

trast with her leniency to Penrhyn, made him sick at heart. "No, no!" Judith cried. "Wait!" She turned to Sears. "What Mr. Wistar has done has been just and right from the start! Owr up, Daddy, dear. It has!"

A hunted look came into the gentle, aging eyes.

"What must he think of us! What must we think of ourselves!"

The old man's hands shook, and he sank upon the bench, abashed, crushed. "I know! You loathe me! And I loathe myself! I wronged him. I ask his pardon. One more dream, and it is all over. But before, at the awakening, I still had my honour—and your love."

Tears came into Judith's eyes and into her voice. "Oh, Daddy! How you must have suffered! I do love you. I shall always love you! How I love you!"

May, who had stood amazed, though uncomprehending, by Onderdonk's side, now knelt and caught the old man in her arms.

He struggled to his feet, leaned over and kissed her. "Good-night, child! Billy is the best fellow in the world. You will be happy."

He said no more, and presently Onderdonk led May away.

"Good-night, Judith. Believe me, sweetheart, you will learn to thank God you know what Penrhyn is, though it breaks your heart. That is my greatest sin, that I ever let you care for him!" He spoke like one on the verge of the grave.

"We shall still be happy!" Judith pleaded. "For you as well as for me, everything is so much better as it is!"

"I am an old man. Kiss me good-night."

Impulsively she threw her arms about him.

He smiled a faint, wan smile. "The eyes!" he said.

Joy lighted her face. "Bless you, dearest! Now I know I can make you happy." She kissed him on the drooping lids.

"Your mother—she is with us now! Yes, I shall be happy!"

In sudden alarm she stood back from him. "Father! What are you thinking of?"

With an instinctive movement he thrust his hand into the pocket of his dinner-jacket. But her hand was as quick. She gripped his wrist and held it firm.

Wistar clutched the revolver and wrenched it away.

The old man winced with pain. "You hurt my shoulder," he complained.

"Your shoulder!" Judith cried.

"Again, Daddy, again!"

He turned upon Wistar. "You have taken everything else," he said. "Give me that! My life is still my own!"

"Father!" cried Judith tenderly.

"If a poor cur on the street were sick, sick to death, you would kill him—kill him in mercy! Yet your father you condemn to live—to live in poverty, defeat, disgraced in the eyes of those he loves!"

"Father!" she repeated, her voice melting with love.

"You are right, dear," he said. "I must be brave—I will be brave!" Then he turned from them and went indoors.

Judith started after, but Wistar caught and held her. "Believe me!" he said. "It is not as it seems. It was my fault. If I had known what I know now, it never would have happened. I want you to tell him so, from me—tell him that I see my fault, and stand ready to join him—under the terms Penrhyn has offered."

"You can do this—without violating your sense of what is right? May I tell him that? Do be quick! My place is there, with him!"

"Once when I promised this it was against my conscience. In the old days I was the cave man, blind to the new ideas. Your father understood them. Little by little I have learned from experience what no argument could convince me of—his largeness and his wisdom. What we have accomplished, his genius fore-saw it all! He may be weak—Penrhyn was masterful, and played on every foible. But in his mind and his heart he is right!"

Already she had left him. With a single flash his darkest hour had turned to the most glorious dawn. The suddenness and the vastness of the prospect before him dazed him, even while it filled him with confidence and joy.

Then, from within the house, a loud cry fell upon his ears, a wail of anguish and horror that stabbed him like a knife in his heart. When it was repeated he had gained the door and was mounting

the stairs within. In another second a sight burst upon him which he was destined never to forget. Judith lay prostrate and convulsed upon the form of her father, still writhing in a pool of blood. Through the window the full moon shone, and upon her hair, faintly golden, was a crimson blot.

XXXIX.

Wistar gathered her in his arms, and, heedless of tears and protestations, carried her downstairs and into the open air. When he released her she looked at him once, then shrank away in horror and loathing. The handkerchief with which he had cleansed her hair was still crumpled in his hand.

"Let me go back to him!" she commanded harshly. "Never let me see you again!"

He recoiled, yet still blocked the way. Out of the shadows May hurried toward them, and Onderdonk with them.

"Father—is it father?" she cried.

A new horror fell upon Judith. Wistar bowed his head.

"He is dead?" The young girl scanned each face in turn.

Judith was mute, and Wistar still bowed his head.

"Did you say dead? Oh, Billy!" But

of grief, silent and restrained. And so a night began, the horror of which left a lifelong mark on all of them.

A breeze came, and with it coolness and the freshness of the sea.

The moon floated above with a serene, unresenting beauty that fell upon Wistar's heart like a blight. By-and-by something made him look at the window above. All his efforts to resist it failed, and he raised his eyes. The shade had been decently drawn; yet nothing would banish from his mind the vision of what was there, or stay the recurrent waves of horror that it brought him. With Judith the silences became longer, but always there followed the convulsion of grief that would not be repressed, yet could find no utterance.

Then came the bitterest hours of Wistar's vigil, in which, little by little, in the intervals of grief, his heart spoke to him, at first in vague intimations, formless and uncomprehended, and then in self-accusations, definite and overpowering. When he had said to Judith, such a little while ago as time is measured, that he also had been to blame, he had only indulged in the luxury of magnanimous self-accusation. He did not, even now, convict himself of any conscious wrong.

He had been ignorant of the world

gazed upon her face, turned away from him. She had fallen asleep at last, he saw, every sense extinguished by the excess of what she had endured. In any young face the outline of cheek and chin is a line of beauty, though often void of expression. In hers it had all the softness, all the sweet opulence of full-blooded health, and, besides, the little, individual crinkle of her eye, at once grave and caressing, the wreathing of her mouth, mocking and also tender.

For as the daylight strengthened, he saw that in her sleep she was smiling. He would not have supposed that there was anything left for him to suffer; but that smile, joyous, serene, beatific, and the thought of what she must wake to, had a pang more poignant still. His knees bent beneath him, and he fell to the ground beside her, his chest heaving, tears streaming from his eyes.

With a little start she awoke. The smile vanished, and she turned a questioning glance upon him.

"Is it true?" she asked, in a sudden fear. "Just now I dreamed—that it had all been only a dream!" For a moment more she looked at him, questioning, unconvinced. Then all the intimate, varied lines of her face contracted to one note of woe. Again she cried out as she had cried in the first awful moment of her discovery.

In obedience to an impulse that was stronger than reverence for her, stronger than remorse, he took her in his arms.

"You poor child!" was all he could say, and he said it again and again.

In a passion of grief and tenderness she threw her arms about him, and strained him to her breast.

"Jim, Jim!" she sobbed, repeating her new name for him over and over.

She hid her face and sobbed afresh. And now, for the first time, the utterance of her grief was full, and brought relief.

For a moment she endured it. Then, gently, he put her from him. In another instant she must remember even him.

It would have been braver, perhaps, to grant her this moment of solace to the full. But he did not deem it so; and, crushed as he was, there was one depth of injury of which he did not wish her to believe him capable.

Yet still she clung to his hands. "What is it?" she said, by and bye, reading pain in his eyes.

"You forget—what I am. I wouldn't have stayed by you—I couldn't—except that you needed me!"

She remembered now, and the horror of it came back into her eyes. But the measure she took to banish the sight of him was to bury her face again on his shoulder, and with a more convulsive tenderness. "You tried—tried in all ways to save him! Let me love you! You are all I have!"

Again her grief returned, and she shook violently beneath it. But she held him closer in her arms.

By and bye she was calmer, and in a brief interval of silence they heard the birds singing. The liquid notes soothed and caressed them; and, little by little, brought the strength of life and its courage.

She released him, her face brave and composed. "I am ready now," she said.

He understood, and, rising, lifted her to her feet. Supporting each other, they went indoors. The thing that had haunted them both all through the night lay in the bed, still and pale. But the face was composed, resigned.

She laid the weight of her arm upon his shoulder, and he knelt with her, hand in hand, while she uttered a brief prayer—a prayer to God and to her father. Then she arose, and, for the first time, she kissed him.

Then, for the first time, he kissed her. "We can bear it now," she said—"we two, together."

XL.

Wistar's return to affairs was made easier by the feeling that he had a duty of piety toward the thing which the dead man had held so dear. In the eyes of the business world, he found, it had needed only the news of the old man's despair to change an uneasy conjecture into certainty. It was soon the general belief that the successful career of the combination had come to an end.

In the sudden panic, which resulted from this, the stock tumbled.

Wistar came to the rescue with as full a statement of the case as the circumstances permitted, and backed up his



Upon her hair, faintly golden, was a crimson blot.

even as she cried out, her voice was of one who did not understand. "Dead!" she asked blankly. "My daddy!" Then she sprang toward the verandah.

It was Judith who caught her. "No, no! Not yet! It is too terrible!"

For a moment the sisters stood sobbing in each other's arms. Then May freed herself, and with incoherent cries, turned from Judith and sank upon Onderdonk's shoulder. The young man held her a moment, and then he led her away, dazed and unresisting.

Judith stood alone. Again she tried to pass Wistar, yet shrank from him as she did so. Again he barred the way. "I can only protect you," he said, "as you protected her."

"I must go! I can't stay alone—alone!" Then again she looked at him, shuddering. "Leave me with him!" she sobbed. "Let me never see you again!"

He desired nothing more than to go; but he stood to his post, and Mrs. Boyser abetted him, bringing rugs and cushions and wraps. She spread them on the grass, and forced Judith to lie down on them. Then she disappeared, and Wistar heard her at the telephone, summoning the helpful aid.

Judith turned her face from him and lay on the ground, outbursts of grief followed by still more agonised moments

about him, of the world of which he was a part, and, when he had been forced to recognise that world, he had still disdained it. At the outset, the situation had lain in his hands. But he had turned his back on those whose outlook was wider than his own. And so it had come to this—a wise and amiable father in the room above, and a daughter here, shielded from the too passionate promptings of filial love by the hand red with destruction. A few hours, and then Judith must never see him again.

And all the time—beneath, beyond, within his pity for her and his own remorse—was something vague and uncomprehended, yet insistent and overpowering. It brushed upon his cheek, tingled ecstatically in his fingers, flattered coarsely about the tips of his ears. It was in the first gray light of dawn that he knew it for what it was. She had held her hands in his with light-hearted endearment; she had put her cheek against his own in mockery; she had flouted him with a soft little tug on his ear. She was a girl who could be comrades with a man, and she had taken him to her frank, brave heart. Never, never could he forget that. And always as he remembered it, he must remember also this hour.

He rose to his feet in anguish, and