

Her face whitened and she moved stiffly to the open window, where she could sit in the draught. As she made Rankin tell her the whole story she simply grew stony, while she sat with bloodless hands clinched together, as if she thus clutched at her soul to save it from the madness of a terrible grief.

Suddenly she interrupted him.

"Dismiss your cab," she said. "I will walk back with you part of the way."

When she turned toward him, the strained face was so white and the eyes so wide and expressionless that he became afraid.

"Perhaps you would rather be alone," said he, doubtful about letting her go into the street.

She seemed to divine what was in his mind, for she made him feel more at ease by a gentler tone:

"Alone? No, no! Anything but that! The walk will do me good."

The cab was dismissed while she put on her hat, and as they walked through the quiet streets toward the heart of the city, he went on with all the particulars, which she seemed determined to hear. Several times they met people who knew her and knew of her engagement to Hampstead, and they were surprised to see her walking with—of all men—Maurice Rankin. But she saw no one, gazing before her with the look which means madness if the mind be not diverted. Suddenly, as they had to cross one of the main arteries of the city, a sound fell upon Margaret's ear that made her stop and grasp Rankin by the arm. Then the cry came again—from a boy running toward them along the street:

"Special edition of the Evening News! All about Geoffrey Hampstead, the bank robber!"

For a moment her grasp came near tearing a piece out of Rankin's arm. But this was only when the blow struck