

voluntary muscles. Day and night since they had reached New York she had schemed for Nan. She had joined every society, club, and coterie into which she could buy, push, or manœuvre her way. She had used her Revolutionary ancestry and high social standing in the old South as the entering wedge and had finally succeeded in forcing her way into at least one charmed circle of the rich and powerful through the Daughters of the American Revolution.

She had leased a house in the fashionable neighbourhood of Gramercy Park, and to meet the extraordinary expense, began a careful and systematic search for rich young men to whom she could let two floors. Stuart had seen through her scheme at once — especially as she had insisted with increasing protestations of love that the engagement be kept a secret until they were ready to marry.

He was sure in his heart that Nan had never joined in those plans of her mother, though he had wished that she might have shown a little more strength in resisting them. He trusted her implicitly, and yet she was so beautiful he couldn't see how any man with red blood in his veins could resist her. And he had spent two miserable years. Every time her mother had come near, purring and smiling, he had always expected to collide with a rival as he went out the door.

Well, he was going to win at last, and the world was full of music! He had the biggest surprise of life in store for Nan — something no true woman's heart could resist. He had succeeded after incredible difficulties in secretly building a cottage by the sea in Brooklyn. Its lawn sloped to the water's edge, and a trim boat lay nodding at the dock. He had been out of town two weeks — ostensibly on law business in Baltimore — in fact he had spent the time putting the