

"I'd best out with it," blurted Walter, looking across at Mr. Mason.

"Mary, you are to be arrested, charged with the murder of your husband. One of our men, a brother of the assistant constable of the town, told me so right after the noon hour. The chief and his assistant may be here almost any moment. That is why I brought Mr. Mason, our manager; for if anything can be done, I am sure we shall both be only too glad to aid you."

They were both bewildered at her calmness. Perhaps she did not realize the fearfulness of her situation.

"Walter Hart, would you believe me guilty of such a crime?" and the placid brown eyes seemed to penetrate into his very soul.

He hung his head as he breathed:

"If you say 'no,' Mary, I will believe you."

"I am entirely innocent," she murmured in a sweet, low voice; and as his eyes sought hers again, there was something of an understanding wafted between them.

He arose and took her hand.

"I believe you; I'll stand by you," he spoke firmly.

At that instant the two officers of the law came to the door, entered, and took their prisoner away.

Walter Hart went out and whistled for the chauffeur. The manager went on home to his luncheon. The foreman, pushing his way through the thronging little street, walked back to the works.

In looking after the workmen that afternoon under his charge it was almost impossible for Walter Hart to keep Mary Byrne, or Mary Matthews, as he had known her years before, out of his mind. He recalled that she was a daughter of respectable tradespeople in his old New England home; that she had always been a quiet, well-behaved, and generally well-liked schoolmate; that as she grew to womanhood she was a model of self-possession, never known to get angry, never boisterous, but always seeming in the best of good nature. He could now conceive of no reason why she should be charged with the murder of her husband. He had often wondered how she had come to marry Ainos Byrne, whom almost every one in his New England home had disliked, for he was ever a bully. Walter Hart had been in Eastern Ontario a number of years before Byrne had come to the chemical works seeking employment; and it had been only on one or two occasions he had gone to their little cottage to renew acquaintance with Mary. What he had seen of the rough treatment of the wife had warned him to stay away. But he was to be enlightened as to the murder charge, together with the rest of the townspeople, the following morning.