

"Certainly, I have, but not a successful person like yourself. I can understand the failures of life, the ne'er-do-wells, the floating derelicts, drifting back to the farm once more just as they drift into the lower quarters of our great cities, but I cannot understand a clever young man like yourself with most of life before you, with a splendid future just ahead, taken up by society too, I repeat I cannot understand such a move. The only reasonable explanation is, that away off on some lonely hillside farm, there is a pair of bright eyes which might grow brighter by your coming. Oh you need not blush" Norman had colored to his very ears "I know how it is myself, I was not always old and grizzled like I am now and I cannot blame you, my boy. But confound it, marry the girl and bring her to the city too. We have work here that you only can do as it should be done, in fact I understood you took a holiday to get married." "I did, but"—he hesitated to finish the sentence and the keen business man broke in with "Never mind now, I do not wish to interfere with your private affairs nor to know them. If there has or has not been a hitch, go back to your work anyhow, we want you to stay with us, let others do the farming. Good farmers are thicker than blackbirds in spring time, good writers are scarcer than angel's visits."

"I thank you for your good opinion of myself Mr. Anderson, but my decision is unchanged" he said firmly. "If my talents are such as you say, then the neighborhood where I was born and raised have first claim on them. In the huge, festering mass of this city's sunken population, which I have investigated and which has largely driven me to my present resolve, I could only hope at the very best to ameliorate a tiny fraction of the misery I have witnessed, but in my own country home if I be true to myself, I may be an uplifting force in many directions, touching the lives of probably all my neighbors. The wide sweep of public life has dazzled far too many already, to be a plain citizen discharging all its obligations has a greater charm for me. In the confusing roar of the city one almost comes to forget that unnumbered millions cannot get to the so called top. To be useful to those every day toilers is my ambition, if ambition it can be called. Besides, I will not deny that a selfish consideration entered into my decisions. We are living this life but once here, and to take the most happiness out of this assured fact may be selfish, but it is at least natural. I enjoy the free, open air life of the country, I do not enjoy the close smothering breeze of the alley-ways and courts. My nature is not to be a martyr for others