

ignominy upon her, I'd throw the cursed weight off."

His voice had lost its drawl. He made a gesture with his shoulders as though he had shaken off a load, and drew in his breath with a sigh of anticipated relief.

"How you must hate me," said Frank, for he saw that his revenge had struck the wrong man; he had planned it for a small one.

"I do hate you," answered Howard, beginning again his restless walk. "We always hate those who dwarf us in our self-conceit. You've been magnanimous—damn magnanimity! To owe no man anything—that's the most divine philosophy of life."

"If that is true," replied Frank, sadly, as he turned to the door, "there is nothing more to say, for I—owe—everything."

"You are at the beginning of your working time—you will not lack at the close," he said.

Frank came back from the door.

"Ah! that's a question—weighted as I am!" His young face showed its pining. His sensitive mind was depressed by what seemed the defeat of the past hour. The spiritual note in him had been jarred by Howard's harshness. The necessity of his nature for comradeship and kinship had made him willing to concede any other right if the man who stood in such close relationship to his sister would but bury his lance.

"I don't know!" reiterated Frank. "If my work had stood an individual test I should be surer. It owes so much to Geraldine Ward—it was she satisfied the critics."

It seemed incredible to Howard that the young man should crave appreciation from him. Yet Frank's tone and manner, the look in his eyes, made it sure. Howard felt his trust. It broke him down completely.

"Lad," he said huskily, resting his hand on the other's shoulder, "your youth is a gift of nature; it has little to do with years—it will win by its everlasting hope, its recurring enthusiasm. I never was young

—some men are born old. One passion mastered me—ambition—greed of fame. I have made my name—. I ask your pardon—for my appropriation of your right. Honour is the recompense of labour; there is no way to make good——" The difficult words took form slowly; their hands were clasped when a knock at the door disturbed them.

"It is I—Caroline."

She stood for a moment on the threshold, the next she was in her brother's arms.

When the first agitation of their meeting was over, and brother and sister sat together in the drawing-room, feasting eye and heart and tongue, through all her happiness, in spite of her flushed face and sparkling eyes, Frank saw something he did not understand in Caroline's manner. It was a familiar enough trait in her character, but strange in her intercourse with him, for unmistakably she was reserved. Every plea that he could urge he had brought forward for pardon of his desertion. Was he justified?

Yes; he was justified. She had never doubted his love! He bent forward pleadingly towards her, taking her hand.

"Ah, *Wahine!*" and at the old endearing term he kissed the hand in his, "often I forgot the task before me, forgot everything that was due from me in my bitter need of you. Once I came to the window here and looked in."

She started.

"Here! Then you knew before to-day?"

He did not quite get her meaning.

"Knew what, dear?"

"That I was Howard's wife?"

It was the first mention of his name between them, and they had talked for two hours.

"Yes, I knew." He did not say that he was on another mission when he discovered her.

Caroline, without further question, in a low voice, and without for a moment permitting her cloak of reserve from slipping away, sketched for her attentive listener the time of her waiting at Matamata; the grey days; the only living picture stood distinctly out to Frank as with extraordinary force,