

BLANTYRE—ALIEN

PART I

I

WITH elbows on the rail Blantyre, ship's doctor, stared from the *Harmonic's* deck after the dwindling form of Stella Blake. The girl turned at the corner of the landing stage and raised a grey-coated arm. For a moment their eyes met, then—his peaked cap still lifted, she vanished.

He stayed for some time motionless. The vessel cleared herself of passengers and luggage. She began to disgorge cargo. The noisy routine of harbour life asserted itself. Derricks whined. An army of Italian stevedores assaulted the high black sides of the liner. She had shaken herself free from her transitory tenants. There was a sudden revelation of varied utilities. The ship yawned. She was drab and commercial in an instant.

Blantyre felt this transformation. It was too familiar to attract him. His mind had gone back to ten days ago when he had leaned over the same rail in New York Harbour, and cynically scanned the oncoming tide of travellers. Always in this survey he had a curious sensation that somewhere in this influx there might be something or some one who would break the chains of circumstance.