

CHAPTER II

THE INVISIBLE LINK

AT the time of the ribbon sale, made memorable by the finding of the baby, the great Departmental Stores of Angers and Son occupied one solid block of the best business property in the city. Three sides of the block were lined with plate-glass windows, displaying everything from a saucepan to a Paris gown; the fourth side was lined with delivery autos, each bearing the simple legend "Angers and Son." The same name was carved in the stone over the main entrances and stamped upon every bit of paper and every bag or box in the great stores, and yet, as a matter of fact, Angers did not exist, neither was there any such person as Angers' son.

Once there had been both Angers and his son, and they had owned the Stores and piled up the wealth it made for them. But it is just the old commentary upon life that the store should be there, a firm and strong reality, while both Angers and his son were memories. All that remained of them was their name, and that remained because it was an asset. No one knew just who stood behind the name of Angers and Son—that is to say, the people who were most concerned did not know. The clerks in the store did not know, the floor-walkers, the managers of departments, the buyers, the superintendents, did not know. To them all there was