

steadily, expectantly. John roused up aflare. He rushed to the door of the shop. He unbolted and tore open the door.

"We're shut up. Go away!" he roared.

"Please, sir—"

"M—" observed John, taken aback and cooling down magically. There stood a tiny girl, poorly clad, shivering with the cold, her big, wistful eyes woefully crushed, but pleading.

"Please, sir," she said simply. "Miss Walton is dying. The doctor couldn't come, 'coz she can't pay him, but he sent her a 'scription. Won't you please make it up, 'coz she's awful sick and can't pay, but they say you are a good, kind man—"

"Who says it?" snapped John.

"All the poor people you've given credit to."

"Bah! Rot! I'm a bear! O'm—ouch! Serve me right. Come in."

John had stumbled over the door check and stubbed his toe. The little girl sat down on a stool. He pushed a jar of candy toward her. Then John examined the prescription.

"The murdering villain!" he burst forth. "Soda and aqua pura for a suffering woman! Here, you lead me to this woman you talk about. I'm only half a doctor, but I can do better than that fraud who gave you a prescription to get rid of you. Fill your pockets with that candy. Now then, lead the way."

It was to the meanness of a row of tenements his guide took him and to a dreary room, sparsely furnished, where, upon a bed, lay the patient. At a glance John read better days in the face of a young woman, full of loveliness, wan and thin as it was. Her eyes were closed. He lifted her hand to feel her pulse. The expressive, intelligent face, dainty molded hand, told a common story of a girl of refinement and culture brought to the saddest phase of poverty and destitution. Now all the desperate loathing for life and humanity left the

man's nature. He roused up to the true philanthropist that he was, as a realization of the patient lives of the poor swept across his mind. A tear dropped from his sorrowing eyes. The patient stared slightly. Her eyes opened, their glance meeting his own. She smiled sweetly, as though half unconscious, as she saw the tear that hallowed the moment where a kind soul had come to the rescue.

The woman was, indeed, ill. For two weeks she lay almost inert, for two more convalescent. Food, quiet, constant medical care the sympathetic John brought to her, overjoyed at her recovery and—loved her. And she? There were expressions on her face at times that stirred him strangely. His business was daily growing more hopeless, yet he seemed to care little for that. His mind was wrapped up in the patient, whose distress had roused him from the lethargy of misanthropy.

"Say, you must be an awful rich man!" commented the little ragged girl messenger.

"Rich?" John smiled desolately. Yet his senses spurred up. He was rich in a new emotion that made the sordid world as gross to him.

"She's gone," were the words that fairly stunned him one day from the little child. "Oh, it's like a play! Her sister, oh! so rich and beautiful and in a grand automobile came this morning and took her away. It seems that our Mrs. Walton had quarreled with her folks, who had lots of money and had made up her mind to be an artist, and they just found her and have taken her away."

And this was the end of the little romance, then? Moodily John spent the last few days of his occupancy of the little shop. He sat on a broken stool in the denuded store the day its creditors came to cart away the few physical assets left of the dire business wreck. His face was sunk dejectedly upon his breast, his eyes closed, his mind groping aimlessly to scan the future.