LEROY SCOTT

TO HIM THAT HATH

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AN INJUSTICE OF GOD

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The Reverend Philip Morton, head of St. Christopher's Mission, had often said that, in event of death or serious accident, he wished David Aldrich to be placed in charge of his personal affairs; so when at ten o'clock of a September morning the janitor, at order of the frightened housekeeper, broke into the bath-room and found Morton's body lying white and dead in the tub, the housekeeper's first clear thought was of a telegram to David.

The message came to David while he was doggedly working over a novel that had just come back from a third publisher. He glanced at the telegram, then his tall figure sank back into his chair and he stared at the yellow sheet. Never before had Death struck him so heavy a blow. The wound of his mother's death had been dealt in quick-healing childhood; and though his father, a Western mining engineer, had died but seven years before, David had known him hardly otherwise than as a remotely placed giver of an allowance. Morton had for years been his best friend—latterly almost his only friend. For a space the blow rendered him stupid; then the agony of his personal loss entered him, and wrung him; and then in beside his personal sorrow there crept a sense of the appalling loss of the people about St. Christopher's.

But there was no time for inactive grief. He quickly threw a black suit and a week's linen into a travelling bag, and within an hour after the New York train pulled out of his New Jersey suburb, he paused across the street from St. Christopher's Mission—a chapel of red brick, with a short spire rising above the tenements' flat heads, and adjoining it a four-story club-house in whose windows greened forth boxes of ivy and geraniums. The doors of the chapel stood wide, as they always did for whoso desired to rest or pray, but the doors of the club-house, usually open, were closed against the casual visitor by the ribboned seal of death.

David held his eyes on the fourth-story windows, behind which he knew his friend lay. Minutes passed before he could cross the street and ring the bell. He was admitted into the large hallway, cut with numerous doors leading into club-rooms, and hung with prints of Raphaels, Murillos, Angelicos and other holy master-painters. Overwhelmed though all his senses were, he was at once struck by the emptiness, the silence, of the great house—by its strange childlessness.

As he started up the stairway he saw at its top a tall young woman dressed in black. His mounting steps quickened. "Miss Chambers!" he said.

She came down the stairway with effortless grace, her hand outheld, her subdued smile warm with friendship. He quivered within as he heard his name in her rich voice, as he clasped her hand, as he looked into the sincerity, the dignity, the rare beauty of her face.

There were none of those personal questions with which long-parted friends bridge the chasm of their separation.

Death made self trivial. At first they could only breathe awed interjections upon the disaster that so suddenly had fallen. Then David asked the question that had been foremost in his mind for the last two hours:

"What caused his death? I've had only a bare announcement."

She gave him the details. "His doctor told me he had a weak heart," she added. "'In all likelihood,' the doctor said, 'the shock of the cold bath had caused heart failure. Perhaps the seizure itself was fatal; perhaps on the other hand the seizure was recoverable but while helpless he drowned.'

"As soon as I learned of his death I hurried here—I happened to be in town for a few days," she went on, after a moment. "I thought I might possibly be of service. But Bishop Harper has sent a Dr. Thorn, and Mrs. Humphrey told me you were coming, so it seems I can be of no assistance. But if there's anything I can do, please let me know."

David promised. They spoke of the great misfortune to the Mission—which she felt even more keenly than he, for her interest in St. Christopher's had been more active, so was deeper; then she bade him good-bye and continued down the stairway. He followed her with his eyes. This was but the second time he had seen her since her mother's death, six months before; and her beauty, all in black, was still a fresh marvel to him.

When the door had closed upon her, he mounted stairs and passed through hallways, likewise hung with brown prints and opening into club-rooms, till he came to the door of Morton's quarters. Mrs. Humphrey answered his ring, and the housekeeper's swollen eyes flowed fresh grief as she

took his hand and led him into the sitting-room, walled with Morton's books.

"The noblest, ablest, kindest man on earth—gone—and only thirty-five!" she said, between her sobs. "Millions might have been called, and no difference; but he was the one man we couldn't spare. And yet God took him!"

The same cry against God's injustice had been springing from David's own grief. Mrs. Humphrey continued her lamentations, but they were soon interrupted by the entrance of a clergyman, of most pronounced clerical cut, whom she introduced as Dr. Thorn. Dr. Thorn explained that Bishop Harper, knowing Morton had no relatives, had sent him to take charge of the funeral arrangements; and he went on to say that if David had any requests, he'd be glad to carry them out. It was a relief to David to be freed of the business details of his friend's funeral. He replied that he had no wishes, and Dr. Thorn withdrew, taking with him Mrs. Humphrey.

Alone, memories of his friend lying in the next room rushed upon him. Morton had been some kind of distant cousin—so distant that the exact fraction of their kinship was beyond computation. After the death of David's mother, Morton's father had stood in place of David's far-absent parent; and Morton himself, though David's senior by hardly ten years, had succeeded to the guardianship on his own father's death nine years before.

This formal relation had grown, with David's growth into manhood, into warmest friendship. David had given Morton the admiring love a younger brother gives his brilliant elder, and had received the affection such as an older brother

would give a younger, who was not alone brother but a youth of sympathy and promise. It had been Morton who had insisted that he had a literary future, Morton who had tried to cheer him through his five years of struggling unsuccess. And so the memories and grief that now flooded David were not less keen than if Morton's blood and his had indeed been the same.

After a time David moved to a window and looked out over the geraniums and ivy into the narrow street, with its dingy, red-faced tenements zig-zagged with fire-escapes. His mind slipped back six years to when Morton had taken charge of St. Christopher's, which then occupied merely an old dwelling, and when he, a boy of twenty, had first visited the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood was then a crowded district forgotten by those who called themselves good and just, remembered only by landlords, politicians and saloonkeepers—grimy, quarrelsome, profane, ignorant of how to live. Now decency was here. There was still poverty, but it was a respectable poverty. Men brought home their pay, and fought less often. Shawled wives went less frequently with tin pails to the side entrances of saloons. It was becoming uncommon to hear a child swear.

David's mind ran over the efforts by which this change had been wrought: Morton's forcing the police to close disorderly resorts; his eloquent appeals to the public for fair treatment of such neighbourhoods as his; his unwearied visiting of the sick, and his ready assumption of the troubles of others; his perfect good-fellowship, which made all approach him freely, yet none with disrespectful familiarity; his wonderful sermons, so simple, direct and appealing that

there was never an empty seat. He was sympathetic—magnetic—devoted—brilliant. Thus he had won the neighbourhood; not all, for the evil forces he had fought, led by the boss of the ward, held him in bitter enmity. But in three or four hundred families, he was God.

David turned from the window. Mrs. Humphrey had asked if she should not take him in to see Morton, but he had shrunk from having eyes upon him when he entered the presence of his dead friend. He now moved to the door of Morton's chamber, paused chokingly, then stepped into the darkened room. On the bed lay a slender, sheeted figure. For the first moment, awe at the mystery of life rose above all other feelings: Monday he had seen Morton, strangely depressed to be sure, but in his usual health; this was Saturday, and there he lay!

His emotions trembling upon eruption, David crossed slowly to the bed. With fearing hand he drew the sheet from the face, and for a long space gazed down at the fine straight nose, at the deeply-set eyes, and at the high broad forehead, the most splendid he had ever seen, with the soft hair falling away from it against the pillow. Then suddenly he sank to a chair, and his grief broke from him.

Soon his mind began to dwell upon the contrast between Morton and himself—what a great light was this that had been stricken out, what a pitiable candle flame was this left burning. In the presence of these dead powers he felt how small was his literary achievement, how small his chance of future success, how comparatively trivial that success would be even if gained. David had felt to its full the responsibility of life; he had longed, with a keenness that was at times

actual physical pain, that his life might count some little what in advancing the general good. But he realised now, as he gazed at the white face on the pillow, that in the field of humanitarianism, as in the field of literature, his achievement was nothing.

He burnt with a sudden rush of shame that he was alive, and he clenched his hands and in tense whispers cried out against the injustice of God in taking so useful a man as Morton and leaving so useless a cumbrance as himself. But this defiance soon passed into a different mood. He slipped to his knees, and a wish sobbed up from his heart that he might change places with the figure on the bed.

This wish was present in his thoughts all that evening and the next two days as he did his share in the sad routine of the funeral arrangements. The service was set for the evening so that the people of the neighbourhood could be present without difficulty or financial loss. At the hour of beginning the chapel was packed to the doors, and David learned afterwards that as large a crowd stood without and that many notables who had come at the appointed time were unable to gain any nearer the chapel than the middle of the street.

Bishop Harper himself was in charge, and about him were gathered the best-known clergymen of his persuasion in the city—a tribute to his friend that quickened both David's pride and grief. Bishop Harper was ordinarily a pompous speaker of sonorous platitudes, ever conscious of his high office. But to-night he had a simple, touching subject; he forgot himself and spoke simply, touchingly. When he used an adjective it was a superlative, and yet the superlative did

not seem to reach the height of Morton's worth. Morton was "the most gifted, the most devoted" man of the Bishop's acquaintance, and the other clergymen by their looks showed complete and unjealous approval of all the Bishop's praise.

David's eyes flowed at the tribute paid Morton by his peers. Yet he was moved far more by the inarticulate tribute of the simple people who crowded the chapel. Whatever was good in their lives, Morton had brought them; and now, mixed with their sense of loss, was an unshaped fear of how hard it was going to be to hold fast to that good without his aid. Never before had David seen anything so affecting; and even in after days, when he saw Morton's death with new eyes, the picture of the love and grief of this audience remained with him, unsoiled, as the strongest, sincerest scene he had ever witnessed. The women—factory girls, scrub-women, hard-working wives—wept with their souls in their tears and in their spasmodic moans; and the men—labourers, teamsters, and the like—let the strange tears stream openly down their cheeks, unashamed. The chapel was one great sob, choked down at times, at times stopping the Bishop's words. It was as if they were all orphaned.

All through the service, one cry rose from David's heart, and continued to repeat itself while the audience, and after them the crowd from the street, filed by the open casket—and still rose as, later, he sat with bowed head in a front pew beside the coffin:

"If only I could change places, and give him back to them!"

CHAPTER II

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WHAT DAVID FOUND IN MORTON'S CLOSET

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David was sitting in Morton's study, looking through the six years' accumulation of letters and documents, saving some, destroying others, when he came upon a dusty snap-shot photograph. Hands and eyes were arrested; Morton sank from his mind. Four persons sat in a little sailboat; their faces were wrinkled in sun-smiles; about and beyond them was the broad white blaze of the Sound. The four were Miss Chambers and her mother, Morton and himself.

The day of the photograph ran its course again, hour by hour, in David's mind, and slowly rose other pictures of his acquaintance with Helen Chambers: of their first meeting three years before at a dinner at St. Christopher's Mission; of later meetings at St. Christopher's, where she had a club and where he was a frequent visitor; of the summer passed at St. Christopher's two years before, during the early part of which he, in Morton's stead, had aided her in selecting furnishings for a summer house given by her father for the Mission children; of two weeks at the end of that summer which he and Morton had spent at Myrtle Hill, the Chambers's summer home on the Sound. Since then he had seen her at irregular intervals, and their friendship had deepened with each meeting.

She had interested his mind as no other woman had ever done. She had been bred in the conventions of her class, the top strata of the American aristocracy of wealth; all her friends, save those she had gained at the Mission, belonged in this class; and her life had been lived within her class's boundaries. Given these known quantities, an average social algebraist would have quickly figured out the unknown future to be, a highly desirable marriage, gowning and hatting, tea-drinking, dining, driving, calling, Europe-going, and the similar activities by which women of her class reward God for their creation—and in time, the motherhood of a second generation of her kind.

But there was her character, which by degrees had revealed itself fully to David: her sympathy, her love of truth, a lack of belief in her social superiority, an instinct to look very clearly, very squarely, at things, a courage unconscious that it was courage, that was merely the natural action of her direct spirit—all these dissolved in a most simple, charming personality. It was these qualities (a stronger reprint of her mother's), in one of her position, that made David think her future might possibly be other than that contained in the algebraist's solution—that made him regard her as a potential surprise to her world.

And Helen Chambers had interested not only David's mind. In moments when his courage had been high and his fancy had run riotously free, he had dared dream wild dreams of her. But now, as he gazed at the photograph, he sighed. In place and fortune she was on the level of the highest; he was far below—still only a straggler, obscure, barely keeping alive.

Yes—he was still only a struggler. He nodded as his mind repeated the sentence. Now and then his manuscripts were accepted—but only now and then. His English was admirable; this he had been told often. But there was a something lacking in almost all he wrote, and this too he had been often told. David had tried to write of the big things, the real things—but of such one cannot write convincingly till he has thought deeply or travelled himself through the deep places. David's trouble was, he did not know life—but no one had told him this. So in his ignorance of the real difficulty, he had thought to conquer his unsuccess by putting forth a greater effort. He had gone out less and less often; he had sat longer and longer at his writing-table; his English had become finer and finer. And his people had grown more hypothetical, more unreal. The faster he ran, the farther away was the goal.

He sighed again. Then his square jaw tightened, his eyes narrowed to grim crescents, his clenched fist lightly pounded the desk; and to a phalanx of imaginary editors he announced with slow defiance:

"Some of these days the whole blamed lot of you will be camping on my door-steps. You just wait!"

He was returning to the sifting of the letters when the bell of the apartment rang. He answered the ring himself, as Mrs. Humphrey was out for the afternoon, and opened the door upon a shabby, wrinkled man with a beery, cunning smile. His manner suggested that he had been there before.

"Is Mr. Morton at home?" the man asked.

"No," David answered shortly, not caring to vouchsafe the information that Morton was in his grave these two

days. "But I represent him."

"Then I guess I'll wait."

"He'll not be back."

The man hesitated, then a dirty hand drew an envelope from a torn pocket. "I was to give it only to him, but I guess it'll be all right to leave it with you."

David closed the door, ripped open the envelope, glanced at the note, turned abruptly and re-entered Morton's study, and read the lines again:

> "You paid no attention to the warning I sent you last Friday. This is the last time I write. I must get the money to-day, or—you know!
>
> "L. D."

He was clutched with a vague fear. Who was L. D.? And how could money be thus demanded of Morton? His mind was racing away into wild guesses, when he observed there was no street and number on the note. In the same instant it flashed upon him that the note must be investigated, and that the address of its writer was walking away in the person of the old messenger.

He caught his hat, rushed down the stairs, and came upon the old man just outside the club-house entrance.

"I want to see the writer of that note," he said. "Give me the address."

"Do better'n that. I'll go with you. I'm the janitor there."

David was too agitated to refuse the offer. They walked in silence for several paces, then the old man jerked his head toward the club-house and knowingly winked a watery eye.

"Lucky they don't know where you're goin'," he said. "But I'm safe. Safe as a clam!" He reassured David with his beery smile.

The vague dread increased. "What do you mean?"

"Innocent front! Oh, you're a wise one, I see. But you can trust me. I'm safe."

David was silent for several paces. "Who is this man L. D.?"

"This man?" He cackled. "This man! Oh, you'll do!"

David looked away in disgust; the old satyr made him think of the garbage of dissipation. All during their fifteen-minute car ride his indefinite fear changed from one dreadful shape to another. After a short walk the old man led the way into a small apartment house, and up the stairs.

He paused before a door. "Here's your 'man,'" he said, nudging David and giving his dry, throaty little laugh.

"Thanks," said David.

But the guide did not leave. "Ain't you got a dime that's makin' trouble for the rent o' your coin?"

David handed him ten cents. "Safe as a clam," he whispered, and went down the stairs with a cackle about "the man."

David hesitated awhile, with high-beating heart, then knocked at the door. It was opened by a coloured maid.

"Who lives here?" he asked.

"Miss Lillian Drew."

David stepped inside. "Please tell her I'd like to see her. I'm from Mr. Morton."

The maid directed him toward the parlour and went to summon her mistress. At the parlour door David was met

with the heavy perfume of violets. The room was showily furnished with gilt, upholstery, vivid hangings, painted bric-a-brac—all with a stiff shop-newness that suggested recently acquired funds. An ash-tray on the gilded centre-table held several cigarette stubs. On the lid of the upright piano was the last song that had pleased Broadway, and on the piano's top stood a large photograph of a man with a shrewd, well-fed face, his derby hat pushed back, his hands in his trousers pockets, a jewelled saddle in his necktie. Across this picture of portly jauntiness was scrawled, "To lovely Lil, from Jack."

David had no more than seated himself upon a surface of blue chrysanthemums and taken in these impressions, when the portieres parted and between them appeared a tall, slender woman in a trained house-gown of pink silk, with pearls in her ears and a handful of rings on her fingers. She looked thirty-five, and had a bold, striking beauty, though it was perhaps a trifle over-accentuated by the pots and pencils of her dressing-table. Possibly her nature had its kindly strain—doubtless she could smile alluringly; but just now her dark eyes gazed at David in hard, challenging suspicion.

David rose. "Is this Miss Drew?"

"You are from Phil Morton?" she asked.

He shivered at the implied familiarity with Morton. "I am."

She crossed to a chair and, as she seated herself, spread her train fan-wise to its full display. Her near presence seemed to uncork new bottles of violet perfume.

"Why didn't he come himself?" she demanded, her quick, brilliant eyes directly upon David.

It was as her note had indicated—she didn't read the papers. Obeying an unformed policy, David refrained from acquainting her with the truth.

"He's not at home. I've come because his affairs are left with me."

Her eyes gleamed. "So he's run away from home!" She sneered, but the sneer could not wholly hide her disappointment. "That won't save him!" She paused an instant. "Well—what're you here for?"

"I told you I represent him."

"You're his lawyer?"

"I'm his friend."

"Well, I'm listening. Go on."

The fear had taken on an almost definite shape. David shrunk from what he was beginning to see. But it was his duty to settle the affair, and settle it he could not without knowing its details. "To begin with, I shall have to ask some information from you," he said with an effort. "Mr. Morton left this matter entirely in my hands, but he told me nothing concerning its nature."

She half closed her eyes, and regarded David intently. "You brought the money?" she asked abruptly.

"No."

"Then he's——" She made a grim cipher with her forefinger, and stood up. "If there's no money, good afternoon!"

David did not rise. He guessed her dismissal to be a bit of play-acting. "Whatever comes to you must come through me," he said, "and you of course realise that nothing can come from me till I understand the situation."

"He understands it. That's enough."

"Oh, very well then. I see you want nothing." David determined to try play-acting himself. He rose. "Let it be good-afternoon."

She stopped him at the portieres, as he had expected. "It's mighty queer, when Morton's been trying hard to keep this thing between himself and me, for him to send a third person here."

"I can't help that," he returned with a show of indifference.

"But how do I know you really represent him?"

"You must take my word for it. Or you can telephone St. Christopher's and ask if David Aldrich is not in charge of his affairs."

She eyed him steadily for a space. "You look on the square," she said abruptly; then she added with an ominous look: "If there's no money, you know what'll happen!"

David shrugged his shoulders. "I told you I know nothing."

She was thoughtfully silent for several minutes. David studied her face, in preparation for the coming conflict. He saw that appeal to her better parts would avail nothing. He could guess that she needed money; it was plainly her nature, when roused, to spare nothing to gain her desire. And if defeated, she could be vindictive, malevolent.

In her inward struggle between caution and desire for money, greed had the assistance of her pride; for a woman living upon her attraction for men, is by nature vain of her conquests. Also, David's physical appearance was an element in the contest. Her quick bold eyes, looking him

over, noted that he was tall and straight, square of shoulder, good-looking.

Greed and its allies won. "Well, if you want to know, come back," she said.

David resumed his seat. She stood thinking a moment, then went to a writing-desk. For all his suspense, David was aware she was trying to display her graces and her gown. She rustled to his chair with the unhinged halves of a gold locket in her hand.

"Suppose we begin here," she said, handing him one half of the locket. "Perhaps you'll recognise it—though that was taken in eighty-five."

David did recognise it. It was Lillian Drew at twenty. The face was fresh and spirited, and had in an exceptional measure the sort of beauty admired in the front row of a musical-comedy chorus. It was not a bad face; had the girl's previous ten years been otherwise, the present Lillian Drew would have been a very different woman; but the face showed plainly that she had gone too far for any but an extraordinary power or experience to turn her about. It was bold, striking, luring—a face of strong appeal to man's baser half—telling of a girl who would make advances if the man held back.

David felt that she waited for praise. "It's a handsome face."

"You're not the first to say so," she returned, proudly.

She let him gaze at the picture a full minute, keenly watching his face for her beauty's effect. Then she continued:

"That is the picture of a girl in Boston. And this"—a jewelled hand gave him the locket's other half—"is a young man in Harvard."

David knew whose likeness was in the locket, yet something snapped sharply within him when he looked upon the boyish face of Morton at twenty-one. It was the snap of suspense. His fear was now certainty.

"She probably wouldn't have suited you"—the tone declared she certainly would—"but Phil Morton certainly had it bad for four or five months."

David forced himself to his duty—to search this relationship to its limits. "And then—he broke it off?" he asked, with a sudden desire to make her smart.

"No man ever threw me down," she returned sharply, her cheeks flushing. "I got tired of him. A woman soon gets tired of a mere boy like that. And he was repenting about a third of the time, and preaching to me about reforming myself. To live with a man like that——it's not living. I dropped him."

"But all this was fifteen years ago," David said, calm by an effort. "What has that to do with your note?"

She sank into a chair before him, and ran the tip of her tongue between her thin lips. She leaned back luxuriously, clasped her be-ringed hands behind her head, and regarded him amusedly from beneath her pencilled eye-lashes.

"A woman comes to New York about four months ago. She was—well, things hadn't been going very well with her. After a month she learns a man is in town she had once—temporarily married. She hasn't heard anything about him for fifteen years. He is a minister, and has a reputation. She has some letters he wrote her while they had been—such

good friends. She guesses he would just as soon the letters should not be made public. She has a talk with him; she guessed right.... Now you understand?"

David leaned forward, his face pale. "You mean Morton has been paying you—to keep still?"

She laughed softly. She was enjoying this display of her power. "In the last three months he has paid me the trifling sum of five thousand."

David stared at her.

"And he's going to pay me a lot more, or—the letters!"

His head sank before her bright, triumphant eyes, and he was silent. He was a confusion of thoughts and emotions, amid which only one thought was distinct—to protect Morton if he could. He tried to push all else from his mind and think of this alone.

A minute or more passed. Then he looked up. His face was still pale, but set and hard. "You are mistaken in at least one point," he said.

"And that?"

"About the money you are going to get. There'll be no more."

"Why not?" she asked with amused superiority.

"Because the letters are valueless." He watched her sharply to see the effect of his next words. "Philip Morton was buried two days ago."

Her hands fell from her head and she stood up, suddenly white. "It's a lie!"

"He was buried two days ago," David repeated.

Her colour came back, and she sneered. "It's a lie. You're trying to trick me."

David rose, drew out a handful of clippings he had cut from the newspapers, and silently held them toward her. She glanced at a headline, and her face went pale again. She snatched the clippings, read one half through, then flung them all from her, and abruptly turned about—as David guessed, to hide from him the show of her loss.

In a few moments she wheeled around, wearing a defiant smile. "Then I shall make the letters public!"

"What good will that do you? Think of all those people ——"

"What do I care for those people!" she cried. "I'll let them see what their saint was like!"

David stepped squarely before her; his tall form towered above her, his dark eyes gleamed into hers. "You shall do nothing of the kind," he said harshly. "You are going to turn over the letters to me."

She did not give back a step. "Oh, I am, am I!" she sneered. At this close range, penetrating the violet perfume, he caught a new odour—brandy.

"You certainly are! You're guilty of the crime of blackmail. You've confessed it to me, and I have your letter demanding money—there's proof enough. The punishment is years in prison. Give me those letters, or I'll have a policeman here in five minutes."

She was shaken, but she forced another sneer. "To take me to court is the quickest way to make the letters public," she returned. "You're bluffing."

He was, to an extent—but he knew his bluff was a strong one. "If you keep them, you will give them out," he went on grimly. "Between your making them public and going

unharmed, and their coming out in the course of the trial that will send you to prison, I choose the latter. Morton is dead; the letters can't hurt him now. And I'd like to see you suffer. The letters, or prison—take your choice!"

She slowly drew back from him, and her look of defiance gave place to fear. She stared without speaking at his square face, fierce with determination—at his roused, dominating masculinity.

"Which is it to be?"

She did not move.

"You choose prison then. Very well. I'll be back in five minutes."

He turned and started to leave the room.

"Wait!"

He looked round and saw a thoroughly frightened face.

"I'll get them."

She passed out through the beflowered portieres, and in a few minutes returned with a packet of yellow letters, which she laid in David's hand.

"These are all?" he demanded.

"Yes."

A more experienced investigator might have detected an unnatural note in her voice that would have prompted a further pursuit of his question; but David was satisfied, and did not mark a cunning look as he passed on.

"Here's another matter," he said threateningly. "If ever a breath of this comes out, I'll know it comes from you, and up you'll go for blackmail. Understand?"

Now that danger was over her boldness began to flow back into her. "I do," she said lightly.

He left her standing amid her crumpled, forgotten train. As he was passing into the hall, she called to him:

"Hold on!"

He turned about.

She looked at him with fear, effrontery, admiration. "You're all right!" she cried. "You're a real man!"

As David came into the street, his masterful bearing fell from him like a loosened garment. There was no disbelieving the prideful revelation of Lillian Drew—and as he walked on he found himself breathing, "Thank God for Philip's death!" Had Philip lived, with that woman dangling him at the precipitous edge of exposure, life would have been only misery and fear—and sooner or later she would have given him a push and over he would have gone. Death comes too late to some men for their best fame, and to some too early. To Philip Morton it had come in the nick of time.

One thought, that at first had been merely a vague wonder, grew greater and greater till it fairly pressed all else from David's mind: where had Philip got the five thousand dollars for which Lillian Drew had sold him three months' silence? David knew that Philip Morton had not a penny of private fortune, only his income as head of the Mission; and that of this income not a dollar had been laid by, so open had been his purse to the hand of distress. He could not have borrowed the money in the usual manner, for he had no security to give; and sums such as this are not blindly loaned with mere friendship as the pawn.

David entered Philip's study with this new dread pulsing through him. It was his duty to his friend to know the truth, and besides, his suspense was too acute to permit remaining in passive ignorance; so he locked the study door and began seeking evidence to dispel or confirm his fear. He took the books from the safe—he remembered the combination from the summer he had spent at the Mission—and turned them through, afraid to look at each new page. But the books dealt only with small sums for incidental expenses; the large bills were paid by cheque from the treasurer of the Board of Trustees. There was nothing here. He looked through the papers in the desk—among them no reference to the money. He scrutinised every page of paper in the safe, except the contents of one locked compartment. No reference. Knowing he would find nothing, he examined Morton's private bank-book: a record of the monthly cheque deposited and numerous small withdrawals—that was all.

And then he picked up a note-book that all the while had been lying on the desk. He began to thumb it through, not with hope of discovering a clue but merely as a routine act of a thorough search. It was half engagement book, half diary. David turned to the page dated with the day of Morton's death, intending to work from there backwards—and upon the page he found this note of an engagement:

"5 P. M.—at Mr. Haddon's office—first fall meeting of Boy's Farm Committee."

He turned slowly back through the leaves of September, August, July, June, finding not a single suggestive record.

But this memorandum, on the fifteenth of May, stopped him short:

> "Boy's Farm Committee adjourned to-day till fall, as Mr. Chambers and Mr. Haddon go to Europe. Money left in Third National Bank in my name, to pay for farm when formalities of sale are completed."

Instantly David thought of an entry on the first of June recording that, with everything settled save merely the binding formalities, the farmer had suddenly broken off the deal, having had a better offer.

Here was the money, every instinct told David. But the case was not yet proved; the money might be lying in the bank, untouched. He grasped at this chance. There must be a bank-book and cheque-book somewhere, he knew, and as he had searched the office like a pocket, except for the drawer of the safe, he guessed they must be there. After a long hunt for the key to this drawer, he found a bunch of keys in the trousers Morton had worn the day before his death. One of these opened the drawer, and sure enough here were cheque-book and bank-book.

David gazed at these for a full minute before he gained sufficient mastery of himself to open the bank-book. On the first page was this single line:

> May 15. By deposit 5,000

This was the only entry, and the fact gave him a moment's hope. He opened the cheque-book—and his hope was gone. Seven stubs recorded that seven cheques had