

The voice of Cranston outside the locked door, informing her that the missing diamond had been found, failed to call Virginia from her self-communing, and it was long after that she at length, moved by her maid's pathetic entreaties that she would take some lunch, left the room, first putting the letter into her bosom.

Young Mrs. Weston's deathlike pallor, and the strong tokens of agitation so plainly visible on her face, though winning Cranston's unbounded pity, failed to excite her curiosity, for the household was now in full possession of the fact that their master was a bankrupt, the store-man having taken a private run up to the house for the express purpose of giving the information.

Regret was the general feeling that morning in business circles regarding Clive Weston's failure, and very few were found to cast a stone. One sour-visaged gentleman declared that Weston was an incomprehensible chap—looked as if he had gained a fortune instead of losing one—another opined that his ruin could not be as complete as was reported, or he would not look so calm all at once about it: the common feeling, however, was one of sympathy. The lamps were lit when he mounted the stone steps leading to his house, and met at the door his anxious young wife.

"What news, Clive dear?"

"Good. Indeed better than I had expected. The creditors give me time, so that if fortune prove favourable we may soon be all right again. In the meantime we can occupy this house till we have looked up other quarters. The servants may be discharged as soon as you find convenient, keeping Cranston of course with us."

"What delightful news! Come now to dinner, poor Clive? You must stand in need of it."

Soon Weston began to perceive that despite the strenuous efforts made by his wife to appear as cheerful as she had been in the morning, a change had come over

her during his absence. Her words and smiles were less frequent, and at times an indefinable look clouded the brilliancy of her dark eyes.

"I fear, my darling," he said, as they sat before the fire in her dressing-room, Virginia on her favourite low seat near his feet, "I fear," and he tenderly stroked the glossy head resting on his arm; "that you are only beginning to realize all that you have lost."

Vainly Virginia protested that it was not so, that her hopes and courage were as high as ever.

"You cannot deceive me, my wife. I love you too well for that. Ah, there is a shadow in those eyes that was not there this morning."

There was a long pause, and then with pallid cheek and quivering lip she answered:

"Clive, my love, my husband! I had not at first intended telling you, but perhaps it is better I should, so that henceforth there may be no misunderstanding or secret between us. With no intention of prying into your private affairs, but seeking for a missing jewel, I opened your table drawer and found this. She displayed his short letter to herself, and then, for the first time since he had known her, gave way in his presence to a passionate burst of tears.

"Once again, Clive, say you forgive me," she sobbed, "for the unwifely heartlessness that helped to drive you to such despair?"

"Rather ask God to forgive me, Virginia, an error that a life-time will not be long enough to deplore. Ah, sweet wife!" and he gently folded her to his heart, "Seek not in your regrets over your own childish faults to make me lose sight of the burden of guilt that weighs so heavily on me. I do not regret that you have discovered it. Sooner or later I should probably have confided it to you. And now we have neither estrangement nor secret between us. May it be ever so!"

The following day the servants at Weston's