

XLVI

WITH the going of Crane an awkward restraint came over the two who were left; the man who had suffered so much for the woman's sake, and the girl who had endeavored so much.

He was like a man suddenly thrust into a new world of freedom; he indulged in a physical manifestation of its exhilaration, drinking in a long, deep draught of the clover-scented air until his great lungs sighed with the plethora. It seemed a lifetime that he had lived in the noisome atmosphere of a felon's cell. But now the crime had dropped from him; a free man in every sense of the word, he could straighten himself up and drink of the air that was without taint.

Allis watched Mortimer curiously; she was too happy to speak—just to look upon him standing there, her undefiled god, her hero, with his heroism known and applauded, was a suffusing ecstasy. He was so great, so noble, that anything she might say would be inane, tawdry, inconsequent; so she waited, patiently happy, taking no count of time, nor the sunshine, nor the lilt of the birds, nor even the dissolution of conventionality in the unsupervised *tete-a-tete*.

The ecstatic magnetism of congenial silence has always a potency, and its spell crept into Mortimer's soul and laid embargo on his tongue. He crossed over to Allis, and taking her slender hand in his own, crouched down on the floor beside her chair, and looked