

Her chin still resting in her hands, the girl slowly turned her eyes to his. She looked at him slowly from his head to his feet, as if she were trying to verify his words.

"There were lots of other things I wanted to do and see, but, of course, I couldn't run all over the world in thirty days very well, could I? I worked it all out with myself for a long time. But gracious! I knew all the time what I wanted to do and what I was going to do, and that was to come back and see you and perhaps ask you to sing for me again."

As Crichton finished the girl looked up at him questioningly, but the man's face was still in the shadow.

"I don't know just what to say to you, Mr. Crichton," she said, "because I really don't know you at all, and yet I feel that I never knew anyone so well. I didn't break with Ned on account of you, but I did it on account of your type, or rather on account of his. He was a good, sweet-soul, but he was just like the rest of them here—the men, and the women, too, for that matter, are pretty much all made in the same mold. I have to go back to my father's ranch three months every year to keep near the earth and see all the sky at once. You were different, and I wanted to know you very, very much. I was going to write you to come and see me in town before you sailed and then—"

"And then?" he asked.

"Then? Well, why not? It can't make any difference now."

"None."

"I didn't send for you because I thought I cared too much."

"But you knew you were not going to marry Curtis?"

"Yes," she said. "I knew that from the first day."

"Then there must have been another reason?"

The girl nodded up at the dark figure. "Yes, there was another reason."

"Not the old reason—the reason

of every dull full that sits in a club window, the reason why every debutante is told to keep away from me?"

Miss Ferguson nodded.

Crichton, still standing with his back to the fire, clasped his hands behind him, and slowly laced and unlaced his fingers.

"I judged," he said, "from what I saw of you before that above all you were charitable. I am sorry that I could not have gone away still thinking so."

"Charity?" she asked. "Do you call that charity? I mean the kind of charity that begins at home. It mayn't have been charitable to you or to me, but the world wasn't made for you and me. We might as well try to dam a flood as to hold back what the world wants to thing of us."

"And yet," the man interrupted, "our happiness would have made up for much. I don't pretend to be unselfish—the Lord knows I have suffered enough to want a little pleasure and peace before I die."

"I know," she said, "I know all of that. I know that we could have been happy, because we could have been content with each other and we could have gone away. But how do we know that those who came after us would have the strength to take up the burden? Do you know that they would have been satisfied, as you and I could have been, with only each other—happy with the heat of the sun over our heads and the smell of the ground under our feet? Do you know that those who might follow us would not choose to live with their kind, and do you know that they would be brave enough to hold up their heads in the crowded places?" The girl rose from her chair and, laying her hand on Crichton's shoulder, half turned him about, so that the red glare from the fire shone fairly in his face.

"I know it doesn't make very much difference now," she went on, "but I have told you what my mother will never know. Is there anything else