

THE GIANTS STRENGTH

wholly so, at any rate; but Paula would agree with the public, if she knew about it. Well, I'll try to patch it up before she does. The wind will be taken out of that sail, at any rate."

He sighed, and went on with his desultory inspection of the Marshall papers. He was still occupied in doing so when a knock came to the door. Before he had time to look up and say "Come in," the door was pushed open and Paula entered, followed by Winship. Trafford remained seated. They advanced together, till they stood before his desk.

"We've come in to say that we can't do it, papa," Paula began, abruptly. "I can't go and leave you alone."

"I will not take her from you like this," Winship added. "It seems to me a sort of robbery. It wouldn't be blessed. If there's a sacrifice to be made, it must be ours. We're younger and stronger—"

"Stop," Trafford said, softly. "Stop."

Winship ceased, and there was a long silence. Trafford still remained seated, gazing absently at the papers on the desk before him. Winship and Paula waited in motionless attention. There was no sound but the click-click-click of the type-writer in the adjoining room.

Still without speaking, Trafford rose. Coming to them, he passed one hand through Paula's arm and one through Winship's.

"My little girl is willing to stay with me after all, is she?"