

## The Innocents

of his soul. His great shock of raven hair was tumbled carelessly. He wore a gray suit, a soft collar and a long, flowing tie.

No time was lost in preliminaries. Graves was given an early place. His rich, penetrating voice carried to the farthest corner of the building. He scorned to use the stand provided. There were no pulpit tricks about this man. He began his address very quietly, rehearsing briefly the cause for which he asked their sympathy.

"I am a child of the people," he said simply, "and for the children of the people I make my plea. I am not making any extravagant demand when I ask for them an equal chance to live clean, honest, independent lives. We are not seeking charity, but justice."

There was a storm of applause, intermingled with groans and hisses.

"We can't hear ye," cried an unknown man in the rear of the hall, "step up by the desk, won't ye"?

There was an eager hand-clapping of approval. Ever ready to oblige his audience John Graves stepped upon the slight dais and grasped the rude desk with both his hands. Scarcely had he done so, however, when there was a tearing of pine, a lurch forward and before the audience realized what had happened, he pitched headlong over the platform and down upon the orchestra, striking his head upon a chair as he fell. A great harp, heavily mounted, crashed over upon him giving him an ugly scalp wound. Several musicians eagerly raised him whilst the blood flowed copiously down the side of his head. He was quickly borne to the dressing-room. No one had stirred. Only a shriek or two gave any hint of the accident. The vast crowd seemed to realize that a tragedy had been enacted before their eyes. In a few minutes