

THE THREAD OF FLAME

always an Elsa for every man, and whether or not they find each other largely rests on their understanding of the source from which Elsas and Lohengrins come."

"And you're sure of your own Lohengrin?"

She answered with a laughing air of challenge:

"Perfectly. Whenever I give the right call I know he'll be on the way."

But this optimism didn't weigh with me. Knowing all I did of love and life, the simple performance of simple tasks began to seem to me the most satisfying food for men. From nearly all of those whom I have quoted I made the synthetic gleaning of bees in a garden of flowers, building my own little cell for my soul and storing it.

I needed such a cell. As May passed and June came in there was much in the trend of public life to make those, who had yearned and hoped and looked forward, cynical. The splendid spiritual freedom for which people had given their efforts and their sons was plainly not to be achieved. If the human race had moved higher it was not directly apparent at Versailles or anywhere else in the world; while in America, the home of the ideal, the land in which so many of the heart-stirring watchwords had been coined, passion, selfishness, distortion, extortion, and contortion were the chief signs of the new times. North of us Canada, hitherto so tranquilly industrious, was threatened with internal convulsion; south of us Mexico, which some of us