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FIVE minutes later Orde emerged from Newmark's house, softly rubbing the palm of one hand over the knuckles of the other. At the front gate he paused to look up at the stars. Then he shut it decisively behind him.

Up through the maple shaded streets he walked at a brisk pace, breathing deep, unconsciously squaring back his shoulders. The incident was behind him. In his characteristic decisive manner he had wiped the whole disagreeable affair off the slate. The copartnership with its gains and losses, its struggles and easy sailing was a thing of the past. Only there remained, as after a flood the sediment, a final result of it all, the balance between successes and failures, a ground beneath the feet of new aspirations. Orde had the Northern Peninsula timber; the Boom Company; and the carrying trade. They were all burdened with debt, it is true, but the riverman felt surging within him the reawakened and powerful energy for which optimism is another name. He saw stretching before him a long life of endeavour, the sort of endeavour he enjoyed, exulted in; and in it he would be untrammelled and alone. The idea appealed to him. Suddenly he was impatient for the morrow that he might begin.

He turned out of the side street. His own house lay before him, dark save for the gas jet in the hallway and the single lamp in the library. A harmony of softly touched chords breathed out through the open window. He stopped then stole forward softly until he stood looking in through the doorway.