

had always faced impending disaster with resolution, and hesitated at no remedial means short of positive punishable crime. Again and again she had come near to it, and then had found some less risky resort. But here she saw none.

Pilgrim had written that he had put in trust for her in Boston enough to give her for life the annual income he had been paying by a quarterly draft. He wished to end even this slight relation. Why he had ever given the money she could not see, but now it would certainly be safe whether he died or changed his mind.

Then, too, her gains had been large, and the autograph business profitable. Would Mr. Fairthorne ever discover the share she had exacted? What if the man in South Street, losing her as an intermediary, should betray her to Fairthorne, or be forced to confess? What then? There was another risk, for other skilled autograph collectors came to see this collection.

She leaned on the ledge of the open window and looked out at the night. A dog bayed in a distant farmyard. Now and then an early katydid shrilled its sharp statement, "Katy-did, katy-did n't."

"If before I count nine," she said, "no, thirteen, that dog bays again, I will do it." As she spoke, Felisa, who usually slept in her room, leaped on the window-sill. It startled Lucretia. A moment later she repeated:

"Thirteen! No, thirteen will not do. It is my unlucky number. It shall be fifteen."

The night was intensely dark. She stared through