

her beautiful eyes suggested. She was of a strongly independent spirit too, but, even so, the woman in her was never for a moment jeopardized by it; she was never anything but a delightful femininity, rejoicing wholesomely in the companionship of the opposite sex.

She and her aunt had lived for five years in this suburb of St. Ellis. They had left New York for the southwest because the profession of the elder woman had gained unpleasant notoriety in that city of contradictions. The calling of the seer had appealed well enough to the citizens individually, but a wave of moral rectitude, hurling its municipal government spluttering upon a broken shore of repentance, had decided it to expurgate such wickedness from its midst, lest the local canker become a pestilence which might jeopardize the immortal soul of the citizen, and, incidentally, hand the civic control over to the opposition party.

So aunt and orphaned niece had moved westward, seeking immunity in a region where such obscure professions were regarded with a more lenient eye. Joan had little enough sympathy with her relative's studies. She neither believed in them, nor did she disbelieve. She was so young, and so full of that vitality which makes for the wholesome enjoyment of life, as viewed through eyes as yet undimmed by the bitterness of experience, that she had neither time, place, nor serious thought for such matters. Her only interest, if interest it could be called, was an occasional wonderment at the extent of the harvest Aunt Mercy reaped out of the credulity of the merchant and finance-princes of the city. This, and the state of her aunt's health, as pronounced by Dr. Valmer, were the only things which ever brought such matters as "crystal