

settled to be married . . ." She paused and saw that he forced himself to sit quiet. "Do you really think," she said, "that the man that wrote those letters, loves me?" Dickie was silent. He would not meet her look. "So you promised Hilliard that you would take me back to marry him?" There was an edge to her voice.

Dickie's face burned cruelly. "No," he said with shortness. "I was going to take you to the train and then come back here. I am going to take up this claim of Hilliard's — he's through with it. He likes the East. You see, Sheila, he's got the whole world to play with. It's quite true." He said this gravely, insistently. "He can give you everything —"

"And you?"

Dickie stared at her with parted lips. He seemed afraid to breathe lest he startle away some hesitant hope. "I?" he whispered.

"I mean — *you* don't like the East? — You will give up your work?"

"Oh —" He dropped back. The hope had flown and he was able to breathe again, though breathing seemed to hurt. "Yes, ma'am. I'll give up newspaper reporting. I don't like New York."

"But, Dickie — your — words? I'd like to see something you've written."

Dickie's hand went to an inner pocket.

"I wanted you to see this, Sheila." His eyes were lowered to hide a flaming pride. "My *poems*."

Sheila felt a shock of dread. Dickie's *poems*! She