

"In spite of that, Maud!" replied Hobby, laughing again. "she and Kilgallan between them will pull Mac through."

"Won't you have some dinner with us?" Allan asked.

"Yes, do, Hobby," Maud chimed in.

But Hobby could not wait. He was much more excited now than Allan, although the whole thing was of no importance to him personally. He rushed away.

He returned to report progress every quarter of an hour.

"Mrs. Brown has booked herself for ten million dollars, Mac! Things are beginning now!"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Maud, still incredulous, and she clapped her hands together in her excitement.

Allan peeled a pear and glanced quickly at Hobby. "Well?" he said. "Tell us more."

Hobby was too excited to sit down. Walking up and down the room, he took out a cigar from his case and bit off the end. "She takes out a pocket-book," he said, lighting his cigar, "such a pocket-book! You never saw anything so dirty. I wouldn't have touched it with the tongs! And she writes something in it. Dead silence! Now the others fumble in their pockets, and presently Kilgallan goes round and collects the various bits of paper—the photographers working at high pressure. Mac, your affair is through, or I'll eat my hat!"

Then Hobby disappeared for a longer time. A whole hour passed.

Maud had grown very quiet. She sat quite still, listening anxiously for the sound of a footstep. The longer she waited the more nervous she grew. Allan sat in an armchair, meditatively smoking his pipe.

At last Maud could contain herself no longer, and she asked rather dejectedly, "And supposing they can't agree, Mac?"

Allan took the pipe out of his mouth, raised his eyes, and, with a smile, answered calmly in his deep voice, "Well, then we shall go back to Buffalo and I shall go on making Allanite." But, with a confident nod of his head, he went on, "They *will* agree all right, Maud!"

At this moment the telephone-bell rang. It was Hobby. "Come up at once!"