

It's a bad thing and you must let me take all these papers back to my office to-night."

Nicholas was suddenly seized with a thought of the schooner. In the absorption of the morning it had gone out of his mind, and he rose and walked out upon the piazza. There was no schooner in sight, and she had probably left during the night. The fact relieved him.

An hour afterward, Pont returned with the information that the supposed tramp, instead of going to the station, went directly to the river, where a boat with a single occupant awaited him. Then he coolly took off his coat, sat down in the boat, and, together, the two men pulled straight across the stream into a cove, and disappeared.

The fact was not calculated to re-assure Nicholas or his lawyer. Neither was surprised at the news, but both had hoped the fellow would go away.

When Mr. Bellamy Gold left the house that evening, he took all his books and papers with him ; but nothing happened during the night to justify his fears, and several days and nights passed away without disturbance, until the threat of the ruffianly intruder had ceased to be thought of, and life at the mansion went on in its usual quiet course.

After all the excitement through which Nicholas had passed, it could not have been expected that he would settle down contentedly to the old life that was once so dear to him. He felt himself becoming uneasy. He had grown familiar with his affairs, and while the examination into them lasted, his mind was occupied. When the interest connected with this had died away, it reached out for something to do. He devised improvements here and there upon his place. He superintended his workmen, or roamed over his estate, or engaged himself in reading, and at last he began to learn that it was less his mind than his heart that was hungry. The beautiful invalid with whom he had been thrown into such strange associations presented herself more—and still more—frequently before his imagination. If he sat upon the piazza, he found the ocean steamer reproduced in every passing vessel, and beheld her reclining in the old attitude upon the deck. Every book he read was illustrated by his fancy with pictures of which she was always the central figure. He thought of her as an occupant of his home, and dreamed of the sweetness with which she would endow it. He thought of himself as her husband, not only, but as the ministering servant to her helplessness. He found his heart constantly rebelling against the statement of Mr. Benson, that marriage with her was "out of the question."

Yet he did not dare to love her. He knew that she liked him. He knew that she was profoundly grateful to him. He felt that she would sacrifice anything to show her appreciation of him and of his services to her, but he had apprehended something in her beyond this, and he was