

the last of them, received the last pitying look, he felt they had turned their backs upon one fallen and forsaken and were fleeing from the house of shame. It had come to this then : he and his were as things unclean, abhorred and accurst. In a moment, without warning, the catastrophe came upon him, laying his life in ashes, like tow at the touch of flame.

He stood absolutely still, like one stupefied by a blow or fixed to the earth by stakes. He did not know that the cold sweat was drenching him ; it did not occur to him that this was Gethsemane. He knew only that ruin had come, swift and terrible as the stroke of heaven ; that a mighty wind smote the four corners of his house, shattering it to chaos, and that he remained in the midst solitary, maimed, and helpless. What had he done to bring so crushing a judgment ?

He was recalled by the touch of a tiny hand slipped softly into his own. "Papa, what is it ? What is the matter with mama ?" Pearl asked in an awed voice, gazing up at him. He looked down into the sweet young face darkened by its first real trouble and on the golden hair glinting—

"Like sun-gilt ripples
On the yellow bed of a brook,"

and a great spasm of pity shook him. His Pearl, his darling little Pearl ! God help her in all this. The wide, innocent wondering eyes told of the love that is without bounds and the faith that does not reason. Would he, could he sully or hurt that divine affection by any tale of frailty or shame ? No, not if he lied to save it. God would forgive him for the sake of a little child, a pure unstained soul still in the white