

in Westhill—a hundred and fifty miles west of here, you know. The reply did not reach me until after; it got mixed up in the Settlement mail. We were married at a clergyman's house, with a close friend or two of Darrel's and one or two of mine as the only witnesses. The ceremony was just over when Jim arrived."

Gwynneth Price looked away.

SHE continued, presently: "I thought, Mr. Courtenay, that Jim had come for my sake . . . to wish me happiness and all. I was soon undeceived. He took me aside, and forgot, I think, that he was my brother, and that it was my wedding day. He was very bitter, and, when he knew that the ceremony was over, he said: 'So I'm too late, then?'"

"Too late?" I echoed.

"To prevent you marrying that crook!" he flared. "I had to come in the end—though I told myself I'd get no thanks. Well, it's my own fault mostly. I should have got wise sooner to the fact that you were falling for him, and warned you!"

"Angry as I was, Mr. Courtenay, I had to get the explanation from Jim then. He said: 'I suppose you fell hard for his getting me away from that trouble—saving me from the pen, he'd call it, I'll bet! Huh!—he did it to save his own precious skin. He's like the rest of 'em that get up and talk clean civics from the platform; it's all lip and no action! I guess he's not so bad some ways, but don't let him pull your leg on that stuff! I've got the inside dope that would queer him for keeps if I ever let it out. If he doesn't treat you right, sis, just mention "Garbuts" to him, or send for me. I may have been in the deal, but my part'll blow over because I don't particularly count, but his—well, there are always folks who would like to get his scalp. Refer them to me!"

"Darrel came in, then, Mr. Courtenay, and they greeted each other in a kind of a way, and Jim left, because it was time for us to go to the train. I think I might have spoken right then to my husband, but a quick wave of loyalty came to me, and it swallowed up thoughts of everything but my love for him. Afterwards, in the happiness that was mine, I dismissed the matter from mind, laughing it off as one does a bad dream, telling myself that Jim was not always quite,—well, dependable.

"He built a house for me—Darrel did—and gave me

*carte blanche* in the matter of furnishing; he provided me with servants, and a car, and, cherishing every gift as a token of his love, I revelled in this unaccustomed luxury, and allowed the past, with its hardships and its memories, to drift away from me.

"Then, one day, a woman came to see me—an old Irishwoman who had helped us at the Settlement, and who had long known me. She sat on the edge of one of my best chairs, and looked about. Then she shook her head at me, sadly:

"'Ye'll not be comin' to see the loikes av us more,' she said with finality. 'We've missed ye, and we'll be missin' ye more. 'Tis very grand, but I'm thinkin' the little gurl I loved is lost to me. I wondered why you never so much as looked in on us these days. I guess maybe I'll be goin'."

"That awakened me, Mr. Courtenay, to what I had done—to my desertion of a cause that had taken me from the grip of the slums myself. And I remembered how this woman had been with my own mother when she died. And I took her in my arms, and kissed her, and I think we cried together to know we had not lost each other, after all. And the butler, passing by the doorway, forgot himself and stared, and remembered himself and sniffed. And then I heard the story of Daniel Mulanny's defections.

"It was through this same Daniel Mulanny, the Irishwoman's husband—a ne'er-do-well if ever there was one—that I again came across Jerry McGinnis, the son of my husband's rival candidate. I had known him before—Jerry was a great worker down our way, with purely political motives, but, through his father's influence, a ready and powerful arm, as of course you know, Mr. Courtenay. He had interested himself in the present scrape of Daniel Mulanny, and we met once more. I had always feared him, Mr. Courtenay, and evaded his rather aggressive advances; and now my fears awoke again, for he began to haunt my path as I returned to my Settlement work in such time as I could spare from home. Jerry is not of the best repute, but he is hard to evade.

"Darrel, meanwhile, was preparing his campaign for the mayoralty, and I found myself, somehow, shut off from him more and more. The realization did not come at once, but grew, like some nasty weed, until I could not overlook its existence, that Darrel and I had drifted away from the first intimacies. But the crisis came,

Mr. Courtenay, only three days ago, following the night on which Daniel Mulanny died, in the squalid rooms that were home to him and his wife, and the pallid family he had brought into existence. I spent the night with her—and Jerry McGinnis was there most of the night, too. Outside the place detectives watched, waiting to take a man who had become an outlaw of society. At four in the morning Daniel Mulanny passed out, with a smile on his lips, and the joke that never was far from him: 'Tell them guys outside I've fooled 'em at last. 'Tis a long warrant and a longer arm will be needed to fetch me now!' And Jerry McGinnis pulled the broken shades, and the men outside came in for verification, and went their way without remorse.

"At seven I reached home, fatigued beyond words. Darrel, to whom I had sent word, met me at the door. I shall never forget the arraignment he made of me.

"'Young McGinnis brought you home,' he charged. 'At seven in the morning! A pretty business! I'm not reading any harm into it, Gwynneth—it's just your soft nature to poke in where you've no need to go. Haven't I given you everything you need—spent more on you than I could afford, and then you turn and disgrace me, and mix with McGinnis—Jerry McGinnis!—in a way to set fool tongues clacking!"

"He had had a hard day, Mr. Courtenay, and worked long into the night, and the name of McGinnis was anathema to him; but I thought, as he went on with his tirade, of poor Dan Mulanny—good-for-nothing though he was—passing out in such squalor, and of his wife and kiddies—and then, too, I was at the last edge of resistance myself—and I let myself go. I told him what I thought of a man who had made so much of uplift work while I was there, and then tossed the whole business aside for fear some of his constituents might think he had dangerous ideas for the great unwashed, and refuse their support. And I charged him, Mr. Courtenay, with treating me as a child, given playthings and told to play and be good—and not a wife—especially a wife who had come from the slums, whose betterment he now forsook for power and fame. I know, Mr. Courtenay, that there are some radicals on the Settlement committee, and the place is in disfavor with some of Daniel's most influential supporters.

WORDS led to words, with nerves on both sides egging us on. He forbade me with finality, to

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"ISN'T OUR ROOM AND THE MEAL READY, GASPARD?" ASKED JERRY FROWNING. "I PHONED LONG ENOUGH IN ADVANCE!"