

"No—no—why? he took the money. I paid back every cent—every cent."

"And you did not see his face in the glass?"

"I—in the glass—Christine—do not stare like that." He could not control his twitching arm.

"In the glass—I mean when you put the money into the satchel."

He fell as if a stone from a sling had entered his brain between the eyes. But he did not faint; he put up his hands as if to keep back a rush of memories.

"Christine!" he cried, not in his own voice, "it was his fault."

"His fault—that poor boy—who led him on? You plotted—he was to take the blame. I see it—you have kept him away. Give him back to me. Give me my brother." Her eye was on fire.

"No, no, Christine. You don't understand; *he* misunderstood; he thought I was going to keep the money, but I only wanted it for a while. He went away; he may have thought I would be blamed, but he needn't have gone."

She stood, dazed by her tumultuous thoughts; she had, for a moment, fancied her brother partly guilty, now she saw him innocent.

"You saw his face in the glass. You knew that he knew. You did not speak to him. You let him go,"—these words in a low voice, as if thinking out loud. Her father stood before her, judged.

"He took the disgrace for you because—why?—he thought you had everything at stake, that your ruin would kill us all—now I know, don't speak—he did not say a word to anyone—he let us think what we would—he thought he was saving us."

"Christine, how could I know?" She looked beyond him stonily.

"What did you do with that money?"

"I turned it over."

"Turned it over?"

"Yes, I speculated with it. In a year I had doubled it. I paid it back; they lent me money on the place at Sedgford at three per cent., but I was getting ten per cent. for all the money I could find. Everyone liked me and trusted me."

"And you were acting a lie! Father! Father! And this prosperity is built on the heart of my brother—his ruined life!"

He tried to calm her, but he was so broken in every nerve that he shook like a sapling in a great wind.

"Listen, Christine; how could I help that—I have spent a fortune in trying to find him. Think of what I have given to the church; to-night I was preparing to give a new organ."

"No! no!" she cried, "do not speak to me. I must think." She threw herself on her knees and hid her face against the lounge. A moment later she was on her feet.

"Father," she said calmly, "we must renounce all this, you must tell everyone. We must go away. You must save your soul. You must tell mother. We must not wear a mask any longer."

He felt fire rise from his heart and flood his brain. He could not see. He caught at the air.

"Christine," he groaned, "not me! Just think how I am respected; everyone would lose faith—no, no, I can't, I have been rich too long. It would kill your mother—just think—to make a confession."

"Father, listen to me, you must do this yourself, no one else can do it for you, it is the only thing left to do. I do not demand it—everything good and just in heaven demands it. It must be done, and you must do it."

She left him. He fell back on the sofa. There was no further need for concealment from himself; he was plunged into despair. The horrid life he had led stood beside him like a character in a play. He knew the part was hateful, but he loved the character he had made. "I cannot, cannot, cannot," he cried out in spirit, with a growing intensity. Christine would not ask him to do that. It was only Christine he had to deal with. He felt clammy; he brushed cold water off his face, how had it come there? How could Christine have found out? Perhaps Charlie had come back—non-sense, he had almost direct proof that he was dead—and what need was there then to confess. He battled up and down the lurid field of his experience. He went to his room, locked himself in, and began again. Dawn found him tossing on his bed. He did not know how all these years of cowardice had weakened him. When he rose he could not stand.