-like hands jerked nervously as she hastily unwrapped the packages. Her hair was black as a raven’s wing; her high forehead showed unmistakable signs of intelligence; the rest of her face, save the little piercing black eyes, which now and then flashed with joy and hunger, was horribly misshapen; a huge scar, as from a burn, covered one whole side of her face, while the other was so badly distorted by something of the same nature, which drew her mouth down and back so far on one side, that her molars were plainly visible. She was devoid of eyelashes and her brows only remained in spots. Yet, in spite of her surroundings, her uncouth language, her privations and want, a kindly light shone out of those eyes of ebony, as she said:

“Man, I believe you’re all right; anyways you know about what a hungry one wants. This seems like old times,” she added, as she unrolled the generous slices of ham.

No persuasion was needed to induce her to eat and I fully enjoyed the spectacle. The feast added much amiability to her versatile nature.

Finally she said: “Lord, I wisht the kid was here.”

“Who is the kid, tell me,” I said.

“Maybe I will, sometime, but tell me, what did you want of Mrs. Densmore?”

“I want you to tell me all about yourself.”

“And honor bright, now, it ain’t the kid ye want?”

“No, bless me, no; I don’t want anybody’s kid.”

“Well, you see, it was this way: I married young, married a man who was as handsome as he was mean. I was considered a beautiful girl and he thought he loved me, but he was so jealous that he was miserable. We lived happy for two years. I may as well say right here that I had a sister who was a beautiful blonde, and I being dark we were a great contrast. I loved

my sister so devotedly that when we discovered that sooner or later I would become a mother we asked her to come and live with us. She had a friend who called frequently, a perfect gentleman, but my husband grew so jealous and finally became so enraged that he drove him from the house. Then my sister left. The rest of the time, up to the birth of my child, I spent in tears. I was almost killed to think my husband would be so brutal and so ill treat my dear sister.

“At last the little fairy came, and with her came more suffering and misery for me. My husband flew into a vicious rage, for my baby was a blonde, as perfect as an angel. My husband was neither light nor dark. My sister’s friend was light. My husband charged me with infidelity, disowned the child, and one day in a fit of anger, he threw her from me hurling her against a red hot stove. The burn caused a scar on her little back, which she carries to this day.”

Great tears rolled down the scarred face and splashed on those long talon shaped fingers. Then, with a shiver, she continued:

“The Bible says something about, if one marries a man to stick to him. My people all tried to get me to leave him, but woman-like I left them and my baby. I proposed to go where no one knew us and begin life over. He said if I would leave the ‘brat,’ he would go.

“We came to Chicago, but the same bitter feeling still existed in him. The evil mind brooded and the heart became affected until our lives were the lives of beasts. He lost one position after another. He began to drink and beat me terribly. Oh, sir, I would have stood all that, if he had only loved me. I would have willingly starved for bread if my heart could have had one morsel on which it might be sustained.

“Finally we took a large house and began to take roomers. We did well for a while; then things began to go wrong and he suggested that we rent rooms to people for immoral purposes. My soul revolted against it, sir; indeed it did, but I consented! Oh, sir, many’s the time I’ve cried when I would see some sweet faced girl come to our house, for, sir, I could not help thinking that some day my baby would grow up and she might become the prey of some vulture.”

As she progressed with her narrative she dropped the uncouth language of the locality in which she lived. The hot soup and the light, together with the living over the better times, seemed to have taken her out of herself for the time being.

“My husband drifted from one bad crowd of associates to another. At last he was arrested and convicted of stealing and was sentenced to the penitentiary. The disgrace which this brought upon me was so terrible that it overwhelmed me. I lost all respect for everything and everybody. I removed from the semi-respectable district into the more notorious and better advertised portion of the city, and became the landlady of one of the most notorious resorts of the day. I made many friends among the class into which this life had thrown me. I developed into a woman of beauty. I had fine clothes and precious gems; money came easily and was spent with a lavish hand. Still I maintained a business presence of mind which gained for my house a reputation of good order. One of the inmates of my place was a beautiful blonde. She was proud and set herself up as being the most bewitching woman in Chicago. She had a dear friend, a very wealthy man, who called on her with great regularity. One night, in a jest, he put his arm around me and remarked that he was tired of blondes, anyway. All the fury that God allowed one woman to possess, arose in that blonde when he said that. She swore and tore and raved like one possessed of demons. After that she and I quarreled often. I would not have taken her lover. I did not like him, but I could not get her to understand. It all ended by

her forcing her friend to take a magnificent house next door to mine. It was lavishly furnished and I soon had a rival in business that made that quarter of Chicago more famous than ever.

“One day I met her admirer on the street, the first time I had ever talked with him since the gun was fired which had kept me in an incessant battle. He told me many things that she had said of me, which, in addition to the insults she had heretofore heaped upon me, made me boil.

“Eighteen years had passed since my heart had been transformed from the organ of anticipation to the soul of a young mother, and a woman can grow very hard in that time; she can nerve herself to do anything at anyone’s cost, in order to crush a rival. I forgot all the goodness I had ever known. I did not want this man myself, but I wanted to sting his innamorata so as to cause her the most intense pain and mortification. I proposed to him that if he would abandon this woman I would get him a nice young girl.

“‘Agreed,’ said he, ‘I will do that and it won’t be long till you’ll have the business of the block all your way again, for when I turn the ‘old girl’ down, the whole gang will quit her house.’

“With thoughts of revenge and the anticipation of an increased bank account, I began the search for a candidate for the position of mistress to my enemy’s friend. It did not take me long. I was on the train one day, when I met a young girl, beautiful, graceful, fresh, but sad. My practical eye soon sized up the situation and I made friends with her. She explained to me that she was coming to Chicago to seek a position. Then, slowly, but as surely as the snake coils itself around the helpless, bleating kid, so did I spin my web of Hell around her. ‘Now,’ I said, after I had made all arrangements, ‘I don’t want to know your real name, for I don’t like to lie if anyone should ask for you.’

“Ha, ha! Only think of it, sir! I was too good to lie!”

The wild glitter of the black eyes made me think of a snake, as the woman writhed and twisted and uttered her maniacal screeches.

“Well, I brought her in, as the saying goes. I took her to the dressmaker’s and in a week’s time she was ready to show. I notified the man. That night the scenes of revelry and debauchery outdid all former efforts. Men and women sang and danced, wine flowed and money was spent in the most reckless manner. The little girl easily outclassed all others. The wine soon caused her to cast aside her modesty, which was a part of her, and she was the merriest one of the lot. It was three o’clock when I assisted the man to undress her and put her into the best bed in the house, then I left for my own room. Night after night these scenes followed. Great was my glee when a carriage would come down the street and boldly drive up to the door. I was so delighted that I became bold and proceeded to return some of my now unpopular neighbor’s taunts and jeers. It was no uncommon thing for men to bring strange women to my place, so I was not surprised when, one evening about nine o’clock, I saw a veiled woman alight from a carriage and come to my door. The maid announced, ‘A lady to see you, madame.’ I went forward, and just as I pulled the door open a hand shot out from under the long cape and I felt a blinding, burning sensation spread over my face. I ran inside. Everything that was convenient was applied, and when the doctor came he told me it was acid. That is how I got the scars. I went to the hospital. The little girl came to see me daily. She spent as much time with me as the nurses would allow and in that way we became deeply attached to each other. I put her in charge of my affairs, and by her sweet ways she won the esteem and admiration of all the girls. We had little trouble in tracing the acid thrower. Next morning after it occurred my unfriendly neighbor was found dead in her room. A note pinned to her pillow told all. She had done me, then drank poison.

“I recovered; that is, so far as you can see, but I was too badly disfigured for publicity, so I left my entire place in the hands of the little girl and opened a home for women during confinement.

“Things ran on this way for two years. I had many bright but wayward girls in my care during that time. The little girl’s visits were less frequent to me and I had not seen her for months, when she came to me one day and told me she was to become a mother. I took her in, of course, and the former resort was rented. The time arrived for her expected illness. The baby was a bright girl. The little mother hung between life and death for days. She, in her delirium, roamed everywhere, called many by name, and spoke of places she had known. One day during her ravings I attempted to arrange her bed more comfortably, and in order to do so was compelled to turn her over. I discovered that her back and shoulders were covered with a rash. I thought a tepid bath would be just the thing, so I slipped her gown down and laid bare her back. I saw a scar. Believe me or not, mister, that acid felt cooling on my face compared to the pain which now fired me within and without. My daughter! I was able to be up and around the house when she regained her senses. She asked for her baby. I don’t know why, but I lied to her. I was not too good to lie this time.”

The gurgle which emitted from the woman’s throat at this juncture was a poor excuse for a laugh.

“Yes, I lied; I told her it had died; and to think it was then in the nursery with several others, and the jolliest, cunningest one of the lot!

“The little mother got well and strong and she got a good position and a man, a real man, fell heels over head in love with her, and now they are married. Now she has three sweet children.”

“Do you ever see your daughter?”

At this question the small black eyes snapped, and the haggard woman started.

“Don’t say that, mister, please; ’cause nobody knows.

“Yes, I see her twice a week. She has a beautiful home and for the sake of old times she has me come and clean her room twice a week. She says I do it so much better than her regular servants. Oh, mister, you don’t know how long and faithful I work in that room.”

“And the other little girl; her first baby?”

“Oh, the kid?”

“Yes.”

“Well, you see, I’m trying to raise her right, for now you see I know right from wrong. She is nearly ten. A year ago a drunken man came down here and brought a monkey. He mistreated it so that it bit him and broke away. It ran to the kid and nothing could get it to leave, so the man told her to keep it, and he took rather a fancy to her in his drunken way and took her up town and bought her an organ. From that on we lived real well, but during the first cold snap the fire went out one night and when we got up ‘Pranks’ was froze to death. Since then she has begged a ‘right smart.’”

“Does she ever see her mother?”

“Sometimes; not often, though, mister. I took her with me onct jes’ after the coal oil man’s little girl died and his wife give me all her clothes, ’cause she said I’d been there and helped so much. So I kind a dressed the little one up and took her over, and while I worked she played with her—I mean with the other children, and when I got ready to start home I like to

never got her to come. She cried most all night, so I don't take her no more, but she's gone over there now. I was over there today and done the cleaning and the 'lady' (that's what I always call her) said if I would send the little one over she would give her a suit or two of her older girl's underclothes. You see her girl's younger than the kid, but she's fatter, so I guess they'll fit. Lord, I wish she'd come, mister, for now I've told you all and you'll be goin' and it'll be awful lonesome here."

"I will wait until she comes, if you don't object."

"No, I will be glad, and I guess I'd better put this soup on and warm it, for she'll be cold and hungry."

A few moments and a rattle at the door announced the "kid's" coming. She was a sweet-faced child, but the beauty which would have been visible under favorable circumstances was marred by the pinched, drawn expression which always attends want. Without ado, or bashfulness, she unrolled a bundle, shouting, "Look Granny, two for you and two for me. The lady had some of her own that was too big and she said you could have 'em."

And there, under the rays of light shed from the tin lamp, I saw articles of silk underwear with a monogram on the waistband, the same which adorned an invitation to a party for one night next week, which I had received that morning and now carried in my pocket.

4. A Woman Of Thirty-Eight

“Look at his pretty face for just one minute!
 His braided frock and dainty buttoned shoes;
 His firm shut hand, the favorite plaything in it—
 Then tell me, mothers, was’t not hard to lose
 And miss him from my side—
 My little boy that died?”

“How many another boy, as dear and charming,
 His father’s hope, his mother’s one delight,
 Slips through strange sicknesses, all fear disarming,
 And lives a long, long life in parent’s sight!
 Mine was so short a pride!
 And then—my poor boy died.”

“Perhaps if he had lived,” she said, as she handed me a little tintype of a round-faced baby, whose laughing face was surrounded by ringlets of hair which looked as though they might have been silk.

“Perhaps,” she repeated in a dreamy way, “it might have been different.”

She was a woman of thirty-eight. She did not look it when I was first admitted to her apartments. She then appeared to be a very demure little housewife of ten years less. It was in the afternoon and she was suitably attired to receive callers, and had she not been, I am of the opinion that she would have bowed graciously to the inevitable, and received me just the same, for she was one of those matter-of-fact souls who do not allow formality to interfere with pleasure. Not that she would appear in a soiled dressing sacque, or an old skirt which bore evidence of the various strains, neither would she be guilty of coming to the front with ragged shoes on those dainty feet; but to make a long story short, she was too considerate of a man’s “fussy feeling” to keep him waiting an hour or more while she labored before the mirror trying to obliterate the traces of time and increase the beauty of form.

Ethel Manning had been and still was more comely than many women in more favorable circumstances. She was not so tall that she was striking, but the willowness of her figure seemed to add power to the face on which every thought was plainly visible before she allowed the red curve, commonly called mouth, to open in utterance. She spoke slowly, and as each word fell on one’s ear the evidence of the voice having been cultivated became more convincing. Her deep violet eyes were luminous and seemed to grow darker with the earnestness of her sentiment. Her chin was a trifle short, however one would at once decide that it was made that way to correspond with the nose, which, to one critically inclined, might seem to be abbreviated to a certain extent. All in all, she was one of those people who are all life and activity, yet possessed with the gift of discreet executive ability. If she had lacked anywhere in personal charms the deficit was supplied to one’s mind’s eye the moment one would glance at her hair. It was plentiful and seemed to cover her head with bright rippling waves which shimmered with every motion of the well poised head.

Bright colors might have been more becoming to her winsome nature, but she was clad in black, some soft, clinging material on the crepe de chene order. The neatness of the design, the fine texture, and the correctness of the fit only added to the grace with which she wore it.

“No doubt you would have been happier,” I said, as I handed the little tintype back to her.

“I don’t know,” she said sweetly; “perhaps somebody would have been purer today.”

“Well, Miss Manning, I am all attention and over anxious to hear your story.”

“All right, I will tell you all I know, and think that is enough,” she said, as she cast her eyes downward.

“I was raised a Christian. I taught a Sunday-school class from the time I was sixteen until I was just turning my eighteenth year. At this point in my life my parents changed their place of abode; the only regret I felt aside from my breaking up of a general friendship, was the fact that I was called upon to leave my sweetheart.

“David Strathmore was all to me that any young man can be to a girl who is in love. He had lived in the little village where I was born and raised for twelve years, during which time we had been school-mates, play-fellows, steadfast, youthful friends, and with the true congeniality of our young natures we became lovers early in life. He was constant, true and tender. I had learned to count upon his sagacity in all things. I was not alone in my admiration for him; that is to say, although I was the only girl who really loved him, but think that was because it was a foregone conclusion that marriage was to be the result of our constant association. Everybody who knew him admired him, and that meant nearly every man, woman and child in the locality, for his father was a grain merchant and David had grown up in his business there by coming in contact with almost every citizen.

“I had never known what trouble was, and when, on the evening before we were to leave my native town, David and I took a long stroll, I felt as though each step brought me nearer to the grave.

“‘But we will be true to each other,’ he said, as he held me in his arms pressing his warm lips to mine.

“‘Yes, David, and you will come for me soon, won’t you, dear?’

“‘Yes, Ethel, as soon as I have placed a sufficient sum in the bank to make us a home, I will come for my blue-eyed belle.’

“So with promises of loyal devotion, we parted.

“I really liked my new surroundings very much in our new home. The young people were very kind to me and I was soon on a firm footing with the best society of the town. It was a college town and I met a young man who was in his last year of school.

“His name was Edward Singleton, and I was more than delighted to know that he and my David were warm friends. That fact bound us closer together, and I did not feel that I was being disloyal to David when I accepted the attentions of his friend Singleton.

“He was very kind, a born aristocrat, and soon became devoted to me.

“David came to see me as often as possible. At such times Singleton could call with him, but always retired from the scene as soon as propriety would allow. He seemed to know that David and I were engaged. Once when it was time for David to call, he failed. Fearing he was ill I immediately wrote to him to ascertain the cause. His very cold letter informed me that he had come to our town with the intention of making his regular call, but had learned that I was

being attended in a very chivalrous manner by his old friend Singleton, and he did not wish to be classed as an interloper, etc.

“That almost killed me; that letter petrified my heart. It took months of indulgence and constant coaxing for Mr. Singleton to convince me that it was David’s plan to jilt me.

“‘You don’t know,’ he said, ‘but there is some one else he loves.’

“He besought me to bestow my love on him, but I was true to David. It was a fact that I had not answered his letter. I simply ignored him. I still accepted Mr. Singleton’s attentions and allowed him to condemn David, but it took more than that to cause me to rescind my promise.

“But the time came—it came, too, just as I had arrived at the conclusion that I could not live longer without David. Of course, I had Mr. Singleton at my feet making love to me all the time and I think that had much to do with my endurance in the matter, for when a woman loves a man and that man for any reason whatever goes out of her life, she can even appreciate the affection of a good loyal dog. It seems to fill an aching void, you know.

“As I said, the time came when the last cord of love which bound me to David was called upon to stand a severe strain. It happened in this way: There was a party given near our home. I was invited to attend and Mr. Singleton had insisted on calling for me, but there had happened to be one girl in the crowd who had made the remark that I surely must be proud to be able to take up all of Ned Singleton’s time.

“It stung me, and not caring to be the butt of remarks, I declined to go. I was at home that evening when about ten o’clock Mr. Singleton called. He apologized for the time and then went on to say smilingly that he could not resist the temptation of running in just to tell me that David was at the party with Emma Cline.

“The blood left my face. I could feel the pallor creeping over me, then with a flash and a horrid thought, I almost screamed:

“‘I don’t believe it.’

“I was now burning up.

“‘Come,’ said Singleton.

“I went, and there through the bright plate glass I could see that the bad thought of calling Singleton a liar was entirely wrong. David was enjoying himself with the other young people.

“The words of love that Mr. Singleton poured into my ear that night sounded like the song of the nightingale. It soothed my poor, troubled heart, and seemed to gather the torn and bleeding fragments together and they grew with a new hope. I did not know that I was yearning to be loved, but I was. My soul was fed to its full. I had never before fully enjoyed Singleton’s protestations of love, but now they were as healing balm, and I was glad to lay my face on his shoulder and weep as a child weeps for its lost mother, while his strong arms encircled my form. With each loving word he gave me a firm but gentle pressure, which only made the shivers and sobs more delightfully thrilling, and while his own great heart throbbed in muffled accord with mine he kissed away my tears, smoothed back the straggling locks of hair which clung to my feverish face and softened my feelings in such a way that when he tenderly took me in his arms for the last time that night I felt that there had been a death and a birth at one and the same time, and that I was the mother of two children and those two were each named Love, and that in the act of burying one in the darkness of the cavern of despair the other Love had shed its light and been born into my soul.

“From that on I wondered how a girl could be so foolish as to think she was in love with anyone until she had known at least more than one man.

“Those were happy days,” said the girl with a sigh, as she glanced at the little picture.

“And of course you and Mr. Singleton were married,” said I.

“I will tell you all, everything,” she said, then hastily rising, she walked across the room and gazed out of the window.

When she returned tears were glistening on her cheeks.

I waited for her to continue, which she did after a moment.

“Those were happy days; I mean the last days of Ned’s school, for we planned our future, at least my future. He graduated with highest honors and came to see me often during vacation. He had intended to settle in business somewhere before the next term of school commenced. He was just killing time for one summer, he said. He seemed to fully realize that his boyhood days were over and put in his time calling on me and writing to old college chums.

“We were much surprised when the management of the institution of learning which he had attended offered him a chair in the college. He had never aspired to become identified with the faculty, but the honor was so great for a young man that he was not long in allowing his friends to persuade him to accept.

“Our wedding day was set; it was to occur during the holiday season. Just about the time that Ned took his position I realized that our indiscretions in love had led to a state of affairs that would be exceedingly embarrassing. I told Ned my trouble and insisted on an immediate marriage. But he, of course, would not do that. Now that he was a Professor there must be some deliberation in the matter of a ceremony. A big wedding must be planned. Then I began to fail in health, and a physician, who had been an old classmate of Ned’s, advised that I go South. My mother wished to accompany me, but as my father’s health was poor I simply declared myself against going unless she remained with him. I told her I would rather stay at home and die than go away and live at the expense of my father’s comfort.

“I went alone; no power could help me from the predicament which had been wrought by folly.

“My babe was born in New Orleans. Ned came to see me as often as his duties would permit; I had the tenderest of care, and he always commented on my good appearance when he was with me; but I am sure if he could have seen me one hour after he had gone he would have thought differently.

“Of course, I begged him to marry me, and he faithfully promised to do so, but, he said, ‘We must first allow your dishonor to be forgotten.’”

“Think of that, will you—my dishonor!”

At this thought Ethel began to pace the floor, seeming to forget my presence.

“Ah,” she said, “if the baby had only lived!” Then, clutching the little square of tin, she pressed it to her lips with the fervor of a loving mother.

“If you had but lived,” she said, as her deep blue eyes gazed at the chubby face shown in the picture.

“He put me off from time to time.”

“One day I received a letter from my mother saying that she would visit me. Horrors! what was I to do. It was at this point that the good little French woman with whom I was making

my home came to my rescue. She was a mother. She had a child a year older than mine, but still at the breast. I told her of my predicament.

“‘Never mind, dear,’ said she, with a pat on the head, ‘tell your mere to come; I will save you.’”

“On the day my mother was to arrive she sent her child to her sister’s home in the country, and for three days my child received the nourishment which rightfully belonged to another child.

“I looked quite well and my mother insisted on my returning home with her, but I made the excuse that I was going to take a course and become a trained nurse. My argument prevailed.

“In sixty days my baby was at rest in a far off corner in one of the famous cemeteries of New Orleans, which is the object of so much interest to travelers from the fact that all the vaults are above the ground. Then for many reasons, I did go into a training school and eventually graduated as a professional nurse.

“I followed that occupation for eight years.”

“But what became of Professor Singleton?”

“Oh, he became Professor Doubleton,” said the girl, with a toss of her head, which denoted more sarcasm than words could imply.

“You mean—”

“Yes, I mean he was married three weeks after the baby died, while I was yet weeping my eyes red as I sat on that cold gray slab of stone each day.”

“Did you not protest?”

“Yes, I wrote, upbraiding him with all the power I had left, but sorrow for the loss of my baby had so softened me that my letter was more in the manner of an appeal than a command, and a man who is as heartless as he will quickly see a woman’s weak point and will not hesitate to grasp the opportunity of crushing her so completely that she loses all semblance of her former self.”

“He did answer me; rather a long letter, too, it was, but among other things he said that his position in life was so changed and that he would be able to rise higher if he would marry some one in his present station, and a lot of such rot. He closed by saying that ‘a woman with a past has no future.’

“At the end of eight years’ service as a nurse I was a mature woman of thirty. I had learned enough of the world to be able to take care of myself. The last patient for whom I cared in the capacity of nurse was a foreigner; he was a nobleman who had contracted the yellow fever which was raging in the South at that time.

“One accomplishment which I had picked up at odd times was playing the guitar. I could sing a little, and this patient, who was wealthy, seemed to improve so rapidly after he was able to listen and enjoy music that I would often sit and play and sing softly to him for hours. The music was not grand, but, as he said, ‘it was vera sweet.’

“As soon as he was able to leave the hospital he insisted that I take a vacation; purely out of gratitude he took me to New York, where he lavished many fine presents on me.

“At last, and to my sorrow, the time arrived when the prince must sail for his native land, and while I did not love him I was sorry to have him go. He had never been anything to me nor I to him, except on the lines of purest Platonicy. True, we had been much together. He was

kind and affectionate to me; he had held me in his arms, but beyond the admiration of pure loyal friendship he had never expressed himself. I think he detected my feelings as the time for his departure drew near, for I could tell that he was more attentive and considerate than ever before. One day he came to my room and found me crying, whereupon he took me gently in his arms and asked what caused my sorrow; as I sought to free myself that I might bathe my swollen eyes, this little picture dropped from my bosom where I had hastily thrust it. Out of chivalry he picked it up and handed it to me, glancing at it as he did so.

“‘Ah,’ said he, ‘a story, eh?’

“I indignantly replied that I had never lied to him, for I had never told him anything.

“‘No, no. I mean you have—you—know—perhaps—ah—a life story.’

“Then while he held me in his strong arms I told him all. I think I felt better after I had finished than I ever had since Ned Singleton had instilled a hope in my heart. It was only three hours until the boat would draw in the gang-plank and depart for sunny Italy.

“The prince came to say goodbye, as he held my hands in both his and looked into my eyes I saw the tenderness shine out of his face, then, without warning, without power to stop, I burst into tears.

“‘There, there, little girl,’ he said, ‘don’t cry, I won’t go and leave you; you shall go with me.’

“Glad to leave the country where I had known so much misery and pain I did not wait for a second invitation. In one hour my trunk was aboard the vessel, and I was strolling about the deck taking in the wonders which the huge ocean liner affords the untrained mind of the untraveled novice.

“The state room (our state room) was to me the most wonderful and interesting point on the boat, so cozy and secluded, to what I had anticipated, that I felt like lounging around all the time for the first day or two out.

“The prince was so pleased to have me play and sing to him that I found great pleasure in that pastime.

“I know you think it strange that a woman of the age that I had reached, should repeat my youthful indiscretions, but nevertheless I did so. The commonplace existence of man and mistress seemed very conducive to pleasure for we did enjoy each other’s society so much.

“We traveled from one point of interest to another in the foreign country; six years had been spent in sight seeing and pleasure seeking. I was then thirty-six. We were in Paris when the Chicago World’s Fair opened. The Prince had often told me that we must begin to surrender each other, for he was expected to marry someone of rank; I knew all the time that he was everything to me that it was possible for him to be. I well knew that I was drifting down the stream of time only to be cast onto the breakers of separation. We could see the great ghost of dissolution looming up higher and higher as one by one the days were torn from our calendar of pleasure. That one haunting thought was the only blot on our title of happiness. I was surrounded by all the luxuries of the land. The Prince lavished costly presents on me and seemed so happy when he could think of some little act of kindness that would especially please me; he was ever thoughtful and kind, he cared nothing for the company of other women.

“He came to our apartments one day. I was almost lost in thought and only looked up and smiled after he had taken my face between his soft hands and kissed me.

“And what is my little Senorita dreaming about now?” he asked.

“I was just thinking,” I said, “that my boy would have been almost a man now had he lived, and now that I must give you up soon I would have had some one to love me.”

“Oh, don’t worry, little girl,” (he always called me little girl), “I guess some one will love you.” He seemed to forget that I was growing old. I have forgotten to mention that my musical education had been taken up and I had learned to sing fairly well. I had been thinking how I might earn a living and when he came in I told him my quandary. He suggested that I take instruction in French dancing and come to America and join the profession.

“I hesitated, I could not bring myself to the point of considering such a proposition, while such joy as I now possessed lasted. Then the necessity of supporting myself again forced itself into my mind, and we laid the plans which later brought me to this city. I gained a fair knowledge of heel and toe dancing, and believing what my teacher said, I considered myself competent to fill an engagement in America. As a last farewell trip my Prince concluded to sail with me, we would take in the sights of the World’s Fair here and he would then say goodbye and leave me in my native land, older, wiser and as unhappy as when he found me, but it must all end. He had done all and more for me than he had promised. It was such a rarity for a man to keep his word with me that the novelty of the thing was entrancing.

“The Fair and all its glories were viewed and absorbed by us. Then came the sad bitter end of all; we must give up all pleasures. I shall never forget the last few days of his stay. We sat up late into the night, reviewing all our travels.

“Then goodbye—I lived days in blank despair. Each time I looked on some treasure he had given me, tears would flow so freely as to indicate no control of the flood gates which my eyes appeared to be.

“At last, more to attract my mind to other things, I made application for a position. I did not need to work yet, for the Prince had left me with a well filled purse. I had no trouble in getting an engagement. I rehearsed all day, performed in the evening, went to my room at night and looked at this poor little picture and cried myself to sleep. My boy would have been nineteen. I used to try and imagine what he would have been like as a full grown man.

“One night as I was doing my turn I saw in the audience Professor Singleton. He did not recognize me, and fool like I left the stage and cried. I arose the next day with that long reaching determination and desire to see him and talk with him. It was an easy matter to search the hotels. I found him. He failed to recognize me at first, but a few words from me quickly convinced him of my identity. I learned that his daughter, who was nearly seventeen, was attending a musical college here. Then I wanted to see her, but was careful not to let him know my wishes in that direction.

“I soon found her and managed to make her my friend. She was a sweet girl; I often closed my eyes and took her in my arms with brain afire and ears strained, almost expecting to hear her call me mamma.

“We grew fond of each other. She was filled with a desire to go on the stage.

“I dared not ask her about her home or her parents. One day she came to me asking me to go with her to the station to meet a friend, as she put it. That friend was her father. I would not have gone for worlds for I was not inclined to make anyone suffer. I am sure I did not expect to be a witness of what happened. I gave him credit for having more sense, but as she led me to meet him, instead of being a man and accepting his position by bowing to the circumstances, he turned his back on me, grabbed Ione by the arm, and hurried her into a carriage.

“He came to me the next day and his abuse was as shameful and disgraceful as it was uncalled for. He insisted that I had taken foul means to poison his child’s mind. I begged for pity. I tried to stay his scathing tongue; but, no. He would show me, a public woman, how to entice a pure young girl from her duty. Then he struck me, the brute. I might have forgiven all he said, for I suppose he was sincere in his belief, but he should not have been so cruel as to use personal violence. He went away and left me lying on the floor in agony. My mind was quickly made up. He prized this daughter so highly that he could lay me low in the dust and dirt. I, who should have been mother to his second child the same as I was to the first. My child by him had long ago been food for the worms. I resolved that his daughter should meet a fate worse than did his son. I would ruin her and then ask him to strike again, strike the kind of a blow that *he* deserved when I was young and fair like his much beloved daughter.

“The plan was long. I had many admirers, several of whom professed to love me; one in particular whom I think meant it. I sent for him and quickly told him that I had been injured, and that a certain young lady was the cause of it. He immediately grew gallant and suggested that he assist me in punishing my tormenter. That was what I wanted. He would do anything for me especially when there was a girl in the case. I told him how he could meet her. He followed my instructions, went to her and represented himself as a theatrical man who was just organizing a company.

“She took the bait easily and when she was more than half drunk he brought her to my home, where several members of the profession had gathered for a little dinner. She soon forgot all about the footlights, and when she was thoroughly under the influence we put her to bed. Her downfall was as complete as the plan that caused it. We kept her there for four days and to make my victory more pronounced I wired for her father. His curse on her was worse than the one that rested upon me. He cast her off and attempted to strike her but I was on the lookout. I put myself between him and her with a dagger. He was a coward.

“He went away. Ione became herself again but she was a pitiable object. She wanted so much to die. Just at this time the Prince came unexpectedly; he had concluded that he could not live without me and had come to take me, rank or no rank. He met Ione Singleton; her sadness caused him to ask questions. I told him all, and then with my arms around his neck asked him if he wished me to be happy.

“‘Of course I do, dearest, and came to try and make you so.’

“‘Then,’ said I, ‘marry Ione, and not me.’

“He objected, but I would not yield, and she is a princess now, having lavished upon her the same kind treatment which almost healed the wound so much like hers, that I had suffered.”

5. A Forecast

“Ah, that is the ship from over the sea,
That is bringing my lover back to me,
Bringing my lover so fond and true,
Who does not change like the wind like you.”

“Oh, my! Look at that. Money, a letter, and good news. Oh, jolly! Three aces, change of places, and affection of a dark man, and a diamond woman has good hearts for me, and great days! Of all things! Well, just look at that! The nine of diamonds, my wish! I am going to get my wish, so I am, 'cause the cards say so!”

I stood in the open door as the above monologue was being rendered, feeling a trifle guilty at the thought that I was even a friendly eavesdropper. I consoled myself, however, with the assurance that I did not intend to listen, and that I stood as I did all on account of the picture before me. Even the calloused heart of the writer was felt to swell, and his mind counted backward to a time when he often looked upon such sights as I now beheld.

The room was small, but very cozy and well furnished. The careless confusion with which the pillows and doilies were scattered around the room was so absolutely natural that it helped me to form an opinion of the occupant. And she was but little more than a child. There she sat tailor fashion on the soft, fur rug, shuffling and dealing a pack of cards, all the time prattling to herself as some card was turned over that would signify any important event in her life. Her sweet, youthful voice was in unison with the rings of light shining hair, while the rosebud mouth seemed to talk only to keep the big blue eyes from expressing the feelings of this care free heart.

When the merry chattering ceased I concluded it was absolutely necessary, for manner's sake if nothing more, to make my presence known. I did so by addressing the young lady.

“Ah, are you here? When did you come? Won't you sit down?”

The running fire of questions did not disturb me in the least, for before I could frame an answer to any of them she continued to talk.

“Now, that is right; take that big, soft chair and here, for goodness sake, let me take your hat. I was just telling my fortune, and don't you know, it just came out fine, not a bad card in it— isn't that jolly? And would you like to have your fortune told? No, I am not in that business and will not charge you, so there now, isn't that cheap enough?”

To which I replied that I should prefer to be entertained by her own conversation than to have any forecast added by reading the spots.

“Oh, well, I can't entertain.”

“Yes, but you can give me some news.”

“News?”

“Yes.”

“What subject can I enlighten you on?”

“Well, you are such an interesting little body I think I should like to know all about yourself.”

“All that I know is that I am in love, and, oh, yes, I am very, very rich, I guess, at least my lawyer says so.”

“I did not know you were a woman of wealth.”

“I know. You see no one knows that but my attorney and myself, and now that I have told you, you also know it, but you won’t tell it, will you?”

“Not if you wish it to remain a secret, but now that you have told me so much, will you tell me why you do not want the fact to become public?”

“Well, you see, as I said, I am in love, and I guess to tell you one part I must tell you all, but you are one of those horrid newspaper reporters. You will have that all printed.”

“No, not until you have given your permission.”

“Have some candy, and see, here is a present I just received yesterday. Isn’t he a little darling?”

Whereupon this little one hundred ten pound mite of humanity dropped a silk poodle from under a soft comforter with one hand while she passed a box of Allegrettis to me with the other. While I in turn patted the dog with one hand and at the same time relieved the box of a couple of pieces of the sweet-meats.

“Now,” said I, “let’s have a story.”

“Well, you see, it was this way. I was born in Janesville, Wisconsin. My father was a mechanic; he was poor, so very poor, that my mother’s folks, who were rich, got awfully mad when she married papa. They would not go to see her nor allow her to go to see them.

“Finally my father was injured by a falling building and for two years we were dependent on charity or, as some children used to say to me, we were county charges. I was so young then that I did not realize what it really meant. At last papa gave up his last breath of this life and the county buried him. Mamma’s rich relatives never came near during the trouble. After papa’s death, mamma obtained work in the home of a family in Milwaukee. She was housekeeper for an old gentleman of about sixty-five. His wife had died years before and his family now consisted of himself, two grown daughters and one son about twenty-two. I was then fourteen, and it was so arranged that I was to assist with the work and go to school. That all seemed very nice, for mamma and I could live together. All went well for a year, during which time my mother’s two brothers died and as they were the only remaining heirs to the large estate, their demise left my grandmother the only legal heir, as my grandfather had so provided in his will that my mother was entirely cut off. At the end of the first year in our Milwaukee position, Edmund Decker came home from college ready to do battle with the world. I felt the effects of the menial exactness of my position. I was but fifteen then, but he of twenty-three, fell in love with me and fearing his father’s objections, our meetings were secret. Oh, how I have watched and waited for him, and how the moments would fly as he held me in his arms and breathed words into my young ears that made the rich, warm blood of my youth leap and bound through my veins, while my lips and cheeks burned as though they were being bathed in fire. Alas, our anticipations were true; we were caught fairly in one of our little love-making scenes. It happened one afternoon when we supposed everyone was away. Edmund came to the house and we were having a tete-a-tete in a little alcove off the library. Nothing so bad about that, but one of the sisters who existed chiefly on suspicion, had hidden behind some heavy curtains, within three feet of us, and after hearing as much as she

liked she stepped out of her hiding place and found me contentedly curled up on Edmund's lap.

"It all ended by my running away and coming to Chicago. I did not let anyone know where I was. I succeeded in getting a position as a nurse girl in one of the best South Side homes. One day I was in the park with the babe who was entrusted to my care, and by sheer accident met Edmund. He explained to me that he was located in the city and had taken up the study of law. We arranged and met often after that; finally Edmund asked me to go out to the theater with him one evening and by a great effort I managed to get away from my duties long enough to accept. After the play Edmund suggested that we call on a friend of his who was preparing to leave the city that night and bid her goodbye. We called at the flat of his friend. She had changed her plans some and would not go until three o'clock the next morning. She was just preparing some lunch after her day of packing. We stayed to lunch and had wine. That was the first I had ever tasted. I never did return to the nursery. Edmund arranged that night to rent his friend's furnished apartment and she went away leaving us in charge of everything. Edmund said it was all right, for we were going to be married anyway just as soon as he was admitted to the bar, so that he did not have to depend upon his father for support.

"We lived very happy, my husband and I, for he was my husband and he used to call me his wee little wifey. It is no use for me to describe all the fun of the few short months we dwelt together there, but it all ended in this way:

"Edmund was so devoted and attached to me that in order to be with me constantly he neglected his studies in the law office. Sometimes he would not leave me for days, and the firm with whom he was studying notified his father of his dilatory conduct. His father was a shrewd man and was not long in guessing that there was a woman in the affair some place. He had Edmund watched, followed and located in the house, discovered that he was living under an assumed name with some woman but failed to determine who the woman was.

"One day I watched and waited for Edmund as usual. Night came, but no Edmund; all night I waited by the window for that form to appear. Daylight broke in all its freshness and glory only to find me still longing for the loving caress on which I had learned to exist. Long days and dreary nights dragged slowly enough. I could not imagine why Edmund did not return or at least write me. I listened for the familiar step along the hall, and when exhaustion compelled me to seek rest and sleep, I would dream of rivers of dirty, black water, and finally awoke from some horrible nightmare screaming for Edmund. I did not lose faith in him and I thank God for that. I knew some terrible calamity had befallen him, but silly little goose that I was, dared not tell anyone nor try to find him. Each day the sun rose with more spots on it, each night was darker than the preceding one; every hour brought more misery and desolation to my young heart and with nothing to console or encourage me, I almost cried my eyes out. I had no appetite, consequently at the end of three weeks I was a fit subject for a dime museum. Oh, I looked terrible! At that time I was confronted with a new trouble which absorbed some of my time and attention. When Edmund went away he left very little money in the house and I was suddenly brought face to face with the fact that I was almost penniless. My maid of all work left at this stage, and I was entirely alone in my misery.

"For three days and nights I had not a bite to eat, then a strange thing happened; a woman came to my house and asked me if I would rent her and her husband a room. She was a handsome, dignified, well dressed woman and offered to pay liberally and in advance. I hesitated, not because I thought of refusing but for the reason that I was faint and hungry and not strong enough to talk glibly; the woman mistook my slowness of reply. She thought I was afraid she would not pay, whereupon she took from her purse a roll of bills greater than I had

ever before seen, at the same time asking me how much I wanted for the front room. Visions of loaded tables, steaming dishes and dainty salads rushed past my eyes while the aroma of hot coffee seemed to fill my nostrils until my wasted frame shook with an excited hunger. I managed to state a price. She paid me and went to bring her trunks. Oh, at last, I could have something to eat; I could regale myself with food such as I had not tasted for days. I went to my room to dress thinking it best to go to a restaurant. Fortunately I had given my roomer a key and when she returned that night she found me where I had fallen, half dressed on the floor of my room, while clasped tightly in my hand were the crumpled bills she had given me. I battled long and hard with a fever, all the time calling for Edmund. At last the fever broke, leaving me a poor, emaciated wreck. The doctor told me I would be all right soon and added that I would soon be able to go to work. That sounded so strange to me who had learned to depend on someone else; time did bring my complete physical recovery, but I had added responsibilities. I owed a large doctor bill which came to me with the request to remit before I was fairly able to sit up all day. I could not pay it, and could not figure out how and when I could expect to pay. Almost daily the medical man's collector called. He harassed me so that I actually wished the doctor had allowed me to die. In spite of all this I grew strong; color came to my cheeks, my lips took on the rosy hue which had so many times drawn complimentary remarks from Edmund. My eyes shone with their old time brightness, and when people told me I was getting pretty, they said it in such an earnest way that I was inclined to believe them. My improved condition was due to the kindness of the woman who was rooming at my house; during my illness she assumed entire control of everything, and was to me all that a mother could be.

“At last the doctor's demands became unbearable. He called personally one day; his salute was genial and his manner kindly, but his remarks were burdened with sarcasm. He went even so far as to make improper advances to me, saying that I might liquidate my obligations to him by becoming his friend. I was so indignant that the words I used in telling him of his unprofessional conduct could not well be mistaken. He laughed at my rage and informed me that he knew of my affair with Edmund; also that the woman living in my house was a person of improper character and accused me of being aware of the fact. His argument was no good. I would not listen to his demands. After he had gone I went to the lady in the house and told her all that had passed. She acknowledged that she was not married to the man whose name she bore, and even half advised me to accept the doctor's offer. I was desperate and had it not been for the mean advantage he had taken I believe I would have consented to the plan, but the man had completely killed all feeling in my breast for him and it was now but a matter of business. I owed and must pay, and pay I would, but in cash. I resolved upon one thing, and that was that if my soul was to be disposed of in a mercenary manner it would go to some one who was willing to strike a bargain and not because I was under obligations to that one. I thought of one more plan and acted upon it as a last resort. I put an advertisement in the leading papers, asking Edmund to return to me or send me some word. I put it in as a blind advertisement. I received one reply and it stated that the party advertised for had gone to Europe and I need not expect to see him as he was through with me. Heavens! how my Scotch blood boiled. I branded the whole thing as a lie. Again the lady roomer helped me out. I counselled with her and she went to the law office where he had been studying and there she saw a letter from him postmarked Berlin. That settled it; my mind was now made up as to my next step. I began a methodical canvass of the houses of ill repute and when I found one that I thought was of the better class of places of that nature I applied for admission and was admitted. This occurred about four o'clock in the afternoon, one cold, dreary, cloudy day, not a fitting atmosphere for one to begin a new undertaking, but a fitting inducement to tempt one to rid one's self of the blues. I was to go to my new home at once and fired with the fever of excitement and firm determination to bury the past, I took my trunk and was assigned to my

room in the midst of public debauchery and iniquity. I must say that the surroundings were very inviting. I soon learned that I was not the only unfortunate girl in the world; many more who were there had even more sad experiences than I, owing to the fact, perhaps, that they had been in the world longer.

“As I did not have the proper clothes upon my arrival I was not asked to go to the parlor the first evening, so I spent the time visiting with the other members of this sinful family, during such time as they were not engaged.

“The next morning a modiste took my measure. At noon several flowing robes of silk were sent to my room for trial. I selected three beautiful ones, which were fitted to me. The landlady had them charged to her account and I was told to dress myself and appear in the parlor at eight that evening.

“I dressed; I appeared; my face burned, my fingers tingled and I know my eyes stared. It was a beautifully furnished home, music, birds, flowers, gayety and mirth, answered the clink of the wine glasses, as long as the parlor was the scene of the festivities, but I knew that burning, scalding tears were the sequels to all this as soon as the participants were allowed to retire to their rooms alone. The shudders which convulsed me were noticed by others of the house and many a kind touch and look was given me. Fate seemed to be my Saviour that night, for it was nearly midnight and for some reason none of the many male visitors seemed inclined to cultivate my acquaintance.

“I had just received permission to go to my room when the bell rang. And, oh Gods! I was told to wait. I waited and as the visitors were ushered into the reception room I heard a voice that chilled my flesh, and caused my blood to stand still; it was the voice of one I knew well. Then a vivid, wild thought came to me. Had Edmund found me at last? Thank Heaven, he was in time to save me!

“It was with hope wandering and blind stupidity that I managed to answer the call and go forward to meet the newcomers. Those ten steps covered ten years in flight of time; what could I tell him? What would he say? How could I look him in the face? While all these mental problems were racing through my brain, I was drawing nearer to the little group of men.

“‘Gentlemen, this is Miss Adele.’ (That was the name I had chosen.)

“The announcement aroused me from my trance-like condition and I raised my eyes and looked squarely in the face of Edmund’s father. The other men I did not know. Edmund’s father stared, started and then with a gasp cried, ‘My God, girl! Child, what are you doing here?’

“‘I am here to make a living,’ I said frankly.

“Without excuse or apology to his friends he drew me to a seat. I almost fainted at the thought of meeting him and being chosen by him in such a place; my very soul revolted.”

“But where was Edmund?”

“Ah, there you are. You see when I heard the voice I knew it was that of his father. I, grasping at a forlorn hope, naturally supposed that Edmund had come back, gained his father’s consent to marry me, and they had started out to find me. It was very natural to think they would be successful for a girl in that position is always expecting the worst to happen, or rather to be exposed to some one whom they do not wish to see.”

“And Edmund was not in the party at all?”

“No. His father was a man of slightly sporty inclinations, and he with his party of friends were simply out for a night and happened to come to the place where I was. But the turn of affairs seemed to change his mind a bit, for he questioned me so closely as to my whereabouts in the past, and as to how long I had been in that house, that I became suspicious, but I told him all, everything truthfully that had happened to me since I had left his home; but one thing I sought to keep secret and that was the name of the man with whom I had lived. But it seemed impossible for one so unused to intrigue to keep a secret. I had a chain (this chain) around my neck, and on the chain this locket, and as I leaned my head forward it dangled in the air and unknown to me he took the locket and opened it and this picture, Edmund’s picture, was in it.

“At first he raved and swore, ‘to think that I, a common woman of the town, should dare to wear his son’s picture in such a place as that!’ I don’t know how I held myself together, but I did, and gently reminded him that he should not object to his son’s picture being worn in a place which he himself frequented.

“He gradually became reasonable and we talked matters over in general, he finally drawing out of me that it was his son whom I had looked upon as my husband. He satisfied himself as to my purity, otherwise, then made a confession. It was he who had caused Edmund to be spirited away to Europe. Edmund had endeavored to correspond with me, directing his letters to the name that we were making temporary use of, but his father had intercepted them, thinking that the boy had fallen into the hands of some very bad woman who would eventually ruin his life. It was he, of course, who answered my advertisement, but to make amends for his mistakes, he made me the proposition that I should have a good home, go to school, take music, and in fact qualify myself in every possible way, during the two years following, all at his expense. At the end of the two years he promised that if I had been good and true Edmund should come back from Europe and marry me. And the two years will be up in just three weeks, and I am so happy.”

“You were telling your fortune when I came in; will you tell me what you wished?”

“Oh, sure! I wished Edmund would come back before the three weeks are up.”

“You said you were rich.”

“Yes, you see, Grandma died and left me all the money my mother has been kept out of all this time, but don’t tell that, will you? For I want to know for sure that Edmund loves me for just me.”

As the writer arose to leave, a messenger boy brought in a strange looking envelope and after being convinced that he was talking to Leonore Marks, he handed the envelope to her, saying, “Cablegram for you.”

It read, “Home in ten days. Be ready to be married.

Edmund.”

“Now, you see, the cards were right. I shall get my wish.”

As the writer left Miss Marks, in her joyous delight, was administering such caresses to the silk poodle that he half wished he too were a little white dog.

6. A Daughter Of Proud Kentucky

“One sin, I know, another doth provoke;
Murder’s as near to lust, as flame to smoke.”

In response to a vigorous rap, I was admitted to a scantily furnished but clean apartment, the warmth and glow of which made a pleasant contrast to the drizzling rain, the rows of flickering gas lamps, and the sloppy streets that I had been plodding through for several moments.

Leaving my hat and coat in the narrow hall, I followed the directions of the little girl who opened the door, and soon found myself in the parlor which contained furniture that was old, badly matched and much worn; pictures—well, two portraits, and a few little cards on which some enterprising merchant had printed his name, all of which failed to add greatly to the attractiveness of the room. My scrutiny was not to be confined to the handiwork of man, however, for by the time I had taken a complete inventory of the room, my attention was attracted to an object of nature. I heard a soft voice say, “Good evening, sir.” The full tone and sweet southern accent caused me to turn, and as I did so my mind was filled with anticipation.

Before me stood a girlish figure. She might have been twenty-five, although she did not look it; there was that in the deep gray eyes which told of trouble rather than the joy of youth. Her soft hair was rolled loosely back from the low brow, leaving only a little curl or two above her temples. Her neat fitting house dress of princess design did little to add a matronly air. Mature youthfulness sweetened by cares, is what flashed through my mind as I took the slender white hand which she extended with the dignity of a court lady.

“I am Mr. —,” I said.

“Yes, I have been expecting you,” she said, as she pointed to a wobbly rocker, at the same time gliding across the room to a little divan.

“And are you ready to proceed?” I asked, in the cold mechanical way that had been supplied by nature and developed by cultivation.

“I suppose so, sir, but what am I to tell you first?”

“Tell me where you were born and grew up, and so on, right through to the present time.”

“Well, I was born in Kentucky, and there grew to—to—yes, I might say to womanhood, although I was young when I left there. I was an only child; my father was a wealthy stockman and during my childhood want was an unknown word to me. My earliest recollections were of my old black mammy, who used to croon to me, in a voice that was always soothing. I was taught to believe that the world was at my command; a mother’s care I never knew, for my advent into this world cost her her life. Ah, sir, I have often longed for a real mother, one to whom I could go and tell all my little secrets, one who could feel the love for me which my nature seems to crave.

“My father was a most indulgent parent, but I fear that in his great goodness he failed to conceive the emotions of a girl’s heart.

“When I was fifteen I met a young man from the North. It was quite an accidental meeting, but it was not an accident that I loved him, nor that he worshiped me. He came to our plantation to buy some horses for his stables in Chicago; he was honorable enough to ask my

father for my hand in marriage, whereupon my father flew into a rage, told him that his business there was buying horses and not putting foolish notions into a young girl's head. The scene was a stormy one and closed by the young man being ordered to leave. He left that night and took me with him. We crossed the river into Indiana and tried to get married, but on account of my extreme youthful appearance we were unable to obtain the license. We traveled on to Cincinnati, failure again confronted us. Just as we were in the act of boarding a train for Chicago an officer arrested us. I was taken back to my home, while my lover was placed in jail on the charge of abduction. A taste of the things in the outer world only made the fancies in my childish brain grow. I soon found myself planning how I could leave my father's home and secure freedom for the only man I loved. I begged and pleaded with my father, but to no avail; finally he informed me that he would horsewhip me and lock me up if I ever mentioned the matter again. This was too much; all the pride within me bounded to the surface, my hot Southern blood tingled, my cheeks flamed in anger. It was then that I missed my mother more than any time in my life, the thought of her put a new idea into my disturbed brain. I would go to the spot where she was laid to rest, there to find relief in the desolation of the grave.

"It seems as but yesterday that I strolled down the lane, across the meadow, and entered the little enclosure that had been set apart for a final resting place for the members of our little family, the ripened blue grass waved gently at the bidding of the gentle breeze, the full, warm October sun shed its beautiful rays of light upon the great spreading trees, the birds seemed to be chanting their last song of summer, the red and brown leaves lay scattered on the hillside, making a scene of gorgeous splendor in the bright sunlight. Drooping flowers showed signs of the first frost, chattering squirrels scurrying hither and thither, gathering the winter's store of food, added to the fullness of nature.

"As I followed the little unused path, keeping before me all the time the tall, white shaft, I seemed to leave the world in which I had been living, the choking sensation gave way, my eyes no longer burned, the great relief I sought seemed granted, and instead of gasping for breath and feeling the hot scalding tears running down my cheeks, I knelt down on my mother's grave and gave way to the sobs that came, it seemed to me, like great waves of comfort, and felt tears that were cool and refreshing. I remained there for hours, never looking up and not till a well known fluttering sound reached my ear, did I think of leaving. The noise was made by a flock of blackbirds that had come to seek shelter for the night. As I passed down the sloping hillside where the long shadows were fast fading into the twilight, the first feeling of loneliness crept over me but I did not want to leave. I loved the place. It seemed the most sacred place on earth to me.

"That night as I rolled and tossed in my bed, I fully realized that I had been wrong. Yes—it was wrong for me to disobey my father and I had aggravated him until he was cross. It was all my fault that he had threatened me. I had no business to annoy him and would go now and ask his forgiveness. I stole out of my room feeling like a guilty culprit. I can see myself now as I crept through the long hall of our old Southern home, closer and closer to his door, until at last I could hear his deep, heavy breathing. I pushed the door open, then at the critical moment I became frightened lest I should waken him, still I was firm in my purpose. There in the darkness of his room I saw the hillside, saw the birds and heard the soft rustling of the leaves. Oh, how my heart went out to poor papa, alone—alone—in the world, with only an ungrateful, disobedient daughter as his nearest of kin. I am sure that the time spent at the grave created a communion of souls. I could almost see my mother as she had been pictured to me, and the vision drew me nearer to papa. One step more and I was inside the room, cautiously I crept to the bedside, then quietly kneeling on the carpet, I buried my face in the pillow beside his head, then for the first time that I could remember I put my arms around his

neck and kissed him. His first words brought a flood of tears to my eyes and caused such a lump to rise in my throat that I could not say a word. I knew now that he misunderstood me, for with a muttered curse he commanded me to go back to my room.

“But please, papa, hear me,’ I begged.

“No, I don’t want any more foolish nonsense out of you,’ he said.

“Nothing could induce him to hear me, and I was compelled to leave without making him understand that it was forgiveness and just a word of love that my young heart yearned for, instead of his permission to see my lover.

“Back to the loneliness of my own room I went. As I felt my way along the dark hall I wished that I might die. Ah, if I could only have heard one kind word from him I would—well, I am sure that you would not have had this story for your book, but I suppose,” said the girl with a dreamy sigh, “that the foundation of your work is cemented together with the mortar made from mistakes.”

“Yes, I quite agree with you, that if there were no sorrow in this world this book never would have been written.”

“Well, back to the story,” she said, with a toss of her head, as though she would have it done with.

“Yes, go on.”

“I returned to bed but not to sleep; I tossed about in frantic efforts to forget the burning wound I felt. When daylight came I arose and dressed myself without calling my maid. My eyes were so red and swollen that I could not go down to breakfast at the usual hour and when I did go I asked for my father.

“Law sakes alive, honey, you fadah done lef de place mos’ an houah ago,’ said my old black mammy.

“Did he leave any word for me?’ I asked.

“No, Mis’ Abbie, he jes went and nevah said nothin’.’

“My heart fell within me. I had intended to try again to explain to him my resolutions of the day before. Later in the day I learned that my father had gone on a ten days’ trip. Oh, how desolate I felt, with no one but the colored servants about. I am not surprised now that I was easily persuaded to leave my home, and it came about in this way: On the evening of the day of my father’s departure, a man came to our house on business; he was not an entire stranger for he had been there many times before although I had seen but little of him. He was a noted horseman from California and his business, like my lover’s, was to purchase horses. He was received into our house and all the generous hospitality of a Kentucky home was extended to him, and I, being the only member of the family at home, took upon myself the duty of entertaining our guest. He was a man of fifty and his gray hairs added much to his polite dignity. He was a much traveled man and his stories of adventure were so thrilling and interesting that he quickly had me wrapped in attention. The evening being warm, we sat on the broad gallery (better known as a veranda in the North) and after asking my permission, he lit a cigar and as he leisurely puffed and blew out clouds of smoke, he explained to me how he had been all over the world, and where he lived. In doing so he painted such pictures of the beauties of nature that I lost interest in the little world that I had always known. A new desire was created within me and then a new thought came to me. I wondered if this kind old gentleman had any daughters of his own, and if he had I wanted to hear about them; that desire was followed with the thought that it would be nice if my father were like him. I

finally asked him if he had a daughter, but he seemed reticent as to her. At last with a struggle born of desperation I asked him if his daughter loved him and should come to him for advice would he give it.

“Bless your heart, yes, any father would do that,” said he.

“I did not think he could hear me crying softly, and I made no reply for some moments, that my quivering voice might not be the talisman of betrayal. At last I ventured to say, ‘It would be so nice if such were really the case.’

“At that he said, ‘Come here, little girl, and tell me what the trouble is.’

“With that great desire to unload my heart, I could not resist. I needed but one invitation. I told him all. When I had finished he said, ‘I know your father very, very well, and do not think he will consent, but I will help you.’

“‘Oh! you will,’ I exclaimed, ‘I knew you would; you are so good, so kind;’ and I fell upon my knees in front of him.

“The plans were quickly made. I was to leave the house the next day, go to the railway station which was but a mile distant, buy a ticket and go to Indianapolis, wait until my benefactor could go to Cincinnati to secure the release of my lover, then they would join me and we would be married. It all carried nicely. After we were married the question arose as to how to keep out of reach of my father’s wrath. That was soon settled by our accepting an invitation to visit our champion in San Francisco. My father made no attempt to follow me so far as I know.

“We set up housekeeping in the West. My husband was devoted to me and we could never thank our ‘good Samaritan,’ as we called him, enough for helping us. As you well know, a Southern bud soon bursts into a full grown flower, consequently I was not long in developing into a full fledged woman, and in spite of my tender years, I felt the full importance that devolved upon me, when, after twelve months of wedded life, a baby girl came to brighten our home.

“My husband had not entered into business of any kind, he having plenty of money, and as he said, cared to do nothing but love his ‘little girl.’ Happy? I was as happy as an angel and sometimes think that the memory of those days keeps me alive now; again, the thought almost crushes me. I shall never forget the first cloud that hovered over my sunlit career of wifehood and motherhood. It was in the evening of one of the days of the great race meet. I was waiting for my husband to come home, sitting in the window as was my custom. It was after nightfall, but many of the pleasure seekers of the day had extended the revelry into twilight sport. Handsome equipages, loaded with gaily dressed women and well groomed men, rolled by one after another. Some were singing, while some more fortunate carried buglers and other musicians. I had not attended the races, on account of not wishing to leave the baby, but Harry, my husband, had gone. We had been invited by our old friend and while Harry gently protested that he would not go a step without me, he finally consented after considerable persuasion on my part. At nine o’clock in the evening my weary vigil was rewarded. A four-in-hand drawing a handsome tally-ho drew rein in front of our home. I could not see any of the faces and the first intimation I had of Harry’s being in the crowd was a remark some one addressed to him, saying, ‘It’s all dark, Hal, old man, nobody at home, don’t get out.’

“Then I heard him say, ‘Oh yes, I know she is here waiting for me, and I must leave you.’

“Then a jangle of maudlin voices, one saying one thing and one another, but among the many things that were said were, ‘Goodnight, sweetheart,’ and ‘Here, kiss me once more before you leave.’ ‘Be sure and come up tomorrow.’

“I could stand no more; I moved from my position to a point where I could touch the button which turned on the electric lights, then I heard this:

“‘Hist, sh—be still,’ and then in the brave and manly tones, I heard him thank his host. The host asked to be remembered to me, and to assure me that he was sorry I could not be with them, etc.,—then respectable, cheery good nights, were the parting salutes.

“Harry came into the house and as was his custom, took me in his arms. I discovered that he had been drinking, but uttered no word of reproach, neither did he offer to explain. Next day after he had gone down town, I sent a note to our old friend which he answered in person. I begged him not to take Harry on any more escapades. He laughingly answered that a man must see a little of the world; I did not like his manner, and frankly asked him to tell me all about the affair.

“‘There’s nothing to tell,’ said he, ‘except that as you know, Harry is a fine fellow and a good entertainer, and I needed him to help to take care of that jolly little party and I must say that he was a success. Ah, yes—Harry is a prime favorite, and you, my little girl, should be proud to know that since he has been so unfortunate as to lose every dollar of his own that he can yet be of such service to me that I can afford to pay him a princely sum for his good qualities.’

“‘Lost every dollar! why, what do you mean Mr. —?’

“‘I mean that unfortunate speculation has caused your husband to—to—Ah, well never mind, little girl, I did not come here to tell you bad news, but, rather to comfort and assist you. Come, come, cheer up,’ he said, as he laid his hand on my bowed head in a kindly manner.

“‘But I implore you to tell all. All, everything!’

“‘Yes, let the worst be known. It is I who can help him most, I, his wife who has shared his comforts during days of plenty who must now cling to him in his penniless misery.’

“‘Oh, come now, don’t take it so hard, it is not so bad as that; he can make a very comfortable living for you and the baby.’

“‘But how? He has no money,—no business,—no position.’

“‘Have I not just told you that as an entertainer he was valuable? I can use him to good advantage. You see, little girl, I travel much, have many horses, and consequently many followers. During racing season I sometimes have a full carload of ladies and gentlemen going where I go and backing my horses, and we entertain the hosts who gather at the race tracks.’

“‘Oh, you are so kind, sir; and we can travel and help you,’ I said eagerly.

“‘Well, yes, or rather Harry can, but you see, little girl, you must not want to go.’

“‘Why not, why cannot I go too? I will do all I can to help; I want to go with Harry, and I know he will want me.’

“‘Yes, all that is true, but you can see, my dear girl, the people we have are—well—at any rate you might not like them.’

“‘But I will try, I will do all I can to make them like me.’

“‘Yes, I know,—but the truth of the matter is they are not fit for you to associate with.’

“Not fit—why, what do you mean? Not fit companions for me and yet my husband is to become your hireling and mingle with them.’

“My blood boiled, my heart seemed to leap to my throat, while my temples throbbed until my head was in a whirl.

“Oh, but you see that is another matter,’ said my caller. ‘With your husband going it is simply a business proposition, while with you, to say the least, it would ruin your reputation.’

“And my husband’s name, how about that? Is that not to be considered? Am I to sit at home idle and permit my husband to join a party of men and women whose companionship is of such a nature as would ruin a decent woman who happened to be in their company? No! no, Mr. —, if the company is unfit for me, it is not good enough for him.’

“But you must live.’

“Yes, but not on the price of my husband’s honor.’

“Oh, my! what a fine little lady you are, but come now, think it over a while and I will see you later, and here, for fear you will need something, take this,’ and he pushed a roll of bills into my hand, then added, as he saw the look of disgust on my face, ‘it is all right, I owe it to Harry and you are entitled to it.’

“I took the money and he departed.

“That night Harry did not come home, though I watched and waited until nearly daylight. When morning came, I sent a note to Mr. —, asking for Harry. He replied that he would see me later in the day, and if Harry was not home by the time he called, he would tell me where he had gone.

“Gone—what did all this mean? Oh, the agony of that day. When night came I was years older. As I then thought the climax of my sorrows was reached. In the evening our old friend called to inform me that Harry had recently been drinking and gambling, and associating with improper persons until not only was all his money gone, but his good name as well; in fact, he had incriminated himself by obtaining money by false representations, and had left for parts unknown.

“But that need not have bothered him, for the man he had defrauded was our old friend himself, and he would not have punished him, for my sake if for no other reason,’ so he told me by way of explanation.

“Oh, what was I to do? Left almost destitute and disgraced by my baby’s father. Our friend kindly offered to assist me, but how could I accept it? for I knew no way by which I could repay him. Well, finally he left me, after doing all he could to comfort me while I wept, using the kindest words and softest tones. He averred no harm could come to me from any source, and as a parting salute kissed my tear stained cheek and said, ‘rather than have you suffer, little girl, I will personally supply all your wants.’

“The long hours dragged on until gray streaks of dawn were visible breaking in the East before my weary eyes closed in slumber. I was awakened early by the maid, only to be notified that I had a caller who insisted on seeing me at once.

“I dressed hurriedly and sallied forth to greet my caller, who proved to be a neighbor lady. She was one of those people who at times suddenly become deeply interested in other people’s affairs. She had just run in to tell me that it was something terrible the way I was carryin’ on.”

“‘Just think,’ she said, ‘your husband gone and left you, and all because of that old dog who comes here every night! Oh, I am sorry for you, but I want you to know that you are not the first woman who has been deserted by her husband on account of seeing too much of that “licentious old cur.”’”

“I was too dumfounded to answer her, and only told her that I did not understand, consequently did not choose to enter into a lengthy discussion of the matter. I closed the short but stormy interview by asking to be excused and was highly gratified by seeing my early and impertinent caller pass out with her nose high in the air.

“My time was absorbed during the morning hours trying to determine the cause of her violent abuse of our friend. My mind was relieved about the luncheon hour, when I had another caller; this one also a neighbor and a woman of refinement. She came to console me in my trouble, saying among other things, that it was an event which had been looked for as the inevitable result, for many weeks. I was not overjoyed at the particular kind of consolation which she dealt out, but my spirit was subdued to some extent and my anger of the early morning somewhat mollified. I was curious to know in just what position I was.

“My second caller soon made me acquainted with facts that surprised me. She told me that the uncouth old lady who had called first was the mother of a poor unfortunate, who had at one time possessed a charming figure and a pretty face; their former residence had been in the slums of the city. One day our friend saw her and took a fancy to her, induced her to accompany him in a round of debauchery, and while yet under the influence of the drunken infatuation, he had purchased the beautiful home near by and moved the girl and her mother into it; but the flower soon faded and the attraction which the poor young thing had held for him was soon gone. He settled with them in a financial way that afforded the means to maintain the well located home. The fact that he paid no further attention to them angered the old lady and she made use of every opportunity to abuse and decry him.

“That same evening I was favored with another call from the gentleman himself; he had heard nothing from Harry, and could give me no information as to his whereabouts. I asked him for advice and he suggested that I wait a reasonable time for news from Harry, and if I did not hear from him, he thought it would be well for me to start out to find him. Next day the agent who had charge of the house in which we lived, called.

“‘I came,’ he said, ‘to collect the rent.’

“‘I was not aware that we owed any rent,’ was my response.

“‘Oh, yes, two months.’

“‘But I was under the impression that my husband leased the premises for a year.’

“‘So he did, but did not pay the rent for a year.’

“‘In my ignorance of city affairs I never dreamed but that city homes were rented the same as farms. Then, with a happy thought, I said, ‘I will pay you, how much is it?’

“‘Well, the fact is, if you want the house it will be \$150 per month.’

“‘But that is more than we were to pay.’

“‘Yes, I know, but I have been compelled to raise the rent.’

“‘Why?’ then thinking of the lease I said, ‘does not the contract hold good?’

“‘No, you see you have forfeited your rights in the lease by a failure to pay according to the terms stipulated in it.’

“But why do you ask double?”

“I have reasons which I would rather not make known to you.”

“I suppose it is because my husband is away, and you think you are in a position to take advantage of me,” I said warmly.

“No, it is not that, but if you insist on knowing, I will tell you.”

“Proceed.”

“I am sorry, but it is because this is an irreproachable neighborhood, and some of the residents of this locality object to your living here any longer, and as I have many clients in this immediate vicinity, it behooves me to heed their demands.”

“I was almost too wild to speak but finally found my mind and tongue in a co-operative state long enough to ask him the reason why I was ostracised by the neighbors.

“Because you have Mr. — call here, and it is a well known fact that he was the cause of your husband’s leaving you.”

“My head swam, my throat ached as I forced back the sobs which almost choked me. My pride was not to be crushed in this manner, so I went to my room and produced the roll of bills which this man, whose very touch seemed poison to a woman’s name, had given me; for the first time I counted the money, just three hundred dollars, how gladly and proudly I handed it to the agent, never thinking where my next dollar was coming from, and he, crafty man that he was, gave me two receipts, one for the two months we owed him, at seventy-five dollars per month, the other for one hundred and fifty dollars in advance. Within two hours after he left the house I received a notice that my rent had been raised to three hundred dollars per month, and in addition he must ask me to give him a secured lease. What to do I did not know. I sat down and wrote to my father. I waited five days for the answer which I hoped would contain an enclosure, during which time I remained indoors not speaking to a person except my maid. I fed my soul on the anticipation that I should be able to live down the unearned shame which had fallen upon me. I knew, of course, when papa understood my position he would be liberal, and that after all, the pitiless neighbors must apologize to me, for I was as good as any of them. The reply came. Oh, joy of heaven and earth! how I kissed the envelope on which was the well known chirography of my dear old papa. Then with trembling hands and joyous exclamations, I tore the end off, and nervously pulled out the reply. The sheet on which the answer was written was crumpled and clinched tightly in my hand when I regained consciousness; the maid and the kind old doctor were the only ones with me; the doctor soon left and I read the answer again, ‘Better get the man who helped you to marry that dog, to help you now.’ That was all, and that was written across the back of the envelope which contained the letter which I had written him. Just at nightfall the door bell rang; the maid reported that my old friend had called. But the doctor had left strict orders that I see no one, and she sent him away; in less than an hour several bottles of the rarest wine that his famous cellar contained, were sent to me, along with an armful of most beautiful cut flowers.

“For three weeks I laid in a bed of fever, during which time the only feminine voices that reached my ears were those of the trained nurse and my maid. Each day dainty ices and fresh flowers were sent to me, all by the hand of the man whose acquaintance was a black mark on the white character of any woman.

“During all those days of tossing in burning delirium, no women in the neighborhood crossed the threshold of my home. I often thought as I rolled and twisted in search of some cool spot in the bed, that if some kind hearted woman would just come in and touch me or look on me

with a feeling of friendship, I would have been ready to take a good cry, then close my eyes to all things earthly. But no—I lived to feel the sting of and be despised by my sex.

“After I recovered my old friend called. I was so grateful for all he had done, that he really seemed near to me; then I told him the incident of the lease, and my appeal to my father, whereupon he scolded me gently, for not having come to him in the first place.

“When I was able to go out he took me for a drive; his company was all the pleasure I enjoyed. Women whom I had known, turned their noses up when I met them on the street. Finally the time came for the rent to be paid again. I was still weak from my recent illness. We had just started for a drive when the agent called again. I told him at the door that I had not the money with which to pay the enormous sum due for rent, and it ended by his giving me notice to vacate.

“Next day a special messenger brought me a signed receipt for a year’s rent, together with a brief note from my friend, saying that he had just bought the property and was now the landlord. I could not see then what it all meant, but I know now, that I was simply sold to the highest bidder, and the buyer conducted the sale and purchase all on his own account.

“I shall never forget my seduction; it occurred right there where I had known so many happy hours with Harry, in the same room where I had been accustomed to receive his beautiful caresses, there in the midst of condemning neighbors; flowers filled the room in wild profusion. We had a dinner, my friend had invited a few gentlemen to spend the evening, the feast of good things was freely washed down with wine. A musician had kept the piano ringing out sweet melodies; everything appeared bright; words seemed soft and soothing, time passed quickly, the callers were gone all too soon, in fact, just as I had begun to fully enjoy the evening, they seemed to fade away almost before I knew they were gone. The lights were lowered, as though being smothered by the perfume that filled the house; everything looked soft and velvety, the flowers organized themselves into a kaleidoscopic scene as though they understood that it was time for retirement and so effectually blended their different hues as to cause one to feel that sweet repose abided in the air.

“I was so glad when I reached my bed and realized in a dreamy way that I was being disrobed and fondled at the same time. At last with the silken folds of a new gown, that I did not know was in my wardrobe, clinging softly to my excited, trembling form, I reached the point where the curtain must be drawn.

“When I awoke the next morning, my head throbbed wildly, my eyes smarted, while my hands seemed pale and weak. As I staggered from room to room in search of I don’t know what, strange sights met my gaze; a table in a bad state of disorder, chairs misplaced and flowers whose heads had once been held high in the air were now drooping, while many petals were scattered about the room. An air of desolation hovered in every nook and corner, the atmosphere seemed stifling, the rays of morning sun straggled through the half open slats of the window shutters. My heart was heavier than ever before, the consolation I sought when I thought of my seducer’s kindness in comparison to my father’s cruel treatment was of small consequence. I tried to blame my father for the loss of that which heretofore I had held so holy and sacred, that even the thought of surrendering it to any man not rightfully possessing it had never entered my innocent mind. I went to the little nursery and there in the morning light, my baby was slumbering in perfect peace, no trial, no sorrow, no temptation had as yet come to the pure infantile heart.

“The following nights for a fortnight were only repetitions of the acts of the night just described. I learned to sleep by day, and as the shades of evening gathered, shutting out the glaring light of the setting sun, I would find myself engaged with my toilet, endeavoring to

appear at my best, for my friend took great pains to compliment me on my personal appearance, consequently my pride knew no bounds.

“Every night he spent with me fondling me as a child does a new toy, and why not? Was I not a new plaything for this man of millions?”

“I had lost interest in my baby, so much so, that I would not see her for days at a time, leaving her to the care of a nurse girl. I had given up hope of ever seeing Harry again, and cared little about him. He had willfully wronged and deserted me, he was a thing of the past to my frivolous mind. If I became blue and depressed, I would have the maid bring me a bottle of wine from the well stocked cellar. But all this must end. A change such as the frailties of humanity seek, is sure to come. I grew tired of the solitude that I had to contend with; I was a prisoner. One day I told my friend that I wanted to travel some.

“All right,” said he, “I am going to Chicago, I start in two days, get ready and make the trip with me.”

“I was wild and in my delight I threw my arms around his neck and thanked him. It was agreed that we should spend one more night in the house where we had known so many pleasures before departing. That night of all nights, we had a sumptuous dinner, wine, cordials, everything that two happy, healthy people could indulge in. It was on that occasion that I fully concluded that I could not live without him, and discovered that things which I had hitherto loathed and despised, I now looked upon as a part of my daily existence.

“The city was reached in due time. The first day here was given to rest, then a round of sightseeing which fairly dazzled me. I had never given much thought as to the immensity of Chicago, and it is little wonder that my unsophisticated mind was overcrowded with the many things that were on every hand for it to feed upon.

“It was after ten days of revelry, during which time we went to every place of entertainment, both high and low, that this city contains, that my mind for the first time reverted to my baby, and then to Harry. Not that I cared for him still, but I was seized with a fit of curiosity. About this time horse racing began here at Washington Park track, and as my friend and admirer was in that business, I, too, became very enthusiastic in the sport. Every day I could be seen in a box, the most lavishly gowned woman at the ring side. I had money and tips, and being full of the blood that tingles with feverish excitement when anything is at stake, I quickly and easily became the best known woman among the talent which frequents the race course; I wagered and won and lost with the same confiding nonchalance. I cared nothing for the money, for I knew not the value, but I was filled with the true desire to be able to pick the winner. At last the season ended, but not until a certain influential and wealthy man of this city managed to fall desperately in love with me, and as he was young, handsome and clever I must admit that the fickle goddess who waves the magic wand over such affairs succeeded in convincing me that my California friend had faded some, the glamour seemed to have receded, but honesty and gratitude had not yet been completely eliminated from my sinful soul, and it was with real tears and sobs that I told him that I had learned to love the younger man. His reply only verified statements which I had heard made in regard to him, being that he was always cool, even at the betting stand. He would lose or win a fortune without a change of countenance.

“But his reply.”

“Oh, yes,” he simply said, “all right, the season is ended, I am through with you, anyway.” Then taking my hand in his, he said good-bye and departed.

“Then began the new life. Oh, how easy the second step! Rather than dread it, I looked forward to the completing of the arrangements with pleasure. My new suitor knew my past history except that I had a child. We took elegant apartments, and he spent the greater portion of his time with me. We were very congenial companions; for months this life continued; at last the existence became monotonous to me. I began to long for something, I knew not what. I often found myself thinking of my past life, my childhood home and my child—the memory of whom I had allowed to go almost entirely out of my mind. One day Mr. Eddy came to see me and found me weeping; he questioned me and then I told him of my baby, and God bless him, he insisted on my sending for her, which I did. He arranged it all for the nurse to come to me and in seven days my little girl was in my arms. I then became possessed of a new feeling, such, I think, as only a mother can experience. I felt as if I must change my mode of living, but how? To go to my father meant to be turned away and the burden was double when the care of a baby and earning a living were both to be considered. Again I put the matter before my friend; he was kindness itself and proposed to marry me and be the father that my child needed. I gladly accepted his offer, but before we could be legally married, it was necessary for me to obtain a divorce from Harry. We took the first steps in that direction, one of which was to advertise as the law specified, and lo and behold! the advertisement had an unlooked for effect. It brought Harry from his long silence. He found me and we talked the matter over with my husband to be. It was at this meeting that I learned the cause of Harry’s action. He told us as follows:

“Our old California friend had induced him to bet his every cent on certain races on the day he came home with the crowd, and he had lost all. Then in order to retrieve his losses he was advised to become a forger in order to get more money with which to again play the races. It was the same old story, he lost, then for fear of punishment he left the country. I then told him all. Oh, how sorry I felt for poor Harry! After exchanging ideas, we became convinced that it was all a plot of the kind old man in California to get me in his clutches. After we were assured of that, Harry asked me to promise not to go further with divorce proceedings until he saw me again. I promised him. I also promised him not to receive a penny from the man who now wanted to marry me, and as I could not live as I had been, with my child under the same roof, we left. I sold my handsome gowns, and jewelry, furnished this poor little home and baby and I have lived here since.

“But Harry, where is he?”

“In the State’s Prison of California.”

“Ah, he was caught at last and punished for forgery.”

“No, when he left me he went to California and killed my traducer, he is serving a term of ten years for manslaughter, and I am waiting for him.”

7. My Lover's Bequest

TWO WOMEN.

“I know two women and one is chaste,
 And cold as the snows on a Winter waste,
 Stainless ever in act and thought
 A cruel tongue and a jealous mind.
 (As a man, born dumb, in his speech errs not),
 But she had malice toward her kind,
 Void of pity and full of greed,
 She judges the world by her narrow creed;
 A brewer of quarrels, a breeder of hate,
 Yet she holds the key to ‘Society’s’ gate.
 The other woman with heart of flame,
 Went mad for love that marred her name;
 And out of the grave of her murdered faith,
 She rose like a soul that has passed through death.
 Her aims are noble, her pity so broad,
 It covers the world like the mercy of God,
 A soother of discord, a healer of woes,
 Peace follows her footsteps wherever she goes,
 The worthier life of the two no doubt,
 And yet ‘Society’ locks her out.”

“You ask me why my house is so gorgeously furnished, why the music, why the beautiful young women lounging about? You say the oriental splendor reminds you of what your ideas have always been as to the making of a typical harem. I do not blame you. Men are very apt to make more serious mistakes than you have made in this instance. Would you like to see my girls? You would, eh?”

As this tall, dignified woman completed her monologue, she touched an ivory button on the side of the mahogany secretary in front of which she was seated. The silence which followed the closing of her remarks was broken only by the sounds of sweet strains of music, which floated through this spacious house on one of the notable streets of the “Tenderloin” district of Chicago.

I sat and quietly waited for the response, which I knew would come at the touch of that bell. A description of the interior of that palace is beyond my power, and had I tried to take mental notes, I would have failed completely, for I felt the steady gaze of her blue eyes upon me so strong that I could not center my mind on anything but the woman. In spite of the fact that she was not more than thirty-five years old, her hair was silvery gray; her eyes were bright,

her skin soft and fair; a smile of natural sincerity helped to light the sweet face, adding an expression to the pink and white that would cause any man to become a close observer, if not an admirer, of the woman, even without making a more scrutinizing survey of her many other charms. The poise of her head, the full, round neck, the broad, yet plump shoulders, the long, beautifully moulded arm and tapering fingers, served to attract a reasonable share of attention from the heaving bosom and slender waist of my hostess. My going over process was interrupted by a merry laugh, which caused my fair entertainer to rise, then with the grace and dignity of a queen, she presented to me the entire coterie of new comers, who constituted the bevy of young ladies which came into the room.

I was at once convinced that all the income of this house was not spent on the furnishings, for each young woman was gowned in a manner befitting the occasion. Some music and a few songs occupied the next fifteen or twenty minutes, during which time I used my eyes with as much of a critical air as was possible. Presently I told the lady of the house that I wished to talk with her in person before I made further acquaintance with any of the inmates of her rendezvous. The hint was sufficient, and we were soon alone.

“Well,” said she pleasantly.

“Yes, I want to talk privately with you.”

“Proceed.”

“But, had we not better retire to some private room where we will not be in danger of being disturbed?”

“This house is mine; we will not be interrupted here,” she said sweetly.

“Thank you. Then I will tell you what I want. I am looking for facts and wish you to give me the entire history of your life.”

The smile of anticipation faded into a look of remorse, that expression in turn was followed by an inquisitive look which told me that the woman was feigning misunderstanding.

“Yes,” I continued, “I want to know how you happened to be here.” The fair cheeks flushed, the intelligent brow wrinkled, while hard lines were plainly visible around her mouth, as I finished the sentence.

“It may be a long story,” said the woman, as she gazed at the bright buckles on the dainty slippers which encased her feet.

“I am willing to listen if you will be kind enough to tell me all,” said I.

“My early life was devoid of anything more than most girls are called upon to endure. At the age of twelve I lost my mother, at fifteen death claimed my father, then I went to live with a maiden aunt in Columbus, Ind. I was poor, very poor. As I now look back and view the past, I wonder that I was able to continue my studies until I graduated with high honors, but I did and the day I was seventeen my greatest heights of happiness were scaled, for it was on that eventful day that my youthful lover, Jamie Harris and I became engaged with the consent of my auntie, provided, however, we would not think of marriage until Jamie had finished his course at college, which he was taking at the State University, located at Bloomington, Ind. We two young lovers, eager in our happiness, consented to the plans which my spinster relative laid for us. Jamie was twenty; he had two more years in the regular collegiate course, then a professional course of some sort and we would be ready to take up life’s journey.

“Meanwhile, I bided my time, looking forward to the longed for event with anticipation in every way worthy of the reward. One long year dragged along; I cared for no one, thought of

nothing but to dream of Jamie. All the little details of 'love in a cottage' had been thoroughly gone over, and directed, I, in my own mind, trying to find some method of improvement on the time worn ethics of a wife's duty.

"When morning came I busied myself with the affairs of my aunt's humble home, which I, too, had known as my only shelter for years. I moved with the spirit of love. I became mechanical in doing things while I drew on my imagination to such an extent, that at times I almost fancied that it was our home (Jamie's and mine), and that I was serving him. I planned and thought so much of how I would always have his slippers ready, and papers and cigars, for he smoked. Oh, all the dreams made me so happy and contented.

"It was the beginning of the second year that I received an invitation to visit a friend in Franklin, Ind., a near-by town. During my stay there I met many and made scores of friends; it was then that I realized how closely my life and Jamie's had become cemented together. I saw the world as I had never before known it to exist; I was the recipient of many favors at the hands of my new friends. If I failed to write to Jamie as often as I had done, he excused me by saying in his letters that he was glad I was having a good time. Theaters, drives, parties, dinners, etc., to the fulfillment of my fondest hopes. More excitement than I had ever expected to know.

"The friend whom I was visiting was a few years my senior, and when I explained to her that I was engaged and suggested that it might not be good form for me to receive the attentions of a certain young man, who insisted on occupying most of my time, she only laughed and said I had lots to learn. She then gave me much information along the lines of society conventionalities. She was my best friend. I heard all she said and allowed myself to put too broad a construction on her words. I allowed words to be poured into my ears that changed the feeling which I had had for poor Jamie. My new admirer was rich, handsome and gallant and much admired by all the girls of 'the set.'

"True to the expectation of those girls, I seemed to win Francis Winslow. He had no eyes for any but me. Things drifted along until the time came for my home going, then all on account of his persuasions, I remained a week longer than my allotted time. When I arrived home I received several letters from Jamie and a severe scolding from my aunt. The letters dated back ten days; the tone of the oldest one was the same sweet, endearing sentiment, which had always made his messages so precious, but as I sat reading through the many pages, I perceived as I thought a coldness (though I know now it was love's anxiety). The last two hurt me; they referred to things which I could not account for his knowing. Finally the closing of the last letter said, 'If not too busy flirting with your friend, Winslow, please answer.'

"It was more than my young heart could bear. I did not know then that I was just looking for some excuse for stinging him and now it had come. I had never flirted; I had met Mr. Winslow under proper conditions and circumstances. He had always been courteous to me. I had been true to Jamie, though my love had faltered. Next day's mail brought a letter to my aunt and one to me; the one to aunt was from Jamie. I do not know what it contained, but it was of such a nature that she heaped a tirade of abuse on me.

"'Just to think!' said she. 'I've worked and done for you all these years and tried to raise you decent, and done all this for my poor dead sister's sake, and when I've got you fit to marry a good man, you go and spoil it all by takin' up with a fop you nor the Lord don't know nothin' about.'

"The letter which I had tucked away in my bosom was from Mr. Winslow. It stated that he was going to visit in this city and he would be glad to have me join him. 'I know,' it said,

‘that you will have to invent some excuse for your absence from home, but that can be arranged by your saying you met my cousin, while in Franklin, and she will write you soon, asking you to spend a week with her in Chicago. She is the wife of a railroad man and will send you transportation.’

“My mind was quickly made up; I would not stand my aunt’s abuse and Jamie’s insults. If Mr. Winslow liked me, as he said, he would probably propose to me and we would get married, ‘so there now.’ That letter was followed two days later by one from Mr. Winslow’s cousin, enclosing a ticket, which auntie did not know from a pass. The invitation was pressing and I came here.”

“But go on,” said I, as the long pause seemed to add solemnity to the stillness. “Tell me more of Jamie, of Winslow and of this,” said I, with a wave of my hand, indicating the interior of the spacious house.

“Be patient,” she said, and then continued.

“Winslow met me at the station, then it was a ceaseless round of theaters, dinners and other amusements, which were new to my unsophisticated mind. His cousin was a myth. The woman who claimed to be his relative was none other than a hireling, who did all in her power to assist him in entrapping me. The speed with which I fell was something terrific; the bottomless pit of Hell was not very far away and I was an easy victim to the seductive plans of my pretended friend. The scene of my defamation is still fresh in my mind. It seems but yesterday, since he called for me at the home of the supposed cousin. Oh, the blackness of that night as it now appears to me, is only intensified and made more dismal, when I think of the lights, the gay music, the finely arrayed women and the entrancing wine; it was a long night of song and revelry, only to end in the beginning of a long day of miserable, torturing, painful existence. That fortress of purity, which is all a girl has upon which she can rely at all times, was stormed. The excitement, the glittering lights, and the enchanting environment added such argument as the man lacked in his make up. I suppose I was an easy victim, wine dulled my senses to such an extent that, as God is my judge, I was not wholly responsible for my acts; when morning came I awoke and knew that the great white star of virginity, which I had heretofore followed, had been transformed into a dull leaden aspect, which would only bespeak for me sullen misery and degradation.”

“Where did it all happen?”

“Right here in this house,” sighed the woman.

“Here, and you have lived here ever since?”

“No, at least not all of the time; after a few days of sobbing, longing for the old life and for Jamie returned to me. Then the horrible fact that I could never return to Jamie confronted me. Oh, what was I to do? With nothing in view and no aim in life, I returned to my aunt’s home only to be told that I could get out and ‘shift for myself.’ ‘This ain’t no home for no good for nuthin’ strumpet like you; clear out, I say! You ungrateful hussy.’

“If you will excuse me I will not detail to you the feelings of pain which I endured as stings from her lash. It is quite enough to be compelled to live through such periods without being called upon to recite them in after years.

“From there I went to the home of the friend in whose house I had met Mr. Winslow, then with that feeling of trust and confidence, I told her all; she blandly stated that she was sorry, but that I should have known better. Oh! that bitter sting, and from this woman, who could have taken me in her arms and heard my sobs, that act alone, I think, would have consoled me some; but no; she who could have replaced me upon the pedestal from which all women

shine, said, 'Well, run along now, I must dress for Mrs. —'s reception. Maybe some day I will talk it all over with you.'

"'But, oh, please hear me! just a little. Help me,' I begged.

"'I will see; I heard of some one who wanted a good girl, and I will try to find out, for you see, Lillian, you could do housework.'

"Bah! ruined, turned into the street, scorned, too miserable to live, afraid to die.

"I was not too good, nor too proud to work, but that was not what my heart yearned for; pity, love, sympathy, a kind look, a gentle touch would have done much to heal my troubled mind. I came back to Chicago. I went to Mr. Winslow's cousin; she told me the cold, hard, cruel truth. I had been enticed to the city for the one purpose of gratifying the amorous desire of Mr. Winslow. The truth had long ago forced itself upon me, but the confession by the woman who had assisted in the plot made me desperate.

"What to do? Where to go, were the questions. Home I had none; true friends were far away and unknown things to me. The lake! Oh, at last a friend, who could receive me in all my sorrow and shame, a refuge which never failed to take suffering humanity into its safe retreat, giving solace to all pain. Yes, I would write to my aunt and Jamie; I would confess to them what I was afraid to confront God with. My plans were all completed; I had one dollar to my name, enough to pay for a night's lodging at some fairly respectable hotel. There I could write to them, and then when all was quiet, steal out to the pier and * * * then."

"Four o'clock next morning I was ready. I stole out of the hotel, wended my way to the nearest place where I could walk far out on the timbers which projected into the moaning water. No hesitancy on my part; I deliberately tied the cord which I had brought around my skirts, let my hair down, so that the long plaits hung below my waist, then pressing the locket, (this locket) which contained my father's miniature, to my lips, I leaped as far out as I could.

"Down, down, below the gurgling waters, up to the surface, then down again, with just a faint dreamy view of the lights on Michigan avenue, then all was dark, all I could see was Jamie, as I felt myself being pulled along by some irresistible force. I only remember saying, 'Good-bye, Jamie.'"

"'Oh, I think she is alive yet, Capin',' was what I heard a voice say long before I was able to assure the speaker that he was correct.

"I had been picked up by a fisherman as the boat was starting out for the day's haul. I recovered only to suffer more, too miserable to live, too unfortunate to die. A few days of privation and want brought me to this house, where I took up the routine life of the other members of the establishment, and vied with my associates for favors from the opposite sex. Success was the result of my efforts; I was soon known as a favorite of the frequenters of the resort; when wine held sway in my brain, I was glad the fisherman heard the splash of the water. Again, when my brain was dull from isolation and inactivity, my heart was sad. One evening the bell rang just as it did this evening; the signal was given for the 'ladies' to appear in the parlor, as was the custom when callers were announced. With ill-feigned pleasure I led the way, being followed by the other girls. I marched through the hall, across the back parlor, treading always on soft rugs, my white satin gown flowing in rhythmical time to the strains of the music; and there amid the scenes of splendor for which this luxurious establishment was noted I found myself standing face to face with Jamie. Yes, my own dear, true Jamie. Oh,

forgive me, sir, for this expression of feeling, but again to live those moments of delirious joy, mingled with fear and anticipation, is more than I can bear. With one bound I left the other girls far behind me. Swiftly crossing the room I appealed to him as only a love maddened girl can appeal to the object of her devotion.

“Oh, God! what horrible retribution was about to be brought upon me; how much more was I to suffer and how long would my breath continue to come in sobbing gasps as I begged and prayed and pleaded with him to take me in his arms as of old. ‘Jamie, Jamie, my own dear Jamie!’ I cried. ‘Hear me, see me, touch me! Oh, I beg of you, Jamie, listen. Don’t you know it is I? It is your Lillian! What, Jamie, don’t you know me?’

“In spite of all my entreaties he stood like stone unmoved and unaffected by anything I said or did. Presently a new thought struck me. I thought of the cottage and of the roses which Jamie loved so well; then madly tearing a white rose which I wore on my breast I handed it to him, begging him to take it.

“‘Do take it, Jamie,’ I said; ‘it is as pure as I once was. Ah, but then you loved me, Jamie, and your love was pure, too, was it not? Tell me, Jamie, tell me, oh, even if you hate me now, tell me in that same soft voice that I know so well, that you loved me then. The memory of that love will make me pure again, Jamie, if you will only speak to me again. Jamie, take this rose; take it, Jamie, for the sake of the memory of that love which I had for you. I know, Jamie, it’s all my fault; it’s not your will that I am here; I wronged you cruelly. Don’t you think, Jamie, that I have suffered enough, or do you still insist on making my life death?’ All my supplication to him was in vain. He stood with that firm, determined air which I knew so well, with his hand extended with palm toward me, as if to push me away as he would some vile, loathsome creature. He did not speak to me; he seemed to know that he would find me here. When I had ceased pleading with him he handed me a large white envelope. With feverish delight I clutched it. As I did so I saw an inscription upon it. Forgetting my pain, misery and degradation, with a wild cry I ran to a position near a light. What was it I read? ‘To be opened after I am gone.’

“What, I thought, Jamie going? No! he must not. Then, turning to go back to Jamie, I was just in time to see him place a pistol to his heart and fire. He died without a word. The spot over which you see the urn full of roses is the exact location where Jamie fell. The other girls had left me. There, bending over him, frantically tearing his garments to see if I might render him some assistance, the white rose dropped from my dress where I had carelessly replaced it and became stained with Jamie’s life blood, making a fitting semblance to the tragedy which had been enacted in this same house a few months prior, where the spotless character of an innocent girl had been transformed from pure white to a charred remnant.

“They took him away. I saw him once more at the morgue; then the officers took me to a cell; then there was a trial. I was accused of murdering Jamie and almost convicted, when the thought struck me to send for the packet which he had placed in my hand. It contained, besides this letter, which you may read, other things which the letter will make plain:

“‘My Poor Dear Lillian: As I write this letter I know not what your fate is, but I fear that something terrible has befallen you. I start out to find you, if on earth. Since leaving your old home I have come into a large inheritance, which will afford me ample means with which to pursue my aim. May God grant that I may find you pure and unstained, and that I shall be able to take you to my bosom; that we may be allowed to enjoy the fruits which have fallen to us as two lovers should enjoy life.

“‘Yours lovingly,

‘Jamie.’

“Later.—I have discovered you. My love is buried in sorrow; I have nothing to live for, no ambition, no soul, no heart. I have but one request, which is as follows: You will find enclosed negotiable papers to all the wealth which I possess. It is yours; the same as my life has been yours. I want you to take it and spend it in saving the blossoms of this earth. I have yet enough confidence in you to cause me to believe that if the circumstances were conducive to honor and purity that you would court the same with the ambition and zeal which is a part of your nature. I leave the method of restitution entirely in your hands; only asking you in closing to put forth your every effort to snatch the burning brands from the fiery furnace which is ever ready to engulf the innocent, unsophisticated representative of purity.

“As ever yours,

Jamie.’

“Well,” said I, as I handed the letters back to the woman, “do you make much money here? I suppose you had a good time while Jamie’s cash lasted?”

“Jamie’s cash is still lasting,” said she.

“You don’t mean to tell me that you have the heart to support this place as a house of ill-repute by spending poor Jamie’s money in that way?”

“Bless your heart, no. I own this property, a monument to Jamie’s pure devotion and good intentions. It not only serves to remind me of where I last looked upon him alive, thereby making the associations more pleasant, but also keeps fresh in my mind the night that I leaped in the darkness and landed into the mire of debauchery.”

“Do your girls know your story?”

“In part, yes.”

“Do they enjoy the existence of soiled doves?”

“But, my dear sir, they are not soiled doves; they are brands which I have snatched from the burning.”

“Then this is not a house of—”

“No, sir! This is an harbor of restitution, where souls may be anchored to hope, where hope fills the heart with a longing for better and purer things; a home where I am trying to atone for my own misdeeds.”

8. The Victim Of A Drug

“Blank the mind, sad the heart,
 Supple the form, sweet the face;
 Pure the soul, sold on the mart,
 To suffer ever in vile disgrace.

“Neither bended knees,
 Pure hands held out,
 Sad sighs, deep groans, nor
 Silvery-shedding tears,
 Could penetrate the uncompassionate shout
 That, in spite of all, fell on her bloodless ears.”

“I am sorry,” said the girl, “that you have concluded to abandon the detective business, for I am sure that you accomplished much good while thus engaged.”

If I had not been attracted by the strong personality of the speaker I should have been favorably impressed with the sincerity of her tone. She was pale, very pale; her eyes were large and brown. As she spoke she gazed on me with the languid expression so in keeping with one of great volume of earnestness. Her nose was thin; I might say drawn and pinched; her lips as red as cherries, parted slightly as the soft words left them, showing a mouth full of regular, well-kept teeth. The forehead was not higher than the ordinary, but it made a fitting support for the crown of dark brown hair, which was artistically dressed in a manner to form a frame about the face, which seemingly did not end at the chin, as most faces do, but it was possessed of a broadness and deepness of nature which illumined the pallid cheeks on either side back as far as the little, thin ears.

She was not large, neither could she be considered under size, not altogether on account of her stature, which might have seemed diminutive to the eye in search of physical development, but rather because the intelligence which this creature possessed seemed to reach out and permeate every nook and corner of the lavishly furnished parlor.

“I thank you for your kindly allusion and feel that if I have been the cause of good that there must have been some good enveloped in the subjects with which I had to deal during my professional career. In pursuance of the fact that good may come from good, I have retired from the secret service business and am now preparing a work which will be largely based upon the experience of former days. I find it necessary for me to glean from others some of the facts of their lives in order that I may not digress from the truth and that the twenty stories that will compose my book may be hinged upon different modes of existence, hence my call upon you to-day.

“I well remember the last words you uttered when I left you in a convalescent condition in the hospital: ‘If I can ever serve you, command me.’ I am not here to command you, but to ask you for your life’s story.”

“And did you know, Mr. Spencer, that if you are put in possession of the facts as they exist, that you will have something which the world knows nothing of?”

“I trust, however, that you will place in me the confidence of your history.”

“But what time in life do you desire that I begin?”

“I want you to tell me how you happened to come to Chicago before I ever met you.”

At this request the woman seemed to draw herself together and with a movement of her figure that impressed me as a straightening out process, she began by saying:

“I came to Chicago when I was sixteen. I came to visit my aunt. It was during my last year in high school. I don’t believe I had ever known what love was. I had lost my mother when an infant. My father was a stereotyped business man, with so many affairs to keep his mind employed that he evidently did not have the time nor inclination to take me in his arms and show me any devotion whatever. I had two brothers, both of them several years my senior, and by the time I was old enough to appreciate the brotherly protection and love which their existence might have afforded me they were married. True, I had my school day episodes of note writing and had indulged in the blissful pastime of a few kissing parties, but never the full realization of loving caresses.

“I had been in the city three days when I met a young man. I was quick to listen to his avowal of love. It seemed to bring to me new joys; it directed my feet into newer and brighter paths of life and all wound up with an elopement and a marriage, after which I wrote to my father for his blessing and, as I have since learned through the influence of my step-mother, received his curse. His cold letter informing me that if I wished to return to the old home and continue in my studies as I had suggested, that he would certainly offer no objection, as I was now mistress of my own affairs, and if I chose to continue in school he could see no reason why I should not do so, as the school house still remained. Of course, I didn’t go. I fell ill and this necessitated the absence of my husband from his duties for such a long time that he lost his position.

“When I regained my health I set out to find employment, and met with partial success. That is, I could have the position on conditions, one of them being that I was not married and that I would not marry while in their employ. I was compelled to sign an affidavit to that effect.

“The position which I obtained seemed to me of little importance. I was reception lady in the office of a coterie of physicians, who announced themselves on gayly printed circulars as the medical staff of a certain institution, each one being a specialist in treating different afflictions. My duties required me to report at the office at 10 in the morning and remain there until 4 in the afternoon. I went along in the even tenor of my way for six months, during which time my husband was searching for employment. He came to me one day, the first time that he had been in the office since my entrance there, to tell me that he had a position offered him, but that he must acknowledge that he was married, as the gentleman who wished to employ him could not engage a single man.

“Our work was to consist of caring for an invalid who was kept in a beautiful cottage in the outskirts of the city.

“We fully considered the conditions, terms, etc., and decided to accept the trust. I gave notice to my employers that I should leave, but agreed to remain one week through courtesy. Three days before I was to leave a gentleman of middle age, one who often came to the office and held long consultations with one or two members of the staff and frequently went away with them, came out of the private office of one of the physicians and approached me, saying: ‘Much to my regret, I have just learned that you are about to leave the establishment. I have a little gift here which I wish to give you in consideration of your kind treatment of me during my many calls.’”

As the girl's voice fell and ended in a soft monotone she drew from her bosom a little chamois pouch and took from that a ring set with a beautiful diamond.

"And this," she said, as she touched it with her lips, while the tears which gleamed in her eyes outshone the gem itself, "this I have kept."

"I suppose there must be some little sentiment clinging to the bitter cruelty which makes it as precious to you as the sweet violets are to the lover of dainty flowers."

"Yes," she said, "the fact that I have kept this ring is, in part, the reason of my long suffering, but as it was given to me, according to my belief, in purity, I kept it in memory of the thoughts which emanated from my heart when I took it. My mind was as pure then as the gem itself. If I have become contaminated by adversity I can proudly say that this gleaming white stone, on account of its flinty hardness, has escaped the fire of degradation."

"It was five days subsequent to our going to the cottage that my husband and I were seated on the veranda of our little cottage, congratulating ourselves on having secured such an easy position and liberal compensation for the light services rendered."

"I wonder," said Dan, "why the old gentleman doesn't take her to some private hospital, where she could receive proper medical attention, as well as the benefit of trained nurses?"

"But you know, dear," said I, "that a rich man does not like to have his daughter in an asylum; and besides I don't think we should complain, because the care of this poor girl is not a great burden and her unbalanced condition serves for us to be together all the time."

"Yes, I know," said Dannie; "but I can't stand it to hear her moan and weep the way she does. Sometimes in the night when I am but half asleep her screams and groans disturb me so that I get to dreaming somehow or other that it is you who are locked up in that horrible but softly padded room. It is so real that it is like a nightmare, and finally, as I fancy myself struggling against a wall trying to free you, with a mighty lunge I awake, and while I then know it is only a dream I am dripping with cold perspiration. My nerves are all unstrung, and I feel just like reaching over and taking you in my arms and running away, leaving the old man and his crazy daughter far behind."

"Then it really was a crazy girl you had to care for?"

"Oh, yes. You see, this old gentleman had married years ago. I remember how he told us all about it. How his sweet young wife had been killed in a railroad accident and his little daughter went raving mad when her mother's mangled form was brought home to her. And he seemed to be doing all he could to make the poor demented creature happy."

At this she laughed discordantly. It seemed so out of place to me, for to look at her and hear her voice was to be inspired with a sense of harmony.

"I left my chair and went over to him. I crawled up into his lap and nestled my face against his. 'You mustn't dream that way, dear,' said I. 'It is bad for you, and besides you know I am always by your side.'

"One day when I had gone to the city to do some shopping the man who had engaged my husband came out to the cottage to have a talk with him. When I came home I found my husband all excitement."

"What in the world is the matter with you?" said I. "Mr. Leighton was here to-day and he wants me to leave you in direct charge of things here while I go out West and look after his interests in the oil fields.' He had given him a week in which to decide whether or not he

would go, but I could see that Dannie feared to refuse. I cried and clung to him, for I couldn't bear to be separated from him; so he decided not to go.

"When he went to the city to meet Mr. Leighton and give him his decision Mr. Leighton was quite haughty and seemed offended. He as good as told Dan that if he did not go he would have to find some one else to go to the cottage and take care of the invalid.

"Dan came home thoroughly disheartened. I tried to cheer him and said maybe I could go with him, but he said no, he had asked Mr. Leighton about that and he had very decidedly said that it would not do. We talked it all over quietly and the question resolved itself into a matter of dollars and cents. If Dan refused to go we must give up the cottage, and that meant all our income. If he went he would be well paid in addition to the amount we received for the care of the cottage. So we decided that it was best for him to go and we would try and save enough money to start in business.

"After Dannie left I took up the duties of nurse, for which I was not altogether unfitted, being patient and persevering.

"Mr. Leighton's daughter was as frail as a lily, and when I took her meals in to her I used to sit and watch her and wonder how she lived, for she ate almost nothing.

"I concluded it must be the medicine which she took in the wine that gave her the little vitality she possessed.

"She rarely noticed me and I am sure my coming and going was of no interest to her. She was not often violent these days; on the contrary, she was very tractable.

"Two weeks had passed since Dannie left and I had had three letters from him, all of which breathed of his love and devotion to me and bade me be cheerful, that the time would soon pass and we would be reunited. No word had been received from Mr. Leighton yet, and I was just wondering what had become of him when the bell rang. When I was called down to the parlor whom should I meet but the kind gentleman who gave me the ring, Mr. Price.

"I am ever so glad to see you,' said I; but I don't believe my tones half expressed my feelings, for I was so lonely there, all alone with that poor girl, with only the servants for companions. Our cottage was built in the center of a large plot of ground, and there were no houses very near us. Mr. Leighton told Dan that he had built the house that way purposely, so Lita's ravings would not disturb the neighbors.

"How in the world did you happen to come here, Mr. Price?' said I.

"Well, you see—I—I am Lita's father.'

"Why, what do you mean? Lita's father's name is Mr. Leighton.'

"Yes, I know; but I can explain it all to you in a few moments. It is such a terrible thing, I could not endure to have it generally known that my daughter was hopelessly insane, so when I arranged to have her brought here I decided it was best to have her known as Lita Leighton.'

"Oh, yes,' said I, 'it must be very terrible to have such a misfortune befall a member of one's family; but you surely couldn't call it a disgrace.'

"Well, perhaps not; but, you know, it would injure my business if it were known. But what are you doing here?' he said.

"Why, I am Dannie's wife.'

"He seemed to be greatly surprised, and asked me why I did not tell him long before. I told him that I could not occupy the position which I held when he first met me if it had become

known that I was married. I followed on with my whole life's story, and he shed tears at my recital of woes and my father's unkind treatment.

“How I should have cherished such a beautiful daughter,’ said he, and came over to my chair, bent over and kissed me. ‘Won’t you be a daughter to me in place of my poor demented Lita?’

“My heart went out to him then and there, and I put my arms around his neck and kissed him.

“By and by we went in to see Lita. At the sight of her father and me she ran into the furthest corner and no amount of coaxing could induce her to come out. Finally he asked me to leave him alone with her. Just as I was leaving I saw him give her her medicine.

“Oh,’ I exclaimed, ‘it is not time to give her that yet.’

“It is harmless enough,’ he said, closing the door.

“He remained in her room an hour or more and left the house soon after. At parting he said: ‘I shall come out often now, because I have two daughters instead of one to visit.’

“That night Lita was very violent. She shrieked and moaned most pitifully. My heart ached for her, but I did not dare to go to her while she was in such a state.

“At last she fell asleep, I suppose, for she ceased her ravings. When I took her breakfast to her the following morning I found her prone upon the floor, with hands clinched together as if in mortal agony. I was horror-stricken. I had never seen her like this before and had never heard that she had spells like this.

“She looked like death, and without regard to the strict orders we had had, never to call in a stranger, I fairly flew to the nearest doctor's office.

“He responded at once, and after heroic treatments revived her. He asked to see the medicine we had been giving her. I showed it to him and he examined it critically, then looked grave.

“This is a drug which should not be administered except in an extreme case and then only in small doses,’ he said.

“Then I explained to him how her father had been there and how Lita had acted, and that it must have been necessary or he would not have given it. He told me I must not give her any more of it for three days and at the end of that time he would call again.

“After he had gone I went in to see Lita and she seemed brighter than I had ever seen her. On the evening of the second day she showed real interest in things and had a good appetite. There was a faint tinge of red in her cheeks and she was almost pretty.

“She asked me who I was and what my name was.

“I am your nurse, and you have been very ill, but are getting better now,’ said I, ‘and my name is quite a little like yours; it is Anita.’

“I was so delighted at her apparent improvement that I determined to write her father the good news, but on second thought concluded I would not, as he had said he would come out often.

“On the third day the doctor called and was greatly pleased at his patient's progress. ‘Just continue to give her this tonic and keep the other away from her,’ said he.

“I think you had better not tell her father what we have done if he calls soon; better wait a couple of weeks and surprise him.’

“Then I thought of my orders not to call in a stranger and told the doctor about it. He passed the matter by as a trifle, saying: ‘They probably feared the excitement.’

“Two weeks passed and no Mr. Leighton and no word from Dannie. I was getting desperate at Dannie’s neglect and telegraphed him. The telegram came back, so I knew it had not found him. Mr. Leighton came the same afternoon and found me a pitiful looking object. My eyes were red and swollen with weeping.

“‘What is the matter with you, little daughter?’ said he, kissing me on each cheek.

“I told him about Dannie and he begged me not to worry; that he was probably out of town in the oil fields and too busy to write.

“We went in together to see Lita, and she acted as she had done on the previous occasion when he called. He did not stay long with her, but devoted most of his time to me, trying to cheer me up, which he certainly knew how to do. He remained to dinner and brought out some of the wine which we kept for Lita’s use.

“After dinner I felt so drowsy that I laid down and he covered me up carefully and told me to take a good sleep; that he would take a late train to the city.

“That was the last innocent sleep I had. When I awoke, in the night, I was undressed and in bed. I could not think where I was, and when I turned I thought Dannie was there and I put my arms about him.

“When morning came—ah! how can I tell it?” she said shuddering. “When morning came—well, I knew I was no longer what I had been—a true wife.”

“Mr. Leighton was very tender to me and tried to soothe my feverish unrest, and after awhile I passed into a quiet slumber. When I awoke I was alone. It was late in the afternoon and I thought with a start of Lita.

“When I entered her room she came toward me with outstretched arms.

“‘I am so glad to see you, Anita,’ she said. ‘Where have you been all this time? If you had not locked me in so securely, I should have found you before this time.’ She pulled me down on her cot and said: ‘I want to tell you something.’

“I always indulged her whims, so I sat down beside her.

“‘You have been so good to me that I have learned to love you, Anita, and I want you to love me, too; but I have much to tell you, and maybe you will hate me when you have heard all,’ she said, her lips quivering.

“I was surprised at her rational manner, yet delighted. I put my arms around her and said: ‘Tell me all, Lita. I shall not hate you, no matter how bad it is.’

“‘You think I am crazy, but I am not,’ she said, ‘although I have had enough to make me so in the past two years. My senses have been so benumbed since I have been here that I don’t know all I have done. I have had a terrible experience, and my mother is the cause of it all. Several years ago my father began to speculate; he was a wealthy man at that time, but with the speculation the trouble began. He became deeply involved, and when one of his creditors fell on him and demanded a settlement he collapsed. My mother met the man and he demanded me as the price of liquidation. Rather than suffer the financial loss and the disgrace of the penitentiary, which stared my father in the face, my mother sold my honor, my virtue, my all to this scoundrel who poses as my father. He took me abroad with him and traveled with me as my husband. He was ideally kind to me for more than a year, or until he had worn me out and my health began to fail. Little by little he began to neglect me, and at last I was

furious. One night when he did condescend to come home I met him at my door with a revolver and told him to take another step at his peril. This was the beginning of the end. As soon as we returned to this country he brought me directly to Chicago, where he had me examined and pronounced of unsound mind. After that he kept me under the influence of some opiate and the next thing I knew I was here, in this cottage. It is no wonder I have acted insane, no wonder they padded this room to keep me from doing myself violence. Every time he came here he gave me more medicine and then treated me with every indignity possible. I grew to loathe him and feared the very sight of him. Since this doctor came I feel so much better, and I am going to get well and punish that vile man.'

"I was so filled with dismay I could only gasp: 'And this man isn't your father after all?'"

"No, indeed,' she said.

"Well, as you may imagine, my suspicions were aroused; yet I felt, too, the whole story might be the vagary of her imagination.

"After thinking it over I resolved to tell Mr. Leighton all. While he talked to me and I was under his mesmeric influence my suspicions were lulled to rest and I felt that he was the best and kindest man I had ever met.

"One day soon after this I received a telegram stating that Dannie was dead. I got Mr. Leighton to investigate the matter and he found it was too true. He had been killed and robbed. For a time I was inconsolable, and it was then that Mr. Leighton was most tender. When I began to recover from the blow I wondered why he had not asked me to be his wife, for he had often told me he loved me better than his life. I waited several weeks and he said no word, so I finally decided to speak of the matter myself, thinking he might feel reticent considering my recent bereavement.

"When I did muster up courage to speak to him he said: 'Why, my dear, when I marry and give a woman my name she must be pure.'

"And if I am not pure, who is to blame?" said I, quivering with rage.

"There, there, we won't talk about it any more,' said he.

"He went away and left me in an agony of despair. I went to Lita's room and told her the whole story, for I knew she was rational and had told me the truth.

"When I had sobbed out all my troubles on her breast she soothed me and said: 'Listen, Anita, you will believe me, I am sure, so I will tell you something. Dr. Snyder, whom you called in that day I was so ill, has learned to love me. He knows all my story and is willing to marry me. We were going to run away from here together at the first opportunity. If you will, you shall go with us. We are going to have a beautiful home on Drexel Boulevard, and you will be a most welcome guest.'"

"I suppose this is the place," said I. "You certainly have a lovely home."

"Yes, and Lita has more than repaid me for what I did for her. The doctor went to the doctors who employed me before we took the cottage and learned all about his doings. He had him arrested and he is now languishing in jail. Dannie will be here in three days now. Oh, I am so happy!"

"Dannie! Why, I thought you said he was dead?"

"Oh, you see, that was a part of Mr. Leighton's nefarious plot. He intercepted all the letters that passed between Dannie and me and bribed a man to send that telegram to me; then sent a man to Dannie to prove I was untrue to him.

“He seemed to be highly successful in carrying out his plans for a long time, but you see he was caught in his own toils.

“Dr. Snyder was so kind that he went out West and searched for Dannie until he found him and told him all and Dannie forgave everything. He had invested some of his money in the oil lands there and we will have plenty of money now, for they turned out well. He was coming to me on the first train, but the doctor prevailed upon him to stay and finish up his affairs first, so that he would not lose anything.

“Just think! only three days more until we are reunited.”

9. What Happened To A Girl Who Flirted

“The thorns which I have reap’d are of the tree

I planted,—they have torn me and I bleed:

I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.”

“If all girls had as bitter an experience as I had, and all brought about by their first venture at flirting, I am sure there would be less of it.

“I had lived in Chicago a number of years, but had been so carefully reared that I knew absolutely nothing of the snares set for the feet of the unsophisticated.

“My parents died within a few weeks of each other and I was left all alone, so far as near relatives were concerned. After the estate was settled up and I had recovered from the shock of their death, I was left to my own devices, and while I had many invitations to make my home with relatives I decided I should like to be alone for awhile, so I went to live with a widow and her daughter. I enjoyed my Bohemian life very much, for it was such a change from the old way of living and I was bent on making the most of it. I was engaged to a young man from the South at this time. He was a young man of the highest principles and unimpeachable honor, and one of whom my parents thoroughly approved. I think mamma felt quite happy and resigned when she took Will’s hand and placed mine in it and said: ‘Will, you will take good care of my baby after I am gone, for I shall leave you all very soon now. I shall die happy if I have your promise,’ she said faintly.

“He leaned over her and said: ‘Mother, dear, I promise. Agneta shall always have my tenderest love and devotion.’

“Well, as I was saying, I went to live with this kind family and they granted me every privilege that I could have had in my own home. Will was an ideal lover and caretaker; in fact, he was too good, and I was not sensible enough to appreciate it then. Ah, if I could only live over the old days once more, things might have been different. One needs to live three score and ten years before one knows how to live.

“One day I dressed myself with unusual care, entirely in black, of course, but it was quite as becoming as any color. I could not have told why I was so painstaking in making my toilet; it must have been an unkind fate at work while the angel guardian of my peace and happiness, slept.

“I bought a few articles at Field’s and ordered them sent out, then went up to the waiting room on the second floor, where I could look down from the gallery to the main floor and watch the throng of shoppers. While I was sitting there I saw a fine looking young man standing near me, engaged in conversation with some ladies. At the first glance I took him to be an old acquaintance of mine. He was not very tall, but had beautiful wavy black hair and eyes of a soft brown.

“I suppose my gaze, which was a little more ardent than custom would permit, attracted his attention, for he glanced at me frequently, and as those things sometimes happen caught my glance every time. I knew by this time that he was not the acquaintance for whom I had taken him the first time I looked at him, but his face was so handsome it seemed to fascinate me, although on a closer inspection it was slightly effeminate. I think we kept that up for nearly half an hour, but all this time no word was spoken. I decided that I had better leave, and I

arose to go and was soon lost in the throng. I was walking east on Madison when someone walked up beside me and tipping his hat said: ‘Pardon me, may I walk with you?’

“I was not so disconcerted as I had always supposed a girl must feel under such circumstances. I looked around and, of course, it was not the young man, but Will. I was half vexed and treated him very coldly, until he told me that he had seen me at Field’s and had noticed the conduct of the man in question who had held my attention so long, and believed he had evil designs on me.

“This made me really angry, and I told him that was just like a man to think that every glance another man bestowed upon the woman he loved was evil. ‘One would think I had no individuality, no charm of person at all to hear you talk,’ I said.

“‘Well, I know the men better than you do, dear; so please be careful, won’t you? Men never have a good opinion of a woman who will flirt with them.’

“Now, you see, if there is anything a girl hates it is to have her sweetheart assume superiority over her in knowledge of men; so it all combined to make me disagreeable.

“He walked as far as Lyon & Healy’s with me and I went in to buy some music. He went on back to his office. After I had bought my music I sauntered into the room where the pianolas are on exhibition and sat down near the window to listen to the music. It was not long before some one at my elbow said: ‘How do you do? I have been trying to find you ever since you left Field’s, and was just despairing when I passed this window and saw you. Are you enjoying the music?’

“I looked up into two brown eyes and my heart fluttered painfully.

“No, I didn’t feel any remorse yet, for I was still piqued at Will’s interference with my innocent pastime and what he had said still rankled in my heart.

“He sat down and we talked a few moments, and then he suggested that we walk up to the Auditorium and sit in the parlor, as it would be so much more quiet there. So I walked up there with him. We had a very pleasant chat and I thought more and more how ill-timed Will’s remarks were and how unjust. Why, this man was every bit as much a gentleman as Will himself.

“‘Pardon me, but are you not in mourning?’ he asked, noting my black apparel. ‘As you have probably noticed, I am wearing deep mourning and perhaps that is why I noticed yours.’

“I told him the circumstances, and then he told me he was mourning the loss of his wife, who had been dead three months. He seemed to feel like talking of her, so I encouraged him, thinking it might be a relief to his feelings. He did not say a great deal, except that they were very happy and she died, leaving a sweet baby girl, who survived her mother seven weeks.

“When at last I arose to go he laid a detaining hand on me and said: ‘Allow me to present my card, and will you allow me to call?’

“‘I should like to tell you all about our life, if it will not bore you. You are such a sympathetic little woman that it will be a great relief to unburden my heart to you.’ Tears stood in his eyes as he spoke. If there was anything needed to win me, more than his words, it was those tears. So, after hesitating a little and alluding to the unconventional manner in which we met, he said: ‘I know; I can understand how you might feel, but this is not a day of strict conventionalities, and you know that if we all waited for a formal introduction we should miss a great deal in the world. Many of the truest friendships are formed in this way.’

“So we decided on the following Wednesday. I suggested that night because I knew Will would be out of the city on that night.

“Wednesday night came at last and found me waiting expectantly. I was delighted at the prospect of doing something a little risqué. He came and I introduced him to my friends and they were very favorably impressed with him, I could see by their actions. I didn’t tell them how I met him though. After visiting awhile he asked me if I would not go down town and have dinner with him, and I thought that would be fine. We drove down town and stopped in front of a well-known restaurant; that is, well known to all but the novice.

“We alighted and were shown to a little room, which I have since learned was a private dining room. I did not exactly like the idea of being shut up in a room alone with him at the time, but did not dare comment on the matter for fear of showing my ignorance. He ordered a nice dinner and asked me what I would have to drink. I told him I never drank, so he did not insist on my taking anything, but ordered whiskey for himself. On the pretext of getting his handkerchief out of his overcoat, which hung back of me, he passed me and bent over and kissed me. Not a kiss of respect, but a kiss of vile, lecherous passion, and one, no doubt, intended to inflame me. I pushed him away from me disgusted and reprimanded him severely. He apologized and said: ‘You are so sweet, so irresistible I could not help it.’

“After dinner he came over to me again and kissed me. I was very angry this time and resolved to go home at once. He pushed me down into the chair and told me I could not go yet. I finally succeeded in rising to my feet and he sat down in the chair I vacated and pulled me down in his lap. I struggled to free myself and reached the door. He caught me in his arms and pressed me to him in a passionate embrace, raining burning kisses on my face. He subjected me to every indignity that was possible considering that I was fighting all the time to get away. I tried to reach the electric bell and summon aid, but he divined my intention and drew me back. I was afraid to scream for fear of creating a scene and perhaps getting my name in the paper in connection with such a scandalous affair.

“I prayed for deliverance from that man as I never prayed before in all my life, and promised myself if I got home safely I would never, never flirt with anyone again.

“As if in answer to my prayer, a thought flashed across my brain. My hat pins! They were of very stiff steel, and I snatched one out of my hat and plunged it viciously into his arm. It broke. I took the other and struck him with all my strength and that broke and I could not see that I had hurt him a particle. My strength was fast giving out, and I was in despair. I feared he would force me to yield that which I would rather die than part with. But joy! by this time the blood was running down his arm in a stream. He saw it and let me go. ‘My God! girl! What have you done? Look at the blood!’

“He took off his coat and rolled up his shirt sleeve. His heavy flannel undershirt was saturated with blood. The pin points had entered the upper arm with great force and the wounds were bleeding profusely. I felt sorry when I saw what I had done, and I offered to bind them up for him. He gave me his handkerchief and I bandaged it up tightly. Then he sat down, pale and trembling, weak from the loss of blood. I was in about the same condition from nervousness. He urged me to take a stimulant of some kind, and I finally consented and took my first drink of whiskey and absinthe. He told me all about his wife and how happy they had been the one short year she had been spared to him. He told me how she suffered on her deathbed and with what fortitude she bore up under it, trying with her last breath to cheer him and asking him to live for her baby’s sake.

“The tears rolled down his cheeks and I cried in sympathy.

“My angel wife is dead and her baby—our baby. No one cares for me now nor what I do. I have lost all my friends since she died and nearly all my money. I have been drinking and gambling and was in my cups when I came to you to-night. I would not hesitate a minute to kill myself if it were not for the fear that I should never meet her in heaven.”

“Do you think what you have done to-night would please her if she can look down and see you? You deliberately enticed an innocent girl here, one whom you surely must know was innocent, and for what purpose I can form but one opinion.’

“He went down on his knees beside me and begged my forgiveness.

“Give me one kiss to show me that you forgive me,’ he said.

“He called the waiter and ordered another drink apiece, which I should not have taken. It went to my head and when I tried to walk I staggered. He took me in his arms and that is the last I remember until I felt the wind blowing on my face.

“I was leaning against him in the carriage. I did not know where I was going and I did not care. The thought of Will came to me but dimly. I felt no compunction, and if I had it would not have aroused me from my stupor sufficiently to make me active.

“When I came to my senses I was home, thank heaven! Just as pure as when I left. They told me I had been brought home ill; had had a sudden attack of heart failure and had been given something to stimulate me. So much for the whiskey breath.

“When Will returned I met him as usual, but with, oh, so much keener appreciation of his goodness than I had ever felt before. I had had an experience which taught me his sterling worth. I realized how unscrupulous men were when they had no interest in a woman beyond that of a passing fancy.

“No, I have not told Will. I could not see that it would do any good. I committed one indiscretion and I think I should commit another if I told him. He might not forgive me, or, if he did, he would never feel quite the same toward me, perhaps, and both his happiness and mine would be ruined. I say ruined, for we are certainly very congenial and I believe God intended us for each other, and perhaps it was part of His divine providence that I passed through what I did.”

10. Sold At A Fixed Price

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE.

“By thine own soul’s law learn to live,
 And if men thwart thee, take no heed,
 And if men hate thee, have no care;
 Sing thou thy song and do thy deed.
 Hope thou thy hope and pray thy prayer,
 And claim no crown they will not give,
 Nor bays they grudge thee for thy hair.
 “Keep thou thy soul-sworn, steadfast oath,
 And to thy heart be true thy heart;
 What thy soul teaches learn to know,
 And play out thine appointed part,
 And thou shalt reap as thou shalt sow,
 Nor helped nor hindered in thy growth,
 To thy full stature thou shalt grow.
 “Fix on the future’s goal thy face,
 And let thy feet be lured to stray
 Nowhither, but be swift to run,
 And nowhere tarry by the way,
 Until at last the end is won
 And thou mayst look back from thy place
 And see thy long day’s journey done.”

“Dearest Arthur: Sounds strange, does it not, or, perhaps, no sound escapes your lips as your eyes scan this letter. I write you; you are surprised, I know, but you should not be, for stranger things than this have happened. My reasons for writing, I say reasons because they are numerous, will be divulged either by statements from my pen or by a critical reading between the lines.

“You asked me to write, though why you should have done so is more than I am able to determine. I am sure it was not all love which prompted you to make the request. I feel that you did at one time love me. No, a man of your force of character cannot love truly and allow that love to die while the object of his devotion lives. If you ever loved, you still love. The only question that remains unanswered is, ‘Am I the only one to whom your whole heart has gone out?’ Be that as it may, I have concluded that, wise or unwise, right or wrong, the same untiring love which has inspired me to worship you, day by day and the long night through, since first we met, must live on until the words, ‘Dust to dust’ have echoed through the tall pines and rolling mounds of our Southern city of the dead, while the clods fall heavily on the

rough box that contains my casket. I feel I could court even death while reveling in the sunshine of your beautiful love, and smilingly challenge the chords of life to snap and precipitate me into that unknown beyond, with the memory of your dear kisses on my cold, blue lips.

“I feel that way now, when so many leagues separate us, but I presume that should I be blessed with one smile from you, I should want to live always. I think one slight token of recognition, one little sign of memory of the old days, spreading over your features would be food and drink to me ever. But such joys do not spread themselves on my table of anticipation. I know not love. I only know what it is to love. I have hesitated about writing you as I shall before I close.

“I have wondered if by holding open the bleeding wounds of my breast, the breast you have made love to, the breast that gave life and strength to your child, while the thrills of motherhood overcame me even to tears of joy, would pain you. I have summed it all up and have concluded that nothing will pain you, so will not hesitate to show to you the every heart-beat as it forces the blood through the veins which your heartless acts have drained. Forgive me, darling, if I inflict any injury upon your feelings by any reference to the past, but then you know your short note said, ‘Do not conceal a single thought nor withhold one particle of the emotion with which your voluptuous body abounds.’ I will pour out the soul that you have penned up. I will account to you for the acts which you refer to as unladylike. I will bring to your mind new fancies, born of reflection. I will accuse you of no wrong, for you in your exalted goodness and influential position must know right from wrong. If I am wrong, God is just. If He allowed you to misjudge me, I beseech Him to prevent you from branding another woman with the same iron. While I have been writing one day has died and another been born. With the passing of the hour I have passed another milestone. I am now one year older. My birthday and my baby are the only things I can claim without dispute as to title.

“I have been to his bed, the baby’s bed, and shall I tell you—his father—how sweetly he sleeps, how my burning kisses did not startle him? You will know whether or not these lips of mine will arouse a man to his greatest efforts. You, and you alone, have tasted the sweets that I longed to lavish upon you until satiety was a far away and unknown thing.

“You said: ‘Write. I am interested in your welfare.’

“I believe you, for you fear me as the bleating lamb fears the ravenous wolf; but fear not, oh, god of mine; you are my child’s father, and for the gracious act of begetting me an image of thine own self I shall always be devoted to you.

“Oh, that I could live on and on into the ages that are only obscured by oblivion. But no. Face to face with a world, I must accept death as a charm to enduring existence. You must know, dearest, that I love you, have always loved you and shall always love you. As I sit and look into the fire which from great red flames has sunk to an ember glow, I liken it to your love; for in the manliness of your youthfulness you loved me with a passion that was all consuming. I bathed your soul in the divine worship and devotion such as only a pure woman can pour out on a man whom she extols above all others. In your letter there appears not one allusion to love. Is it possible that you do not love me? You who have held me so close while spasms of delight have shaken your stalwart frame, and the flame of passion has reddened your otherwise placid brow, while exclamations of joy poured forth from your lips between the spasmodic kisses which held my lips as in a vice. You, a man of equal parts, do not mention love; you may remain silent on that subject, but if you tell yourself that you do not love you *lie*, and your heart bears witness to it.

“You can love; I know you can, for I can love with a wild desire to die in your arms, and I am a student of no school but your own.

“Do you imagine that the cold indifference which your letter displays will have a tendency to lessen my love for you? Do not be misled, I beg of you, for you once descended from your proud station to make love to me, and I have treasured that love and it has grown into such a mountain that no chasm of indifference can ever engulf it, and remember you are his father—my child’s father. He would love you, too, for having loved me, if for no other reason, for, God bless him, he is in love with your old sweetheart. Where I go he will go. I do not love you still with the hope that as in our case at first, love begets love.

“I have long since learned to live to love, and expect nothing but dreams in return. You did love me. No, you did not, or else all the world could not have torn you from me; but you cannot love another. I wish you might, for the goodness which lies within you would shine out and light a world of laggards.

“You ask me if I am comfortable. Yes. I have everything that my physical needs require. I have a good home and plenty to eat and wear. You say you often wonder how I manage to get along in such an expensive city. Now, if you mean that, you love me and you feel that every dollar I have comes without the soil of dishonor. I will tell you how I—we—live. You have raved over my figure; you have worshipped my body as though the presence of my heart were an unheard of thing. Other men have evidently been schooled in the same house of learning as you, for they, too, admire my flesh and bone. Not a day passes but that I form some new acquaintance, and, as I take it, all on account of my shapely limbs, my slender waist and swelling bosoms. Those very possessions which were once yours, all yours for your own aggrandizement and worshipful indulgence; those charms which held you to me—the wealth of red-gold hair, the pink-tipped ears, the pearly white teeth, the tapering hands, the high-arched foot, the delicately moulded ankles, the laughing eyes and supple grace that you so admired, even before I gave to you a son, are as much admired by other men as they once were admired by you.

“It is different, though, with them and you. You held all of the then priceless pearls with nothing but love; the same possessions which were then yours because I loved you, are now dispensed at intervals to suit the convenience of other men and for financial consideration.

“We—you and I—can remember the time when no man but you could lay claim to any of my charms except my ready smile and kindly word.

“Now, and for two years past, my charms have been the property of a public who, while not so demonstrative as you once were, seem wild to have me disport myself for the edification of mankind.

“I often ask if I wrong a nature-loving public by allowing the use of my body to fulfill their desires.

“My natural answer is no. I feel, in fact, that I may be the means of saving some timid girl the embarrassment of assuming my place in the world. I am sure I can do more to satisfy the whims of humanity than can a novice, for I am a student of your school and your ideas are instilled within me until I feel that my efforts will avail more than the efforts of an inexperienced girl. Again, I am feeding and clothing myself and our baby, and I love you. The world will, in part, frown upon me for the part I am playing; others silently applaud me, and I congratulate myself and feel, in a certain degree, I am a guardian angel and the precepts inculcated by my conduct will be fittingly heralded to ears which will transmit them to the heart with a good effect. I am doing what you might not object to your divorced wife doing, but that which no man of high honor would consent to his daughter doing.

“I am a model at the Art Institute. I pose in the nude, and I thank God I am an honorable woman, and, in spite of all the years of suffering, I am still devoted to the man who taught me to love. With thanks for your inquiry, I beg to sign for this once,

“Your wife,

“Nora.”

11. A Story Of Suicide Bridge

“Age cannot love destroy,
 But perfidy can blast the flower,
 Even when in most unwary hour,
 It blooms in Fancy’s bower.
 Age cannot love destroy,
 But perfidy can rend the shrine
 In which its vermeil splendors shine.”

It was a blustering winter day and a heavy snow was falling, making the streets exceedingly disagreeable to traverse. State street was crowded with shoppers evidently bent on taking advantage of the annual clearing sale which always takes place at the beginning of the new year.

I was elbowing my way through the crowd on the east side of the street, about as uncomfortable as a man could be, when I passed Kehoe’s. I had not gone a dozen steps when it occurred to me that a cup of hot chocolate would taste good. I turned abruptly and encountered an umbrella, which flashed dangerously close to my eyes. Somewhat confused, I entered the door behind a woman. She had pushed the door open and dropped her skirts directly in front of me. It was too late for me to catch myself and in less time than it takes to tell it, I had stepped on them. The suddenness with which she let that door swing back was appalling. It took me squarely on the nose, a fact which I do not now regret, inasmuch as it led to a very pleasant acquaintance. She glanced around to learn the cause of all the trouble and accepted my humble apologies with good grace, and seemed to feel sorry when she saw her carelessness was the cause of a great deal of suffering, for I could not well disguise the fact as the tears ran down my cheeks.

All the tables but one were taken and that was a small one in the corner, at which there were two chairs. She made her way to it quickly and when she saw me waiting she sent the waitress to me to tell me to come to her table. I bowed in response and crossed the room.

“I feel that I owe you some consideration for the unfortunate occurrence of a few moments ago,” she said, “and I hope you’ll accept my apologies in turn.”

I replied that it was my own stupidity and assured her that I already began to feel it was rather a fortunate than unfortunate occurrence.

She smiled, yet at the same time drew herself up with a quiet dignity that was unmistakable, and I knew I had taken the wrong tack when I made my gallant speech.

By this time my eyes were somewhat cleaned of tears and I was able to get a distant view of my vis-a-vis. I had already discovered that she was of medium height and quite slender. Her face was oval, her eyes large and brown, and looked liquid in the half light of our corner; her chin was round, her mouth was rather large and when she smiled her full, red lips disclosed a set of well kept teeth; her nose was neither long nor short, but quite in keeping with the contour of her face. Her eyebrows were dark and beautifully arched. Her forehead was high and full and an abundance of real golden hair was drawn back and concealed under the large, black beaver hat she wore so becomingly.

The real beauty of her face, however, was in its expression. Every emotion was clearly defined in the wonderful eyes and, though when smiling they would light up with a merry laughter, their general expression was one of sweet sadness.

When I assisted her to remove her coat, can I be blamed for feasting my eyes on the beautiful bust and shoulders with which nature had endowed her?

We chatted idly on the topics of the day as we sipped our chocolate, and when we had finished I handed her my card, saying, "If you ever need services in my line, I shall be pleased to render them."

She thanked me and said as she read "Attorney at Law," "I might have been grateful for your proffered aid a few years ago, but now, thank God, I do not need such aid, and I hope I shall never need it."

Then she handed me her card. "Mrs. Geoffrey Nye Melville." As I read I could not restrain the exclamation that arose to my lips.

"Why, I once had a friend by that name who was an official on the St. Paul road. He and I were the best of friends in St. Paul five years ago. I was at that time their attorney."

"It is certainly my husband whom you know," she said, "and you must come and call on us at your earliest convenience."

I thanked her and on the strength of my friendship for her husband asked to escort her to the train.

I was not long in taking advantage of her invitation, and felt doubly free to do so, inasmuch as her husband had hunted me up the very next day after our meeting, and had insisted on my coming as soon as possible.

It happened that the night I called her husband was away, having been unexpectedly summoned to St. Paul on business.

I found her alone and looking almost beautiful in the bright red crepe gown she wore. Her skin was fair but pale and her cheeks reflected just enough of the color to enhance the effect. We had a long talk on generalities and gradually drifted to personalities.

"I am quite surprised at Geoffrey's marrying again," said I. "I had begun to think him proof against the fair sex five years ago, and it seems to me he added four more to that, with all due respect for you, my charming hostess."

"Well," she sighed, "he might still have remained single had not he met me in my forlorn condition, and I often think pity was the deepest sentiment he felt until we had been married several months. Well, you see, like most Chicago women, I have a story, and mine is a long one, but probably not an unusual one."

"Dare I presume to ask you for it, on the strength of my long friendship for your husband?"

She was gazing dreamily into the grate and did not reply for a moment, then she turned her glorious eyes toward me and said slowly, "Yes, I will tell you if you think it will interest you."

I assured her it would and asked her to proceed.

"I was married once before, too," she said, "but was so unhappy that I left my husband and secured a divorce on the grounds of cruelty. I was granted a small alimony, enough to supply my modest wants.

“As time went on, I became rather dissatisfied with my quiet life and was filled with a desire to enter the business world. It was just about this time that a friend of mine, being too ill to go down town, asked me to do an errand for her. It took me into an office building, and when I entered the reception room I was told that the party for whom I inquired was not in, but was expected soon, so I sat down and waited.

“While I was waiting a man came out of one of the private offices, and as he saw me waiting he stopped and asked me whom I wished to see. When I told him he asked me into his office to wait, saying I would find it more pleasant there than in the reception room.

“As I think of it now, I wonder why I did not always adhere to my first impression of him, which presented itself so forcibly. It must have been fate, I guess. He was not at all handsome; he, in fact, was homely, especially his mouth, which was too coarse, yet when he spoke his countenance lighted up and there was an earnestness about him that partially restored my confidence. He had a fine physique, a large, brainy head, and carried himself with dignity. Well, we drifted into the discussion of literature, and I found this was a well chosen subject, for we were both deeply interested in it.

“After visiting an hour or more with him, I decided to wait no longer for the man I had called to see, and I left. Not long after this my friend called at the same suite of offices and she met Mr. Ferris. She seemed very favorably impressed with him, so much so that she asked him to call, and I must say that in spite of my prejudice I enjoyed the evening. He called often after that and my friend said that he was in love with me. I did not believe it at the time, probably because I was so utterly indifferent to him at that time. He interested me greatly, however, for many reasons, not least among which was the fact that he was in touch with the business world and I thought I saw possibilities through him.

“It was not a month after this that he proposed to me. We were sitting on the couch together, and I had been telling him of the unexpected visit of a little friend of mine from Buffalo. He suddenly took my hand in his and said, ‘Claire, I want you, and before anyone comes into this home to rob me of you, I want your promise to be mine, all mine.’

“I felt within myself that he had endeared himself to me considerably, but did not feel at all sure that I wanted to marry him, and told him so, so we left the matter in that way, although I accepted his ring, but it was with the understanding that if in the course of a few months I wished to retract, I was at liberty to do so.

“On the following Wednesday Gretta came. Dear little Gretta. Pretty, petite and winsome, so sweet yet so frivolous.

“I introduced Mr. Ferris to her and they soon became good friends; no one could help being nice to her. I was slightly indisposed at this time and was very glad that Ned could take her out, for it relieved me of the burden of entertaining her, for a burden it was, in my present condition.

“One night, while I was confined to my room, she came to me and told me that she loved Ned, and that she believed he loved her, for he had kissed her and called her his dear little girl.

“As if by magic, the demon of jealousy reared his head and began to sting me. I loved him now, I knew it, for I was unmistakably jealous. I was jealous of a pretty, voluptuous, little doll, with no thought beyond her present gratification, be it a new gown or a dinner, both of which she enjoyed with all the fervor of her nature. They had not one thing in common, unless it was their passionate natures. I tried to reason with myself, to assure myself of the fact that a man of his calibre could not really love so frivolous a creature as she; that it was

merely a passing fancy. But having been married, I knew a man's nature so well, knew how often a magnetic personality lured them on to mistakes fatal to the happiness of both, that my theory of incompatibility was not altogether a consolation.

"During this period of uneasiness, I did not mention the matter to him. I was too proud to mention it to him, and felt it would be beneath my dignity to admit that I had a possible rival in one so shallow. Perhaps that is where I made my mistake; I don't know.

"I tried to lull my suspicions to rest, but they would none of it, and one night after they had gone to the theater I dragged myself wearily down stairs to the library, which was off the parlor and separated from it by heavy portieres. I became tired of reading at last and turned out the gas and laid down determined to await their return and be convinced that my suspicions were groundless, if possible; at least I wanted to hear how he made love to her and decide for myself whether he meant it or not.

"I must have fallen asleep, for the first thing I remember was his saying in most pleading tones, 'Come in here a moment, dear, and let me love you, as only I can love you.'

"She danced into the darkened room beside him and he led her across it to the large leather couch. He picked her up bodily and laid her on the couch, and before she could demur, had she been so inclined, he was bending over her and raining fervent kisses upon her and she nestled up to him and sighed in an abandonment of ecstasy, fearing nothing, hoping nothing, only living in the delight of the moment.

"I don't know how I expected her to resist him; in fact, I'm sure I didn't. I would have saved her, but for the fact that I seemed as if in a nightmare, unable to move or utter a sound. I lived hours in those moments.

"After awhile I heard a sobbing. Then his voice, all tenderness and commiseration, 'There, there, dear, don't cry. You are all right. Don't feel so badly; we are just human, and are no worse than hundreds of others.'

"'Humph!' thought I, suffering though I was, 'there is a great deal of consolation in that!'

"Gradually the sobs ceased, and then he bade her good-night. I knew she would not go into my room this night, so had no need to fear my absence from my room would be discovered.

"What I suffered that night, only God knows. I laid there all night in my misery, freezing and burning by turns. It seemed to me my hair must be gray. My idol was shattered, it lay in fragments at my feet, but alas! as with the shattered vase, round which the scent of the roses still clung, so did the virtues with which I had endowed this being continue to obtrude themselves to the complete obliteration of the crime he had committed before my very eyes.

"At daybreak I went to my room and bathed my haggard face and tried to make myself presentable, at least, to Gretta when she should come in to see me. I had not decided what to do for the immediate present, only that I would say nothing.

"Much to my surprise, Gretta came in beaming as usual, her volatile spirits were incapable of more than momentary depression, and I wondered vaguely if it could all be a horrible dream.

"Out of the chaos of my brain one idea resolved itself, and that was to tell him all after she left, unless he, in his desire to right the wrong, asked for his release.

"She went. A week passed and nothing was said, and I knew then nothing would be said. He was going out of the city and I determined to tell him about it on his return Sunday night.

"He came and after he had chatted awhile he got up and said he would go out and order an ice sent up from the drug store around the corner. As he bent to pick up his hat, a letter fell

unnoticed from his pocket. Perhaps I should not have done so, but I concealed it with my skirt until he left the room. It was from Gretta, I found, and I have it yet," she said, as she crossed the room to the little inlaid writing desk, and took from it a plain white envelope bordered in black.

"I am going to let you read it," she said, handing it to me.

"Dearest Ned:—

"I am going to die, I am sure. I am grieving myself to death over you. The sun never shines brightly any more and my heart aches all the time now. I am disgraced, or soon will be. Oh, Ned, come and take your poor, little Gretta away. Tell Claire what you did and she is so good and sweet she will send you to me, I know. Please take me away and marry me and I will tell them all that we went to St. Joe and were married when I was there visiting in Chicago. Come, dear, or I shall surely die. I ordered this black bordered paper because I am sure mamma will have use for it soon; anyway I am in mourning for the loss of what even you, with all your tenderness, cannot give back to me.

"Come, Ned, for baby's sake.

"Your heart broken

Gretta."

"When I had finished my head swam, and I felt but one mad desire, and that was to fly. I acted on the impulse and after pinning a note to the letter saying, 'Ned, I knew some of this before, now I know all. I am going away where you will never see me or hear from me again. You *must* do your duty no matter what the sacrifice. A lifetime of devotion cannot repay her for her loss.

Claire.'

"I put on my hat and left by the side entrance. I had not the remotest idea of where I was going or what I was going to do. I was numb with agony and wandered aimlessly on until I came to a car line, then the thought flashed across my mind to go to 'Suicide Bridge,' and thither I went.

"It was yet early in the evening and many people were lingering in the park. I walked onto the bridge with perfect calmness, the calmness of despair (for what was there now to live for), and on to my fate. I walked to the center of the bridge, as nearly as I can remember, and looking carefully around and seeing no one, I climbed upon the railing and jumped.

"God must have raised up that man at that particular moment from mere nothingness, for I was so sure I was the only one on the structure at the time. He caught my skirt and by an almost superhuman effort drew me back onto the bridge. He did not ask a question, but took me in his arms and carried me until he met a policeman, to whom he said, 'My wife became dizzy and fainted. Please call a carriage.'

"He took me to the Virginia hotel, and when I had sufficiently recovered to talk he said with decision, 'I feel you were sent to me this night, raised up from the ashes of my buried hopes, and if you are free to marry I want you for my wife. I care not what your past has been or what caused you to try such a rash act. Your sweet, refined face tells me you are good and for the rest I care naught. I do not profess to love you, neither do I expect you to love me, but we will try to make life endurable together. You saved my life as much as I saved yours, for by saving you I saved my own, for I went there tonight for the very purpose of doing what you tried to do. Come now, what do you say?' he said earnestly."

“And what did you say?”

“I said I was willing to try, and thank God that I did, for I have never regretted it. We were married that night between eleven and twelve.”

“And what about Gretta?”

“Ned made what reparation he could; that is, he married her, and they have a dear little Ned eight months old.”

12. Two Babes And Two Mothers

“They say best men are moulded out of faults;
And for the most, become much more the better
For being a little bad.”

“Yes, we are very happy here.”

“That fact is very evident and, as I am out for a story today, I am going to be so rude as to ask you if there is not some pain back of all this peacefulness?”

The woman addressed drew herself up to her full height, which was little more than five feet, while her gray eyes gleamed with the assurance of complete possession of some article of value.

This woman was not handsome, in fact had she been placed in less effective surroundings she would have been homely.

But she was good, although the fact that she had borne cares could not well be concealed. It was her nature and intention to see the brightest side of any object, and that trait in her character was so dominant that it outshone her physical imperfections. The writer had known her a very long time, and she had often promised him a story, so that it took but little urging on his part to get her to talk of her past life.

“I was never a famous beauty, an actress, a singer of note, nor a rich man’s daughter,” she said, by way of beginning. “I was a simple country girl whose chief duties consisted in helping my mother wash, iron, churn and pull weeds in the garden in the summer months, while the winter days were whiled away by washing dishes, going to school, and if nothing of greater importance came up for the evening, sewing carpet rags until bed time.

“Such was the monotony of the life of Virginia Dawson. My father thought little of the future, not that he failed to care, but that he failed to see that the future held anything in store for him or his children. He had been taught the lesson of frugality, the same being demonstrated by poverty. It seems strange that a discovery of nature’s deposits would be the turning point in my humdrum existence, but such was the case. My parental home was but a few miles from the now busy city of Anderson, Ind., and it was the finding of natural gas near our house that threw me into the company of Arthur Blake. He was the son of wealthy parents and, though all my sufferings are directly traceable to my early association with him, I must say that he is one of the most noble of men. He came to the community in which we dwelt as a civil engineer, having fancied that profession more than any other. A firm of Boston capitalists had employed him to investigate the extent and certainty of the gas belt. He was instructed to keep his business quiet and to conceal his real identity. To do this, he assumed the role of a laborer, going about and actually toiling with the derricks, ropes and pipes just as though he was not an heir to a large fortune.

“While thus engaged he came to our humble home to board. I was just such a strip of awkward girlhood as any man might expect to find in a child of the rural district.

“I know I was the most unsophisticated creature that ever lived. I knew nothing of life outside the five-room house in which my parents had lived for twenty years and in which I had been born nearly seventeen years before I met Arthur Blake.

“He remained at our house for three months, and so refined and dignified was he that he won a place in our hearts that was hard to fill by any others. He was rather reticent and made few friends. My father was dumfounded when one day Arthur proposed that he, my father, go and buy a new buggy.

“What would I buy a buggy with and what for?” asked my father.

“With this,” said Arthur, as he handed father a roll of bills, “and for my use. I shall have to do a great deal of driving. I will hire a horse from you, but I want everyone to understand that the whole outfit is yours.”

“So it was arranged, and it was generally said by less fortunate neighbors that ‘Dawson must be makin’ money keepin’ boarders.’

“Then came a long series of drives over the broad expanse of the gas fields. My parents did not object to my going with him, for he was very considerate of my welfare. It was during these trips that I learned of the beauties of nature. I soon became thrilled with the songs of birds, the chirping of crickets and the humming of bees, none of which had held any charms for me before. Plants that to me had always been known as weeds now bore bright blossoms; the green leaves meant more to me. I saw beauty in the undulating fields which I had always known as plain hills. The whole world seemed to put on a new garment. You see that I was not experienced enough to know that I saw everything with different eyes than before. I did not know that a little word of four letters told all that affected me, in fact I did not know what love meant until he told me, and then I did not fully understand it until he was away from me for three weeks.

“He went home, back to Pittsburg on a visit, and while he was gone the brightness of the flowers faded. The frosts of October withered the foliage, and the brown of the leaves seemed to resemble the solemnity of my heart when I would walk along the well known paths with pleasant memories in my mind. Every bush and tree seemed to add to the sentiment with which my heart was filled and sobs choked me. The notes of the few birds that had remained tempting fate by braving the elements were even sobbing.

“Then he came back, and the glinting of the sunshine on the early morning frost was not brighter than my life. After that he made real love to me, and I have always thought he meant it. Our love was like that of many others and led to grave indiscretions, and in due time I realized that I was in serious trouble. I told Arthur and he said he would go back to his father and get some money and come and marry me. Instead, he went away and during those months of waiting my suffering was beyond description.

“I was finally forced to tell my parents. My mother wept herself sick; father became morose and said little; my trouble became neighborhood gossip; one old lady going so far as to say it was good enough and she guessed most anybody could have a new buggy for that price.

“One day after my baby was born, a well dressed stranger called at our house and asked for my father. He was a lawyer that Arthur had sent. He had a great lot of papers he wanted us to sign, and after a long talk with father, we signed them as directed. After that father seemed to get along better; he was kinder to me and seemed to like the baby better. He seemed to have more money and the first day of each month, rain or shine, he went to town and nearly always brought mother and me a new dress or some article of apparel that was most needed. He gave me money to buy the baby’s clothes without a murmur, and took a more cheerful view of everything.

“At last the land in our section became so valuable for the gas that was under it that the little forty-acre tract on which my father had been a tenant so long, was sold to a party of capitalists, and our occupation as farmers was gone.

“We moved to town, I mean Anderson, Indiana. There my father obtained work in a factory. All this time my baby was growing from the sphere of long clothes, into prattling, toddling childhood. Father toiled long and faithfully day by day; mother and I managed the housework, nor was our strength taxed, for we had but a five-room cottage, and it seemed a shame that poor father should work so hard, so many long hours of the day and we have so much time to spend in idleness. It was decided that I should seek employment and I obtained a situation as maid in the home of one of the large factory owners. I had a very pleasant place, and when at the end of two years, the family decided to remove to Chicago, it was arranged that I go with them. My mother could easily get along without me, and she had grown so fond of the baby that she would not hear of my taking her with me.

“I was soon located in my new home on one of the principal North Side thoroughfares of the city. All went well until one day the lady of the house announced that she expected some company from California, and wished me to be in attendance to them during their stay.

“When the visitors arrived I was at my station in the hall on the second floor; the hostess greeted them, and in her demonstration of hospitality showed the lady the suite they were to occupy during their stay. She rang and I went in to assist in putting away the wraps. The lady was a sweet young matron, and when she said, ‘Now I must have my baby with me a little while,’ I could have hugged her.

“‘Yes,’ said the hostess; ‘Virginia, run down and bring the baby up; he is with his papa in the reception room.’

“Then, with a motherly feeling growing in my breast, I descended the heavily carpeted stairs, three steps at a time, but even in my flight I had taken time to fall in love with that baby before I ever set eyes on it.

“I told the gentleman that I would take the baby up to its mother. I saw the pallor on his face as I spoke, but when I took my baby’s half-brother into my arms none of the spectators suspected the truth.”

“Then the man was—?”

“Yes, it was my Arthur who had brought his wife and child to visit in the home where I was a servant, quite accidental, of course, and thanks to my rugged nature, I did not faint nor in any way betray my feelings.

“For two weeks I held my post of duty. Once he tried to speak to me in the hall, but I ran away from him. I felt that my claim had been settled. The day they left he pushed an envelope into my hand as I was packing his wife’s trunks. It contained a fifty-dollar bill and a letter. The money was an insult; the letter told me of his sympathy for me, and how he had been engaged to his wife long before he met me, but had loved me and still did. It all aroused my anger. I brooded over the matter for three weeks, then concluded to go to his home and expose the whole affair to his wife. I went to Anderson, got my little girl and departed for the west. I had no difficulty in finding his home. I was admitted and ushered into the parlor. His wife soon came to me; the moment she saw my little girl she began to weep and took her in her arms. My first impression was that he had told her everything. But no, she explained to me that her baby boy had contracted a cold in Chicago, from which he had never recovered, and they had buried him but two days before. She insisted on knowing whose child I had with me. Her suffering had the effect of changing my plans. Poor soul, I did not wish to add to her

misery. After wringing a promise from her never to tell anyone, not even her husband, I told my story. I told her all except who the man was, and I concealed that fact from her. She insisted on my staying at their home for a few days until I found work. I was eager to do so, for she said baby and I would be such a comfort to her.

“I left with a promise to return. I found Arthur’s office and told him why I had come west, also how my plans were altered. He listened in silence until I had finished, then tenderly he took the baby into his arms and kissed her—just think, the first father’s kiss she had ever known.

“In spite of all my desire to expose him I was now fully convinced that it would be a great wrong to wreck his life and that of the woman who was his wife, and whom he had loved before he met me. He joined his wife in her entreaties for me to make my home with them, at least, he said, until I could do better.

“All went well for two months. Suffer? Yes, I suffered more than I dared then admit, but I was doing good, I was making his wife happy instead of dealing out pain, as I first intended. I am sure he suffered also, but I think he, too, found a great deal of happiness in the fact that he was doing all in his power for me and my child, without doing any harm to anyone. But an end must come, even to good intentions. One evening we were all sitting in the library of his home; my little girl was playing with a doll house he had given her. She had been quietly engaged in this pursuit for some moments, and so still was she we almost forgot that she was in the room. All at once she left her play and ran to Arthur and proceeded to climb up in his lap. Then putting her chubby arms around his neck and kissing his cheek, she said, ‘I wish you was my papa.’ And before anyone could answer her she turned to me and said, ‘Mamma, ain’t I dot no papa? Why tant you det me a nice papa like—like—Unca Arter?’

“It was too much for him. Tears sprang into his eyes and, putting her gently from him, he left the room. His wife thought his grief was caused by the sad recollection of their baby, but I knew. Such scenes were exceedingly straining, so I avowed my intention to return to Chicago, whereupon they begged me to leave my little Harriet with them. We talked it over while Arthur held her on his knee. I finally consented, for I knew she would be better cared for there with them than she would with me. I felt the greatest pain, though, when, after it was settled, Arthur lovingly folded her in his arms and said, ‘Now, darling, I am going to be your papa.’ Freeing herself from him, and not quite understanding it all, she ran to me and said, ‘Who’s doin’ to be my mamma now, you, mamma, or Auntie Arter?’ I could only take her in my arms and weep.

“Good-byes were said and I came here and found work in a restaurant. Letters came and went with the regularity of the rising sun. Always a little sheet of scribbles from my baby. They never allowed her to forget me. To my surprise one day I received a telegram from Arthur saying that his wife, the baby and himself would arrive in Chicago in three days. I did not understand at the time, but learned upon their arrival that Arthur’s wife had become afflicted with some malady which required a difficult surgical operation, and she was coming here for that purpose.

“The operation was performed and everything done to save her precious life, but it became the painful duty of the nurse to tell Arthur that all efforts had resulted in failure. The slender thread of life seemed about to be severed. They sent for me to come to the hospital and bring my baby. I went and was shown to the room where white sheets seemed to predominate, the monotony of which was only broken by the vases of beautiful flowers which filled the room with sweet perfume.

“Arthur and the nurse were with her. She feebly requested the nurse to leave us alone, then she kissed me and the baby, and reached out her feverish hands to Arthur.

“‘Arthur,’ she said, in trembling tones, ‘Arthur, say once more that you love me and for the sake of that love will do something for me.’

“The scene was pitiful. Arthur knelt beside the bed and took the death marked face between his strong hands and said, ‘Nannie, dear, I do love you, and will do anything you ask.’

“Poor soul, how she struggled for breath while Arthur with his face buried in the white linen sobbed his heart out.

“Then she said, ‘Now the baby.’

“He took the baby and placed her on the bed as she requested, where she could pat and caress her.

“‘And now you come, too, Virginia.’

“And there, with death stealing in on the bright rays of sunlight, we knelt one on either side of the baby.

“With a look of love which I shall always cherish, she began by addressing me:

“‘Virginia, I know all; he, Arthur, my Arthur and your Arthur, dear, has been good and truthful, and baby, God bless you, you have a real papa now and one of your choice. Listen—Arthur—Virginia—,’ her breath now came in gasps,—‘I’m—going to our little Arthur—see—see—he is watching us—and he’s waiting—for—me. Promise—Arthur—promise—Vir-gin-ia, that when I am gone—you will marry—for the baby’s—sake—and—my—sake—promise.’

“The sun crept through the blinds and lighted the smile that flitted over her face as I closed the bloodless eyelids.

“As soon as Arthur could arrange his business affairs in California, he went to New York, where baby and I were to join him.

“We were married quietly there a month after Nannie died. Quietly, because the world would have censured us for lack of respect had it known just that much of the affair.

“We sailed for Liverpool, and traveled abroad a year, and on our return we married again, and this time publicly. We are very happy, although there was much pain behind it all. We both know now what true happiness is.”

13. Not Guilty

“I have so loved thee, but cannot, cannot hold thee,
Fading like a dream, the shadows fold thee;
Slowly thy perfect beauty fades away,
Good-bye, sweet day; good-bye, sweet day.”

I stood outside and listened. The silvery, sweet tones of the singer rose clear above the soft guitar accompaniment. As the last words died away on the stillness of the evening air, I rang the bell. It seemed almost sacrilege to break in on her quiet enjoyment, although I knew she must soon be expecting me. She responded to the summons at the door herself. Of medium height, with beautiful, sloping shoulders, a tiny waist and perfectly moulded hips, she would have inspired an artist. Her hair was prematurely gray, and dressed low on her neck. Her face was almost perfect in feature and the only traces of sorrow time had left visible were the gray hairs and lines about the slightly drooping mouth. It was the heart which bore the scars of agony, invisible to all but her and her God. She had passed through the fire and had come forth purer, fairer, sweeter, more charitable, more forgiving, better fitted to cope with the world.

This was the woman as I knew her now, and had known her for the past year. She was to be married on the morrow (lucky man), and had promised to tell me her life’s story before she married.

“For I shall want to forget all that sad past after the last day of this life, for tomorrow, I trust, a new era shall have dawned for me,” she said, when she gave me her promise.

When I heard her singing I wondered if she longed, yet feared, the new life, and if she wished to hold the day yet a little longer, which she had evidently given over to reminiscences, for I knew the past held some sweet memories, for every past has them, no matter how bitter it has been. And those sweet memories seem the brighter for their setting of darkness.

“I have been thinking of my past life all day,” she said, after we were seated, “and you know when one indulges in such a review a thousand things recur to one’s mind which are really irrelevant to the real story, yet they all combine to make up one’s life, and may have some bearing on the case after all.”

She was silent a long time, looking out into the twilight with unseeing eyes.

“You know I was accused of murder,” she said, abruptly. “I was tried and acquitted owing to insufficient evidence.”

“Yes, I remember something about it.”

“Five years ago, when I was nineteen, I married a man who was twenty years my senior. I met him out west while I was visiting there. He was a miner then, not actively engaged in digging the gold out of mother earth, nor panning it, but he was on the ground and superintended the work. He was a handsome man, although bronzed by exposure to the sun and wind; a Yale graduate, and every inch a gentleman, although thoroughly a man of the world. To sentimental nineteen, he had all the qualifications of a god, and although he was not the only one in Colorado Springs who was attentive to me, he was the one altogether lovely in my eyes. To be Mrs. Chauncey M. Dare was the height of my girlish ambition, and I

used to write my name 'Lucile Dare' just to see how it would look on paper, and all this was before he had asked me to take his name.

"My auntie, who was a wealthy widow, thoroughly approved of him and thought him a most eligible parti. He was reputed wealthy and, as Auntie said, he was old enough to be staid in his ways. I am sure she had my best interests at heart, but it seems strange to me now that she did not realize that he was too many years my senior and also that she did not deem it necessary to look into his antecedents. But if she had, she might not have found out, and I suppose I should not have this story to tell, and perhaps, too, I should have always been a careless child, with no thought for the comfort and welfare of others.

"Well, we were married on the fifteenth of October and took apartments at The Arlington, instead of going to housekeeping, because he said he did not expect to remain there long, and it was an easy matter to pack and leave the hotel.

"It was his desire to go back to New York City and show his 'girl bride,' as he called me, to all his friends and have a taste of real life.

"He met the highest ideal of all my girlish fancies, and was as tender a husband as he was a lover.

"After we had been married six months he came home one night and said, 'Hurrah, babe, we are going east in a fortnight, thank God, so get your duds packed and be ready.'

"I was glad to make the change, too, for youth loves a change, and I was delighted at the prospect of going to New York, for I had never been further east than Chicago.

"We went at the end of the two weeks. I was received with open arms by all his friends in the east and I thought myself the happiest girl in the world, for he seemed so proud of me. I know now it was not the right kind of pride. He was not proud of me for my goodness and purity, it was rather the pride in the possession of some coveted article, for I was conceded to be beautiful then, and I suppose my figure was good. His was not a nature capable of appreciating nobility of character.

"He took a house there, and we entertained a great deal and on a large scale. I think I might say I was a favorite in his set, but what does all that amount to? His was a fickle nature and when he thought he had fathomed mine, when he thought he knew me in the perfection of every art I possessed, he began to weary. I did not know it at the time, I knew something had caused a change, but always attributed it to business cares. He began by neglecting me occasionally; from that it grew to continuous neglect, even to the point of ignoring my existence altogether.

"Endowed by nature with a cheerful disposition, my volatile spirits were continually on the rebound and even his gross neglect I did not feel deeply until it was brought home to me very forcibly after a year's time.

"It was by one of his best friends, although many years his junior. He had long treated me with a great deal of consideration, but I never felt it was more than the ordinary courtesy that one friend would show to the wife of another until that night.

"We had been dancing together and he took me to the conservatory to rest and sat down beside me to talk. Perhaps I was unusually tired that night, or perhaps, owing to the round of gayety, I looked worn. At any rate Mr. Mansfield leaned over me with an air of anxiety and said, 'Lucile, are you sure you are quite well tonight?'

"'Why, yes, of course I am,' I responded, laughingly. 'Why?'

“You look thoroughly disconsolate tonight. Are you worrying about something? About—about Chauncey and his doings?”

“About Chauncey and his doings? Why, what do you mean? Why should I? He is perfectly well, isn’t he?”

“Yes, his physical health is good, but you surely know that he is drinking hard, and his neglect of you is occasioning a great deal of comment. It isn’t right, and we all feel it.”

“Why, I hadn’t thought about it,” I said, “only that he was very busy.”

“Do you mean to say you don’t know the way he has been doing. Why, I could take you to him this very minute.”

“My face burned, my heart began to throb violently. Tears of anger slowly welled up and overflowed my eyes. And yet I really could not comprehend it all.

“You must be mistaken, Horace. Surely Chauncey loves me still. We have never had any cross words or misunderstandings.”

“It may have been pique at my incredulity that made him say suddenly, ‘Lucile, come with me. Get your wraps and come, and put on a heavy veil. I will show you.’

“Mechanically I obeyed him. We entered his carriage together and drove, miles and miles, it seemed to me. I was very nervous and trembled violently. Horace tried to reassure me and stroked my hand tenderly.

“Brace up, little girl,” he said; “you need all your strength for the ordeal before you. Perhaps I have done wrong to tell you this or to take you where you can see it, but you are too young, too good to be treated in this manner and you ought to see for yourself the depth of his depravity.”

“Do you think I will be any happier for being disillusioned?” I asked. “Would it not have been better for me to have gone on blindly trusting? Oh, why did you tell me, why did I come, anyway?”

“If you wish to, we will return at once.”

“No, I must see it through to the bitter end. I could never be happy again now, knowing even as much as I do.”

“We drew up in front of a large house ablaze with light. We alighted, rang the bell, and were ushered into a sumptuously furnished parlor. Everything that was picturesque met the eye. Beautiful pictures and statues, elegant furniture and beautiful women, elaborately attired, and behind the palms in the corner was an orchestra. Everything combined to make the scene enchanting. I clung bewildered to Horace’s arm.

“He led me to a small room off a large salon, where there were many tables. It was a scene of wild revelry, wine flowed freely and the air was heavy with the odor of many flowers. Horace pointed out a table near the center of the room. Seated at this table were two women and a man. The women were horribly made up and gowned in extreme décolleté gowns, only fit for the most formal affair, and were laughing boisterously at something.

“When the man turned his head I recognized my husband, and as I gazed he placed his hand on the exposed chest of one of his blasé companions, and patted it just as he had mine a thousand times when we first married. The spectacle was too revolting for words. I gave a slight scream. But Horace had anticipated some such occurrence and pressed my face against his broad shoulder. When I had partially recovered my normal condition we left. Back

home—yes, now a home no longer! Back to the place where I had known so many happy days. Horace bade me good-night in the reception hall.

“‘Lucile,’ said he, ‘you don’t know how sorry I am to have been the one to change the whole tenor of your life, but it was more honorable in me, was it not, than to maintain silence?’

“‘Yes,’ I said, calmly.

“I went into the library and took a new magazine from the table, sat down and waited. Two o’clock, three o’clock, four o’clock and still no Chauncey. My eyes were glued to the clock; 4:15 and I heard a step. I half rose in my nervous expectancy and was appalled to see an arm uplifted over me as to strike. I threw up my right hand, which held the paper knife, to ward off the blow which seemed imminent.

“When I returned to consciousness I was lying on a couch by the window, my head was dizzy and the room was filled with imaginary voices. I wondered where I could be; then the occurrences of the previous night passed before me in rapid succession. I jumped up and the sight which met my eyes froze the blood in my veins.

“There weltering in his own life blood, with the steel paper knife buried in his throat, lay Horace.

“Words cannot express the agony of the hours that followed. I managed to arouse the servants and they called the police. They asked me to explain, but they could not get a satisfactory explanation from me. I did not know how it all happened and I was mentally incapable of doing myself justice in telling what I knew. My account was so confused that I was remanded to jail without bail, pending my trial. Oh, those awful days! Not a friend came to see me. While I was living in affluence I had scores of friends, but now that I was in trouble and disgrace there was not one of all the number that would take me by the hand.”

“But where was your husband all this time?”

“Yes, you may well ask.

“When they questioned him as to his whereabouts on that night, he proved an alibi. He gave a detailed account of his doings every hour of that night and, while it did not redound to his credit, it saved him from the penitentiary, and nearly sent me there.

“There were three reasons why I was cleared. Firstly, they could prove no motive for the act; secondly, it seemed impossible for a woman to strike such a powerful blow; and last, but not least, the efficiency of my counsel.

“He was an entire stranger to me. He had read the newspaper accounts of the affair, which stated, among other things, that I had no counsel, and his sympathies were aroused. He took up my case with no prospect of compensation.”

“But, tell me, what became of your husband and who killed Horace?”

“That mystery was not solved until six months ago. I had come to Chicago after the trial was over to get away from all the old environments and the old scenes, in the most miserable health. I found employment here and as soon as my mind became occupied with other things I began to recover. One day I received a telegram which had been forwarded from place to place in search of me. It came from my husband’s physician, and told me to come at once, as Chauncey was dying, and it was his last request that they find me and bring me there at any cost. I went and he confessed before witnesses that he was guilty of the crime for which I had been arrested.

“It seems that Horace never left the house that night, fearing, I suppose, that I might do myself some injury. He saw Chauncey come in intoxicated, and fearing he might do me bodily harm he ran in to warn me. It must have been his raised arm, silently motioning me to fly, which I, in my dazed condition, mistook for Chauncey, and in fear threw up my arm for protection, then fainted. Chauncey staggered in and the sight of Horace there with me so angered him that he picked up the first thing he could lay his hands on, which chanced to be the paper knife, and in his drunken rage he killed him.

“The sight of his crime sobered him and self-protection was his first thought. He placed me on the couch, never stopping to revive me, and fled, leaving me to my fate.

“Ah, well,” she shuddered, “it is all over now. He died repentant in my arms, begging me to forgive him with his last breath.

“Tomorrow I marry Mr. Graves, the attorney who defended me, and God grant that I may be happy. I shall try to deserve it.”

“Amen,” said I.

14. My Lover's Daughter

“He

That kills himself to avoid misery, fears it;

And at the best shows but a bastard valor.”

Dear Stella:—How strange that you should write me; do you know, girlie, that it has been almost five years since we have had any correspondence?

It was only yesterday that I got out all of your old letters and re-read them, then put them away with the forlorn hope that I might sometime hear from you again. The last letter that I had from you told me of your engagement to Alfred, and cruel, heartless creature that I was, I did not even answer. I wrote you once since then, that was after my trouble. I did not tell you what it was, but told you that I would if you felt interested. You did not answer my letter and I, of course, took it for granted that you did not wish to be burdened with the knowledge of my misfortune, so never wrote you again. And now, bless your dear heart, you have written after so long, and in just the same sweet way as of old, even though you have so recently undergone such a great bereavement. You are a widow. How strange! And I am still unmarried, and have taken a vow to remain so always.

Oh, how I long to visit you and go over all the old, happy days which we lived together. You ask me to tell you all that has happened to me. Well, nothing has occurred to change the humdrum existence of my life since I came here to live. I have worked every working day but five during my residence here. You well remember when I went to California to spend the winter. It was the winter I was twenty, and I think you know that when we parted, with the vow that we would write each other all our joys and sorrows, that I left heart whole. I have not kept my word in full, but will now endeavor to cover all important points. I arrived in San Francisco on schedule time, and was so delighted with the climate, the fragrant flowers and singing birds that I do not wonder that I was ready to admire the first man whose conduct and appearance was on par with the beauties of nature that abounded everywhere.

Still I knew better than to fall in love, for I was given to understand by mamma that I was to marry Harry Caruthers. I fairly hated him, and besides he was papa's nephew, and I always had a horror of blood relations intermarrying. Mamma said that did not matter, and Harry would be a very wealthy man some day. And you remember mamma, too. She was one of those sweet, dignified, haughty women who needed nothing but her own opinion to conclude an argument, and this with all due respect.

Well, I fully understood that to apprise them of the fact that I had become greatly interested in any one man, save that red faced Caruthers, meant that my visit would suddenly terminate and that I would return to cold, cold Wisconsin, to face the storms for the rest of the winter.

It was only the girlish ingenuity then which prompted me to omit the name of Capt. Elerding from all my letters for more than three months after I had met him. Oh, he was so good and kind, so considerate of my welfare, and I think the most refined gentleman I ever met. I would not blame any woman for falling in love with him. I fell desperately in love with him and, strange to say, without any solicitation on his part. He never once told me that he loved me, but I knew it by his every glance and his every act. The feeling became so strong within me that I decided that sooner or later he would propose to me, and as I did not care to run any

chance of losing him by asking him to wait, I thought I should at least get some expression from my parents in regard to the attachment which had sprung up.

I wrote to mamma. My letter brought a hasty reply refusing to tolerate the attentions of any one, and a request for a full and complete description of the handsome captain. I took the command as a matter of course, for mamma wanted to have Harry Caruthers for a son-in-law.

Out of courtesy to my parents, I drew a pen picture of Captain Elerding. I told how gallant, how handsome, how brave, how popular, how genteel, and even how old he was. I elaborated upon his good qualities with the zeal of a loving girl. I left the age till the last, for I knew that when my parents learned that he was forty-five and quite gray that it would have the effect of a bomb bursting in camp; but of course the gray hair was caused by the many years of service for his country. Think of it! He was so devoted to his country that he had never been married, so there was no danger of my having to assume the responsibility of mother to a lot of grown up sons and daughters.

This description of the charming captain brought a telegram to me saying: "Inez Manford, come home on first train."

It was signed by both my mother and father. I did not quite understand it, but wired back: "Delayed, see letter."

Then I wrote my parents a letter, explaining that Captain Elerding was expecting a party of friends soon and very much wished me to extend my visit another month, and with their consent I should be delighted to do so. The reply to that letter was mamma herself. She came post haste and superintended the packing of my trunks with such dispatch that we were east bound seven hours after her arrival in 'Frisco. I asked to be allowed to introduce the captain, believing his winning ways would capture mamma's heart. She was obdurate and refused to see him or allow me to see him.

It was two days after we arrived home before I could steal away alone long enough to write him. I think the letter only increased the desire to talk with him, and I resolved to run away and return to him. I felt sure he would lose no time in making me his wife if he had but a chance, and I would be the gainer, for he was very wealthy, in fact, more so by far than Harry Caruthers ever would be, and, more than all, I knew we would be happy.

I stole out into the darkness of the night after everybody had retired. I knew that the Limited stopped to take water just at the edge of town, about a mile from our house.

Through the biting cold I forged my way, dodging from one alley to another, until the railroad tracks were reached, then a long line of green and red lights guided me to where I caught the train as it was pulling out, and I was soon speeding to my dear captain.

The time seemed to drag so slowly, each day seeming longer than the one before, until I reached my destination. I took a carriage and went directly to the captain's hotel. I asked for him, but no one seemed to be able to talk to me; everyone was excited beyond reason. I finally got the attention of the clerk long enough to learn that the chambermaid had just discovered Captain Elerding in his room, *dead*.

In his strong, right hand was still clenched the deadly pistol. The ugly hole in his temple and the powder burns around it told the story. In front of him were two papers, one a letter from my mother in which she upbraided him unmercifully for having cultivated my acquaintance. The other was his last will and testament, stating that he was in possession of all his faculties. It said: "I hereby bequeath, demise, convey and assign all of my money, property, goods and chattels whatsoever, that I now own, to my beloved illegitimate child, Inez Manford."

I left on the next train and have been a resident of Chicago ever since.

Please write me at once, Stella, and tell me all that has happened to you since last we met.

Yours as of old,

Inez.

15. As Told To A Clergyman

“The night has a thousand eyes,
The day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

“The wind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies,
When love is done.”

“You sent for me?” he said, gently, as he looked down at the emaciated form before him. Her eyes were unnaturally brilliant, her brow, with the thick, clustering curls brushed back from it, was as white as marble; the nose was sharp and had that pinched expression which is so sure a forerunner of dissolution. On each cheek was a small, red spot which indicated the fever which was consuming her. The chest heaved rapidly and as the clergyman leaned over her and looked into the hazel depths, he laid his hand almost caressingly upon her head.

At that touch she caught his hand in both her own frail palms, and sobbed, “Yes, I asked to have a clergyman sent to me.”

“I am James Townsend, the rector of St. Anne’s,” he said.

But before he had disclosed his identity she had fainted. He hastily summoned assistance and in a few moments she was restored to consciousness, although very weak.

He sat down near her couch and quietly stroked the masses of hair, the only charm left her by the ravages of disease. Her face seemed to him to be strangely familiar, and as she laid with closed eyes he had ample opportunity to study it as intently as he wished.

Where had he seen that face before? He bent more closely and, as if attracted by the scrutinizing gaze, she slowly lifted the deep fringed lids until her eyes met his.

“What is it?” she asked, faintly.

“Nothing but a little fainting fit, and you are all right now.”

“Yes, I’ll soon be out of all my trouble. I am so tired—so tired! I shall be so glad to rest at last,” she said.

He administered another stimulant and gradually she became stronger, until at length she was able to talk.

“I think, that is the last I remember, I was going to tell you why I sent for you. It was not to have you pray for me or to have you quote scripture. I sent for you because you are a clergyman and ought to be a good man. I know I am dying, although they tell me I will be better when the warm days come; but I know that when that time comes the grass will be growing over my grave, and that is why I want to tell you my life’s story. I do not feel that I ought to be absolved because I confess my story to you, but it will be a relief to tell some one all and the plain truth of every detail. I shall die easier, I know.”

“Aren’t you in danger of overtaxing your strength?” he asked.

“No, I feel quite strong again, and if you will give me some more wine I feel quite confident that I can tell you the whole story without a break. It is a long one, though, and may weary you.”

“Do not fear, I shall be an attentive and interested listener,” he said.

“Well, to begin at the very beginning, I must tell you that I was left an orphan very early in life. I was the youngest of three children, and after the small estate was divided my brother and sister held a consultation and decided to educate me for a kindergarten teacher, as there was less expense connected with the fitting for this work. I finished my course in due time and went to Peoria to organize a private class. Among the names of those given me who had children likely to join my class was a Mrs. Ames. I called at her home early in the week and secured her two children very easily. She seemed to take quite a fancy to me, I thought, a theory which afterward proved to be correct.

“One day I received a very urgent invitation from Mrs. Ames to lunch with them. I gladly accepted. We did not wait for Mr. Ames, as he was often detained beyond luncheon hour at his office. As we sat at the table idly chatting he entered. Up to this time I had never seen Mr. Ames and, in fact, had scarcely given his existence a thought. I gave him a casual glance as Mrs. Ames presented him to me, and noticed what a strong, finely developed man he was.

“He was rather quiet during the hour and had little to say, but when he was leaving he came over to me and said, ‘I am glad to have had the pleasure of meeting you at last, for I have heard your praises sung by many and was quite anxious to know this little paragon of virtues.’”

She shuddered as she said this and perhaps the quiver which shook the clergyman’s frame in his effort at self-control at this mention of the name Ames had communicated itself to her, and she remained silent for awhile.

Again the clergyman’s sympathetic hand sought to soothe and encourage her by stroking her hair.

Reassured, she continued:

“Not long after this I was quite ill, and much to my surprise, considering my limited acquaintance in the city, received a large box of American Beauties. The card accompanying them was that of Mr. Ames. On the back was written, ‘Because you are so like one I used to know.’

“I wondered whom he could mean and resolved to ask him the first time I saw him, yet I felt rather timid because he was quite a stranger to me. I need have felt no timidity, however, because he embraced the first opportunity to tell me when we were quite alone that I was so like his first wife, Laura, the mother of his children. He told me what a good, true woman the present Mrs. Ames was, and what a good mother she had made his children, but explained to me that it had been a matter of convenience on both sides—not a love affair. She had passed the age when women are most sought and was glad to accept the luxurious home he offered her, and he was glad to have such a sensible woman for the mother of his children.

“It was but a short time after that that Mrs. Ames asked me to come to her house and make my home with them as one of the family. No one but myself knew what a God-send that was. My class had been greatly decreased by a diphtheria scare and my finances were low, and now that I had no board to pay I could manage very nicely. Everyone at the house was so kind to me except Mrs. Ames’ mother, who lived with them, and she seemed to look upon me as an intruder, but I was thoroughly happy notwithstanding.

“I was at that time as innocent as a child, with absolutely no knowledge of the world except what I had seen in my own little sphere.

“One night Mr. Ames whispered to me that he was coming up to my room at Mrs. Ames’ request as soon as I retired. I had been in my room but a few minutes when he tapped on the door. I opened it and let him in. He drew me to the window seat and put his arms around me and said:

“‘Little girlie, I have come to tell you a few things which you or any other innocent girl ought to know. It is for your own protection that I tell you. I would that I could spare you the revelation, but I cannot, for you are unsafe, there are so many unscrupulous men in the world who would take advantage of innocence.’

“I did not understand the drift of his remarks and was half vexed. He kissed me then for the first time. Then he told me about myself and about men and women and their relations to each other.

“It was a great shock to me and I hid my face on his broad shoulder and cried as if my heart would break. After he had quieted me, we talked a long time and I could see what a good thing it was that he had told me as much as he had.

“It was one night some weeks after this had occurred that Mr. Ames and I were left alone in the parlor. We had waited a long time for grandma to retire, and when she finally went he turned out the electric light for a moment, so that he could take me in his arms and kiss me good-night. It was a mistake, for grandma stood on the landing above and saw it.

“Nothing was ever said about it, but I could feel the change in the atmosphere and luckily, as my school term was out that week, I was able to leave without occasioning comment. I returned to Chicago with little money and secured a pleasant room with a private family on Drexel boulevard. I had not been there a week, when Mr. Ames, to whom I had promised to send my address, came to see me. I was so discouraged and blue that his presence was a panacea for all my ills. He laid down on the couch and asked me to come and sit down beside him, and took me in his arms.

“I was just in the state of mind to receive caresses and to return them; his were balm to my aching heart. He caressed me until—well, I don’t know how it all happened—if anyone had asked me the next morning if I had done wrong, I should have said no, with a clear conscience, for I did not know then that that which a good woman prizes higher than life had been taken from me.

“After this he came as often as his business cares would permit, always the same, tender and true. One day he came as usual and said, ‘I have planned your vacation trip for the summer, dear, and although it will deprive me of the pleasure of your company for a long time and I hardly know how I am going to get along without the sunshine of your presence; but you are not well and I think the change will do you good.’

“Then he unfolded his plan to me. I was to go to Mackinac for the summer. He gave me \$200 when I left. I staid three months and was really very lonely at times without Fred, but not as lonely as he was without me, for I had many friends among the young people, while he was obliged to come to the city regularly and stay for a day or two every week as usual, to keep up appearance at home.

“He sent me many pretty little gowns and waists, and showed rare good taste in their selection, and was so thoughtful in every way that it was little wonder that I leaned on him more than I realized. And, then, too, his letters were so beautiful, every one of them breathing of his devotion to me. When fall came, with it came the thought of what I was to do to

support myself. I came back to Chicago and Fred met me. We had a long talk and he asked me if I thought I could manage to live on \$10 a week. I felt very rich at the prospect of having an income assured me every week, and think I enjoyed it, small though it was, more than I did the days of prosperity that followed.

“I boarded all winter with a friend who had moved to Chicago during my absence. The next spring he invested \$200 for me and in a year it had made \$5,000. He felt he was better able to provide me with a good home of my own now, and so he found a beautiful little flat, which he furnished very cozily.

“He came to Chicago every week, ostensibly on business, and remained two days. Of course my living this kind of a life necessitated my giving up all my former friends; they would wonder and ask questions and rather than lie, I ostracised myself.

“I had learned to love him devotedly by this time, for he was so good to me, my slightest wish was anticipated, and he loved me with such tenderness as only a strong man can bestow.”

“Tell me again that he was good to you,” said the clergyman.

“Why,” she said, wonderingly, her eyes meeting his for the first time since she began her narrative.

“I—I only wanted to be reassured of the fact that while Fre—this man, I mean, had done you the greatest wrong that a man can do a woman, he tried to make reparation.”

“Yes, he was good, until—until,” and again her face was drawn in agony and her frail form quivered, “well, until the time came when he could not come every week. Business was such that it was impossible, he said. I grew so lonely that I thought I should die.

“During this period of loneliness, I met an old school mate on the street one day. She seemed very glad to see me and insisted on my going to Rector’s with her, where she had an appointment to dine with her friend. I went and it was the same old story. Her friend was a strikingly handsome fellow and I was a pretty girl then,” she said with a wan smile, “and we became enamored of each other.

“He asked to call and I allowed him to come. He came often and finally in a moment of weakness I yielded to his importunities. This was my fatal mistake. Fred came unexpectedly the next day and I was so remorseful and conscious stricken that I could not appear natural. He took me gently in his arms and begged me to tell him what the matter was. I sobbed it all out to him, yes, every word of the truth, and instead of forgiving me as he should have done, he tore my arms from about his neck, and threw me from him.

“I think I must have fainted, for when I became conscious of my surroundings, he had gone.”

The clergyman groaned aloud, but so absorbed was she in her contemplation of that past, that she did not heed it.

“I laid on the floor all night, just where he had thrown me. Morning came and brought with it more misery. A special delivery letter was brought to me; it contained a draft for \$5,000 to be deposited to my credit in the bank, and a short note saying that he did not wish to see me again. That my sin had found me out.

“I was crushed and heartbroken. My illness began with that day. The doctors say it is pulmonary trouble, but it is not that. It is a consumption of the heart and brain, and the desire to live vanished when I knew he had gone out of my life forever.”

The last words were scarcely audible. The clergyman leaned over her and took her in his arms and wiped the death sweat from her brow.

She looked at him and whispered, "Why are you so good to me?"

He thought a moment, fearing to tell her the truth lest the shock prove too much for her rapidly ebbing strength, but the pleading eyes were fixed on his and he could not withhold the truth.

"Because," he said, gently, "the man who ruined you is my half brother. He was younger than I by ten years, and I loved him better than my life and cared for him after our mother died. I could not believe he would have done such a thing, had not you yourself told me. I have seen your picture in their home, and that is why your face seemed so strangely familiar to me when I first came in. There is but one thing I can do that will in the least atone for what he has done, and it is this: Marry me within an hour, that you may at least have a name. I will take you away with me to a warmer climate and change of scene and you may yet recover and learn to be happy. I think God must have sent me to you at just the right time. Will you marry me?"

He bent over her almost eagerly, longing to hear her say yes, now that he had made up his mind to make the sacrifice.

But she had gone where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage.

16. A Story Of Stage Life

SOUL.

“But whither went his soul, let such relate
 Who search the secrets of the future state;
 Divines can say but what themselves believe;
 Strong proofs they have, but not demonstrative;
 For, were all plain, then all sides must agree,
 And faith itself be lost in certainty;
 To live uprightly, then, is sure the best,
 To save ourselves, and not damn the rest.”

“Tired of the stage? Yes, I am tired, but what am I to do?”

“Don’t you know anything but to sing and dance and act?”

“Yes and no.”

“Why not seek other employment?”

“Simply because I am too energetic; life on the stage is hard work; some day I suppose I shall break down entirely, then—and then,” she repeated dreamily, “I don’t know where it will all end.”

“I am interested,” said the man, as he toyed with the wine glass, which he had just drained in company with the girl.

They were seated in what is known as the “cafe” of one of the theaters of the city wherein humanity is represented in the audience by bald men and ribald youths; and on the stage by feminine apparitions, whose make up consisted principally of blonde wigs and carmine; some were women of good figures; some whose figures were in evidence on account of the assistance the arts of man had rendered nature; some had charms which even the faded eyes, paint and powder could not hide.

Each performer had a part to play, which was outlined on the program; if some were playing a role which was not on the regular line of her profession, no one seemed to care.

A large placard, which hung behind the scenes warning the members of the company from receiving any attentions from any spectator, did not have the effect which its strict wording would imply. The writer is of the opinion that the police inspector is the only person who is sure the sign existed; it being there for his benefit, one cannot think strange if he did see it and report to the chief that the laws of the state and city were being complied with.

The cafe was always well filled between acts, especially during the thirty minutes intermission which was allowed the performers about midway of the evening’s entertainment. If I say this time was allotted to give the performers a breathing spell, I fear that the sympathy that was felt in each heart for the poor overworked chorus girls, would be felt more in behalf of the much wanted bar boy, as the numerous parties wrapped on the tables in their haste to be served first with the liquid refreshments, which were dealt out to the men and women with the same free hand.

The girl who did the speaking in the opening of this story, was one of the first to appear through the stage entrance to the large room, where classes met in a motley crew. She had caught the gleam of the small brown eyes of the man in the front box, and as she passed off the stage, she plainly heard him say, "Go down to the wine room."

"Go on and tell me," he nodded, as the girl said, "Manhattan," to the inquiring look of the waiter, who had rushed to the table at a signal from the man.

"No," she said doggedly, "I don't want to talk; bring me a package of cigarettes, Otto," she said, as the waiter moved away.

"It's no use; what do you want to know for?" Then the lines around her mouth became hard, while she tapped the heel of her dancing slippers on the floor. She may have been pretty; she may have been good and pure at some time, but the deep laid wrinkles, the flaring nostrils and bleared eyes told of the long days of hardships and nights of dissipation.

"Oh, no matter," said the man, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I just thought you might have known better days; I have, and thought we might talk of other times, besides," said the man leisurely, "I used to be in the profession."

"What line, specialty or legit.?" asked the girl, with a show of interest.

"Oh, most anything, heavies principally, though."

"Why did you leave it?"

"Went to the bad," said the man, nonchalantly.

The man's remarks had the desired effect; a feeling of closer fellowship began to develop and that, coupled with the warming up process which the second cocktail afforded, caused the woman's tongue to run glibly.

"Oh, I don't mind," she said, between inhalations of cigarette smoke, "but you see a girl don't like to break open and tell some stranger all she knows about herself."

"Go on," said the man, confidently, "I am very much interested. But first," he added, "how much time have you? For if you are in danger of being interrupted, we had best make an appointment to meet later."

"Oh, I don't know," said the girl in a hard, bantering tone; "you see we girls are allowed the privilege of entertaining friends, in fact, salary cuts such a small figure in this joint, that it is absolutely necessary for us to get some money on the side."

"But I hope you don't expect to get any money from me for just talking with you; of course I will buy drinks, lunch or anything you like, but there is where I draw the line. You see I am only a curiosity seeker."

"In that case," said the girl, "I must leave you, for if I am not on the stage at the call, the manager will have a kick coming."

"How do you appease his wrath when you stay away, that is to say, when you are getting the money?"

"Oh, that's different," said the girl, rising. "I always cut it with him."

"Oh, I see," said the man, musingly. "How much does it take to satisfy him?"

"Oh, I guess I can fix him for a dollar."

"Then here, I'll give you the dollar, now we will go into a private wine room and have a good hour's chat."

“What! and let all these sure things around here go? I guess not! Don’t you see that old guy over there making eyes at me now? He’s a regular here and always ready money, too.”

“Have another drink,” said the man, as he took a cigarette from the package which the girl held in her hand.

“All right, I’ll have one more, then bid you good night. I’ll see you again,” she said reassuringly.

The man was wise. When the boy brought the drinks, he produced a roll of tens and twenties, which would cause the eyes of most people to dilate with greed.

Tossing a bill on the table, he carelessly placed the roll in his waistcoat pocket, and when the waiter returned with the change, he generously insisted on his taking a dollar for the drinks.

“Now it is my time to buy,” said the girl, before the boy had left the table.

“Bring me a whisky sour, and what is yours,” she said merrily as she leaned over and placed one hand on the man’s knee.

“I will take a small bottle of beer,” said the man, slowly.

“Oh, come now, old brown eyes, take something better; some kind of a mixed drink.”

“No, please let me have beer; you see I am thirsty. I have drunk nothing but whisky all day.”

After this speech the man placed his elbows on the table and almost fell asleep.

“Come, cheer up, dearie!” said the girl with a slap on the man’s back.

“Yesh, I’m all right,” said the man, “only you see, I’m so tired let’s go into a wine room where people won’t see us.”

“All right,” said the girl, “but first let’s have this drink that’s coming, then we can tell our waiter where to find us.”

The girl had forgotten the “old guy,” and seemed only to remember the visions which floated through the air in the forms of tens and twenties. She would look at the man hopefully, then her eyes would fall on the vest pocket on the side furthest from her.

“How old are you?” asked the man, as he laid his arm along the back of her chair and gazed steadily into her face, after they had been enclosed in the wine room.

“No matter, you don’t care,” she returned, coyly.

“Yes, but I do. You see, I want you to tell me everything. How old are you; where were you born; when did you come to Chicago, all?” said the man, earnestly.

“I am twenty-four,” she muttered, and she probed the bottom of the glass with a toothpick for the cherry, which so persistently rolls around in a cocktail.

“You look it,” said he, frankly.

Tears sprang into the girl’s eyes, as she said, “My God, man, if you had gone through what I have, you would look old, too.”

“Now come, I did not mean that to hurt, but I am blunt and to the point; if I have hurt you, forgive me,” said the man.

“Oh, that’s nothing,” said the girl, “only, you see, I guess I am wrong someway tonight. I don’t like to swear, and feel too mean to cry.”

“You seem worried or sad.”

“No, I am—am—nothing,” said the girl, dreamily.

“Oh, I guess you are a great deal,” said he, as he passed his hand down the woman’s bare arm, with a soft caress, from her shoulder to the hand that hung listlessly at her side. In spite of the man’s maudlin condition, his touch was soft and gentle; the stroke seemed to soothe the mind of the girl; tears sprang into her eyes as the man took her hand and patted it in a kindly manner; hope seemed to take root in her breast and the man, throwing off all assumption of intoxication, looked her squarely in the eyes and said: “Come, now, I know you have a story. The thrill which your soft hand sends through me tells me that you have known better things, that you have graced a throne more becoming to womanly instincts, with which your nature is so bountifully supplied.”

“Don’t, oh please don’t talk like that,” cried the girl, “it—it—makes me so sad.”

“Have you ever told your story,” asked the man, paying no attention to the now sobbing girl.

“N—o—, but—I have wanted to, oh so much, for some time I shall die, and while I have sinned much, I want some one to know that I was reared right, and that even after I had fallen from the great white throne of purity I had some good thoughts, but I have always been afraid to tell any one especially since—” here the creature broke down entirely, moaning and writhing in bitter agony.

“Since when?” asked the man, gently, as she seemed to get her grief partially under control.

“Oh, since I have gotten so low.”

“Come, now, you’re not so bad off, and besides you are going to tell me the truth, and I am going to believe you, for a woman never gets too low, even in her own estimation, to tell the truth when she refers to a beautiful past.”

“Oh, yes, if it were all as you say, but then I think I will tell you,” said the girl, bravely.

“My parents were natives of the New England states. When I was four years old they removed from our eastern home to a small town in McLean county, Illinois. My father was a Baptist minister, and I was taught all the principles of the true Christian and, believe me, I enjoyed the Sunday-schools, prayer-meetings and all the devotional exercises. Music always charmed me and when the question arose as to whether or not an organ should be placed in the church, I think it was due to my influence over my father that one was installed there, for he opposed it at first. The most looked for event of the year was Christmas time, for it was the custom to have a Christmas tree at the church, at which time the music would excel all other occasions. Once the local paper of our town offered a fine, large doll (lifelike in every particular) as a prize to the girl over nine years and under twelve years of age, who would write the best Christmas story, the stories to be published several weeks before Christmas. The names of the writers were to be kept secret, while the patrons of the papers sent in votes denoting their choice; the doll was given Christmas eve. I think as I now look back over a career that is not spotless, that the moment when the great wax figure with the big blue eyes and masses of soft, fluffy hair, the kid body of which was clothed in the finest array imaginable, was placed in my arms, was the happiest moment of all my life. I knew I had sent in a story, but never dreamed of being the winner; my heart was full, my life complete. I had no longings or dreads; my childish competitors took their defeat like little women; the next week my parents assisted me in giving my first party and the invitations were issued only to those dear little friends, who had competed for the prize; we called it a christening party, for we named the dollie.

“Tired, aren’t you?” said the girl.

“No—go on!”

“I cannot understand how all this stuff about my dolls, etc., will interest you.”

“But you have not always played with dolls,” said the man as he elevated his brows.

“I am sorry to say I have not. The next important event of my life was the death of my father, which caused my first real sadness. I was fourteen then; how well I remember the night after we buried all that was left of our dear protector. I dressed for bed, then, as was my custom, went to say good-night to papa and mamma; my prayers were always said at my father’s knee; that night from force of habit I went from the door of my room and walked straightway to my father’s chair and was just bowing my head as I prepared to kneel, when the vacant chair caught my eye. Oh, sir! I can’t tell you how desolate, how dreary I felt when I fully realized that the blessed privilege of snuggling into his lap and putting my arms around his neck and having a good talk with him was gone forever; my father always trusted me as a good friend and companion, confiding in me and often advising with me on different topics pertaining to his sermons, so that even at this tender age I was well advanced in mental training; he never told me no if I asked him if I should read a certain book, or go any place, or do anything; if my act did not meet his approval he never indulged in a long lecture about disobedient and headstrong children, but would take me gently into his arms and say, ‘Now, let’s see, we will talk it over,’ and before I left him I would know and understand why my contemplated step was wrong and no amount of persuasion would induce me to go contrary to his wishes. Not only would he cause me to see things his way on these occasions, but he would insert some request, some little point he wanted me to look up in the Bible or history for him, so that my mind became so full of interest in doing these things that my own ideas were submerged. I was told once by a girl friend who was hurt at some little indiscretion on my part that I need not be so smart, my father was not always a preacher, while I, in the full confidence of religion and clerical importance, naturally supposed that he had been and replied to her sharply that ‘I knew better.’

“‘Well, I know better, too,’ she retorted, ‘for my papa knew him when he was a bad, wicked man, so there, now!’

“I was so hurt and humiliated that I burst into tears, and made no reply but went home and running into my father’s arms, I cried and sobbed until I was sure I should die; it was a long time before I could calm myself sufficiently to answer questions which my father and mother poured in upon me. Finally I told them the circumstances; I noted the pallor which spread over papa’s face, but mistook it. I thought he was angry.

“In about thirty days from that time my father was called to go to the country, some sixteen miles, to officiate at the funeral of an old member of his flock. The day was bitter cold; the wind howled, while the snow went swirling and drifting everywhere. It was necessary for him to drive; he arrived home late that night, chilled and benumbed from the cold and exposure; in three days pneumonia had added poor papa to its long list of victims.

“A parson’s salary is not a source of large bank accounts, and by the time all the expenses which were incurred by the illness and death of my father were paid we were without means; then the regulation donation party was inaugurated and by that means we were put in possession of a sufficient amount of the necessities of life to exist on for several months, and to help, the official board met and passed a resolution that they would not engage a regular pastor for the remainder of the winter, so mamma and I could ‘just as well’ live in the parsonage right along until further notice. Christmas passed that year with as much sadness in it for me as there had been joy and pleasure in the preceding ones; cold, dreary winter days did nothing to enhance the value of our lives; then came spring, ushered in by the songs of

birds and the breath of roses. The official board met again and a new pastor was called to take the place of him who had been the light of my life. The members of the church were not thoughtless by any means, for they, in their goodness, provided for us; in a certain town in Eastern Indiana there is a Baptist hospital; it was through the generous and kindly directed influence of my father's flock that my mother was offered the position of matron of this institution. We took up our abode there and it was there that my real life began.

“When I was fifteen years old I tried my hand at writing again, but not for a doll this time; I was successful enough to have a story received by a popular magazine, for which they paid me fifty dollars. This brought me not a little notoriety and I was asked to join a literary club and practically taken into the arms of the social leaders of the town. If I say I was good looking, I do so only because others declared such to be the case. I seemed to be a favorite; I was much wanted at the different social functions for I had learned to play and sing. It was little wonder that when a young man came into the city and arranged with the Ladies' Club to produce an opera, solely with local talent, that my name was mentioned as being the one for the leading part. The part required youth, grace, modesty and vigor, a combination which the director told me was not easily found.

“‘The Little Tycoon’ was the title of the production. My part was a singing part and it required much training and long practice. I strove to please the young man who had the affair in charge and worked many hours after the other performers had gone home. The young man, Leon La Dew, was also greatly interested in my success and he spent hour upon hour with me that I might attain the proficiency which I aspired to reach.

“The entertainment was a success from every standpoint, so much so, that hundreds were turned away and by request it was repeated on the following night; after the last performance, I hurried home with my mother, as I had upon all occasions of rehearsal during the preparations for the event. Next day the papers were full of praise for the participants, many of them getting what we now call a ‘special.’ An interview with Mr. La Dew held a conspicuous place on the first page. He lauded all the people who had so ably assisted, and the interview closed by saying, ‘Mr. La Dew informs the press that much of the success of the performance was due to the excellent work of Miss Althea Noble, in fact, Mr. La Dew assures us that should Miss Noble aspire to the stage as a profession, she, without a doubt, has a great future before her.’

“How my heart throbbed, how my blood surged. I was not stage struck, I actually abhorred the thought of it, but I had been praised by Mr. La Dew. I wept with joy; he had been so kind, so sweet and tender, never scolding or fretting when we girls made blunders, he had just that even, patient temperament which will conquer all things, and he was rather handsome, too. Not strikingly so, but so much so, that if he suddenly came into a room crowded with people, no matter how unassuming he might appear, everyone would see him. Then for me there was a familiar look and attraction in his manner. I felt as if I had known him always. I once expressed my feelings about him to mamma, and she explained that the feeling was born of a memory, Mr. La Dew being the first man I had associated with in any manner since my father's death. I accepted her explanations for the time, but before Mr. La Dew was gone from the town three days, I knew I was in love. On the fifth day, after he had gone, I ran to my mother, uttering screams of delight, all brought about by reason of a letter which I pushed into her hands as she gazed at me in an amazed way. The letter was from him. It said, ‘I have arranged to put on “The Little Tycoon” here (a near-by town), but am unable to fill the part which you so ably took in your home town; I showed the ladies here the press notices, whereupon they insisted on my asking you to help us out here, hence this letter. Now, if you

can be prevailed upon to come, please advise me by wire. You will, of course, be liberally compensated.

“Yours respectfully,

“Leon La Dew.’

“I insisted so hard that my mother finally said in a relenting tone, ‘of course, we could use the money.’

“I went several days before the performance. I was to assist Mr. La Dew in drilling some of the characters; I was housed in the home of one of the best families in the city and the lady of the house was all a mother could be. I was protected in every way and Leon was so good, so kind and gentle.

“On the afternoon of the performance, we were very, very busy at the theater, everything in a turmoil, so I told my hostess that after the last full-dress rehearsal she could run on home and dress and that I would stay and assist in getting everything in shape for the evening. At six o’clock I tapped on the door of the managers’ office and told Mr. La Dew that I would run out, get some supper and return, so that I could be there to help some of the young ladies with their ‘make-up.’

“‘No,’ said he, ‘I have sent out and within ten minutes our suppers will be here; I cannot leave and there is no use in your going out, Miss Noble.’

“We waited but a short time until the boy arrived with our suppers.

“If I sang better that night, if the roses seemed sweeter and the music more dreamy, if I at times imagined that the flitting forms on the stage were angels and that I, too, held a harp and chanted the songs of the seraphs, it was all because Leon had told me of his love. I did not act that night, I just lived my part in the ecstasy of my new found joy. When I went home, Leon went with me. We told my mother all; our whole life’s plans were changed. We quickly arranged for Leon and me to marry. Mother was to leave her position and we were all to travel in the same line, in which Leon had established himself. I disliked the business, but with the assurance that he would save our earnings and enter into some business in the future that would be more to my liking, I consented. Oh, the joy, the happiness of true love. It now seemed that all the world was bright and cheery. We had no time to lose, as Leon had engagements to fill. After our plans were completed Leon said to me, ‘Althea, dearest, I want to have a talk with you, there is something I want to tell you.’

“‘What is it, Leon?’” said I, as my heart stopped with a throb.

“He, perceiving my agitation, took my face in his two dear hands, and kissed my brow.

“‘Oh, it is not much, darling, only I must tell you. I know your love for me will make things all right.’

“‘Well, Leon, tell me;’ as anxious as I was to hear his round full tones, I trembled with fear. I never knew why I felt that way.

“‘I must tell you,’ he continued, ‘something of my past life.’

“‘Oh, never mind, Leon, I know you are nothing but a dear, good boy, and I will not believe anything else of you.’

“‘No, Althea, it is not that, for believe me, I love you too much to have caused you pain by spoiling your life by my own association if I thought I were not worthy, but there is a blot on the abstract of my life and before it is too late, I must tell you all.’

“I begged of him to keep the secret, but no, he was too honest.

“My mother was like you, Althea, a sweet, innocent girl; the man who is my father I have never known, but he, like myself, was theatrically inclined; he came to the town which was my mother’s home and much the same as in our case, my mother took the leading role in the production which he was playing; he became infatuated with her, they were quietly married, but he soon became tired, deserted her, and there was a life with all the glory and sweetness taken out of it. My mother died from disgrace, when I was eight; she held me in her arms and told me the story, then giving me a locket, which contained my father’s picture, ‘take this,’ said she, ‘and when you are a man, find him if you can; be gentle with him and tell him I died thinking of him.’

“And have you the locket, Leon?’ I cried eagerly.

“Yes, here it is.’

“I regained consciousness, surrounded by friends; all I could see as I slowly opened my eyes, was a little gold locket. The picture which it contained was that of my father.

“No amount of coaxing or force would cause me to tell what the cause of the shock was; as soon as I revived sufficiently to talk, I asked for Leon. When he came I signified a desire to be left alone with him and told him all, then the dear, generous brother, that he was, insisted on taking my mother into the secret. That is where I blundered. In order to spare my poor mother the pain and anguish which I knew the news would bring, I objected. Leon and I argued the matter, he contending that he could at least go on with our plans in regard to the show business; he could at least assist me on to fame, but no, I would not agree with him. He finally left me in as much misery as he himself was surrounded with. I have seen him twice since then, once, soon after I came to Chicago and adopted the stage, for I was compelled to seek employment. My fainting spell which occurred while all alone with Leon was food and drink for the ‘I told you so’s’ of the little town where I had sprung into popularity in spite of the fact that some of the more conservative residents insisted on saying that ‘nobody really knows what she is.’

“I left mamma there; when I arrived here I applied to one of the most fashionable play houses in the city. They were in need of chorus girls; my voice was tried and I was told to go to the costumer’s for my wardrobe; that worthy gentleman handed me a large paper box, saying, with a sardonic grin, ‘if they are too tight be careful about stooping in them, for they might split and we are short on outfits right now.’

“They. I wondered for a moment what he meant; tears sprang to my eyes when I unfolded the silken tights, which the box contained. I proceeded to take each article from the box, tights, fancy hose, girdle, etc., hardly enough clothes to make a respectable suit of underwear, still I was to appear under the glare of strong lights, before hundreds of pleasure-seeking people in this scanty array. I thought of my mother, then Leon, and with a shudder of indignation I thought of my father as I had seen him the last time. I cried some, then with the feeling that it was not all my fault, I managed to get into the abbreviated garments and reported to the stage manager for full-dress rehearsal.

“Zound!’ I heard the musical director say, ‘where did you pick that one up?’

“Oh, from the country,’ replied the manager.

“A giggle ran along the rows of girls at this sally.

“I took naturally to the work, and at the end of the rehearsal was told by the director to ‘come on’ for that evening’s performance, ‘but mind, my little scared dear, make up some.’ I failed to understand him, for if the clothes which I wore were supposed to fit a good figure, I felt that I filled the bill, for the costume was very snugly fitted; at last it dawned upon me that it was my face, so I asked some of the older girls to make me up. I was sent from one to another, until one girl, who seemed to be a little new, told me to go to Dollie Squires. ‘She can do it and if she does, the director is sure to be pleased, for she is Prof’s pet, and she knows what will please him.’

“Of course it was my desire to make the best appearance possible, it was simply a matter of business, so I trusted all to Dollie. When I went on in the first scene, the titter which fluttered around the stage almost spoiled the act. Little did I dream that it was I who was the innocent cause of all the sensation among the performers, until after the curtain had been drawn.

“I had seen Leon in the audience. I was most miserable lest he should recognize me; my fear was changed to hurt, however, when the musical director ran pell mell all over the stage until he found me.

“‘Who made you up?’” said he.

“I told him. He raved, he tore, and stormed; his language was so bitter and I was so hurt that I was unable to go on any more that night. Next day he came to me in a more quiet manner and explained that he had intended to ‘feature’ me and that my make up had so horrified him that he really lost his temper. It took days for me to see clearly that Dollie put up the job on me, because she was jealous, but such was the case, and I could thank her for one thing, that being that Leon had failed to penetrate the disguise which she had placed upon me.

“Then there was a ceaseless round of rehearsals; during the day and in the evening after a general mix up of legs, bare arms, slippers and tights, in the main dressing-room, the call boy would summon us to appear in the first act. The music, the lights and the favors which men heaped upon me did much to keep the excitement at a fever heat. How well I remember the first pay day, I paid my little bills with the importance of a king of Wall street. Flowers filled my room each day, and if I became a favorite it was simply because I worked with a desire to please. One day the musical director stopped me as I was going out of the theater; we had quite a talk, all in an undertone and all in regard to my work. He was simply advising me; as I started away, Dollie Squires stepped from behind a wing.

“‘It’s a wonder you wouldn’t talk to that country girl all day,’ she said to the Prof.

“I was too intensely exercised at the remark to reply; I went to my room and related the incident to Bertha Walls, my room-mate. She laughed loud and long.

“‘That is good,’ she finally said, as she struggled for breath.

“‘Why?’” said I.

“‘Because, you see, she is jealous and I am glad of it. Go in, little country girl, and show her a thing or two.’

“‘Nothing to be gained by that,’ said I.

“‘Yes there is, she is as mean as the old scratch, not a girl likes her, and if she doesn’t make you trouble, I’ll lose my guess.’

“‘How can she make me trouble?’

“‘Easy enough. If she wants you put out of the company, out you go. You see, she is a pet of the Prof’s, and if he kicks on your work, Althy, your time is up.’

“But she won’t do that, will she?”

“Sure she will; she has put lots of girls out of business in this house.”

“Next night as I left the stage door a hand was laid on my arm, and, looking up, I saw Leon. I was glad, yet sorry to see him.

“Althea,” said he, ‘I bring you bad news.’

“What can it be?” I asked.

“Your mother is very ill.”

“I questioned him closely and learned that my mother had been sick abed for ten days. He had set out to find me, and if possible, persuade me to return home, but I could not do that, much as I wished to, for I was now a bread-winner and the support of an afflicted mother. My argument won, and he finally left me; it was not long until I needed him, for the second day after that I received notice that my contract would be canceled at the end of the week.

“What was I to do? I told some of the girls, and one of them, a little brunette, said to me, ‘Well, I am leaving the company this week, anyway, and I don’t mind telling you where your trouble started.’

“Tell me please,” said I.

“Dollie Squires, of course.”

“But I have never harmed Dollie; tell me some way that I can become reinstated.”

“Go to the musical director, he is the power behind the throne.”

“I went. That night I went to lunch with him after the performance. Next day, Dollie, on small pretext, assailed me in an unmerciful manner; she heaped abuse upon my head. I said nothing when she had finished, but had the regulation cry; when I came out I came with teeth set hard, what was the use? My condition was not to be considered. My poor mother was a deceived and ruined woman, my father whom I had worshiped as a divinity, was a bigamist and a seducer. The blight was on me. My mother was ill; it was due to my father’s misstep that I was placed where I now was. I must now feed, clothe, and house the woman whose life he had ruined.

“Professor Riggles was ugly, red-faced and slouchy in his habits, but he told me his wife objected to his dressing better, and besides, he was so wrapped up in his music that he cared little, in fact, there was not much in this world to make him happy. I was touched by his pitiful story. I asked him how Dollie happened to have such an influence over him; he laughed and said she was a willful, headstrong girl.

“The fact that I could hurt her never entered my head until I was dressing for the first call after she had abused me so, when I overheard a conversation between two of the girls.

“I wish she would,” said one, ‘it would be just good enough for her, and if Althy would try she could make herself so solid with old Rig. that he would throw that smarty Squires out.’

“That was enough, I had nothing to lose.

“Just before the overture, Prof. Riggles came on the stage and left a note with the call boy for me. It said, ‘Meet me at the — Hotel, twelve tonight.’

“I was curious to know why it should take him so long to go the short distance (for we always got out at 10:45). I watched and when he left, Dollie was with him. I saw them get into a carriage and drive rapidly south; I began to dream and wonder what it all meant, then like ‘a

good little girl' I went to the appointed place and waited; he came at twelve; we had a dinner, some wine, and then—" the girl snapped the stub of a cigarette across the small room, during the pause.

"After Prof. had gone from the room next morning I found a door key on the floor, which, as I afterwards learned, had fallen from his pocket. That night I was placed in a more prominent part in the piece. I was kindly received; my old admirers were joined by numerous new ones; after the show Prof. Riggles came to me and said, 'my girl, you did fine.'

"Dollie Squires never spoke to me after that; she told some of the girls that she 'would put me to sleep.' When the time came for me to leave, I simply asked the Prof. if he could assist me to a place; he told me that the leading lady was suffering from a cold and that I was to rehearse for the understudy's part in the piece as I might be called at any time.

"When the director made the announcement on the stage that I would be called to play the leading role and the entire company should stay for two rehearsals, Dollie 'went up in the air.' She flew into a rage, then into hysterics, for she was supposed to be the next girl up.

"She left the theater in a rage; the next day at noon, I received a note from Prof. Riggles, telling me to come to a certain number on the south side. I went and was let into a handsomely furnished flat, by a colored maid. I found the Prof. in bed with a bullet hole in his arm. He explained to me how he had been held up the night before. It was a week before he could attend to his duties, meantime, I continued to take the leading role each day, not because I loved him, but from a point of appreciation I took many of the flowers which I received the night previous and arranged them in his room. One day I asked him where his wife was.

"'Oh, over on the west side,' he said.

"'But had you not better go home?'

"'No, not until the measly arm gets good. You see, Althy, I am in New York now, working on a new piece.'

"Presents of every form and description poured in upon me; I was wined and dined; poor little simpering fool, I thought it was life. Men insisted on paying my bills; I received money as tokens of kindness.

"So great was the line of my gifts, that on each pay-day I was able to send my mother all my salary. Silk from the skin out, my head adorned with the most exquisite Parisian creations, and some blithering idiot always at my heels. Is it any wonder my head was turned?

"When the Prof. recovered he told me that the apartment in which I had visited him was to be my home; my breath almost failed me, but the arrangements were quickly made, then there was a long series of late dinners in my flat; no home had more luxuries; I received many callers. It was not until this had been going on for three months that I was awakened, then I got a letter from Dollie. She was living in a house in a disreputable part of the city; she told me it was she who had shot the Prof., 'and if you knew,' she said, 'that old Rig. gets from five to fifty dollars from every one he introduces to you, you would make him divide. You need not think he gets all he spends on you from his salary.'

"Of course I did not believe it. She closed by saying that the home I now occupied had once been her own, and of course, I, in time, must give up to some one else, 'for you will grow tired of being his dog, and you had as well come where I am.'

"I asked Prof. about it all and he persuaded me to believe that she was only indulging in sour grapes. A few days later I managed to win favor in the eyes of the colored girl by giving her a

bright red skirt that an admirer from Milwaukee had insisted on buying for me; the next day I clinched the compact by presenting her with a heavy gold chain, which had also been placed at my disposal by some country bumpkin. Then as I handed her a glass of wine, I said, 'Alice, what was the girl's name who was here just before I was, I mean the one who shot Prof?'

"Oh, honey, doan you know?"

"I have forgotten the last name. Dollie somebody, wasn't it?"

"Yes, honey, dat jes it, Dollie Squires,' she said as she smacked her wine laden lips. Then she told me the whole story. I heard her through, went to my room, took a key from my dresser drawer and tried it in the front door. That night I gave the Professor the key and told him everything I knew. He grew pale and quivered like an aspen leaf. I would have killed him if I had been armed.

"The season closed; I visited my mother, took her up into the mountains and resolved to tell her all, but while there she improved so rapidly and seemed so happy at my success as a singer, that my heart failed me. I could not take away the little sweetness that remained in her life; it only spurred me on to greater deeds, when day by day I saw her eyes grow brighter, her cheeks take on a healthy glow, her voice become more cheery, I actually could not end it all.

"When the season opened I left her and came back, back to the theater with its rows of light and entrancing music, back to the dinners and flowers and back to the flat and Riggles, for my mother I could do all. I was soon relieved of that responsibility, for mother died suddenly one day. I went home and for fear that her spirit might learn what I knew in regard to my father, I took all that remained and the casket containing the same, and buried it beside the only man she had loved. It was a cold, dreary day; snow, which was half rain when it struck the streets, was sifting heavily through the air. I arrived from the scene of death over the Burlington route; when I reached the Union Station it was eight o'clock, the atmosphere seemed tuned to my oppressed frame of mind; I thought to walk part way up town. I had gone but a short distance when I met a little girl about seven years old; she stopped me to beg. I looked her over, and there, under the flickering light, I saw a pinched face, so poor and thin that the drawn mouth only added pity to the expression of the big, blue eyes; the little calico frock which the wind whipped tightly around her skinny form looked as though it would fall to pieces with each gust. The pale forehead was made more ghostly by the large blue veins that were plainly seen, while the one poor little plait of hair seemed to add loneliness to the big, white ears, that I could see through.

"Where do you live?' was my first remark.

"Oh, ma'm, I—I—don't want to tell you, it isn't a bit nice place, but you see, we can't help it; mamma, she is sick and papa don't have work all the time, and grandma, she is sick and papa he has to go stay at her house three nights a week, and that leaves mamma and me awful lonesome sometimes, but mamma told me to-day that she guessed she'd die before long, then I would go and live with grandma, then I could see papa every day. But, please, ma'm, I don't want mamma to die; I don't want to live with grandma, and I des know if mamma had somethin' to eat she wouldn't die, either.'

"I went with the child. I thanked God for having found her. Such a wretched place to live; four dingy rooms on an alley, a poor, miserable cook stove, made all the heat the apartment had. A grimy, smoking kerosene lamp in the hands of the child, led me to a coop of a bedroom and there, amid a pile of soiled and torn rubbish that had at some time been entitled to the name bed clothing, lay a half starved, pain-racked wretch, called woman, in filth too great for a beast, in pain too intense for a strong man to bear, burning with fever and

shivering with chills, and at the same time moaning, tossing and suffering only as a neglected soul and body can suffer.

“I spoke to her; she tried to sit up in bed, but fell back with a wild stare which told that it would require but little excitement to bring an end to all her suffering. I went out and bought everything I could think of; I can even now feel a tinge of happiness, as I think of how I ordered the best imported delicacies; I bought coal, a new lamp, and sent a doctor. That night, when I arrived at my elaborately furnished apartments, I sat in my satin house robe and slippers and as my maid brushed my hair I compared my surroundings with those I had visited earlier in the evening, and became happy.

“At midnight the Prof. came; I had concluded I would not tell him of my experience of the evening; it was none of his business and now that mamma was gone, I had no one to care for and I could spend some of my salary in helping some poor soul.

“Next day I called on my patient, as I called her, again; this time I superintended and assisted in placing a new mattress and clean linen and blankets on the bed, then, after calling the janitor’s wife, and having her put a new gown on the woman, I left. I could not return that evening as I had notified the manager that I would be on for my part and the Prof. was going home with me after the theater, so I planned to go the next night after the performance, for he told me that he had been away from home two consecutive nights, and he ‘must show up’ at home that night. He bade me good-night, when I got into the carriage. My driver started out in the usual way for home, but owing to pre-arranged plans, turned west as soon as we were out of sight of the theater. I was soon in the sickroom and was delighted to see a great improvement; I carried my arms full of flowers and when the bedside was reached, the poor woman said, ‘Oh, these dear roses; that reminds me of when my husband used to have steady work at the theater, he nearly always brought home flowers that some of the ladies would give him, for he could not well afford to buy them, and me sick. Oh, you don’t know, Miss, what a burden I have been to him.’

“‘Did you say your husband was at some time employed at a theater,’ I asked, with bright visions of what a star might be able to do to get him a place.

“‘Yes, more than two years ago.’

“‘Tell him to come to me at the — theater tomorrow, and I will see if I cannot get him a place.’

“‘Oh, then—’

“The words were stopped by the sound of a key in the lock and the little girl running toward the door, shouting, ‘Oh, it’s papa, I know, for he said he’d come home to-night.’

“How my heart bounded to think I could say some encouraging word to that husband and father; my lips were shaped ready to speak my thoughts when the child came into the room aglow and excited, trying to tell what a good lady had done. I suppose I should have fainted when I looked up and saw the Prof., but I didn’t. I arose and extended my hand, saying to the little girl as I drew her to me with my left arm, ‘and this is your papa,’ well, I am glad, so glad that I waited until you came, Mr. Rig; ‘Riggles,’ he stammered, as it slowly dawned upon him that I did not mean to disclose the truth.

“I arranged to meet him the next day and assist him in procuring a position. We met; I told him a few things; the fourth day after, I went to his home in my own carriage, took his wife and child to my erstwhile flat, explained to them that he had secured the position and could afford them a better home.

“That was the last ride I ever took in my own private carriage. I sold my horses, carriage, all my jewelry and many fine gowns, placed the proceeds where Mrs. Riggles could draw a fixed sum weekly, then I sailed for Europe. But a star in America is not always a star in a foreign country. I stuck it out three years and then returned.

“Riggles? Oh, well, his wife died, he took up with Dollie Squires again, and a double suicide in a Clark street resort put an end to his career along with Dollie’s.

“The little girl? She grew up sweet like her mother; she is in a convent now, be out soon, then my work is done.”

17. A Trip Across The Lake

“When Happiness comes knocking at my door,
I may not lift the latch to let her in,
Because, ah me! one forced his way before—
The ugly phantom of an ancient Sin.”

“It is a strange thing for me to want to tell you my story, but something about you inspires me with a desire to confide in you, even though I have not known you long.”

The speaker was tall with the angularity of an undeveloped school girl, although self-confessed twenty-one years of age. She had bright, laughing eyes, a large mouth, whose thick lips left an impression of coarseness. Her hair was very heavy and dark, and she wore it dressed low over her left eye, in the style of the day, which gave her an unnecessarily rakish appearance. Yet, notwithstanding her unprepossessing appearance, there was an indescribable something about her which drew one to her.

I assured her that I appreciated her confidence and thanked her for it.

“My parents were Methodists, and while I was carefully trained, they did not keep me under such strict surveillance that I was not able to have many liberties. At fifteen I was as large as I am now, and was in for every bit of fun there was going. I always had a crowd with me, and we rode our wheels everywhere (it was when the wheel craze was at its height). I played the piano then even more than I do now, and lots of times we would ride out to the parks and go to one of the club houses in the vicinity to rest and I would play the piano and they would dance. So the spring was passed, and mamma never reprimanded me if I was in the house by ten or ten thirty. She must have thought no harm could befall me as long as there was a crowd with me.

“One day mamma gave me permission to go to St. Joe with one of my girl friends. We left on the nine o’clock boat, and were to return on the one which arrives at midnight. We crossed without incident worthy of note. On the return I noticed a tall, fine looking fellow watching us. He was sitting on the upper deck. Girl like, my friend and I started up a flirtation. He came over and talked to us and finally my friend asked me to play. I did, and I have thought since that perhaps that was my chief attraction for him then, as he was very fond of music. In the meantime my friend had found some one to take up her time and Jack and I went up on deck by ourselves. We sat side by side and the gentle motion of the boat, the moon shining on the waters, the soft, warm breeze floating past us, were enchanting and very conducive to love-making. He was much older than I, but that made no difference to me. I thought only of the romantic situation, and wondered if fate had brought this prince of men to me. He kissed me and loved me as I had not imagined in my fondest dreams, and I drank it all in, and returned it with interest.

“Before the boat reached Chicago he gave me his name and address, and I had given him mine, and it was arranged that we should correspond. For several weeks I heard from him regularly and then came a long silence. At first I was hopeful, but at last my hope gave way to doubt, and I became morose. I refused to eat and became as miserable as a sentimental girl of fifteen could possibly be. I left school, finally, having prevailed upon my mother to allow me to learn stenography. She consented, thinking, I presume, that it was the best thing that

could be done as long as I was in my present frame of mind, although the cause of it was all a mystery at the time.

“One night when I came home from school, I found a letter from the Alexian Brothers’ hospital, telling me of the severe illness of Jack, and that if I would see him alive, I must come at once. My heart was almost bursting with its strain of conflicting emotions. At one moment I was on the mountain top, filled with joy at the thought that he had not forgotten me; the next, down in the valley of despair, fearing his death.

“I told mamma the whole occurrence, and while she did not approve of an acquaintance made in such a way, she concluded to go with me to the hospital. When we arrived we talked to the nurse a few moments, and she told us that he had constantly called for Carrie in his delirium. He never mentioned my last name, and as a last resort they thought of looking through all his effects to see if there was anything among them which would throw light on the subject.

“In his coat pocket they found his last letter to me, which he had evidently not sent for some reason, and in this way they learned my address. They thought it best for mamma to remain outside at first, until they saw what effect, if any, my presence had upon him.

“I went up to the cot and kneeled beside it, putting my cool hand on his burning forehead, and whispered ‘Jack’ very softly.

“He ceased his ravings and seemed to be listening. I repeated his name and he murmured ‘Carrie.’

“That was the turning point in his disease. The fever abated and I continued to visit him almost daily, sometimes in company with mamma, sometimes alone. Mamma liked him very much indeed, and soon lost sight of the way I met him.

“When he had recovered sufficiently to go out, he came over to our house. He won papa over directly, a feat I had feared far more than that of winning mamma, for he was so set in his ways. He improved the first opportunity to ask papa for my hand, and he consented on condition that we wait one year at least, for he thought I was too young to assume the responsibilities of married life. So it was arranged. I continued with my shorthand, and after I finished found a nice position in a lawyer’s office.

“Jack would give me no peace until I would consent to marry him secretly. He said he was afraid he would lose me. So one day we stole away and were married. He was very tender with me, and taught me the beauty of married relations, so slowly and gently, that I was not shocked, as I might have been had he been different. To outward appearances he was only the devoted lover and I, being his fiancée, he was allowed to call as often as he chose and stay as late as he liked, for my parents had implicit confidence in him.

“One day, six months after we were married, a strange man called at the office to see me. I met him with a great deal of trepidation, fearing, I don’t know what.

“‘Is your name Carrie Barnes?’ said he.

“I said, ‘Yes, what do you want?’

“‘Do you know one Jack Bates?’

“‘I do,’ said I, now thoroughly aroused to anger. ‘Is it any of your business if I do?’

“He looked at me kindly, yet gravely, and replied in even tones, ‘I am sorry to say it is some of my business, and a very unpleasant business at that.’

“Then he asked me if there was not a private office where he could talk his business over with me. So I took him into Mr. Walton’s private office.

“He said, ‘Will you tell me what you know of Mr. Bates?’

“I told him I didn’t know anything against him, if that was what he was waiting to hear me say.

“‘Will you tell me what your relations are with him?’

“I could feel the blood leaving my face, and I must have repeated his question, for he said, ‘Yes, tell me whether you have ever had any relations with him which you should not hold.’

“‘I will not tell you a thing,’ said I. ‘Who are you and what do you mean by asking me such questions?’

“He was exasperated, I suppose, by my impudence, for he said, ‘I’ll tell you my business. I am an attorney representing my client, and in his behalf I am tracing the career of Jack Bates. It is known that he has been to your home frequently, and that you have been out together a great deal. It will be to your advantage to tell all you know.’

“At this critical juncture, I heard Mr. Walton coming. I ran out in the hall to meet him and managed to gasp out, ‘I want to see you a minute.’

“I told him what the man had said, and he said, ‘Carrie, tell me all about it. What do you know about him?’

“Then I told him we were married, and had been for six months. He scowled and said, ‘Bad, very bad. I advise you to tell the gentleman the whole affair, just as it is. Do not try to protect the man; let him stand on his own merits.’

“So I went back to the attorney.

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘are you ready to tell me all you know?’

“‘Yes,’ I said, ‘but I have not much to tell. It is only this. Mr. Bates and I were married six months ago, so I guess even you will admit that we had a right to be seen together often, if we chose to.’

“He said, ‘My child, I am sorry to be obliged to tell you, but the fact of the matter is, you are not his legal wife. I am representing the father of a girl fifteen years old, whom he has seduced, and in my investigations I have learned that he has a legal wife and one child living.’

“How do people live through such awful ordeals, yet possess their senses? I was young and believe that was my only salvation. The world turned suddenly as dark as death; all the sunshine and mirth had gone out of it. That night when I went home I saw other girls laughing and talking as if they had not a care in the world, and I wondered how they could do it. I was still stunned by the awful blow which had fallen upon me. I might have found a little consolation in talking to Jack, but even that was denied me, for the attorney told me that he had been taken into custody, arrested on the charge of seduction.

“I did not know what to do. I could not tell my parents of my marriage, for I knew my father’s pride and sternness, and I feared he would turn me out of doors when he knew the truth. I managed to live through the night somehow, and dragged myself to the office the next morning. Mr. Walton asked me if I had told my parents and I told him I had not, and asked him to break the news to me, which he consented to do.

“After he had gone I sat in the office trembling for the result.

“He came back at last, after what seemed to me an interminable length of time, and told me to go home. Mamma took me in her arms and tried to console me, but papa ignored my presence entirely and refused to speak to me for months.

“When Jack came to trial they brought his wife to appear against him; that is, it went against him, of course. She was a sweet young woman, just the age that I am now, twenty-one years, and he had married her as soon as she came out of the convent. I was not able to go on the witness stand, the shock of the whole thing had proved too much for me, so they took my deposition and the trial went on without me.”

“What was the result of the trial?” I asked.

“He was sentenced to a term in Joliet, and is serving his time there now, and I never want to see his hateful face again.

“His wife came to see me and brought her little year-old girl with her. The dear little thing was as bright and sweet as she could be, and my heart went out to both of them. Later, Jack’s mother came to see me, bent and worn with her grief and the disgrace her only son had brought upon her.”

“And what became of the other girl?”

“Oh, she died of a broken heart, so they say. What a world of misery one man can create!

“I was very ill for a long time, and when I recovered my father felt very differently toward me; he seemed to be reconciled to the affair, and I was fully forgiven.

“I simply existed for two years, not caring for anything. I met Harold about this time, and you know the rest.

“He took me knowing all, and we are quite happy; at least, I try to make him happy, but I can never forget that first awful disappointment. It rises like a specter at the very moment I think I have forgotten.”

18. One Woman's Way

“What men gain fairly—that they should possess,
 And children may inherit idleness,
 From him who earns it—this is understood;
 Private injustice may be general good.
 But he who gains by base and armed wrong,
 Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,
 May be despoiled even as a stolen dress
 Is stript from a convicted thief and he
 Left in the nakedness of infamy.”

“Yes, I think women have great control over some branches of politics, or, at least, I will say that some women lend their influence in such a way that political aspirants are masters of the situation at times.”

The speaker was a woman too distinguished looking to be classed as an ordinary person; tall, straight and dignified, the auburn hair looked almost red, as the glints of sunshine rested on one massive coil, which had been so neatly arranged high upon the well-shaped head, giving her a queenly bearing.

The forehead, a trifle low, added much to the determination of the rather square-set jaws; the thin lips curved into a knowing smile, while the hazel eyes shone with the unmistakable signs of wit and ingenuity. If she appeared taller than the average woman it was partly due to the fact that she had a way of looking at people with seeming downcast expression; the effect of this look was produced by the erection of the woman's head, together with the long eyelashes, which appeared to creep from under the heavy brows; if at first glance one should judge her to be from the ranks of the common, a moment's study of the face, ending in a glance at the symmetrical figure, would emphatically impress one with the thought that some unusual event had some time in her life mixed the surroundings so thoroughly into her plastic nature that it caused some of the rougher elements to crop out in spite of her complete control, and well planned efforts of concealment.

She had answered my question, so I took courage and asked her another.

“Can you tell me of an instance wherein a woman has, by her own efforts, been able to control the political situation?”

“Yes.”

She spoke almost snappishly, then in a softer tone she continued:

“If you will excuse a personal allusion, I will give you a story.”

“The more personal, the better it will be told,” I said with a nod.

“Then,” she said, as she pointed to a chair with an inviting air, and proceeded to deposit herself into a comfortable rocker, “I will tell you one that is founded on facts.”

“I, like all girls, was once in love.”

“Once,” said I, as I looked around the room of the neatly furnished cottage in which we sat, finally resting my eyes on the crayon portrait of a man, whose face, though not handsome, denoted such honest industry that it was easy for me to imagine that he would love the woman of his choice devotedly, that unless she was a woman of barbarous mind she must at least love him out of gratitude.

“Yes, that is my husband; I can read your thoughts,” she said, with no show of further attention to the interrupting gaze, “and thereby hangs a tale.”

“This is my home, and the price I paid for it should have been the means of my presiding over a palace. I grew from the ranks of blithesome, prattling childhood to the age of sixteen, on a farm; wild roses and butterflies were my companions in the summer months, while the winter days were spent in school. I was thrown much into the society of a young man, who had come to our neighborhood as an applicant for the position of school teacher; at the time of his introduction into the district my father was a candidate for the office of township trustee; that worthy official has a great deal to do with the selection of the pedagogues, and it was well understood that if a teacher in search of a place find favor in the eyes of the superior officers of the township, his success was assured.

“It had been the custom up to this time to employ lady teachers in the rural districts, but when Roy Sunderman came on the field he came to win. It was generally believed that my father would have little or no opposition in his race for office, but when he was questioned on the policy of changing from female to male teachers, he was so indiscreet as to commit himself in favor of male instructors; this turned the tide against him, and public sentiment threatened to defeat him.

“It was nearing the time for election; no time was to be lost. One evening a neighbor of ours called to take me for a drive and incidentally to a lawn social, which was to be held a few miles from my father’s home. After we had gotten fairly started, my escort, who was a well-to-do farmer’s son, told me that some of the school and political directors had met at his father’s house on the night previous, and had besieged his father to make the race for trustee against my father, ‘But I hope he won’t,’ said he.

“‘Why,’ I asked.

“‘Because I—I—don’t want our people to oppose each other in any manner,’ said he.

“I was a schoolgirl and cared very little for politics, and knew no reason why Elmer Lane should be so deeply interested in the peace and tranquillity which existed between our respective families. Still, I wanted my father to win. I would have been a strange child if I had not wanted such a result.

“Suddenly a light dawned upon me; if the elder Lane could be kept out of the race, or even defeated, my father would be the victor; then, for the first time in my life, I began to formulate a scheme which would upset the plans of the opposing side; I was not long in drawing out of my companion the statement that he loved me; then I was able to see why he was so keen to have the present standard of friendship maintained. He begged me to say that I loved him. I put him off by saying that if I did I would be afraid to confess it, for fear our families might become antagonized in the coming political battle which was near at hand.

“‘But,’ said he, ‘if that is any barrier, say that you love me and I will compel my father to decline to run, or, better still, I will advise him to accept the nomination; then, after it is too late to select another candidate in his stead, withdraw, leaving the field clear for your father.’

“I had confidence in Elmer’s ability, but did not bind myself by a promise. I told him he must first show his ability to keep the track clear.

“We arrived at the lawn fete with our love affairs in embryo; all was merry; country girls were there from miles around; white swiss and flowered lawn dresses fluttered softly among the rose bushes and other flower laden shrubbery; while the young men, with bronzed faces and a distinct line of bleached skin around their necks, showing evidence of a fresh haircut, sallied about behind gaily colored neckties and ever ready grins of more or less magnitude, as the occasion demanded. All the games so pleasing to the young folks were indulged in by the frivolous guests.

“I had strayed away from the center of the group, which was indulging in some pastime, because I did not have the interest of the evening at heart. I had been told for the first time that I was loved, and while that did not create any strange feeling in my bosom, I could not banish from my mind the thought that the man who professed love to me had endeavored to purchase mine. I was not posted in chivalry, but I did feel as if I might have been more susceptible to his pleadings if he had based his ideas altogether on the fact that he loved me without trying to buy favor by the sacrifice of some other aspiration.

“I was seated on a rough wooden bench near a tall stump around which was twined a profusion of morning glories. I could see everything that was going on around me, but was myself out of the direct ray of light which the many Japanese lanterns shed through their variegated sides. I think I must have started when I heard a voice say, ‘Is this Miss Dalby?’

“The voice was strange and so unlike the uncultured nasal tones which I was accustomed to hear.

“‘Y—e—s,’ I drawled, as I looked up into a mature face, ‘my name is Dalby.’

“‘My name is Sunderman—Roy Sunderman,’ said the voice. ‘I have tried to be introduced to you, Miss Dalby, but fate seems to have blocked my way.’

“‘I—I did not know you wanted to meet me,’ I stammered.

“Roy Sunderman was a full grown man, and I was not long in becoming interested in what he was saying. The time sped so rapidly that the crowd was half gone before I thought of it being the hour for leaving. Then, so wrapped was I in what Mr. Sunderman was saying, that my escort of the evening called me twice before he attracted my attention to get me to join him on the homeward trip.

“I had not granted Mr. Sunderman’s request to be allowed to call, but told him I would consider the matter and notify him if I concluded to allow him to come.

“Elmer Lane upbraided me so unmercifully on my way home for my conduct of the evening that my mind was made up before I went to bed. I wrote Mr. Sunderman a note asking him to call on the Sunday evening following. Long before the summer sun had gone to rest on that Sunday evening, Elmer called for his answer, saying that he had persuaded his father to decline the honor of being a candidate. ‘And now,’ said he, ‘I want you to say that you will love me.’

“‘But I don’t love you,’ said I.

“‘No, I suppose that young snob from town has filled your head full of poetry and such like.’

“‘I don’t know what you mean.’

“‘I mean that smarty that you sneaked off in the dark with, over at Wilson’s party.’

“‘If you mean Mr. Sunderman, you are mistaken,’ said I.

“Well, that’s who I mean, and I’ll tell you now that he’s the cause of all the trouble about this trustee business, and what’s more, I’ll show you mighty quick where he will end. I mean to have my dad run, and he’ll beat your ‘old man’ all holler, so good-bye, Miss Dalby.’

“He left. When Mr. Sunderman came I was in tears; I was alone at home, my parents having gone out for the day and remaining away late. I was so hurt. I could now see that I had put myself in a bad plight. Mr. Sunderman begged me till I told him all. His words of comfort were soft, tender and reassuring, and by the time my parents came home, I concluded to tell them the whole affair, and with kind and genial Mr. Sunderman’s help, I did so. The following Tuesday the papers announced the name of Thomas Lane as candidate for township trustee.

“Never before was the local talent so pressed into service and the issue was one of merit. Many of the people came out in open defiance of my father; he was quoted and misquoted. Meanwhile Roy Sunderman was showing his ability as a politician. He made speech after speech at the school houses in the township; his diplomacy steered clear of the real issue, as he knew that the odds were heavily against him; he not only saw that the public was in favor of women teachers, but he realized that he stood before the people an abject subject to the severest forms of criticism. Still, this man of personal magnetism made many friends and fast friends everywhere he went; his arguments were forceful and conclusive and at the closing of each speech he made the announcement that on the day before the election he would address the people en masse, and if every voter would promise to come he would obligate himself to tell them something startling, and that something would be proven to them, that they would weigh the facts in their own active minds and be guided by their own decisions; in other words, they would be given facts that would put them on their honor as patrons of the public schools, as husbands of their homes and as fathers of their children. Such orations had the desired effect. It set everybody talking and the result was that when the day arrived for the ‘firing of the gun,’ as many of the skeptical ones put it, the entire populace was in the grove that had been chosen for the occasion. I am sure no one knew what was coming. All of the school directors were invited to seats on the rough platform by the speaker. His speech was a marvel of philosophy, his language was one continuous flow of correct and convincing utterances. The attention which was accorded him was within itself a mark of the appreciation of his efforts.

“Then he made the statement that on a certain night the school directors had met in caucus at the home of one of the candidates (namely, Mr. Lane), and solicited him to enter the race, and that he considered the matter in a favorable manner, and that Mr. Lane’s son had gone to the daughter of Mr. Dalby and made the proposition that in consideration of her giving to him her love he would dissuade his father from entering the race, and, pending the decision of the young woman, the Board of Directors had received this letter:

“‘Fellow Citizens,’ shouted the enthusiastic speaker, as he waved a sheet of fool’s cap aloft, ‘declining to become a candidate, then within two days after the young woman had decided that a man of the mercenary ideas of Elmer Lane was unworthy the love of a true woman, the father of the purchaser of love announces himself as a candidate, and young Mr. Lane had menacingly declared that ‘Old Man Dalby would be beat all holler if the young lady refused him.’”

“Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you want a man in the position of honor and responsibility, which it is in the power of this fair minded people to tender a man, who is making the fight simply to gratify the revengeful feelings which are harbored by a whimsical and love sick youth, it is your duty to vote for Thomas Lane. If you want a man to represent you in public affairs who is more loyal to the cause of education, and who has the interest of your home at

heart as well as his own, and a man who is as far above the pusillanimous acts of coercion as the angels are above Satan, then vote for Caspian Dalby.”

“Mr. Sunderman closed his remarks by challenging any one to refute his statements. No one made answer to this remark and the truth won. Of course there was a great deal of talk when my father insisted on employing Mr. Sunderman. He was tendered the position of principal of the academy in town, but he declined, saying that he preferred country life and that all he could accept would be a school in the country. Then he was intrusted with the school in the district in which we lived.

“It was an easy thing for me to fall in love with him, and I am sure he loved me. My father did not object to the match, he only insisted on our waiting, but lovers cannot wait, so we went quietly away, got married and wrote home for forgiveness. It came in time and we, instead of returning, settled down in a small Wisconsin town, where Roy began the practice of law. Sixteen months of happiness is well worth the price of sixteen years of sadness. Our boy was about four months old when Roy came home one day with a cloud on his face. I finally persuaded him to tell me what his trouble was, and he took me in his arms and told me of another marriage in which he was a principal. It occurred two years before he came to our house. He had applied for a divorce and supposed himself free, but it seemed a technical point had been overlooked and he was still legally bound to the other woman. I am too mature now to explain to you how my tender nerves were shocked. I asked him if he could not yet get a divorce. He was afraid not, and besides he had a letter from his father who was very wealthy stating that unless he came home and took care of his wife he would be disinherited.

“‘But what about me?’ I asked.

“‘Oh dear,’ he said, ‘I don’t know; it nearly drives me mad. If I go I will lose you and if I stay I will lose fortune and position, and will eventually be torn from you.’”

“I could see it all; he was right. It was arranged for me to live in Chicago. He would support me and move his wife there so that he could see me as often as possible.

“‘Cold, isn’t it?’ said the woman, as her eyes glowed like coals of fire.

“I would have died to make him happy, but it was not my lot to die.

“He had lived here about one year, when his legal wife died in child birth. I mourned with him, for she was a good angel. I went so far as to have her baby girl brought to my cottage and cared for her as I did my own child. He called often, and it was quite natural for me to now look forward to taking the position which was rightfully mine. After six months I ventured to mention it to him. He said: ‘Yes, dear, just as soon as the proper time has elapsed, you know. I am in politics and I cannot afford to cause comment such as a public man must suffer by the failure to observe the proper respect.’”

“Yes, I could see he was right. All of the bright future which remained before him could be turned to inky darkness by just such a mistake as this. He received an appointment at Washington, consequently was away from me a great deal. Finally, on one of his trips home, he suggested the idea of sending his girl baby to some of his people.

“‘It is too much for you, dear,’ he said.

“I had learned to love the little darling and I was lonesome when he took her away. He never forgot to send the remittance for my support, and his visits continued the same.

“One day after he had been in Washington a year I met a lady from there. In our general talk I mentioned that I knew a gentleman there.

“‘Who?’ she asked.

“‘Mr. Sunderman.’

“‘Oh, do you know him?’ she exclaimed, with a show of delight.

“‘Pleased to know that I had met one of his friends, I felt the flood of joy which shone out of my face as I said, ‘Yes, I have known him a long time.’”

“‘And do you know his wife?’ said my friend, as we started across the street.

“‘I met her once,’ I said, ‘just before she died.’

“‘Oh, I mean his present wife, formerly Miss Bringhurst.’

“‘Is he mar—’

“‘I heard the shout. I caught a glimpse of the horse’s hoofs as they pawed the air near my head, but I was falling, and all I know was that I could not stop. When I awoke I was in the hospital.

“‘I was not so badly injured from the fall as was at first supposed, although I received a bad scalp wound, which caused me to bleed so profusely that I must have been a terrible sight. I quickly recovered sufficiently to be taken to my home. I suffered days of untold agony. I could not believe what I had heard; I was sure it must be false. Roy, my Roy, was true to me; he was too true to our boy to do anything to make us suffer.

“‘Each day made my load heavier. Years were added to my age by the terrible strain which was brought to bear on me. I viewed my position from every standpoint and at last with a love greatly overshadowed with fear and doubt, I took steps to ascertain what amount of truth there was in the report.

“‘It was true. He had been married three months, during which time he had called on me twice, and it was now almost time for his regular visit. I received a letter saying he would arrive in this city on the day following. What was I to do? When I thought of openly accusing him of his perfidy my heart sank within me. Oh, to think that he would be untrue to me; to know that I was not loved. For to know that was to desire to die, and why not? No sooner had the thought flashed into my mind than the plan developed in all its maturity. But what would I do with the baby? I loved him, and surely no one else would care for him since his father had deserted him and I would be dead.”

At this point my hostess paused, and walking across the room took from a drawer a photograph of a youth in military costume.

“‘This is my baby’s picture,” she said, with a tremor in her voice; then, giving way to her feelings, she buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

“‘And to think,” she said, “a fine boy like that with no one to call father.”

So calmly did this woman of nerve tell me of her intention that I became engrossed with the idea and listened as though some one was presenting a business proposition to me.

“‘Then you changed your mind?’” I said.

“‘No, I tried to put my plans into execution. I put the baby to bed, closed the room up tightly and turned on the three gas jets, took my all in my arms and closed my eyes.

“‘I have a distinct memory of the darkness, the shooting pains in my head and the choking sensation which seemed to so nearly strangle me that I had no ambition left with which to struggle for life; then I went to sleep.

“The next thing I knew the fresh air was blowing on my brow and I heard some one calling my name. ‘O, Mary, Mary, speak to me. Wake up, dearest, and say that you know and love me. It is Roy. Don’t you know me, precious one?’

“Oh, how I longed to die while those words were being uttered; how I prayed in my semi-conscious stupor that his kisses would assist in smothering the breath which, in spite of my efforts, had begun to come and go softly through my purple lips. His loving words were as the music of angels, and my only wish was to be wafted away to the sweet sound of his endearing tones. My dreaded fear was made complete when I awoke to a full sense of realization.

“I opened my eyes to find myself in Roy’s arms. I saw that tender look of the strong man; I heard him say: ‘Darling, I love you.’ I felt myself clasped to his breast and I was glad I lived. God seemed to have sent him at the right time. I asked him how it came that he was there and he told me that he was so anxious to see me that he left business and all and came one day sooner. He had let himself into the house as usual and found me in time to bring me back to life. The baby was not so badly affected as I was, for the reason, I think, that he had cuddled close to me and in so doing had gotten his face under the bed clothing, consequently the fumes of gaseous poison had not penetrated his retreat.

“Roy was so tender and good that I could not bring myself to the point of asking him about his marriage. He asked me why I had undertaken the rash act and I told him that I was lonesome for him. Things drifted on for months, and he returned to this city to live. It was then that he came to me and told me that he was married. He explained how he had been compelled to have a certain sum of money in order to maintain his influence in the political circle and that he had married a wealthy woman. He insisted that I meet his wife, but I refused. I also refused to accept any financial aid from him. If it had been his money I should gladly have taken it, but I would not take a cent of the funds which had been the means of buying my place at my husband’s side. I then answered an advertisement for ‘housekeeper wanted’ and accepted a position with a small family, which only lasted a few weeks, at which time I found myself penniless. Next, I was a chambermaid in a hotel, but left because I could not have my boy with me. Then kind heaven seemed to favor me, for I secured a position as companion to an old lady. I remained there seven years; my boy was allowed to live in the house with me, and went to school as soon as he had reached the proper age. I saw Mr. Sunderman occasionally. He was a well known attorney and a man of affairs. During my stay at the home of the old lady I became very much attached to her, and it was little wonder that when she passed into the peaceful slumber of death that I was much moved.

“Many relatives that I had neither seen nor heard of attended the funeral. When the procession was forming to leave the house my attention was attracted to a beautiful woman, who had a little girl with her. She was an earnest mourner; it seemed almost impossible for her to give up her dear aunt to the relentless hand of death. She moaned and sobbed so pitifully as the casket was borne from the house that I thought to lead her; she leaned heavily on my arm and we slowly followed the form we loved so well and sadly watched the pall bearers as they placed the black case in the sombre vehicle. Then the carriages, which were silently waiting, began to draw up to the curbing as the huge burial car moved away. One, two, three handsomely groomed teams stopped, until the curtained doors of the carriages to which they were hitched closed with a muffled sound, when they would slowly walk away as though they understood they were to make room for the next.

“The fourth carriage halted; the attentive assistant opened the door and the lady I was supporting moved toward it, leading the little girl with her.

“‘Would you mind letting this lady ride with you?’ asked the undertaker, with a bow.

“For the first time she looked at me and seemed to recognize me as the woman whom she had seen in charge of affairs in the house when she had first arrived.

“‘No,’ she said, with a toss of her head, ‘I don’t care to take any servants in with me.’

“I watched the streets and boulevards for months before I again set eyes on that turnout; when I did it was but a matter of inquiry to find out it was the private equipage of Mrs. R. Sunderman.

“I had reached the stage of desperation, where I was ready to do anything but one thing, and that was to die. I wanted to live long enough to impress upon her mind who I was. It was while in this frame of mind that I met my husband. I had lost all respect for myself; I had reached that stage of degradation which is worse than to resolve to take one’s life. I had decided to sell my soul in order to have sufficient funds to at some time humiliate this woman who had refused to carry me in her carriage, which should have been mine. I went to a house of bad repute to apply for admission; while talking to the proprietress a man came in. He signified a desire to talk to me, and we left the place together. He was only a poor man, but his soul contains some of the rarest qualities of manliness that has ever been discovered in the human race. In ten days we were married. I did not love him, but he offered me and my boy a home. He asked no questions but, as he said, took it for granted that I was as good as himself; I have never loved him with that pure, unselfish love which is so essential to real happiness, but he has been good to me and I have done my duty.”

“But what about your first—er—Mr. Sunderman, I mean?”

“Well, he followed his political ambitions, and his party has been victorious in nearly all its efforts. Money has come to him without apparent effort.

“My husband finally purchased a grocery store in which he toiled incessantly to provide for us. Such life grew monotonous. I was seeking some way of relieving him, when one day I picked up a paper and saw great headlines saying, ‘Sunderman Faction Wins.’

“‘The result of yesterday’s caucus plainly shows Hon. Roy Sunderman master of the situation. His position and power unquestionably defined,’ etc.

“In reading the article I discovered that Sunderman had gained control of the political situation. He did not seek any office, but rather chose to be dictator, thereby holding the patronage of high officials in his hand. I next ascertained that he would be appointed minister to some foreign country to intercede in issues of great importance which at that time held the public eye, as he saw fit. The newspaper account which contained the latter statement went on to say that the great honor shown Mr. Sunderman was only a fitting tribute in return for the effective and valuable services which he had rendered the party, and that he was given the choice of several different appointments, but preferred the one named because it would afford him an opportunity to take his family on a sojourn in Europe with him.

“At last, I had not waited so long for nothing. This is an exact copy of the letter I wrote him.”

The letter was as forceful in expression as was the writer in her deliberate narration. I will produce it word for word:

“*Hon. Roy Sunderman.*

“Dear Sir: No doubt you have expected to hear from me ere this; I have been waiting for the opportunity which your popularity has just now afforded me. If the monotony of my humdrum existence has taken me entirely out of your life, it is only the more reason why your

rise to prominence has been more plain to me; I have no favors to ask, but a request to make, hence this letter. I can see no happiness in having for a husband a man who on the stroke of five in the morning rolls out of his bed, hurries into his clothes and rushes away to his stall, where he deals out potatoes and codfish to the dictation of those to whom he must humbly bow in order to retain their patronage; remaining away all day without his lunch and only arriving home in the evening in time to eat dinner, which has been spoiled by being kept warm, and then tired, cross and peevish, he goes off to seek the rest from the day's toil and worry, only to rise and repeat the program as the days go by. The man is all right, I have no fault to find with him, but his ill health and the overwork have sapped his vitality until ambition in him is a gone and forgotten element. You have power and my husband is well qualified to fill some office, which would be an honor to him and a glory to me. He is educated and I want you to have him appointed to a position. I also want you to arrange to have *our* boy sent to school.

“These things I *know* you will take pleasure in doing, believing as I do, that my wish is your pleasure.

I remain,

— nee Mary Dalby.”

“He came to me upon receipt of the letter ready to advance me money, anything, that he could do, but the appointment was out of the question.

“‘No,’ I said, ‘it is not; I shall expect you to do as I say.’

“‘But, listen, Mary, the positions which I did control have all been tendered to others since I accepted my appointment, and the only way I could get any favors now would be to withdraw.’”

“‘All right, sir, withdraw,’ said I.

“‘But now, dear, be reasonable. My family is all ready to sail.’

“‘Well, let them sail.’

“‘Yes, I—I know,’ he stammered. ‘But they can’t sail without me and I can’t disappoint them now.’

“‘You can send them and join them later.’

“‘No, I cannot afford it.’

“‘Cannot afford it,’ I gasped.

“‘No. You see, Mary, I have to spend so much keeping pace with the crowd, that money is not at all plentiful with me.’

“‘And this appointment is the only means you have of going abroad?’

“‘Yes, Mary.’

“I looked at him, his eyes were filled with tears. My heart softened; I saw the tender emotion as it lit up his face until a halo seemed to surround his head. I knew that I loved him yet. I heard his trembling voice, as he pleaded with me, I saw his soft, white hands as they reached out to me in mute appeal; I think the tears which now half blinded me must have had a softening effect on my callous nature. Then with a flash I thought of a son without a father, I again went through years of toil, and as if a panoramic view was being unrolled before me, I saw a house in mourning, a hearse drawn by black horses, draped with great, black nets, whose fringe hung almost to the ground. I saw a line of vehicles moving slowly, a man

opened the door, then I heard a voice say, 'No, I do not care to take any servants.' Then with the pride wrought by the tingling of the warm blood which coursed through my veins, I said, 'Well, Mr. Sunderman, I am sorry, but I must ask you and your family to forego this one pleasure.'

"He did not mistake my sarcasm; he only asked me what would be the consequences, if he refused.

"'If you are anxious to know,' said I, 'just refuse and wait twenty-four hours.'

"Within two days the papers were full of Mr. Sunderman's withdrawal on account of a sudden breaking down of his health. He had many applicants for his influence, but he did not tell anyone that he had given up the only position over which he had any influence for reasons of his own.

"In less than thirty days, a rural looking man called at my husband's place of business, and stated that he was looking for an opportunity to buy a store something on the order of his; my husband priced the store, and the man took it without a word; my husband is industrious and I had a hard time keeping him in a contented frame of mind for thirty days more, but I insisted so strongly on his taking a much needed rest, that he was still idle when he was notified that he had been selected to fill a position as a postoffice inspector. His instructions were for him to proceed to headquarters at once to qualify. Our boy, Roy's and mine, is in a military school and I anticipate that he will be selected as a West Point cadet, when he has made the proper advancement."

"And does your husband know?"

"He knows nothing, except that five thousand a year is better than running a shop."

19. A Story Of The Levee

“Ah, yes, ’tis sweet still to remember,
 Though ’twere less painful to forget;
 For while my heart glows like an ember.
 Mine eyes with sorrow’s drops are wet,
 And oh, my heart is aching yet.
 It is a law of mortal pain
 That old wounds, long accounted well,
 Beneath the memory’s potent spell,
 Will wake to life and bleed again.”

In spite of police rules and the fact that there is a city ordinance prohibiting the admission of women in saloons in Chicago, in spite of the reported raids on dens in what has been known as the levee district for years, the writer indulged in a little slumming last evening.

One engaged in Dr. Parkhurst’s favorite pastime need go but a few blocks from the Central Police Station to find sufficient fields of labor to keep one busy for days. South State street appeared to be more attractive to a man going out on such an expedition alone, for the section of the street chosen for the work was nearly as black as Hades while strictly speaking it was as light as day owing to the numerous arc lights which served to light the inexperienced to these shining dens of vice.

The thrum of the guitar and the twang of the banjo and pounding of the piano served to entice me to enter a resort that is well known as the rendezvous of as precious a lot of thieving “old Mols,” pickpockets and grafters of all sorts as any city should care to boast.

Upon my entrance my attention was attracted by the many signs of fresh paint which was smeared over the faces of the denizens of gaudy attire which in some cases could almost be described by saying they were attired in a pair of red hose and a short bodice. In many instances the flaring nostrils and flaming eyes were temporarily obscured by clouds of cigarette smoke, only to be assisted in their display of dissipation by a liberal supply of gold teeth, as the degraded creatures would eagerly open their carmined lips to receive again the agent of insanity.

I was greeted with all the endearing terms known to the human tongue, from “Hello, sweetheart,” to “Honey, buy your baby a drink.”

I saw everything from a friendly handshake to a hugging match behind an artificial palm. Every inducement to a man of virile, animal instincts was held out to the male visitors of this law abiding place, while the revolting scenes of depraved humanity were made more distasteful to the refined person on account of the pit of hellish wretchedness his fellow men had fallen into.

So much for a city which is regarded as being under the surveillance, of proper authorities at all times.

I sat down at a table alone. The three-man band struck up a waltz, the notes arose and mingled with smoke, curses and a discordant humming which came from the husky throats of a dozen or more wearers of bleached hair and otherwise falsified females.

As the music continued I glanced around the large room. The sight of drunken men lolling over women whose only claim to life and conviviality was supplied by the effect of the different intoxicants which these daughters of misfortune had freely indulged in, was sufficiently disgusting to cause me to desire to make my exit without further delay.

I arose to go; just as I did so, I caught the eye of a creature whose smile showed in itself just how much of an effort it cost for the woman to present it. I lingered by the chair, and she approached me timidly. Her action, combined with her appearance, served to mislead me. I mistook her for a novice; on account of her seemingly natural shyness I looked upon her as being wholly out of place. Her general appearance too was far above the ordinary "she frequenters" of this place.

She was young, well preserved, modestly dressed and talked with a degree of sense and moral refinement unknown to the patrons of the establishment. Notwithstanding the fact that circumstances were against her, I believed her when she told me that she was not an habitue of this particular resort.

"But why are you here tonight?" I asked.

"Oh, I have the blues, good and plenty," she said, as she dropped into a chair.

"For why?" was my bantering query.

It was then that I was treated to a square look into her face. She was pretty to say the least. Her soft hazel eyes denoted everything but viciousness; her full, round face carried the freshness of youth and she made feeble attempts to smile pleasantly, at which time she showed a set of white, firm, but very short teeth. She gazed at me for a full moment, then with an air of wisdom she said: "I suppose you are fixing to make a raid on all the 'joints'?"

"No, I am not," was my honest reply, the meaning of which was so well taken that this girl admitted that I was surely "off my beat."

"You do not look like a man who chose his society from the ranks of these people," said she, with a look around the room.

"I should think you would know whether you had ever seen me around here before," said I.

"Nothing strange in that, for this is the first time I was ever in this place in my life."

By this time I had convinced her that I was not a "fly cop." She had caused me to believe that she, too, was telling the truth. I finally invited her to have a drink.

"No. At least not here; this is too tough for me," she said as she arose.

"But I want to talk to you."

"I am willing to talk, but not here and if you will meet me at the next corner in the basement, I will talk as long as you like. It is better and cleaner there," she added.

"Shall I go with you?"

"No, I will go alone. You follow."

After she had gone out, I viewed myself in the dingy mirror. I wondered if I really looked easy to that sly lady. I was not inclined to follow her into any basement den and run the chance of her having told some of the gang that I had insulted her, so they might have an

excuse to beat me into insensibility, rob me and throw me into the gutter, from whence I would be gathered up by the kind hearted policeman and carted away to the station more dead than alive and be called upon to answer to the charge of drunk and disorderly conduct, the next day, and pay tribute to the tune of a big fine, while my assailants were waiting for more “suckers.”

Curiosity and stubbornness led me to follow at a safe distance and try if possible to ascertain what sort of a place she entered.

It was on a corner; a view of the marble steps and shining brass rails denoted cleanliness. Bright lights diffused a warmth of welcome, while strains of music floated from the farther recesses of the basement. An expensive sign told me that the place was a “cafe.” “Ladies’ Entrance” was the inimitable farce that adorned the wall directly over one pair of steps leading downward, while numerous announcements over the other stairway announced all that was to be found by a respectable man of leisure. With a slight feeling of trepidation, I descended to the source of hilarity; as I drew nearer the music I became braver. I sought a table in a far off corner, and had not been there long when my new found acquaintance approached me.

“Now,” I said, “I want you to tell me all about yourself.”

“And if I do will you advise me as to what course to pursue to right a wrong?”

“I will try. But first have a drink. You are all upset; take a little liquor to steady your nerves.”

The drinks being disposed of, she began.

“Ah well, it is a short story. I came to Chicago during the World’s Fair. I was a pretty child of seventeen. My parents were very wealthy. My former home was Grand Rapids, Michigan, but I became so enamored with the exciting life of this great city that I prevailed upon my parents to allow me to remain here and enter a school of music. For four years I advanced rapidly. Society’s doors were wide open to me everywhere. I was in great demand at all social functions on account of my rich voice. I made many friends and was loved and petted by all. I met a man, one who also sang; our sympathetic natures readily embraced each other, our souls were in harmony, we saw with the same eyes, heard with the same ears, and lived by the agencies of the same heart beats.

“Time flew as it only can for lovers. We became engaged. All looked like one eternal, joyous day, but as time brings joy, so does it also bring pain. My fiance held a position of trust and responsibility. He came to me one day and said: ‘Jeanette, we must break our engagement,’ I thought he was joking, but no such good fortune. He meant he was thousands of dollars short in his accounts and wished to break off with me before it became public, so that the disgrace would not rest so heavily on me. He was noble for that, but I refused to release him, and wired my father, who came. I told him all, and my Dad was a good Dad; he anticipated my wish, and at once offered to make good all of Leslie’s shortage. It was decided that the matter should be settled in that way. Just then a new feature came to light. It developed that before I met Leslie he had been badly smitten on his employer’s daughter, Emily Sutton. I had never seen her; in fact, up to this time I did not know there was such a girl on earth. Miss Sutton was conscious of Leslie’s financial trouble, and as she had recently come into a large fortune in her own right, she, too, offered aid to the man we both loved. She had heard of me and demanded that I be jilted, and she become his wife. He refused, whereupon her influence was brought to bear upon her father and to spite me, Leslie was taken into custody. My father was true blue, and furnished the necessary bond which gave Leslie his liberty. He disappeared, and the affair caused an estrangement between my parents, which eventually drove my father to suicide. My mother and I quarreled; she said such bitter things about the loss my father had

sustained by reason of his signing Leslie's bond, that I refused to accept a dollar of the balance of the estate. She eventually married again and her second husband lost all my poor Dad had left.

"I applied for a position as soloist at a number of the different churches, and each time some promise was made, but in every instance I afterward received a brief note, saying the committee had decided not to employ me at present. I went so far as to offer my services gratis, but the offer was gracefully rejected. I had been so deeply worried that I had failed to notice the lack of attention and invitations from my old circle of friends, which had gradually narrowed down to a handful, compared to former days. Finally I thought as a last resort and an excuse for remaining on earth, I would apply for a position on the stage. I had no trouble in securing what I thought was a very good contract. I made my debut at the Masonic Temple and had the newspapers let me alone, all would have gone well, but it appeared to be their duty to take up my thread of existence from childhood and around me they wove a romantic story. They told how one man had so lost his head over me that he became an embezzler; how the publicity had caused my father to fill a suicide's grave, and how I had been a social favorite until this trouble came, etc. I suppose they meant it kindly, for the article closed by assuring the public that my smiles were as winsome as ever and my voice as sweet, and no doubt but that the Temple Garden would have the honor of having more real society people in attendance during my engagement, than any other place of amusement in the city. And they were there like curiosity seekers at a funeral. When the hour came for my second appearance (the matinee), every seat was taken and the "Standing Room Only" card had been put up an hour before the curtain raised. My number came; I went onto the stage and proceeded to disappoint my former friends by being seized with stage fright, and instead of singing, I stood in dumb consternation. Again and again the orchestra repeated the introduction; again and again did the director give me my cue. I heard nothing. I could see in the distance fans and handkerchiefs waving in the air. I saw a hundred pair of hands extended, and brought quickly together, but heard no clapping sound. I saw the many gorgeous flowers that were tossed upon the stage in massive bouquets. I saw the footlights as they seemed to grow more dazzling and then recede to a glimmering yellow flame, then I saw—

"When I revived the manager was furious. They said I had fainted. I guess I did. I know a very strange feeling came over me.

"Now I have recited my entire stage career to you. After this experience my nerves seemed to fail me and I was unfit for anything. I had the misfortune one day to meet one of my old friends, who happened to be in the audience when I broke down. We had a long talk over our lunch which lasted from two till five o'clock. He was so sorry for me, and said the thing I needed was travel. I felt myself as if something was needed. He proposed to assist me financially, and insisted on my going to Mt. Clemmens to take a course of sulphur baths. I really felt that it would benefit me, and hoped it would refit me for some sort of service by which I might earn a living. I accepted the proffered aid and left Chicago to seek health and strength. I spent seven weeks at the baths, and was so much improved that I felt that life was again worth living. At the end of that time my benefactor came to me. He told me two things and one was that he had seen Leslie in Chicago; that since the forfeiture of his bond he had decided to return here and had married his former employer's daughter, Emily. The other thing he told me was that he was just starting for a year's sojourn in Europe and wished me to join him. I did not know what it meant, but he plainly told me that I would be expected to travel as his wife. His request had a crushing effect on me. I could see why he had entertained so much sympathy for me in my days of trouble.

“I wanted to kill him. I asked him why he had not let me starve or die from the effects of the malady from which I was suffering. He listened quietly and then talked soothingly to me, until he convinced me that in reality he was my only friend. I then became suspicious. I did not believe he had seen Leslie, and I did not believe Leslie was married. I still loved him with the devotion that had eaten into my childish heart. I made my tormentor this proposition: That I would return to Chicago and see Leslie. If he really was married and could not marry me, I would return to him and accompany him to Europe. I had two reasons for making this request. First, I really wished to see Leslie, and second, I considered it a good plan to get away from the man who had befriended me, and to whom I found it quite a task to say no after all his kindness. He consented to the return to Chicago, and suggested that if I wished to go with him that I meet him in New York in two weeks. He filled my purse and I came here. I easily found Leslie. I told him I still loved him and begged him to marry me or kill me and end my suffering. He denounced me bitterly, accusing me of every sin a mortal can commit, and wound up by telling me he was married and showed me a picture of his wife. Here, this is the very picture,” said the girl as she drew a photograph from the envelope.

“And you, of course, snatched it out of his hand.”

“No, I will tell you how I got it when I get to that part.”

“I left him, my heart heavy within me. Again I sought employment in this city; for days I almost ran from one building to another in answer to some advertisement, only to find that I was too late, or in order to obtain this position I must submit to such proposals as I could not bear. Two weeks’ continuous trying and almost begging will tire the bravest. I found nothing that I could accept. My money was going fast; as I counted over my little store of currency my mind returned to him who gave it to me. Should I go and meet him? No! Die first, was my resolve. Then the thought came to me that possibly I could do better in New York, so after satisfying myself that he would have sailed before I could reach there, I left. I spent nearly all the money I had left for passage to New York. I felt that I never wanted to hear the name Chicago again, and as the train pulled out, I closed my eyes lest I should see something that would add more to my misery.

“I arrived at the Eastern metropolis without accident. I went straightway to a music hall and sought an engagement. I was accepted and was to appear in “The Spider and the Fly” Co. and told to report for rehearsal the next morning at ten. I went and lo! another calamity. The manager produced a picture of me, one which had been taken to decorate the billboards at the time of my debut here. He also informed me that I was on the black list for feigning illness at that time that I might be relieved from my contract.

“I needed a friend then to show that I was entitled to better treatment. The manager suggested that I change my name and get some one to vouch for me and then apply to some other manager.

“I thanked him for the advice and started out to find some one, but whom could I find? The only person I knew in New York had undoubtedly left there, and if he had not I would not dare go to him. But I did dare anyway. I knew not what else to do. I made inquiry at his hotel, and found to my half hearted delight that he had not yet sailed, but would leave that night. ‘Good!’ I thought, ‘I will detain him but a short time; he will help me to a position and it will not interfere with his trip.’

“I waited for his coming. He greeted me effusively, and told me he had waited and knew I would come.

“I explained all to him and asked him to help me that I might secure a position and be able to repay him all he had expended in my behalf. He laughed at me and said: ‘Yes, of course, but let’s talk it over.’

“It was dinner time and he suggested that as he had lunched early and I looked tired and hungry, that we go to dinner.

“We had dinner at Delmonico’s, and breakfast on board an ocean liner bound for Liverpool. People can say all they please about not knowing what they do while under the influence of intoxicants, but I know that as a rule they are conscious of every act, but simply do not care. At the dinner I have just told you of, we had wine. I rather enjoyed the sensation it produced, it made me forgetful of all my troubles, and appreciative of all my friend had done, so that when he proposed that we sail and not try for the stage again, I was a willing participant in the carriage ride that took us to the docks. How I got on board the ship I do not know. What happened during the night I cannot remember, for slumber relieved me of all the horror attending the desecration of my virginity. I simply know that during our trip I was Mrs. H. Bartel.

“We traveled for a year and then he brought me back to Chicago. He furnished a house, put \$1,000 in the bank to my credit, and bade me good-by.

“He went out of my life as quickly as I seemed to have lost cast in his. I began by keeping roomers; that did not pay. Then some of the fashionable men whom I had known in my palmy days approached me with a request that I allow them to hold clandestine meetings with women at my home. They paid well for the liberty.

“From that I went one step further, and became the landlady of a house of bad repute, entering the field openly and above board.

“Three months ago a woman applied to my house for admission. She looked fairly good and I took her in. I paid little attention to her, and such affairs were so common that I did not attempt to wring from her any ancient history. Her face had a familiar look, that at times puzzled me, but I did not give her much thought. One day I found a picture on her dresser. It was a picture of Leslie. I flew into a rage and questioned her closely. She told me she was his wife, made so by circumstances not conducive to happiness. I concealed my surprise. I knew then where I had seen her face. I managed to keep the truth from her and in a day or two found an excuse to expel her from my house. The last I heard of her she had become a frequenter of these places along the street here. Today I received this letter and picture from Leslie, and my business here tonight is to comply with his request if possible. Here is the letter, I will read it:

“Dear Jeanette: I have just learned what you are engaged in, also that my wife is an inmate of your establishment. May God grant that you are not aware of the fact, for although I have mistreated you shamefully, I will not believe that you have hunted her up and taken this method of revenge on me. Enclosed find her picture, the one I showed you before. For Heaven’s sake, send her to me and my baby.

“Kill me or torture me personally in any way you desire, but I beg of you do not be a party to the visitation of disgrace on my child. Yours,

“LESLIE.’

“And I am hunting Emily Sutton Marsh with a view to returning her to the place where she belongs.”

20. A Scientific Phenomenon

“When I remember something which I had,
But which is gone, and I must do without,
I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,
Even in cowslip time, when hedges sprout;
It makes me sigh to think on it,—but yet
My days will not be better days, should I forget.”

“Yes, art brought me to this.”

The speaker was a tall, thin, young woman of a nervous temperament. The storm of dark hair was pushed back in hurried confusion; the heavy brows and long lashes which protected the dark blue eyes seemed a fitting division between the high cheek bones and the bloodless forehead; her nose, so straight and thin that it corresponded with the lines or wrinkles which extended upward at either end of the mouth, and seemed to cut short the smile which otherwise might have been as merry as the dimple in her little chin would indicate.

Nature had left the stamp of refinement on her face, perhaps for no other purpose than to show the world that Celeste Moss had not always had a bent back and pricked fingers—the effect of shop duties. Her home was in two rooms, which, in spite of the lack of elegant furniture and rare bric-a-brac, showed signs of culture, if in no other way than the tidiness of the floors, which were without carpets or rugs.

The only new article in the room which was visible was a pair of trousers, and they were just being wrapped into a neat bundle by the deft and willing hands of this industrious woman, as she opened the interview with the first remark of this story.

“Art seems to have launched your ship of destiny into strange channels,” I ventured in way of reply.

“Yes, and I have been called upon to face many breakers and tide the waves of furious storms in the best way I could.”

“I am sure your career has been an interesting one.”

“Not so interesting as unpleasant,” she said, “and if you will excuse me for a moment, I will tell you all.”

That moment she consumed by carefully dusting and closing the machine with the same tenderness and precision with which some musician might put away his beloved instrument.

“You take good care of your machine.”

“Yes, that is all there is between me and the street; I must take good care of that.”

“I believe you said art transposed you from some other sphere in life to your present position,” said I, anxious to draw her back to her subject.

“Yes, I was born into a rich home, wherein the merry jingle of dollars was of less consequence to the different members of my family, than the rattle of pennies is to me now. I received all the finishing touches of education, then as my indulgent father said—”just for pastime“—I took up drawing and painting. My heart, brain and fingers seemed tuned with

one accord, so that taking the brush and palette in my hand was only striking the chords of my artistic nature, and the harmony which was thereby inspired spread itself in delicate tints and shades, producing pictures which were as natural as those of the old masters were. So much attention was paid to my amateurish productions that I soon found myself famous. Then I fell in love; art and love should have been brother and sister, born of the same woman and nurtured on the same sweet food. To love a man was to love to draw beautiful pictures as nearly perfect as my accomplishment would allow, then no matter what the canvas portrayed after it had received my finishing touches, I took great pleasure in likening the work to that of my idol, and always found my production wanting. Long days I spent in my studio, striving to make a picture of something which would show as much excellence as a work of art as my lover showed as a man; each time I tried I improved, but before I had reached that stage of supremacy as an artist, I had so lost my head along with my heart that it was a hopeless task; there was nothing so true, so sweet, so perfect as my Reginald."

"We were married. The conditions and circumstances under which we met at the altar were favorable in the extreme. My husband was a musician of note; in fact, he knew nothing but music and love; certainly nothing was more natural than the blending of our souls in love, inspired by ambition; then to add joy to the happy situation my husband's best and dearest friend, Jean Vincent (whom he had long since given up as dead), returned to our home town two days before the nuptials. Wealth was a thing easy of access to us, as both our families were independently rich. I was an only child and it was a common expression of my father's that as I was so careless in regard to my sex, it would be my duty to the family to produce a son. We were very happy, my husband, Mr. Vincent and I, for Reginald insisted on his taking up his residence with us during his stay; he, too, was an artist of no mean ability, and as Reggie said, we could share the same studio and perhaps be of assistance to each other, and besides my husband was teaching a great deal now, and it would be so nice to have Jean in the house for company."

"We spent many happy days; I could sit for hours and listen to those two "chums" discuss their travels, one in quest of musical education, the other chasing art in its various forms and a part of the time the two royal rovers spent their time in quest of pleasure; but Reginald had tired sooner than his friend, and the date of his homecoming had been the beginning of the love match which had culminated so happily. Mr. Vincent had remained in Italy for a time, then visited the Sahara desert, climbed the pyramids of Egypt and scaled the dangerous peaks of the Alps; he had hunted in the jungles of Africa, and probed mother earth for gold in far off Australia; in fact, he had been everywhere, from the scenes of direst poverty to the grandeur of royal palaces. It was not strange, therefore, that this swarthy man of Oriental customs could entertain, instruct and make friends at one and the same time.

"There was such a striking contrast between him and Reginald that many spoke of it. Reginald was one of those dear little, short, fat men, who seemed to beam with good nature; his round face was pink and white, while his clear blue eyes shown with that merry twinkle of tenderness so characteristic of the German type, while Mr. Vincent was tall and broad shouldered, with a face which was a study of stern determination. The years of hardship were not without effect, neither did his dark skin, black curly hair and luminous eyes of ebony have a tendency to soften the expression which the ravages of time had stamped upon his face. So much did these men enjoy the companionship of one another that they were always together when it was possible and it was only natural that I should join in all their conversation. You may imagine my joy when Reginald came to me and said:

"Celeste, I want you to make a portrait of Jean, and, dear, make it your masterpiece."

“Then came long days of close association; we were closeted for hours in the studio; we talked art; we exchanged views; Jean sat for me and then I persuaded him to reciprocate. I told him that as he was sitting for a picture of himself for my husband that it would be a grand opportunity for him to put my face on canvas, and after the deliberate conclusion that we would surprise Reggie, we decided to present him with my likeness at the same time Jean’s was finished.

“We worked with a will; when Reginald was away from home we often went to the church or the theatre or took a drive together. I know some people indulged in a little of that putrid gossip, which is sure to follow the act of any gallant man. We did nothing that could in any way be construed as disloyal to my husband; he knew our every move and sanctioned it all. It was during this period of sitting and painting that I made a happy discovery, and when I told Reginald he was so delighted that he lost no time in conveying the glad tidings to my parents; the prospects of an heir caused joy in their hearts. Finally the pictures were completed, and with them Mr. Vincent’s visit, for, as he put, he had stayed long enough in one place and would move on.

“Reginald used to stand and look at his picture at times after he had gone, as though he were looking on the face of a dead brother. The manly love and devotion which existed between Reggie and Mr. Vincent was very touching.

“In due time my child was born—and blessed be the star which controls such events—it was a boy. Reginald came to me while the nurse was dressing the babe, and taking me tenderly in his arms uttered words of praise in my ears, and showed me that devotion which is so reassuring and precious to the heart of a young mother. O, how grand I felt when I heard him say:

“‘God bless you, darling! You are the dearest, truest treasure on earth.’

“I felt that I could have died for him then and there, and I have wished many times since that I had. His dear head was nestled close beside mine on the pillow when the nurse brought the child in; then he arose, and taking the wee bit of humanity in his arms, turned towards me as if to place it where it belonged; as he peered through the lace to get a view of its features, I saw his face take on the pallor of death. My blood felt like ice, as I tried to raise myself, at the same time crying out:

“‘What is it, Reggie?’

“Then with a groan he fell across the bed unconscious; my only thought was that our baby had been injured in some way and suddenly expired, and with the picture of a little white casket, covered with lilies, before my eyes, I fainted; I revived, only to succumb to an attack of brain fever. When I recovered they told me that Reginald had gone.

“‘Gone? Gone where?’ I cried in amazement.

“For an answer they brought me this letter:

“‘Dear Celeste: I will call you dear this time, for it is the last. I do not blame you so much for what has happened; I should not have trusted even the best friend on earth with you and your charms. I can easily account for all. You longed for the companionship which my profession robbed you of, but you should have prepared me for this blow. I go now to find your traducer, and if he refuses to take you and live with you honorably, his body will meet the same fate his picture has just met. Would to God I had died before I knew of your infidelity. Good-by forever,

REGINALD.’

“What on earth did it all mean? I went to the library, and there found Mr. Vincent’s likeness simply cut and slashed into ribbons. Reginald had left orders not to remove it; as I gazed on the ruined portrait and thought of the part of my husband’s letter wherein a like fate was promised Jean, I realized how utterly impossible it would be to consent to Reginald’s demands, for to do so would be an open confession of wrong, with a defined effort to right it, and so help me, God, we were as innocent as the now fatherless babe, and I knew Jean Vincent to be a man of principle; then I thought of Reginald’s obdurate nature, and—Oh, horrors! he would be a murderer.

“With the thought of blood running from gaping wounds, I swooned away. When I opened my eyes again the doctor was standing over me; I asked for my baby; the nurse brought it, and I was so mystified that I shrieked in my despair; the poor little black thing, black eyes, ringlets of jet black hair and skin as swarthy as the cuticle of an Italian. A long talk with the physician shed light on the subject. He explained how the constant association with some dark person at such a time as that in which I happened to be with Mr. Vincent would bring about just such a result.

“The scandal killed my mother; my father was just as unreasonable as my husband and refused to advise or assist me, even denying me the privilege of seeing him. After two years he died cursing me, but not before he had willed all of his fortune to a distant relative, leaving me penniless.

“On the advice of neighbors, who were sufficiently interested in me to at least want me to leave the community, I put my baby boy in a home for waifs; then selling such articles of personal property as I possessed, I started on a journey which will only end in death.

“I came direct to Chicago, thinking to hide myself in the whirl of a busy city, but soon the little store of wealth which I had realized from the sale of my belongings had melted down until there was only a thin wall of finance between me and starvation. I sought a position and in each attempt was defeated on account of not having a business education; I was not even fitted to do housework; it was then I realized how painfully helpless a girl is in a strange land with no means, who has been born and reared in luxury without even a smattering of domesticity in her character.”

“Why did you not try your hand at painting?”

“I did try, but no use; when I took up a brush and palette my hand was seized with palsy when I touched the brush to the canvas, I fancied I could hear the sounds of ripping, tearing cloth, and to save my life the best I could do was to make zig-zag lines; all of the love for art, all of the ambition had vanished.

“Finally I secured a position as governess, and had it not been for the ideas of liberality which the man of the house in whose home I was employed entertained, I might have regained some of my loss; at any rate, he seemed to conceive the idea that my life was an aimless existence and that I was only waiting to be won with endearing words of love.

“The days of trouble were not conducive to strengthening my character and my tempter was a man of wiles and charms, so much so that his constant observation disclosed my different moods to his discernible mind. His plans were carried out with that accuracy and precision so characteristic of a man of the world.

“That was the first step down the incline of rectitude; other men sought me and so surely did I descend into the valley of shame that it was an easy matter for me to consent to live with men in open defiance of the law.

“During my career I met a gentleman who was more interested in me than any one I had ever met; he lived in a small town in the west; he was a man of great tenderness and we in time grew fond of each other. Much of our time was consumed in talking of schools, books, music and travel. I knew little of him and he nothing of me, any more than he had met me one day as I was buying tickets for a matinee; the line at the window doubled back around the entrance of the theatre. As the crowd crawled slowly along I found myself standing beside him; he addressed me, whereupon a conversation sprung up and he kindly offered to buy my tickets for me when he reached the window, which would save me a delay of several moments. As he handed me the tickets he apologized for his intrusion; I thanked him for his kindness and was not at all surprised when I found him in the seat next to mine. Our friendship grew and finally ripened into such mutual admiration that I frequently found myself counting the days that I must wait for his coming. Finally his visits grew less frequent; I did not ask him why he came so seldom, for I considered it none of my business; one of the waits proved longer than any before. He did not come for a year, but when he came he found me in my old haunt. This time he explained why his visits had been so far apart; his wife had been ill and he had lost her six months before; they had a child, a boy by adoption, and he could not well leave the little fellow. I insisted on his bringing his boy along next time.

“I had become so attached to this man of genial nature that I was quick to become interested in anything which was of importance to him. He came again in two weeks, and with him came the boy. I met them in the parlor of a hotel, and oh, how my heart fluttered as I saw the youngster; all the love, pity and compassion of my happier days rushed back into the places of my nature, which had been devoid of anything sweet for the last six years. The boy was standing with his back to me talking to his father. As I approached with outstretched hand to welcome my friend, who stood with his back to the mirror, he reached out to clasp mine and stepped slightly to one side, revealing the complete image of the child in the mirror.

“God only knows what I suffered in that one brief second. The picture I saw there in the frame of the mirror was more vivid than any work of art ever produced. My own child stood beside me. The hardening process of years did much to assist me in my self-control. We went to dinner; my friend was aware of my unhappy state of mind and questioned me closely. I could not tell him the whole truth; I simply told him that I had been married and that I had had a boy so much like this adopted son that the sight of his boy had refreshed my memory, had recalled the sad hour of parting with him when I had to give him up.”

“‘And his father—is he dead, too?’ he asked, as he gently put his arm around me.

“‘Yes,’ I sobbed, ‘dead, everything is dead to me.’

“‘My sufferings must have touched the strings of his harp of love and caused a melody to re-echo from his soul.

“‘Come, and be a mother to my little chap,’ said he.

“‘Oh, please don’t! I beg of you not to punish me by such jests.’

“‘But I mean it.’

“I hope that God in his goodness will never allow any poor woman to suffer as I did. I would have gladly gone, but no, I could not marry one man when I was the legal wife of another. Oh, I wanted to go so much, but I could not. I loved my child too purely to go and be a mother to him, while I was mistress to the one whom he was to know as a father.

“That night ended my downward flight; I felt in my own mind that I had reached the bottomless pit of degradation, so low, so impure, so tainted with vice, that I dared not take my own child in my arms and lavish that love on him which was now consuming me, for fear

that the taste of bliss would plunge me into a sea of desperation and cause me to commit myself in some way that would contaminate his sweet, young life.

“I had saved some money, enough to live on while I served an apprenticeship in a sewing shop. I have taught myself the lessons of economy and domesticity so necessary to one who intends to follow the life of humble purity.”

THE END

I'm Julie, the woman who runs [Global Grey](#) - the website where this ebook was published. These are my own formatted editions, and I hope you enjoyed reading this particular one.

If you have this book because you bought it as part of a collection – thank you so much for your support.

If you downloaded it for free – please consider (if you haven't already) making a small [donation](#) to help keep the site running.

If you bought this from Amazon or anywhere else, you have been ripped off by someone taking free ebooks from my site and selling them as their own. You should definitely get a refund :/

Thanks for reading this and I hope you visit the site again - new books are added regularly so you'll always find something of interest :)