

saturated with rain and was quite black. He looked at it in a dazed fashion; there were three protruding lumps on it where it had thrown out smaller branches. He wondered dully why he noticed these things.

Then he looked across the room. The lamp remained unlighted, and methodically he trimmed the wick and set a match to it. He looked around him. In the corner Amy was crouched, white faced, shivering, silent. She was beyond tears.

"Come here," said the man.

His wife hesitated, staring at him.

"Come here!" he repeated.

"I am afraid of you," she said in a dry tone.

He turned and looked at her scornfully.

"I will not touch you, if that is what you fear." And she came slowly towards him then, as though she walked on legs which could hardly support her. She looked into his face with big, questioning eyes. He looked back at her, like a man whose features have been twisted beyond recognition by some terrible pain.

"I will not ask you what that man was to you. I won't insult myself by holding a conversation with you. I only want to tell you that you have to-night to get your things together; you are leaving on the stage-wagon to-morrow morning. I will give you what money there is in the house, and you can get the train to wherever you wish to go."

For a moment the woman swayed unsteadily, her hands clasped cold against her breast. She could hear the rolling crash of thunder, the beat of the rain against the sodden ground. She struggled to understand what it was the man was saying to her.

"You mean—What do you mean, Alan?" Then, with a sudden scream, as the truth came to her, she understood. "Alan, you can't mean you are turning me out? You are believing the worst about me that any man could believe about his wife. Alan, only trust me a little longer—only trust me a week—three days; I can tell you then—I can tell you—"

"I want to hear nothing. To-morrow you go—with your lover if you will, without him if you will. It matters nothing to me." He looked down at the blackened branch he held and laughed harshly. "He must be a sorry lover!" And with a gasp of horror the woman shrank back.

"Alan—that brand! You—you never used it?" she cried.

"I am afraid not to any purpose. Well, the stage leaves at six. You will need all your time to be ready."

He walked over to the fire and lighted his pipe. There was a haze between himself and the outer world. Even Amy his wife, who was moving slowly, heavily like an old woman, towards the bedroom, even she seemed a stranger.

It was a long night. Alan spent it sitting in the chair before the stove, which from time to time he fed diligently. At four o'clock the storm came to an end, and the twittering of birds heralded the first light of day.

When Alan called out, some time later, the door of the bedroom opened, and Amy, ghastly pale, came out carrying a suitcase. He surveyed her long traveling cloak and neat hat—she had bought them, with many smiles and jokes, before she left England. A pang shot through Alan's heart. He looked into her face. If she had cried now—if she had begged him to forgive! But she only met his glance with one of equal coldness. He pushed a cup of hot coffee towards her, and she drank it. Neither spoke; but as he turned away towards the door, Alan saw her look once, very quickly, around the room. Then she went out and down the steps. She never looked back. At the end of the main street, outside the only hotel the place boasted, the stage waited. He helped her up, thrust a roll of notes into her chilled fingers, and stepped back as the coach lurched forward and rattled away.

Halfway up the road he met a neighbor, who touched his arm and jerked a finger in the direction of one of the strangers who had come up on last night's stage.

"A tee—after someone believed to be hiding hereabouts, I'm told. We'll be

getting famous, I reckon!" And he grinned.

Before he joined Jim Forshaw the news of his wife's hurried departure had travelled throughout the village, and he saw the question in Jim's greeting glance. But he offered no explanation, and Jim never asked one as they went out to the claim. They worked for an hour before a cry broke from Forshaw's throat. He came scrambling over the rough ground separating them; in his hand he held a piece of quartz.

"Alan!" he cried, "we've struck the vein at last! Man, don't you realize it? We're rich!"

Alan dropped the pan in which he had been washing dirt into the little stream at his feet as he took the veined rock which his chum handed him.

"Gold!" he muttered, with a hard laugh. "Rich!" and he looked far away across the hills towards a rough road where a stage-wagon jolted through the growing heat. And he dropped his face in his hands and cried.

* * * * *

In a very comfortable consulting-room at his house in Kensington, young Doctor

this; it is my first big case, you know; and I want it to come off right."

Then Bickersteth hung up the instrument and turned to a pile of notes on his desk. He had just settled in to work when there came a knock and a ring at the street door bell, and a moment later the trim parlor-maid entered with a telegram.

Bickersteth slit it open and read the contents with startled eyes. He gave the order: "No answer!" in a dull voice. As the maid left the room he sank back into his chair with a groan. Again he read the brief message on the flimsy paper:

"Doctor Massy seriously injured in motor accident, unable to keep engagement to-morrow.—Elvard, secretary."

A turmoil of thought crashed through Bickersteth's mind. Massy unable to do the operation to-morrow! Carter, his patient, lying at death's door. Only a few hours left in which to get a substitute. And all the famous men he thought of were liable to ask a large fee, and Carter was only a poor man! But Bickersteth was a man whose heart was in his profession, and though he had

stated his difficulty, and waited for the other man's answer. The shrivelled head nodded.

"My fee is one hundred and fifty guineas for that operation. As you know it is one of extreme delicacy. Probably there are very few men in London at the time who are sufficiently confident of themselves to perform it," he said in a hard voice.

"But I am going to ask you to reduce your fee. My patient is not by any means a rich man, and he has dependants who—" began Bickersteth.

"I never reduce my fees, Doctor Bickersteth. I fear you have wasted my time. Good-night."

Bickersteth's head burned with shame as he found himself once more out in the street. He walked hurriedly along, scarcely noticing where he was going, mortified with the shame which had been flung upon him. Yet to-morrow was so near! He owed it to Carter—to poor Carter, even now suffering tortures from his complaint—to get someone who could do the operation to-morrow.

In his irresolution he paused at the corner of the street. He was outside a house with a lamp shining brightly above a white door, and the door bore the name-plate of Doctor Hallam. Bickersteth halted and searched his memory. Hallam—Hallam! Why, of course, this was the man who had cropped up quite suddenly a couple of years ago and had taken London by storm. A very famous surgeon, this Hallam; a man who had been known to go down into the slums and stand the full cost of intricate operations which few save himself would have troubled to perform on such lowly patients. And there were other tales to his name; of crowned heads who begged his services at enormous fees; of hospitals equipped with rare drugs at his expense. Yet no one could say how he had made all his money. They only knew one thing; his skill with the knife was a fascination.

And Doctor Bickersteth, gulping down his pride once more, mounted the steps and rang the bell. Five minutes later he was in the presence of a tall, bronzed man, still young, though his hair was plentifully sprinkled with grey. He greeted the younger man genially, and pushed a chair up in front of the fire.

Bickersteth felt the hurt pride fade away. He told Doctor Hallam the story of Massy's accident, and he told reluctantly of his recent rebuff. Hallam listened sympathetically; he was a man who radiated sympathy and strength, and in the end he said:

"Now tell me the history of the disease. You see, I shall have to operate in the dark to a great extent. I have only a few hours left in which to study the points of the case."

"Then you will undertake it; you do not discourage me because I ask you for a reduction of your fee," cried Bickersteth.

"It seems to me," said Hallam slowly, "that all the world sets its store on gold and the getting of gold. It is the least thing in life—the least! And men sell their souls for it! We will not quarrel about my fee, Doctor Bickersteth. Now about your patient?"

They plunged into technicalities.

A pale wintry sun was shining over the ugly block of flats in West Kensington as Doctor Hallam's limousine deposited him at the entrance. He walked reflectively up four flights of dingy stairs and knocked at the door of No. 40. A slovenly maid-of-all-work admitted him, and Bickersteth met him in the tiny hall.

"You will come in first and see the patient?" said the latter; and Hallam followed in to the small, meagrely furnished bedroom. A thin lath of a man, very white and looking desperately tired, lay with half-closed eyes under the white coverlet. He looked up with a wan attempt at a smile as Bickersteth brought his colleague to the bedside.

"You the chap who's going to carve me?" murmured the patient in a weak voice. Then he looked more interestedly at the surgeon. "Why, doctor, I have been so frightened of you. Now that I see you I am not afraid any more. I somehow feel—well, it's safe with you." Suddenly his eyes filled with



This is one of the most pitiable plights caused by the absolute brutality of German war methods. This white haired grandmother, with her worldly goods stowed in a wheelbarrow, is making her way out of the home of a lifetime, because the Germans driven from a French village turned their guns on the town endangering the lives of all the inhabitants. The feeble old lady has to flee for her life with as much of her belongings as possible. All her household goods, and there are precious few of them, have been piled into the rickety wheelbarrow which she is slowly trundling to her new home, and she doesn't know where that will be. Moving Day is not a serious thing in ordinary life, but to this old lady of France, it is the tragedy of her life. Learning to make a new home in unfamiliar surroundings, is infinitely harder for the aged who have spent their lives in one place.

Bickersteth sat with the telephone receiver pressed to his ear. From time to time he smiled as he chatted through the wire to a colleague on the other end. Then, as their conversation took a more professional turn, the young, alert face of the man became more serious. He leaned forward, speaking earnestly into the phone.

"Well, I will meet you on the case to-morrow, then," he said. "Yes, they have everything very well arranged, though, of course, their necessities are limited owing to their small means. Jerringham Massy is to be there to do the operation at ten-thirty. I propose to get there a little earlier. Yes, they are upset about it, naturally. Poor Carter! I hope for all our sakes that he will come out of his ordeal safely. But if he will be safe with anyone, it is Massy. Well, good-night, old chap. I say—I'm glad I have you with me in

had a pretty hard fight for it these few years since he had walked the hospitals, he had not lost his humanity.

He hastily looked up the address of a surgeon whose fees ran into a fat three figures. And Bickersteth flung on his hat and coat, and taxied hastily to Harley street. As he ran up the broad white marble steps of the famous man's house he heard nine o'clock striking.

A pompous manservant admitted him with aggravating and dignified slowness. Doctor Bickersteth sat in a waiting-room where the fire had gone out, watching the hands of a gilt clock move laboriously towards the quarter, then the half-hour. As the pompous manservant re-entered the room he started up, and at a word followed him into the famous surgeon's private room.

A small, acidulated man, very brown and shrivelled looking, greeted him; Doctor Bickersteth introduced himself,