

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

MARY slowly raised her tear-stained face. Her attitude was a study in dreariness.

Edith, with quick intuition, was the first to catch the full meaning of the scene.

"It wasn't true!" she voiced the thought that flashed into her mind.

She went swiftly to Mary and bent over her.

"It wasn't true, was it—your story about Mr. Smith?"

There was in her voice an anguish of appeal. She put her hand on the other woman's shoulder.

"Tell me," she said, a catch in her throat, "tell me it wasn't true."

Mary's fingers writhed against each other on the table. She shook her head in slow denial.

"And you know the truth!" Edith persisted. "What is it?"

"She'll tell, Miss Mallon," Elise assured, coming nearer.

The agitator stood in the centre of the room, his chest rising and falling with the deep breaths he took. He looked like a man fighting for air.