

great cataclysm, to be followed by painful years of retrenchment. And Brand had caused this thing—surely the man who does God's surgery must not be squeamish. Prolonged excitement and want of sleep had left him dull, too exhausted to feel more than the heavy aching of his neglected wounds; unable, happily, to think much about anything; but when, arriving at the tenement house, he went up to meet his bride, all that was changed, new life had come to him. Well might his haggard face be flushed, well might he throw back his shoulders in pride, well might his eyes shine, for Hilda was very fair, shrinking back a little in sweet confusion, then throwing her arms about his neck in joy of deliverance and in utter trust. She was arrayed for her marriage, not in the bridal dress prepared for Gaul but just as he had always known and loved her, in the severe uniform of her calling.

"The trousseau, Brand? No, that was for him. Are you sure that I am free—really free?"

"No, Hilda, never free while I live. You are bound more strongly now than ever before."

"But a woman," she whispered, "loves these sweet chains, that nobody else can see, nobody wear."

"Come," said the man, "and let me bind them fast."

On their way down-stairs they stopped to look from a window, down through the winter mist and dense smoke toward the lower parts of the city, where there burned a great fire.

"Poor things," said Brand, "they don't know what good for them. His love gets red-hot at times like the blazing sword that kept the first two sinners out of mischief."

Hilda looked up into his face. "He touches His servants with the sword—the ones that love Him. You