

a chill, a numbness to his heart. His hands clenched, and he began to pace up and down the room.

How buoyantly he had tackled the problem — buoyant in his own emancipation, buoyant in his love, in the future full of dreams, full of inspiration, full of the new life that Helena and he would live together! How confidently he had settled himself to undo in a moment the work of months, to outline a mere matter of detail, with never a thought that he was face to face with a problem that he could never solve — that brought him to the realization that the game, not he, was the master still, iron-handed, implacable — that though the mental chains were loosed it was but as if, in ironic justice, in grim punishment, only that he might look, clear-visioned, upon the ignominy of the physical shackles he himself had forged and fashioned so readily, whose breaking now was beyond his strength.

He had done his work well! In the first few moments, an hour ago, when he had begun to consider the problem, as seeming difficulties arose, he had turned coolly from one alternative to another. And then slowly a sickening sense of the truth had begun to dawn upon him — and like a man lost in a great forest, peril around him, he had plunged then desperately in this direction and in that, as a glimmering point of light here or there had seemed to promise an avenue of escape — only to find it vanish at almost the first step, the way closed as by some invisible, remorseless