

with brisk step, an unusual joy of life stirred his blood.

A soft breeze moved the trees and the water rushes, and stirred the pool where Polly's ducklings defied their foster-mother hen, fussing on the brink, imploring her youngsters to be cautious and discreet. The sound of the saws in the old mill reached him, droning in contentment for the fat giants of the forest they had devoured, and as he passed the door Howard sniffed the pungent scent of the pines.

It was a live morning; bees, with drowsy murmurs, were abroad upon their all-important errand of making honey while the sun shone.

Howard strolled beside the river. Of a certainty *she* (he had no name for her) would be abroad on such a morning; bird left its nest, and insect its shelter; the lambs gambolled in the fields. He looked along the stream. He should see her emerge from the soft shadows as he saw her yesterday.

The morning passed, and he grew impatient; he returned to the mill to lunch, then timed himself to reach the briar pool at the hour he had seen her first. He had had reasons for every other act of his life; he had no reason for waiting there all the afternoon for her; impulse held sway; those hours were an eternity in their denial. He lingered in uncertainty. Resinous odours filled the air, rich tints and glowings seduced the eye, then came the fading of the afternoon. He retraced the way he had come, amid lengthening shadows and satisfied nature. The breeze was laden with odours of land and water; the honey-bags of the bees were heavy with sweets; the clouds had gathered into themselves every tint of the setting sun. He felt cheated, and, as the tints faded to grey and the first pale star appeared, the hunger for companionship drove him back to the solitary cottage on the river's brink, where he had first met Caroline. A woman's figure stood in the porch. He had been looking for her all day, but it gave him a shock to find her here in Caroline's territory. He was chilled;

all day he had felt an intoxicating sense of freedom; he had lived, in feeling, his earlier manhood over again; life had seemed simpler, truer; he had forgotten his self-dissatisfaction, and again Caroline claimed him. Back of this woman the shadow of her stood—nay, Caroline was the reality and this woman was the shadow.

He lifted his hat as he passed; something stirred in his heart at the magnetism of her nearness, but he would not seem to pursue her, and turned his face to the lonely country. The great space was flooded with magical moonlight, but the beauty of the night had lost its charm for him. He felt no sympathy, no connection with the past, except what jarred; he could not recall the emotions of greed for fame that in this spot, less than two years ago, had been his whole existence; there seemed a dim gulf between that time and this. Could he put it away from himself? Enjoy and suffer again in kinship with honest men; meet Caroline in thought without shrinking from her truth? Had he gained his world, and lost for ever the honesty of his own soul? Perhaps.

For several days he avoided the open, and much to the gratification of Thomas, devoted himself to the saws with an energy and skill that fairly astonished and delighted the sawyer. He had once said that he had been born a craftsman; anyway, he put as much scrupulous care to the splitting of pine trees into boards as he did to the formation of sentences.

At the end of the third day he was honestly interested, and began to understand the cheerfulness the mechanic brought to his daily fight with life; the brooding concentration and silence with which the student enveloped himself of necessity developed a painful sensitiveness to external jar. He himself was growing morbid and morose. The sawmill, with its stacks of timber, its perfumes of sawdust, its quaint shadows and heavy beams, seemed a retreat from all worry. He found the exercise of lifting and stacking the timber more to his taste than lonely wanderings.

It was nearing the close of the third day