POOR DOCUMENT

MC 2034

THE SUBTERFUGE - By Mabel Herbert Urner.

Wilson, A. D., Insurance.
Wilson, Albert J., Clerk.
Wilson, Arthur F., Dentist.
Wilson, Austin G., Waiter.
Wilson, B. C., Plumber.
Wilson, Benj. E., Tailor.
Wilson, C. A., Lawyer.

C. A. Williamson—yes, that was it. She there that it was. She seemed to remember now that the initials were C. A. and the address—she leaned over the directory again—Bond Building, 138 Nassau street; that, too, seemed familiar.

A wave of great relief came to her, now that she had found it. That she was alone in New York and had lost her order of introduction would not have mattered so seriously, had it not happened that she had only personal cheques to no one to identify her but this Mr. Williamson. He was a lawyer, and of her own lawyer at home, had given her the letter of introduction.

The letter had been in the hand-bag she had on the train, and she could remember only that the name was Williamson. But now it was all right; the initials and address seemed so familiar. There could be no doubt about it. She closed the directory and nodded her thanks to the drug clerk as she passed.

Outside she stood for a moment on the curbing down the crowded street; endless lines of cars, cabs and wagons—a great stream of traffic that swept by with its clang and roar.

She felt an inclination to laugh at the night woman standing on the most crowded corner selling "The Simple Life" at 5 cents a copy. The simple life on a downtown corner of Broadway!

A half hour later she was in the rotunda of a great office building in Nassau street, studying the floor directory near the entrance.

"Express, sixteenth floor," shouted the guard as she was entering the nearest elevator.

"Rooms?" she asked.

"Twelfth floor, miss; take next elevator.

"Rooms 1203 to your right," directed the man she stepped off at the twelfth floor. She turned to the right, down a long corridor lined with glass doors.

1202, "Spring Cement Co.," was the first door. 1204, "Commercial Agency." 1206, "Phix Woolen Mills Co." A door marked "Private." A few doors with no lettering at all, and then 1218, "C. A. Williamson, Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law."

She knocked timidly. There was no response, only the sound of a clicking typewriter within. She waited a moment and then opened the door. A girl rose from a typewriter as she entered.

"I should like to see Mr. Williamson, if he is in."

"Mr. Wilson has just come in. If you will take your card."

A moment later the girl returned. "Mr. Wilson will see you," she said. "Please come this way."

It was luxuriously furnished office, and a man sat at a desk by the window; he rose and held her card in his hand.

"Miss Craig," he said inquiringly.

She held her hand impulsively. "Yes; Mr. Williams wrote you that I would be here yesterday, but I lost your address and have just succeeded in finding it."

"Er—all right. Will you be seated? There seems to have been a mistake."

"Oh! You are not Mr. Williamson?"

He smiled and replied, "Yes, I am Mr. Williamson, but I am afraid I am not the Mr. Williamson you are seeking."

"Oh, pardon me." She rose hurriedly. "I must have made a very stupid blunder. I looked in the directory and the first lawyer I came to under the name of Williamson I felt sure was the. I am sorry to have troubled you. I hope you will pardon the intrusion." She was turning toward the door.

"It has been no intrusion, I assure you. Perhaps I can help you. Won't you sit down again and tell me something about it?"

She hesitated.

"There are a number of Williamsons who are lawyers in New York. I presume you note my name because my initials are first, and would come alphabetically before the others. The telephone book she took one down from the top of his desk, "would be better for your purpose than the directory. If he is a lawyer he has a telephone and you will not have to wade through so many names."

He turned to "Williamson" in the book and ran his pencil down the column.

"Now, here," he said, looking them off, "are the lawyers. Perhaps you look over them and see if any one seems more familiar than the others."

She took the book and glanced over the checked names.

"Oh," with a little laugh, "I hadn't thought of that. Why, that makes it very hard; I can't help finding him there. And I was becoming very much worried, for I have only personal clients and no one else to identify me. I'll go down to a drug store and phone at once."

"You can telephone from here, or if you will allow me I will do it for you."

"Oh, thank you. I should not want to take some of your time."

"It will take but a few minutes, and I shall be glad to help you."

He pushed some papers aside and drew the desk telephone toward him.

"What did you say your lawyer's name was, the one who gave you this letter to Mr. Wilson?"

"Mr. Collins—J. B. Collins."

"And you are sure this Mr. Williamson will recognize your name at once?"

"Oh, yes; they are old friends, I believe."

He was looking over the list in the telephone book. "There is W. Williamson, 36 Bond street—we will try him first."

He took down the receiver. "Hello, 1247 Cortlandt."

A moment's silence.

"Hello! Is this Williamson's office? . . . Yes, I would like to speak to him."

Another silence. "Is this Mr. Williamson? My name is Williamson, too—C. A. Williamson, of 138 Nassau street. There is a lady here in my office looking for Mr. Williamson. She had a letter of introduction from her lawyer in Wisconsin, J. B. Collins of Middleton, Wisconsin. She lost the letter and cannot remember the initials or address. I wonder if you could be the man? . . . No? . . . No, she can't remember the initials. . . . Yes, that is what I am doing—calling them all up. . . . Yes," with a little laugh, "the Williamsons are pretty thick, and a number of them seem to have gone in for the law. . . . Yes, that's all. Good-bye.'

He hung up the receiver and took up the telephone book again.

"The next is F. L. Williamson, patent lawyer."

"Oh, he is not a patent lawyer—I am sure of that."

"Well, that simplifies things some. Then the next is G. W. Williamson, 424 Wall street."

He took down the receiver again. "Hello, hello, Central! Give me 1468 John. . . . . Hello, I want to speak to Mrs. Williamson. . . . What's that? . . . When will he be back? . . . When? Not until Friday. . . . Well, do you know if he has any business relations with a lawyer in Middletown, Wisconsin—J. R. Collins? . . . Yes, Collins—J. R. Collins. . . . How's that? A letter from Mr. Collins now? Well, that's all right then. Yes, Friday morning. . . . . That's all. Good-bye."

He turned to her smiling. "Well, we have found him. That was his secretary. He says there is a letter on Mr. Williamson's desk now from this Mr. Collins. Mr. Williamson is at Hot Springs; it seems that he has rheumatic gout and has been there for several weeks, but is expected back Friday. Will it inconvenience you very much if you cannot see him until then? You spoke of having only personal cheques."

"Yes, but I can easily wait until Friday."

"Well, in case he should not come Friday, and you find yourself embarrassed in any way for lack of money, if you bring your cheques down here I shall take pleasure in introducing you at the Trust Company where I bank. I think we can arrange there to cash your cheques and open an account. I am sailing for Liverpool Monday or I should be glad to offer my future services. But if I can serve you before then I shall be most happy."

She held out her hand. "You have been very kind, and if Mr. Williamson should not return I shall be glad to accept your assistance about the cheques."

Outside, as she waited for the elevator, she was conscious of a vague feeling of depression. She had found the Mr. Williamson she was seeking—he was at Hot Springs with rheumatic gout. A rheumatic, gouty old man! How differently she had pictured him.

"Cafe to the right," read a glittering sign as she left the elevator. She would have luncheon here, it was so far back to the hotel. A marble corridor led from the rotunda to the brilliantly lighted cafe. She was surprised at the luxurious splendor of the place, the mirror-lined walls and the palms. It might be the dining-hall of some great hotel and not merely a cafe in an office building.

A waiter led her to a table and placed before her two leather-bound cards—a menu and a wine-list. She gave her order of bouillon and salad, and then took up the wine-card. Her knowledge of wine was limited to the very mild claret punch served at the semi-monthly meetings of the Middletown "Shakespeare Circle" and the Current Events Club. But now—now she was in New York! It was a pleasant little thrill of excitement that came to her as she glanced over the list. The strange names bewildered her. Claret, port and sherry were the only wines she knew, and she could find none of them on this card.

"A pint of Sauterne or a little Rhine wine, ma'am?" suavely suggested the waiter. "We have some very good Moselle, 1880."

"I think I will take the—the Moselle."

"A pint of Moselle, ma'am? Yes, ma'am."

She leaned back now and gave herself up to a study of the place. It was crowded, mostly with men—alert, keen-looking, typical New York business men. Two of them were passing on their way out.

". . . . . Yes, we unloaded ten thousand Colorado Fuel yesterday on talk of iron merger. The stock was held—"

A waiter rushed by with a bill on a silver tray and laid it before a man at the table in front of her. It was in large black figures that she could easily read—a total of $3.55. The man glanced up from his paper, drew a leather wallet from his pocket, threw down a note and was instantly engrossed in his paper again. $3.55 for one man's lunch! And when, a moment later, the waiter brought the change, he stuffed the bills carelessly in his pocket and left the silver on the tray.

". . . . Contracts with the Burlington and the Union Pacific to take our ore to Pueblo. Our mines are——" came from a near-by table. The rest was lost in the clink of glasses and the hum around her.

And this was New York! She had a thrilled sense of being in the heart of things. It was men like these that handled the great business interests of the world.

She thought of the pitiful narrowness of life in Middletown—of the petty, trivial things that made up existence there; the importance that was attached to every paltry thing. The buying of an acre lot for a hundred dollars was a matter requiring weeks of careful consideration. The most prominent and affluent citizen of Middletown would discuss for days the purchase of a new carpet for the "parlor," or the painting of the front door.

And how she hated it all, with a relentless, intolerant hatred! If it had been only the women—the lives of most women are narrow; but it was the men as well. It was not poverty, for Middletown, for its size, was one of the wealthiest towns in the State. It was not ignorance, for there was much culture there. It was just littleness—a littleness that came from the narrowness of their lives. As no great things ever came to them, they attached importance and greatness to little things.

And now she was in the world, the great, vital world, that she had always longed for—and yet she was no more a part of it than if she had been in Middletown. She was only an outsider—a mere spectator, and within her was that great, hungry craving for some real part in it—to feel that she had some share in it all.

She glanced around at the women in the cafe. They were all with men—men who had an air of ability and power. She only was alone. A feeling of desolation came over her; a realization of the loneliness, the hopelessness of her position. An absolute stranger in New York, with no opportunities of being anything more. She thought of all the vague dreams she had before she came; how she pictured herself surrounded by journalists, lawyers, men of affairs—her life a round of dinners, receptions and drives. It had never occurred to her to wonder how all this could be accomplished. She had felt that if she could only come to New York, everything else would follow.

How childish and impracticable her dreams had been. After all, might it not have been better to stay in Middletown and still have the dreams than to come to New York and realize the utter impossibility of it all.

"Pardon me, I believe this is yours." She glanced up, startled. A man was placing a glove by her plate.

"Oh, thank you—I did not know I had dropped it."

He bowed and passed on, but not before she had seen the quick admiration in his eyes. She watched him as he passed out, his carriage, the set of his shoulders, the gloves, the cane, the obsequious respect of the waiter, who hurried to open the door for him.

She did not stop to analyze the swift feeling of elation that came to her, nor the impulse that made her turn to the mirror beside her. It was a long, critical glance she gave the reflection there, but when she turned again, it was with shining eyes and flushed cheeks.

With youth beauty and ambition—surely New York held something for her. How foolish of her to despair so soon, merely because her impracticable dream was not instantly realized. Perhaps when Mr. Williamson returned. . . . In some vague way he had been connected with her dreams. But then came the thought of the Hot Springs and his gout! Oh, if she could only have come to New York with several letters of introduction instead of one. But then she would have lost them, too; they would have been in the hand-bag she left on the train. But if she had lost them—she would have at least remembered the names. She could have looked them up in the directory, as she had looked up Mr. Williamson, and even if she did make mistakes . . . The color rushed to her face with the thought of meeting a number of men as she had met Mr. Williamson, of the infinite possibilities that might have held for her. If only he were not going abroad! He had seemed deeply interested in her.

And then—then came a thought that drove all the color away, that left her very white with a sick beating of the heart. Why should there not be half a dozen letters of introduction in the hand-bag she had lost? Why not?

There was a fleur-de-lis design in the table-cloth; she had been tracing it carefully with her fork. And now she tightened her hold on the fork and pushed it through the cloth. She drew the fork out and looked at the four round little holes. They were like gasping little wounds.

Why not?

She carefully refitted the prongs of the fork into the tiny holes in the table-cloth.

Why not?

The waiter came by and refilled her wine-glass. Her hand trembled a little as she raised it to her lips. When she put it down again it was empty.

There were six letters of introduction in the hand-bag she had lost! Six. . . . Six. . . .

Unused to wine, it was surging through her now, strong and sweet, giving a rose-colored enchantment to the thoughts that were crowding through her mind.

Six letters of introduction? What could she not do with six letters—that were lost!—that she could remember nothing of but the names. The initials, the address, everything she had forgotten except the names. And the names—they were all names that were common, names that many lawyers in New York would bear. And if six were not sufficient—there might be more! Eight or ten!

A man at a table close by was opening a paper. She caught the flaring headlines: "Beautiful young society woman proved to be an adventuress!" . . . A slow, deep color crept into her face as she repeated the words to herself.

And then, oddly enough, a statement she had once read flashed before her; a statement of a great and successful man, that "many lives are failures because at some critical moment one fails to grasp or to make an opportunity." To make an opportunity!

"Is there anything else you will have, ma'am?" It was the suave voice of the waiter.

"No, that is all."

He deftly cleared the table, brought a finger-bowl and her check. When she passed out through the long marble corridors and up the wide steps to the rotunda again, a strange feeling of elation was thrilling through her. The world seemed to have suddenly become a wonderful place—a place of infinite possibilities. In spite of the wine, her brain was very clear. Swiftly she thought out the details of her plan. She must act quickly or her courage might fail. It was just the lunch hour now and crowds of men and women were pouring from the elevators and surging across the rotunda. The revolving doors were choked with people in their rush to get out. She made her way over to the floor directory. It took only a moment to select six of the most common names and copy them on a card.

She would take them in the order she had copied them. J. R. Morris, Room 1409, fourteenth floor, was the first. She left the elevator at the fourteenth floor, and followed the numbers down the hall to 1409. "J. R. Morris, Attorney at Law." She paused with her hand on the knob. Her heart was beating with sickening rapidity and there was a stifled feeling in her throat.

The knob turned suddenly in her hand. She stepped back quickly as the door opened from the inside and a man came out. Seeing her, he held the door open for her to enter. There was nothing to do but to pass in. A sense of fright swept over her, a feeling of having been trapped. The room was empty except for an office-boy who was stamping a pile of letters. He looked up inquiringly.

"Did you want to see Mr. Morris, ma'am?"

She nodded; she could not speak.

The boy disappeared into the next room.

"Mr. Morris is busy just now; he will be out in a few moments," he announced when he came back, and then went on stamping the letters.

The feeling of fright was growing within her. The very atmosphere of the room added to it. The great leather-bound volumes that lined the wall seemed to frown down upon her with the stern disapproval of the law.

The boy finished with the letters, gathered them into a wire basket and took them into the next room. Quick as the thought she turned toward the door, opened it softly, closed it after her and then flew down the hall, down the steps to the floor below, down another flight of stairs and then another, until at last she stopped breathless, five floors below.

Flushed and panting she leaned against a window at the far end of a corridor, with quick, nervous glances back toward the stairs. But there was no one in sight; the long, vault-like corridors were empty. The window looked out on countless smoke-blackened roofs and great, skein-like meshes of telegraph wires. The sound of the street came up faintly—a muffled, booming sound. For a long time she stood there gazing out over the roofs.

When at last she turned away, she opened her purse and took out a card. A number of names were written on it. J. R. Morris was the first. F.W. Hibbert, Room 816, eighth floor, was the second. She walked straight toward the elevators and pressed a button labeled "Up."

"Eighth floor," she said to the man as she entered.

Two hours later she passed out of the great office building. A close observer might have noticed a certain tenseness about her expression. But that was all; she was not flushed nor nervous now.

It was barely four o'clock, but 12 and 13—Subterfuge Star already it was growing dusk and the streets were glimmering with lights. The cars were crowded to the platform. She motioned for a cab that was passing near. The great towering buildings, the noise and turmoil that had interested her so keenly before, were passed by unnoticed now. In the long drive to the hotel her eyes were fixed straight in front of her and she saw nothing at all.

The card with the six names she still held in her hand. Two of them she had marked off—the first, J. R. Morris, whom she had not seen, and another who had appeared hurried and absent-minded. The other four had been most courteous and plainly interested. There had been an almost absurd similarity about it all. Each had expressed his regrets that he was not the attorney she was seeking; and they had all insisted on telephoning to the other lawyers of the same name, and had then offered their services. And she had promised each to let him know if her search was successful, and to avail herself of his assistance if it was not.

In her own room at the hotel she threw herself across the bed. For a long time she lay there. She had not troubled to turn on the lights, and the gloom of the room grew deeper.

A dim light from the hall came through the transom, and now and then the sound of clinking ice as the bell-buoys hurried by. Later came the faint strains of an orchestra from the cafe. Long past the dinner hour, far into the night she lay there. When at last she rose, she turned on the lights, went over to the desk and wrote four letters.

Mr. Dear Mr. Hibberd: I am sure you will be glad to know that I have found the Mr. Thompson of my letter of introduction. I was mistaken in the spelling of the name—it was Thomson, not Thompson, which of course caused much of the difficulty.

I wish to thank you again for your kindness to me in the matter.

Very sincerely,
KATHERINE CRAIG.

My Dear Mr. Daly: I am sure you will be glad to know that I have found the Mr. Daley of my letter of introduction. I was mistaken in the spelling of the name—it is Daley, not Daly, which of course caused much of the difficulty.

I wish to thank you again for your kindness to me in the matter.

Very sincerely,
KATHERINE CRAIG.

My Dear Mr. Hibbard: I am sure you will be glad to know that I have found the Mr. Hibbird of my letter of introduction. I was mistaken in the spelling of the name—it is Hibbird, not Hibberd, which of course caused much of the difficulty.

I wish to thank you again for your kindness to me in the matter.

Very sincerely,
KATHERINE CRAIG.

My dear Mr. Richards: The Mr. Richards of 432 Wall street, was not the one I was seeking. I am afraid I shall have to give it up as hopeless, and shall be glad to call at your office tomorrow morning, as you suggested, that you may take me to the Second National Bank and arrange for my deposit there.

I assure you I appreciate very much your kindness to me in this matter.

Very sincerely,
KATHERINE CRAIG.

II.

It was three months later. On a certain clear, cold morning two riders in Central Park were dashing over the frozen paths.

"That clump of trees to the right"—the man pointed with his crop—"one more last ride to that."

The horses sprang forward, eager at this game of racing in short heats. They drew up, flushed and laughing.

"Oh, look, look!" She leaned over and touched his arm eagerly. "That poor old man!"

A miserable old man was coming down a path toward them. His face was bleared and shrunken; his thin, ragged clothes gave no protection against the piercing cold.

"I am afraid he has been drinking. Shall I give him something, anyway?"

"Oh, yes, yes! I didn't know anyone could look so wretched as that."

She watched him as he rode up and dropped some silver into the withered, trembling hand. She turned away as he came back, but he had seen the tears in her eyes.

"My tender-hearted darling!"

"Oh, I can't bear that anyone should be wretched, now—now that we are so happy."

"I know, dear," he said gently; "I think I have something of that feeling, too—a desire that everyone should share our happiness with us."

She smiled up at him tremulously. "It is a beautiful thought—that our love should bring with it a deeper sympathy and kindness for everything."

It was quite early, and they had the Park almost to themselves. Now and then they met a mounted policeman or a man cleaning the paths, but rarely anyone else. For weeks, these early-morning rides had been one of their keenest pleasures.

As they rode back toward the entrance, a bit of lace fluttered at them from a bush by the path.

"Isn't that my handkerchief? I must have dropped it when we stopped to feed the squirrels."

He stooped for it laughingly. "You won't be my dear, careless little girl, if you were not constantly losing things."

She laughed. "And I don't seem to be able to overcome it, do I?"

"I hope you never will. I love your careless little ways, and besides, I owe them so much. If you had not lost that letter of introduction, we might never have met!"

"Oh, don't!" She bent over to adjust her stirrup that he might not see her face. "I wish you would never mention that again!"

"Why, dear? Because you do not like to think of our meeting at the result of an accident?"

"I suppose that is it—because I can not bear to think of how near we came to not meeting at all."

"Katherine, how pale you are! Are you tired? Have we ridden too far?" He was leaning toward her anxiously.

"I don't think I feel tired."

"But I am afraid you are. I should have been more thoughtful. I want you to be very strong and well for this evening."

"I believe I almost dread this evening."

"Dread this evening?"

"It is the first reception since our engagement was announced Thursday. There will be so many people there that know you—so many mental inventories taken of me."

"But they will be favorable ones—they could not be otherwise."

"No, I feel that there will be an almost tacit resentment that you should marry an outsider—an unknown girl from the West. I even felt that in the newspaper reports. When they referred to you as a prominent lawyer, well-known clubman and member of an old Knickerbocker family, I could feel the resentment of the reporters that they could not finish the paragraph in the usual way—that you were engaged to a well-known society girl, also descendant of an old Knickerbocker family. Instead, they could only say, Miss Katherine Craig, of Middletown, Wisconsin." She laughed a little uncertainly. "That was all they could say of me—that I was from Middletown, Wisconsin."

He smiled down at her tenderly. "They could have said that you were the sweetest, dearest and most lovable woman in the world."

She shook her head. "I am afraid even society reporters would have conscientious scruples against such flagrant exaggerations."

When, a little later, he left her at the door, it was with tender, anxious admonition to rest and sleep during the afternoon, that she might feel stronger for the evening.

A quarter of nine! For almost an hour she had been watching the little clock on her dressing-table. A sick feeling of dread was creeping into her heart. That he should be late tonight—tonight! He had never been late before.

There was a soft pelting sound against the window. She went over and pushed aside the curtain. Large flakes of snow were falling. Slowly they were covering up the window-sill and the great dark roofs outside. A stronger gust of wind rattled the sash and swirled around the building with a plaintive wail.

Another half-hour of sickening suspense. Then a hurried step down the hall and a sharp rap at her door—a bell-boy with his card.

He was waiting for her in the reception hall by the elevator. And that was all. He offered no excuse, no explanation. But there was something in the quiet coldness of his face that seemed like heavy, icy hands gripping at her heart.

Like a stereopticon view flashed before her a scene in the cafe of a great office building; a man at a nearby table was opening a paper with the glaring headlines: "An adventuress! Well-known society woman proved to be an adventuress." An adventuress. . . . An adventuress. . .

He had led her out to the cab in silence; and now, as they drove off, she leaned back in the shadow that he might not see her face. The light from the cab lamp shone full on him. One swift glance she stole at him, and for the rest of the way her gaze was fixed out of the window. Once he asked if she was cold, and once if the lap-robe was well over her. And that was all—the rest of the ride was in silence.

It never occurred to her to doubt the thing that her mind had flashed to with such swift certainty. He knew. He knew.

His face, his voice—everything about him cried out that he knew. She wondered whether he would tell her—what he would say. It didn't seem to matter much. After all, why should it? Why should anything matter now? Somehow the only thing she felt keenly was a dread for the cab to stop—the necessity for action that would follow.

They drew up before a great house ablaze with lights. An awning led down from the door. A few moments later they were making their way through the crowded, over-heated rooms.

It is one of the results of our social training that in the most tragic moments of our lives we can bow and smile and make pleasant little comments.

"Richards, I say, Richards!" An alert, keen-looking man was shaking hands with him warmly. "I want to congratulate you. I saw you when you came in and have been trying to make my way over to you ever since. And Miss Craig"—he turned to her cordially—"you don't know, Richards, that Miss Craig and I are old acquaintances. Some time ago she lost a letter and she came to my office by mistake. Do you know, Miss Craig, how I regretted that you found the letter—I was hoping that I might have the pleasure of giving you my services."

A burst of music from a near-by orchestra downed her almost inaudible reply. The hostess came up hurriedly now and claimed Mr. Daley. He turned away reluctantly. "I shall hope to see you again this evening."

And still they made their way on through the crowd. And still she kept on bowing, smiling, and making pleasant little comments. It might have been ten minutes or an hour later, she had lost all sense of time, that someone was introducing them to a Mr. Hibberd. She turned to find a tall man smiling down at her pleasantly.

"I don't believe an introduction to Miss Craig is necessary. Isn't this the Miss Craig that called at my office looking for another Mr. Hibberd? You had lost a letter of introduction to him on the train. Wasn't that how it happened?"

That was all she heard clearly—the rest was vague. And when again they passed on through the crowd, she saw only a bleared line of lights along the ceiling.

He was leading her to a windowed recess. Now he had placed two letters in her hand. "I would like you to read these. They came this afternoon."

My Dear Richards:—I have just read the announcement of your engagement. Congratulations, my dear boy! I had thought you one of the hopeless ones.

I believe I have had the pleasure of meeting Miss Craig. She called at my office about six months ago, shortly before I went to Europe. It seems that she had just come to New York and had lost a letter of introduction to a Mr. Williamson, a lawyer here; and she called, thinking I might be the one, I remember her as being very charming, and my congratulations are most hearty.

Cordially,
C. A. WILLIAMSON.

My Dear Richards: So you have succumbed at last! But it doesn't seem so strange when I think of the lady. You see, I have met her and I assure you I was impressed most favorably. She came to my office some time ago looking for a Mr. Thompson to whom she had a letter of introduction, which she had lost. It is needless to say that I deeply regretted that I did not happen to be the man. I think you are a particularly lucky fellow and wish you all kinds of happiness.

Yours, etc.,
W. F. THOMPSON.

As on a sensitized plate, in one swift glance those letters were photographed on her brain. And then—then she turned blindly away, swiftly pressing through the crowd to the nearest doorway, through to that to another room and still another, and then the hall. Snatching up a long wrap, she darted down the hall, past the astonished footman, out the great door, down the carpeted steps under the awning, out to the street; past the long line of carriages, down the street, around the corner into a dark side street; another turn to a still darker street and then on and on . . . A mad, wild rush.

Twice she stumbled and fell, but was up and on again in an instant. The snow beat against her bare head and clung to her face and neck. Her thin slippers were soaked through; her drenched skirts flapped around her ankles. But she was conscious only of a great compelling force that urged her on and on.

The streets were almost deserted; but now and then she passed an umbrella held low over some muffled figure. Once a man called out to her and then tried to follow her; but she ran on, turning one corner and then another until she was lost in the snow and darkness.

But now her strength was weakening; the snow grew deeper and harder to struggle through. A great exhaustion was creeping over her. She was growing dizzy and faint and her mind more and more confused. Again and again she fell, but always stumbled on. That lamp-post at the next corner, she must reach that. . . . And now that great dark sign that hung in the next block. . . . . Now the red light in the block beyond.

And so she staggered on from one point to another. Her mind held no plan, no thought of destination—only an urging to go on and on.

There was a sound of footsteps crunching in the snow behind her. A quick, frightened glance over her shoulder—a tall, dark figure of a man was following her. A second later a heavy hand was on her arm. A street-lamp lit up a flushed, dissipated face as it leered down at her.

"Aren't you out on a pretty bad night?"

With a startled cry she jerked away and ran on, but the heavy hand was on her arm again.

"Oh, no, my dear, you don't get away from me that easy. I guess you'll come with me now."

A cold fear clutched at her heart. Again she tried to free herself, but the grip on her arm only tightened. Desperately she fought with the feeling of faintness that was growing over her. Her eyes strained through the darkness for a policeman—for anyone that she might cry out to. But there was no one in sight—the streets were wholly deserted.

She realized now for the first time that she was on a business street; a street of shops and offices, closed and barricaded for the night. If she should scream out—there would be no one in those dark buildings to hear her. How completely she was in the power of this man!

She caught a glimpse of a lighted window—just a little farther on. "Coffee and Lunch Room," read the sign. Could it be open? A few more steps—it was open! Through the steam-covered window could be seen faintly a long row of tables and a woman behind the counter. Quick as thought came her plan.

"Oh, my slipper—it has come off! There in the snow!"

He released her arm to look for it, and then with a desperate strength and swiftness she flew to the lunch room, threw open the door, slammed it to and bolted it.

Almost instantly came a heavy shaking of the door from the outside.

"Unlock that door—you damn minx! You think you tricked me, don't you? I'll show you!" And then came a volley of foul oaths.

There was no one in the place but the woman behind the counter, who came rushing up now.

"Look here—what do you mean? You can't make a row in this place!"

Katherine caught her hand as she reached out to open the door.

"Oh, no—no! You must not! Oh, won't you help me—won't you——?"

A wave of blackness swept before her. Her hands slipped from the woman's as she fell to the floor.

A strong odor of coffee—the pressure of a thick, hot cup against her lips. The woman was bending over her with an anxious face.

She pushed the cup away and tried to rise. "The man—you won't let him in?"

"No—no. He's gone long ago. Now, drink the rest of this coffee; it will do you good. Your clothes are wet through."

She glanced around vaguely at the long row of empty tables, with chairs piled on those in the back of the room; at the counter with its glass case of pies and cakes; at the great brass coffee-urns. There was a strange sense of unreality about it all. She closed her eyes, and gave herself up to the drowsy stupor that was creeping over her.

She was only dimly conscious of the quick opening and closing of the door and the sweep of cold air that followed. A moment later and strong arms were around her, and a voice, broken with love and anxiety, was whispering, "Katherine! Katherine!"

With a curious sense of being far away, she heard faintly the few hurried words with the woman, the anxious questions and the woman's breathless story of how she came, and the man that had followed her, and then her profuse thanks as a bill was slipped into her hand.

"Oh, Katherine, Katherin, my poor darling!"

Gathering her closer in his arms, he carried her out to the cab. "And that it should be I who found you—not any of the detectives who are searching. I have found you myself!"

Still holding her, he wrapped the fur rugs close around her. And so they drove off through the night.

For a while she lay inert and motionless in his arms. Then quite suddenly she released herself and leaned back against the seat.

"No, no," as he tried to draw her to him again, "we must see things as they are. It is all true—all that you thought when you gave me those letters. You would not have taken me in your arms then—why should you now? Merely because I am weak and cold and drenched?"

"Oh, Katherine, don't dear, don't talk of that now. You are not strong enough."

"I must—I cannot lie in your arms and feel that it is only pity."

"Then listen!" He took both her hands in his and held them firmly. "It is love. I thought it all out in that fearful hour I was searching for you. It is you—the best of you that I love. And it was not the best of you that did that thing—that was only the result of some momentary reckless impulse. For don't you see, dear, you didn't follow it up? You dismissed all those men except me. If you had been really a bad or adventurous woman, you would have encouraged them all. But you didn't—you didn't."

His voice broke, and he drew her to him almost fiercely. "Oh, dear, I don't know. Perhaps that is all mere words. If you had encouraged them all—oh, I don't believe it would have mattered what you did—I think I would still love you. I would still love you because—I could not help it."

MANY ARE POISONED BY DUTCH OYSTERS

Government Warns People Not to Eat Any Without Knowing Where They Come From

ANTWERP, Nov. 24.—The reports of many cases of poisoning by oysters continues to cause anxiety. Cases are reported from Brussels, Ghent, The Hague and elsewhere in Holland. These take the form of enteric disorder, lasting for ten or twelve days. Doctors warn people against eating oysters here until the early winter, but it appears to be useless. Guests at several dinner parties here and in Brussels have fallen victims, some requiring medical treatment for several days. When several restaurant proprietors were interview they claimed that thier oysters were procured from the most reliable of dealers and that they could not understand the ill effects which they appear to have caused. The Dutch government has even gone so far as to warn the public against purchasing Dutch oysters without certificates of origin.

REPORT OF A RICH FIND OF GOLD IN ZULULAND

Samples Brought Out Have Been Favoraably Reported On—A Boom Time Predicted.

PIETERMARITZBURG, Niv. 24 — It is confidently believed that paybale gold has been found in Eshowe, Zululand. The proprietors found a 9 inch area giving 25 dwt., and in later working they opened out the reef to the width of five feet. They are bringing a quantity or ore to Pietermaritzburg for the purpose of having it tested in the Tremain battory recently imported by the government.

The property is owned by three prominent citizens. Samples of the ores sent to the Rand were favorably reported on by an expert connected with one of the leading houses. The property is the most distinctly defined proposition in Zululand. Mining people here are quite optimistic and predict a bright future for Zululand in the mining line.