

THE CLOSED DOOR OPENS

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goers, glad to feel one with them in the brilliant pageant of the living. And always he searched for the face he had met twice that day.

The lights glowed mellow in the mist and struck out shimmering golden bars on the asphalt. The song of shuffling feet and the accompaniment of the clattering hansoms rang excitedly in his ears. He felt that he was touching the points of a thousand quick romances. The flash of a smile, a quick step, were enough to make him press on eagerly in the possibility that it was here, perhaps, the loose end of his own life was to be taken up.

As the crowd thinned away and he became more conspicuous to the prowling eyes which seemed to challenge him, he took a path across the Public Gardens, and so reached the broader sweep of the avenue where the comfortable stone houses snuggle shoulder to shoulder. The lower windows were lighted behind drawn shades. Against the stubborn stone angles the light shone out with appealing warmth. Every window was like an invitation. Occasionally a door opened, emitting a path of yellow light to the dripping walk, framing for a second a man or a woman; sometimes a man and a woman. When they vanished the dark always seemed to settle down upon him more stubbornly.

Then as the clock boomed ten he saw her again. Through the mist he saw her making her uncertain way along the walk across the street, stopping every now and then to glance hesitatingly at the lighted windows, pause, and move on again. Suddenly, from the