

For the first time I saw Silverthorn angry.

"Never say a word of that sort to me again!" he cried, with a demeanor bordering on violence.

I was a little piqued, and inquired: •

"Well, how do you get on toward being in a position to pay him?"

But I regretted my thrust. Silverthorn's face fell, and he could make no reply.

"Is there no prospect of success with those machines you were talking of last year?" I asked more kindly.

"No," said he, sadly. "I'm afraid not. I shall never succeed. It all depends on Vibbard, now. I cannot even marry, unless he gets enough to give me a start."

I left him with a dreary misgiving in my heart. What an unhappy outcome of their compact was this!

Meanwhile Vibbard was thriving. After a brief sojourn with his father, who was a well-to-do hardware merchant in his own small inland city, he went to Virginia and began sheep-farming. In two years he had gained enough to find it feasible to return to New York, where he took up the business of a note-broker. People who knew him prophesied that he would prove too slow to be a successful man in early life; and, in fact, as he did not look like a quick man, he was a long time in gaining the reputation of one. But his sagacious instincts moved all the more effectively for being masked, and he made some astonishing strokes. It began to seem as if other men around him who lost were controlled by some deadly attraction which forced them to throw their success under Vibbard's feet. His car rolled on over them. Everything yielded him a pecuniary return.

As he was approaching his thirtieth birthday he found himself worth a little over thirty thousand dollars—after deducting expenses, bad claims, and a large sum repaid to his father for the cost of

his college course. He had been only six years in accumulating it. But how endlessly prolonged had those six years been for Silverthorn! When three of them had been passed, he declared his love for Ida Winwood, though in such a way that she need neither refuse nor accept him at once; and a *quasi* engagement was made between them, having in view a probable share in Vibbard's fortunes. Once—perhaps more than once—Silverthorn bitterly reproached himself, in her presence, for trusting so entirely to another man's energies. But Ida put up her hands beseechingly, looking at him with a devoted faith.

"No, John!" she cried. "There is nothing wrong about it. If you were other than you are, I might not wish it to be so. But you—you are different from other men; there is something finer about you, and you are not meant for battling your way. But, when once you get this money, you will give all your time to inventing, or writing, and then people will find out what you are!"

There was something strange and pathetic in their relation to each other now. Silverthorn seemed nervous and weary; he looked as if he were growing old, even with that soft yellow beard and his pale brown hair still unchanged (for he was only twenty-eight). His spirits were capricious; sometimes bounding high with hope, and, at others, utterly despondent. Ida, meantime, had reached a full development; she was twenty-two, fresh, strong and self-reliant. When they were together, she had the air of caring for him as for an invalid.

Suddenly, one day, at the close of Vibbard's six years' absence, Silverthorn came running from the mill during working-hours, and burst into the superintendent's cottage with an open letter in his hand, calling aloud for Ida.

"He is coming! He is coming!" cried he, breathless, but with a harsh excite