

THE THREAD OF FLAME

had hoped was pacified, was prey to new distress. For me, to keep my sanity amid all this conflict of forces, a little secret temple of my own became a necessity, and to it I retired.

It wasn't much. Having built my shrine with what I had harvested from Drinkwater, Lydia, Mildred Averill, and the rest, I hid myself there with some half-dozen disciples. They were Bridget's boy, the Finn's two sons, and three or four of their chums whom they had brought in. Not only did their young affection give me something I sorely needed in my inner life, but I had the hope that, building on them, I was doing something for the future. Grown men and women were beyond my endeavors. These fresh souls, with their nearness to God, understood my faltering speech, which fell so far short of the ideas I was trying to interpret.

They were simple ideas, connected with practical beauty. That is, with the Museum as what we called our clubhouse, all man's treasures of material creative art were ours. These we were taking in their order, beginning with my own specialty of all things woven, from the crudest specimens of ancient linens up to the splendors of the tapestries, and going on to kindred and allied crafts. Not only art was involved in this, but history, biography, travel, romance, and everything else that adds drama to human accomplishment. To me, with the big void in my life, it was the most nearly satisfying thing I knew to reveal to these eager little minds something of