

For an instant he hesitated and hoped. Then the pair, passing along below the broken wall, came within earshot, and he heard his old boon comrade saying, in a pleading voice:

"But you have never quite promised me, Ida! You have never fully engaged yourself to me."

Partly from a feeling of strangulation, partly with a blind impulse to do something violent, Vibbard clutched himself about the throat, tore furiously at his collar till it gave way, and, in a paroxysm little short of madness, he turned and fled—he did not know where nor how—through the darkness.

It seemed to him for a long time as if he was marching and reeling on through the woods, stumbling over roots and fallen trunks, breaking out into open fields upon the full run, then pursuing a road, or rambling hopelessly down by the ebullient river—and as if he was doing this with some great and urgent purpose of rescuing somebody from a terrible fate. He must go on foot—there was no other way—and everything depended on his getting to a certain point by a certain time. The worst of it was, he did not know where it was that he must go to! Then, all at once, he became aware that he had made a mistake. It was not someone else who was to be saved. It was *himself*. He must rescue himself—

From what?

At this he came to a pause and tried to think. He stood on a commanding spot, somewhere not far from Stansby, though he could not identify it. The moon was up, and the wide, leafy landscape was spread out in utter silence for miles around him. For a brief space, while collecting his thoughts, he saw everything as it was. Then, as if at the stroke of a wand, horrible deformity appeared to fall upon the whole scene; the thousand trees below him writhed as if in multitudinous agony; and, where the

thick moonlight touched house or road, or left patches of white on river and pool, there the earth seemed smitten as if with leprosy. Silverthorn, reaching his room in an hour after Vibbard had left it, was not at first surprised at his absence. Afterward he grew anxious; he went out, ran all the way to Winwood's house, and came back, hoping to find that his friend had returned while he was searching for him. He sat down and waited; he kept awake very late; his head grew heavy, and he fell asleep in his chair, dreaming with a dull sense of pain, and also of excitement, about his new access of comparative wealth.

A heavy step and the turning of the door-knob awoke him. Moonlight came in at the window—pale, for the dawn was breaking—and his lamp still flickered on the table. Streaked with these conflicting glimmers, Vibbard stood before him—his clothes torn, his hat gone, his face pale and fierce.

"What have you been doing?" asked Silverthorn wearily, and without surprise, for he was too much dazed.

"You—*you*!" said Vibbard, hoarsely, pointing sharply at him, as if his livid gaze was not enough. "You have been taking her from me!"

"Ida?" queried Silverthorn, with what seemed to the other to be a laughing sneer.

"Are you shameless?" demanded Vibbard. "Why don't you lie down there and ask me to forgive you for demanding so little? I've no doubt you are sorry that you couldn't get the whole of my money! But I suppose you were afraid you wouldn't receive even the half if you told me beforehand what you meant to do."

Silverthorn was numb from sleeping in a cramped posture and without covering; but a deeper chill shook him at these words. He tried to get up, but felt too weak, and had to abandon it. He shiv-