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ONCE, twice, thrice,—failing miserably in his attempt to appear unconcerned,—Ilingsworth paced back and forth in front of Peter V. Wilkinson's big house in Riverside Drive. There it stood: a massive, forbidding, modern pile of limestone, wholly unlike anything in its vicinity. And yet, now that the time had come, Ilingsworth's face wore a confused, half-fearful look, a sense of uncertainty possessed him, which was all the more maddening because so far, at least, there had been no obstacles or delays in this brief, turbulent journey of his; on the contrary, all had gone well with him, and like a falcon in pursuit of its prey he had sped on the straightest of straight lines towards a person of the name of Leslie Wilkinson, and this person, so Ilingsworth assured himself, would soon feel his claws.

From a distance, it is true, Wilkinson's imposing structure had differed little from that which his imagination had led him to expect. It was like the pictures he had seen of it many times in the papers; so like, in fact, that even now in his extremity he could feel the strange, exultant pride he had experienced but a few short months ago when exhibiting to Elinor a counterfeit present-