

"Is it only a semblance, Richard?"

"If it is, God forbid that I should complain; but"—

He turned upon her a look of such great and passionate love that the colour leaped in her face. She had promised him nothing—no word of love had passed between them yet; they had simply agreed to bury the past, and to share such life as might yet be possible to them, for the sake of the unborn child.

"I would wish you to make your work noble for the work's sake, and in gratitude for so great a gift," she said, with difficulty.

"That I can only do through you," he said, still passionately. "I am nothing without you; you are my better self. Unless you take me in hand, I shall never reach the heights."

She uplifted her hand in deprecation. Rather would she, womanlike, have seen him stand alone, self-reliant, strong as a man ought to be, ready to fight the wrong and do the right for right's sake only. But, remembering the past, she thanked God and took courage. Here was the earnest of the good which might be. Also, she saw stretching before her, in a future grown lovely with heavenliest promise, her own heritage, room for her soul to exercise its goodliest gifts; the power to bless, to strengthen, to point the upward way. She rose up, her heart stirred within her, and for the first time since the darkness had overtaken her life, laid her head, wifelike, upon his breast.

And because love can conquer unconquerable worlds, the soul of the man rose up within him, and, though silent, he cried out with a mighty crying to the Lord to make him worthy.

Such prayer would pierce the heavens, even were they adamant, as some starved souls believe.

So a deepening peace brooded upon them, nor was hope, joying towards fruition, very far away.

THE END.