

THE ROAD TO UNDERSTANDING

"Mother, that's he! I know it's he! Mother, don't let him in," implored Betty. But her mother already was in the hall.

Betty, frightened, despairing, and angry, turned her back and walked to the window. She heard the man's quick cry and the woman's sobbing answer. She heard the broken, incoherent sentences with which the man and the woman attempted to crowd into one brief delirious minute all the long years of heartache and absence. She heard the pleading, the heart-hunger, the final rapturous bliss that vibrated through every tone and word. But she did not turn. She did not turn even when some minutes later her father's voice, low, unsteady, but infinitely tender, reached her ears.

"Betty, your mother has forgiven me. Can't you?"

There was no answer.

"Betty, dear, he means — we've forgiven each other, and — if *I* am happy, can't you be?" begged Betty's mother, tremulously.

Still no answer.

"Betty," began the woman again pleadingly.

But the man interposed, a little sadly: —

"Don't urge her, Helen. After all, I deserve everything she can say, or do."

"But she does n't understand," faltered Helen.

The man shook his head. A wistful smile was on his lips.

"No, she does n't — understand," he said. "I