

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE

supported by some young Westmore cousins, was guiding them into the concert-hall, where he was to say a word on the uses of the building before declaring it open for inspection. And presently Justine and Cicely, summoned by Westy Gaines, made their way through the rows of seats to a corner near the platform. Her husband was there already, with Halford Gaines and a group of Hanaford dignitaries, and just below them sat Mrs. Gaines and her daughters, the Harry Dressels, and Amherst's radiant mother.

As Justine passed between them, she wondered how much they knew of the events which had wrought so profound and permanent change in her life. She had never known how Hanaford explained her absence or what comments it had made on her return. But she saw to-day more clearly than ever that Amherst had become a power among his townsmen, and that if they were still blind to the inner meaning of his work, its practical results were beginning to impress them profoundly. Hanaford's sociological creed was largely based on commercial considerations, and Amherst had won Hanaford's esteem by the novel feat of defying its economic principles and snatching success out of his defiance.

And now he had advanced a step or two in front of the "representative" semi-circle on the platform, and was beginning to speak.