

one. "Yes," she thought, "I am marked just as if I had been branded with a hot iron. I have had love, and so much and so strong that nothing ever can take it away from me, that it is always with me, that it is not a memory at all, that it is something actual which I carry, something that folds me in like a warm mantle that cannot wear out." Then she spoke aloud: "It was perhaps the best for me," she said, "just as what happened was the best for you, Clara." Clara threw her a surprised look. "I mean what happened to me and to you, Clara—my man and your success."

"There's not much left of my success," said Clara. "Here am I, lying on my back on a sofa and nobody bothering much about me. Not that I care. I don't want to take up those things again."

"You don't understand," said Grace. "Didn't you have splendid moments? Not only the big ones like the meeting at the Albert Hall, but all sorts of other little moments: the first time you took the chair, and that day when the Premier said to you that he wished you had married a man on his own side."

Clara smiled. "Yes, it was rather fun now and then."

"Don't you ever think of it?"

"Perhaps I do . . . sometimes quite a lot." Her smile broadened. "Yes," she said, almost sentimentally, "those three or four years they were really rather good . . . but they're over."

Grace's voice came suddenly loud. "Over? Of course they're not over, Clara. Those three or four years of yours, your successes, all that . . . it's all with you now, piled up inside you ready to cheer you up. Oh, can't you see it? You tell me you think about it now and then quite a lot. It's your reserve of happiness, your reserve of glad memories that you're drawing on, just as I do on mine. Don't you think so, Mary?"

Mary did not raise her face. Then she remarked