

The smiling ceased, a sudden gravity fell on each of us. Prison! Ah, this was no comedy we were witnessing.

"No," he answered, "they were not hard on me; but to know that I was shut in, that I couldn't go to you though you lay dying, that was the horror—that, and the homesickness, that used to fairly tear the soul out of me."

"Dear Jim!" She drew down the grizzled head and kissed him. "It's over now, you've come home to me. It has seemed a long time, and I've cried the bloom off my cheeks, dear, and the waiting and longing has left me grey and homely, dear, and—"

"No, no," he interrupted, "never anything but good to look at, old girl. Do you remember how I used to say, in the old days,

'She's pretty to walk with
And witty to talk with
And pleasant to live with?'"

Two big tears rolled down her sunken cheeks, and her lips twitched piteously.

"In the old days—yes, but that was long ago," she said; "not that I'm complaining because my youth and good looks went long ago. I don't care—now that you are back with me I don't care for anything. I told the Lord, if He'd spare us both to meet again and begin life over again, I wouldn't turn wicked or bitter. I told Him it would be all right if both of us died, for I made sure we'd find one another across the river; but that if you were taken and I left I'd make up my mind He had forgotten me altogether and lose all faith."

"And you're sure you never hated me for shaming you so?" he asked, brokenly.

The blue eyes turned to him were faded and misty, but oh the love that shone in them. The boy looked out of the window, the pretty head of the blonde neighbor was bowed.

"Oh Jim," she said, with an earnestness that was pathetic, "it takes a man a long time to know a woman's heart."

Poor little faded woman! the tears blinded me as I looked at her. The boy never looked up.

"I've got a job in Detroit," the man said, after a while. "I'll work hard; I can't get back to where I was before drinking and gambling ruined me, but I'll make a home for you. It won't take long, and then you'll come to me. I couldn't have you leave your brother's comfortable home till I've gotten one ready; but you'll come then, won't you, old girl?"