

that style to which rivers turned to the use of men are accustomed. If he was able to see, in the way he had been pitched, by the falling of his house about his ears, into this adventure with a lady who had been singing under his window all these years without so much as a penny of his attention being thrown to her, something of that designing Hand which men like to feel at the crisis of their lives, he was so far fortunate. Quite as plainly he read the conditions of hard labor, years of time, and more capital than he at the moment saw his way to, required to make out of his appropriated right a creditable achievement.

This was the situation as he had made it, which, as news of it circulated through Tierra Longa, bit slowly home to him. It turned him obstinate at first, refusing Anne's seductive invitations to new planning, and finally, after the first half-humorous appraisal of it, turned him silent.

If his first conscious instinct, confronted with this crisis, had been to strike himself free from every sort of personal entanglement; on its final resolution his first conscious necessity had been that of coördination. And the result of his first tentative cast had discovered him to himself as more solitary than he had supposed it was possible to be. He had n't, he admitted to himself, expected that Tierra Longa would be wholly with him, nor yet that he would suffer a complete misunderstanding. What he had expected was that he should become in a small way the center of a new community of interest, and the nucleus of a robust opposition. "As it is," he complained to Anne, "if they think of me at all, they think of me as a good deal of a fool, and if I've got nothing out of it for myself, that it serves me good and right for my meddling."