

forgiveness. I told you I didn't forgive you. But I'm not going to burden my future life with you. That's just plain ordinary selfishness. I suppose I really ought to jug you but if I do, I'll always carry with me the thought that I've taken it on myself to judge a man. And I don't believe any man is competent to judge another. I told you why—or tried to—a minute or so ago. I've lived clean, and I've enjoyed the world as a clean open-air sort of proposition—like a windy day—and I always hope to. I'd rather drop this whole matter. In a short time I'd forget you; you'd pass out of my life entirely. But if we carry this thing through to a finish, I'd always have the thought with me that I'd put you in the pen; that you are there now. I don't like the notion. I'd rather finish this up right here and now and get it over and done with and take a fresh start." He paused and wiped his brow, wet with the unusual exertion of this self-analysis. "I think a fellow ought to act always as if he was making the world. He ought to try not to put things in it that are going to make it an unpleasant or an evil world. We don't always do it; but we ought to try. Now if I were making a world, I wouldn't put a man in a penitentiary in it. Of course there's dangerous criminals." He glanced at Newmark a little anxiously. "I don't believe you're that. You're sharp and dishonest, and need punishment; but you don't need extinction. Anyway, I'm not going to bother my future with you."

Newmark, who had listened to this long and rambling exposition with increasing curiosity and interest, broke into a short laugh.

"You've convicted me," he said. "I'm a most awful failure. I thought I knew you; but this passes all belief."

Orde brushed this speech aside as irrelevant.

"Our association, of course, comes to an end. There remain the terms of settlement. I could fire you out of this without a cent, and you'd have to git. But that wouldn't