

though, it would be rough on me if anything went wrong with me now! It would clean me out completely."

He was walking up and down the room, trying to repress the nervous agitation which attacked him.

"Seven o'clock!" he said, glancing at the time. "The office is closed long ago. In another hour Brisket will sign over those bonds, and then—Hello! what's that?"

The shrill alarm of the telephone summoned him across the room.

"There is no one at the office," he thought, taking up the receiver. "I wonder what's up now? Hello! Wayne! Who are you?"

"It is Helen Archer, Mr. Wayne," said a voice which he knew quite well.

"Why, what are you doing in the office at this time of night?" he exclaimed, involuntarily.

"I am not at the office—that is, not at your office. I am at the Central station. Can you hear me?"

"Yes."

"I have something important to tell you. Our wire got crossed with Mr. Brisket's to day, and I could hear every word said over it. I could not understand what they were talking about, only Mr. Brisket was talking to a man named Danbury.

"Danbury!" exclaimed Wayne, in great excitement.

"They were talking about bonds, and said a lot of things I couldn't comprehend; but at last your name was mentioned. 'This will put Wayne into a hole,' Mr. Brisket said. 'Yes,' said Mr. Danbury, 'it'll bury him alive. It is a good thing he's shelved to-night. There is no danger, I suppose, of his getting wind of this before 8 o'clock?' 'No danger at all,' said Brisket, 'if you don't go back on me. There will be a new deal all around, and we will boost the market over Wayne's head.' Do you hear what I said?" she interrupted.

"Yes, yes!" Wayne said, excitedly. "What else?"

"Nothing more that I could understand, except that they were to meet at the Continental Hotel to-night at eight o'clock. I came here because I was afraid to talk from the office. I thought some one might get on our wire, and I have you here direct. That's all. Good bye!"

For Roland Wayne to dress and leave the house was a matter of a very short time after he had received the message from Helen Archer. His illness and the danger of exposure were quite forgotten.

He was present, very unexpectedly to Mr. Brisket and Mr. Danbury, at the evening conference at the hotel.

It was a stormy scene that ensued between Roland Wayne and these two men who had combined against him—a scene from which the young broker issued pale with exhaustion, but still triumphant.

What had passed no one knew, but the next day the street was electrified by the news that Wayne was closing up his affairs to go abroad.

"That will throw us all out," said Burns gloomily; and Helen Archer heard the news with a sinking heart.

She was late that night in going home, having some errands to attend to on her way; and moreover, her steps lagged with the consciousness that she had bad news to carry to her poor, ailing mother.

"You are late, Nelly," Mrs. Archer said, as she came in. "This gentleman has been waiting to see you for some time."

It was Roland Wayne who rose and held out his hand warmly.

"Miss Archer," he said, "I have come to thank you for the service you did me last night. Thanks to you, I have saved my fortune from ruin almost absolute. If it had not been for your foresight and prompt action, I should have been a beggar to-day."

"I—I had no idea that it was so serious as that," Helen said, hastily. "I am very glad I could do you such a service."

"I shall never forget it," Roland said, with a steadfast look into her soft gray eyes. "And I have learned a wholesome lesson. When I went into the brokerage business, I did not dream so much of my intercourse would be with men wholly devoid of conscience or principle. I am sick and disgusted. Last night I had expected to make two hundred thousand dollars by one transaction. To-day I find myself thanking heaven and you that I got out without losing anything. I am tired of such chances. I do not feel that I can enter into contracts with men like Brisket and Danbury without compromising myself, and so I have decided to get out altogether."

"I understood that you were going out of business," said Helen, quietly.

"Yes, I am. I shall close up the office as soon as possible."

"I expected that; and—and I don't wish to trouble you, Mr. Wayne, but if you see an opening for me anywhere, would you be so kind as to recommend me?"

"I have just been talking to your mother," said Roland, bowing to Mrs. Archer. "I am going abroad. My health requires it; but I do not like the idea of going alone. I want you and your mother to accompany me. It will do you both good—indeed, you need it as much as I—and I won't take a refusal."

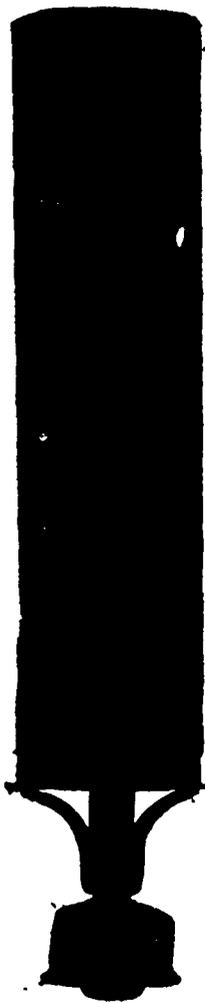
This is how Helen Archer took her first trip to Europe. When she came home Roland Wayne had given her a situation as—his wife.

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