

And he realized that she had burned her boats to make it impossible for a man of sensibility to disappoint her !

The little model raised her face and looked at him. What she saw must have been less reassuring even than the first sight had been, for it stopped her sobbing. She rose and turned to the window, evidently trying with handkerchief and powder-puff to repair the ravages caused by her tears ; and when she had finished she still stood there with her back to him. Her deep breathing made her young form quiver from her waist up to the little peacock's feather in her hat ; and with each supple movement it seemed offering itself to Hilary.

In the street a barrel-organ had begun to play the very waltz it had played the afternoon when Mr. Stone had been so ill. Those two were neither of them conscious of the tune, too absorbed in their emotions ; and yet, quietly, it was bringing something to the girl's figure—like the dowering of scent that the sun brings to a flower. It was bringing the compression back to Hilary's lips, the flush to his ears and cheeks, as a draught of wind will blow to redness a fire that has been choked. Without knowing it, without sound, inch by inch he moved nearer to her ; and as though, for all there was no sign of his advance, she knew of it, she stayed utterly unmoving except for the deep breathing that so stirred the warm youth in her. In that stealthy progress was the history of life and the mystery of sex. Inch by inch he neared her ; and she swayed, mesmerizing his arms to fold round her thus poised, as if she must fall backward ; mesmerizing him to forget that there was anything there, anything in all the world, but just her young form waiting for him—nothing but that !

The barrel-organ stopped ; the spell had broken ! She turned round to him. As a wind obscures with