

"Then I'll walk with you," she said with a smile.

John's face clouded with pain.

"Please, dearest, for my sake?"

"It's for your sake I'm going with you."

"They may say something to hurt you," he pleaded.

"I don't think they will," she said as the fire suddenly flashed from her brown eyes.

"But they will, my love, they will. It's hard enough for me. They mustn't hurt you—I can hear them out there now—that black mob—waiting to hoot and yell—please, don't go with me!"

Stella left his cell door, stepped to the window and looked out. Steve Hoyle was passing along the lines of Negroes ranged on either side of the walk, instructing them what to say. He had massed around the door a mob of two hundred to follow his lead the moment John appeared.

"Watch me," he said, "and I'll give you the signal. I want you to let him have it square in the face when I raise my hand. I'll stand on the doorstep. I want a laugh first from five hundred black throats—on old-fashioned nigger laugh, long, deep and loud! It'll be a funny sight, I promise you that."

"We watch ye," answered a big buck Negro with a grin.