

THE PROBATIONER

out prettiness with the rich bloom of the girl he met on the trail, he easily divined the source of her power over the vestry. As always, its members had paid conscious or unconscious tribute to the strongest influence which can be brought to bear upon their sex.

As he rose from silent prayer, he found himself looking into her face. She was sitting on the front bench, almost within reach of his hand. In her eyes was the quizzical look of their first meeting, only to it she had added a touch of insolence. As their eyes met, she turned and whispered to McCloud, who sat beside her:

ot quite up to sample."

As it was, the minister heard, and the girl saw that he heard. She saw him flush, and noted with secret admiration the swift tightening of the lips that controlled the sudden pulse and turned his face to stone. In the brief glance that flashed between them, each read consciousness of the situation and answered the other's challenge. Rising, the minister proceeded with the service.

After the hymns he preached a sermon suited to his hearers, using common words, freely illustrating, strictly avoiding metaphor and tricks of rhetoric. And as he warmed to his work he forgot Ruth,