

THE CALLING OF DAN MATTHEWS

of importance. The country round about has grown rich and prosperous. Each year more and heavier trains thunder past on their way to and from the great city by the distant river, stopping only to take water. But in this swiftly moving stream of life Corinth is caught in an eddy. Her small world has come to swing in a very small circle—it can scarcely be said to swing at all. The very children stop growing when they become men and women, and are content to dream the dreams their fathers' fathers dreamed, even as they live in the houses the fathers of their fathers built. Only the trees that line the unpaved streets have grown—grown and grown until overhead their great tops touch to shut out the sky with an arch of green, and their mighty trunks crowd contemptuously aside the old sidewalks, with their decayed and broken boards.

Old Town, a mile away, is given over to the negroes. The few buildings that remain are fallen into ruin, save as they are patched up by their dusky tenants. And on the hill, the old Academy with its broken windows, crumbling walls, and fallen chimneys, stands a pitiful witness of an honor and dignity that is gone.

Poor Corinth! So are gone the days of her true glory—the glory of her usefulness, while the days of her promised honor and power are not yet fulfilled.

And because the town of this story is what it is, there came to dwell in it a Spirit—a strange, mysterious power—playful, vicious, deadly; a Something to be at once feared and courted; to be denied