

immediately in front of him. As is the case with all who understand nothing of music, he was astounded by the mechanical precision with which the members of the orchestra played. He leaned forward a little to scrutinize the conductor. This slenderly built, narrow-shouldered man with the distinguished bearing, who was being paid six thousand dollars for the evening, was to Allan an enigma. He watched him long and attentively. It was an unusual head. With its hooked nose, its bright alert eyes, its compressed thin-lipped mouth, and hair flowing back from the forehead, it had something of the vulture about it. The man seemed all skin and bone and nerves. But he stood there calmly amid all the chaos of voices, silencing them at will with a motion of his white, fragile-looking hand. Allan marvelled at him, as at a magician into whose power and mysteries he could not even try to penetrate. He thought of him as of a survivor from an era long past and belonging to a strange unintelligible foreign race that soon would be extinct.

At this moment the conductor threw up his hands with a convulsive movement. There was a deafening climax and then suddenly the orchestra was still.

An avalanche of applause swept through the immense hall. Allan, with a sigh of relief, made a movement as though to rise from his seat, but the music was not done with yet, they were beginning the Adagio. From a neighbouring box came the fragment of a conversation . . . "Twenty per cent. man! As good a thing——"

Constrained to sit still a little longer, Allan set himself to a study of the construction of the tier of boxes, which puzzled him a little. His wife, on the other hand, herself something of a pianist, had abandoned herself heart and soul to the music. Maud looked small and fragile alongside her husband. She sat leaning forward, her delicate madonna-like head with its dark brown hair rested on her gloved hands, her ears drinking in the music that came in waves from every direction. The intense vibration produced by the two hundred instruments thrilled to the utmost every nerve in her body. She gazed out into the distance with unseeing eyes. The intensity