

THE GUARDED FLAME

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Once, entering his room, Mr Burgoyne came upon an interviewer to whom physical obstacles were as nothing. He had climbed the flint walls, dropped down the wide chimney, been delivered in what seemed a case of books from the London Library! No matter, he was there now—walking about the big room as though he had been in a church, sighing, and turning up his eyes, murmuring, "Oh, but this is the torture of Tantalus. Oh, this room! This wonderful, wonderful room!" And the philosopher was looking at him as though he had been an ant—too gentle to tread on him. "But will you not give us at least a message for our readers? *Any* message summing up your philosophy!" Burgoyne showed him the long shelf of "file copies"—forty heavy volumes. "Could not your readers look for my message *there*?"

In two days it was all given to the greedy public, in a hiccoughing, sentimental, hysterical farrago. "Never to my dying day," said the interviewer, "shall I forget the incredible dignity of the man as he turned upon me: the eye flashing, the ringing voice itself—the majesty of mind that beats off the burden of his seven decades. His hands shook with a noble emotion as he pulled the volumes down, one after the other. 'Every volume on these shelves was penned by this hand. *That* is my message for all time.'

It was nauseating stuff to be read by loyal dwellers in the Lighthouse.

But to-day they had to deal with a humbler visitor. He told Mrs Burgoyne that he quite understood the state of affairs.

"That's all right," said the poor little man. "I understand, ma'am. All I wanted was to ask permission to leave me 'eavy camera here while I lug this other to the station. I'll come back with some boy to 'elp me with the big 'un. No more flies for me. This job has cost me enough a'ready," and the little man tried to laugh, but his voice was husky.

"I am sorry you have had your trouble for nothing."

He had turned away his head and was blowing his nose noisily.