

table and tore off the wrapper and spread the first one eagerly. He began with the advertisements, but he could read only the forms of the words; they had no meaning and they marched crazily to the tune in his head. He turned to the pictures. And these were the old fond pictures of snow and sunset, of country homes, of jolly plum-pudding dinners, of girls skating in furs or dancing under the holly. They were the embodiment to his eyes of all that his young Christmas had aspired to be. The million memories of boyhood and youth, of college days and homecoming, of Christmas holidays and Christmas sports stung and tormented him. He turned the pages in a trance of thought, page after page, fascinated. And when he looked up from them he found a nightmare life around him, dinning discordant music in his ears, choking him with the thick heat and the odor of unclean bodies. He ripped the paper up with an oath and threw it on the floor. Then he rose unsteadily and staggered out of the hall.

Don, after one guilty moment of hesitation, shoved back his chair and followed. He came into the bar-room as the street door slammed at Conroy's heels. He ran out to the sidewalk and stood facing a curtain of fog behind which Conroy had been lost in an instant. He wandered about the streets, shuddering with the cold and with the horror of having helped to agonize in despair. When he came on an elevated station, he accepted the futility of his hope, and turned homewards.

And Conroy, driven from the shelter of his familiar haunts, where he was a known and—in the sodden way of bar-rooms—an honored customer, went lurching