

came out of the Judge's library with a pale face and set lips. Ascending the stairs with faltering steps, he sought wife's room and knocked at the

"Come in," said a low voice. Entering, he saw Margaret sitting in a low chair with her light brown hair falling around her shoulders in great profusion. He had never seen her so before, and some great mental emotion prevented his noticing the look of glad surprise which flashed into his wife's face as she perceived who her visitor was. Mr. Carlson checked the impetuous words which rose to his lips, and spoke in a voice of strained coldness. "Margaret," he said, advancing to her side, "I desire a few moments conversation if it will not inconvenience you."

The light died out of the bright face at these seemingly cold words.

"You have occupied my time so little of late that I can give you a few moments without great inconvenience," she replied, without rising. "You and I have made a great mistake, Margie," her husband continued sadly. "I take my due share of the blame; but even I would never have dared do this if I had not thought—but no matter what I thought. We were married for fun, of course, and now we do not find it so much fun as we anticipated. I have been speaking with your father. He will not hear of a divorce, nor is there sufficient grounds for one if we desired it. But he agrees with me, that you and I cannot live in this mutual state of unhappiness. I would give anything if I could undo the past, but that is impossible. It is necessary that one member of our firm live abroad. I consider the necessity very opportune, and shall have all my arrangements completed by next week to sail for Europe. This is not so hard for me, for I am a man, but for you—God forgive me for what—"

"You mistake, Mr. Carlson," interrupted his wife icily, "it is the easiest and most appropriate thing that could be done."

Arthur looked down at the figure before him. The darkness and the wavy masses of hair hid her face, else he surely would have seen the white lips and burning, tearless eyes.

"I do not blame you, Margie," he said gently, but sadly. "I only wonder that you can bear me here at all. I crave your forgiveness, and I pray God that I may not utterly blight your happy life."

Arthur waited a moment as if to hear one word of farewell, but the figure before him never moved or spoke. Then, gazing intently at his wife, to imprint upon his mind a picture that he never forgot, he turned and left the room.

All night long Margaret sat in the little, low chair where Arthur had left her. Only once she stooped to pick up a crushed flower, with which he had been playing, and pressed it passionately to her lips.

Two years now passed away, and the following winter found Judge Thurston and his daughter under the gentle skies of Florence. The Judge was suffering in health, which, some said, was due to Margaret's unlucky marriage. However that was, the two were very dear to each other and were rarely seen apart.

Several days after their arrival in Florence, Margaret met her landlady in the hall, who, with a tray in her hand, was just coming out of the room opposite. Stopping to inquire if any one were ill, the kind but gossip little landlady began to tell in broken Italian, of the young foreigner who had come to her a few weeks before, and who, shortly after, had been taken ill with fever, and now was very ill indeed. She said the young man had no friends, and that the good doctor often came away looking very grave indeed. After that day, many a dainty bouquet or basket of luscious fruit found its way to the sick man, while the landlady often told the young gentleman of the tall, sad-faced lady who had sent the gifts. One day, as this same lady stepped out of her room prepared for a drive, she met the doctor returning from a visit to his patient. The doctor advanced toward her hesitatingly.

"You are an American, miss?" he said at last.

"Yes, sir."

Margaret answered so pleasantly that the doctor continued with more assurance, at the same time waving with his hand to the room he had just left:

"There is a young gentleman in there, miss, who is not long for this world. He is an American, also. It is very hard to die so, miss—so great distance from one's people, and with no kind friends."

"You are right," Margaret answered.