

## THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

"You're not—you're *not*—saying all this," he pleaded, "because you think I've done anything that calls for a reward? I said once that I should never take anything from you, and I never shall—unless it's something you give only because you can't help it."

Her answer was quite prompt. "I'm not giving anything—or doing anything. What has happened seems to me to have come about simply and naturally, like the sunrise or the seasons, because it's the fullness of time and what God means. I can't say more about it than that. If it depended on my own volition I shouldn't be able to speak of it so frankly. But now—if you want me—as you wanted me once—"

She rose and stood by her chair, holding herself proudly and yet with a certain meekness. With his hands clasped behind him, as though even yet he dared not touch her, he crossed the twilight room toward her.

Late that night Henry Guion stood on the terrace below the Corinthian-columned portico. There was no moon, but the stars had the gold fire with which they shine when the sky is violet. Above the horizon a shimmering halo marked the cluster of cities and towns. In the immediate foreground the great elm was leafless now, but for that reason more clearly etched against the starlight—line on line, curve on curve, sweeping, drooping, interlaced.

Guion stood with head up and figure erect, as if from strength given back to him. Even through the