

Yet a moment later, she was kneeling in the middle of her room, her face buried in her hands, the little bundle on the floor, her body shaken by sobs.

John, who had watched her go downhill, saw her stoop, pick up something, and disappear into the house.

He ran after her, but so absorbed was she with her thoughts, that she did not hear him, and she had passed into her room before he reached her.

The door remained closed, and he heard her crying. Did women cry like this?

Had this woman cried here, alone, before?

She had cried, as women will, but always on his breast, always near his heart. Were there then phases in her life into which he could not enter?

What prevented him from opening the door, and begging for a share in her sorrow?

He stayed at the bottom of the stairs, deeply moved to find himself so helpless.

What was there in her simple life that called for such a storm of weeping?

He felt yet so strong, so fit to give his best, and with his boundless faith in this new country, what was there that a man might meet and could not conquer?

Should she fail him now, they might drift on a while; but, having lost their anchor, they would drag amongst the morbid commonplaces, and the end would come for both of them, swamped by the hopelessness of joyless toil.

Well, it should never be.