

"But you cannot live on that," Madame von Marwitz, after another moment, said.

"Why, gracious sakes, of course I can, Mercedes," Mrs. Talcott replied, smiling dimly.

Again there was silence and then Madame von Marwitz said, in a voice a little forced: "You have not got much out of life, have you, Tallie?"

"Well, no; I don't expect you would say as I had," Mrs. Talcott acquiesced, showing a slight surprise.

"You have n't even got me — now — have you," Madame von Marwitz went on, looking down at her door-knob and running her hand slowly round it while she spoke. "Not even the criminal. But that is a gain, you feel, no doubt, rather than a loss."

"No, Mercedes," said Mrs. Talcott mildly; "I don't feel that way. I feel it's a loss, I guess. You see you're all the family I've got left."

"And you," said Madame von Marwitz, still looking down at her knob, "are all the family I have left."

Mrs. Talcott now looked at her. Mercedes did not raise her eyes. Her face was sad and very pale and it had not lost its stateliness. Mrs. Talcott looked at her for what seemed to be a long time and the vistas of her eyes deepened with a new acceptance.

It was without any elation and yet without any regret that she said in her mild voice: "Do you want me to come back with you, Mercedes?"

"Will you?" Madame von Marwitz asked in a low voice.

"Why, yes, of course I'll come if you want me, Mercedes," said Mrs. Talcott.

Madame von Marwitz now opened her door. "Thank you, Tallie," she said.

"You look pretty tired," Mrs. Talcott, following her into the bedroom, remarked. "You'd better lie down and take a rest while I do the packing. Let's clear out as soon as we can."