

Nine years since the September when Rodney Parker had flashed into her world; a long nine years. Sitting under her green-shaded reading lamp, Martie reviewed them, for herself, and for Sally. She and Sally had thought of Dr. Ben as only an amiable theorist then, but there had been nothing theoretical about the help he had given Sally and Joe with their problem.

Martie had solved her own alone. Rodney, Pa, Wallace, and John had all entered into it, but no one of them had helped her. It was in spite of them rather than because of them that she was sitting here poised, established, needed at last. She saw her life to-night as a long road, climbing steadily up from the fields and valleys, mounting, sometimes in storm, and sometimes in fog, but always mounting toward the mountains. Rose and Adele and Lydia were content with the lowlands, the quiet, sunny plains below. She must have the heights.

There were other women seeking that rising road; perhaps she might help them. Love and wifehood and motherhood she had known, now she would know the joy of perfected expression, the fulfillment of the height. She dedicated herself solemnly, joyfully, to the claim of the years ahead. Ten years ago she might have said that at twenty-eight the best of a woman's life was over. Now she knew that she had only begun to live.

THE END