

She would come down to breakfast next morning, probably, twenty-five again; but if she was in one of those calm, even, undisturbed moods, she would be just as charming. Dr. Hall felt a little as if this new being was a credit to his own powers of resurrection.

Miss Roberts was at her happiest at breakfast next day. She was already seated quite away from her usual place, the center of a little group of ladies, and she was talking easily and happily.

The doctor watched her while he ate his breakfast. There was a look in his eyes of late as if he were dreaming—a happy dream, but still not a part of every-day living. But that, perhaps, was because he was conscientiously getting well, and enjoyed the unusual leisure, knowing it could not last.

They came out through the hall together, a dozen of them, all laughing and talking at once. As usual, he found himself beside her. She had on a white dress, and golden rod in the breast of it. She was not coquettish nor girlish; she was simply enjoying herself, with a soft forgetfulness that, perhaps, she had not known for years.

They sat together talking merrily, when a carriage from the early train drew up.

"A new-comer, just as everyone is going?"

Dr. Hall watched the proceeding idly. But as the door opened and a young man stepped out, he started a little. A curious change passed over his face—an expression of strong self-control, as if he had received a sudden blow and would not betray the shock and pain. He rose and went slowly down the steps.

"Hello, George! You're looking fine, man;" and as they came toward the door, "Alice was getting uneasy, and sent me to look after you."

Dr. Hall turned toward Miss Roberts.

"Do not forget that you are to walk with me in an hour."

It was the first she had heard of it, but she simply assented. The young man gave her a wide-eyed, scrutinizing stare as he passed into the house.

See just sat and waited. I do not think she thought much. She was conscious that something had happened, or was about to happen. Some of the others came and spoke to her, but she paid little attention.

He came after awhile, and she went with him. There were a few remarks about nothing, a kind of sacrifice to the proprieties, till they were out of sight of the house. They stopped at the rocks where he had told her about his Southern experience.

"I am going away, Miss Roberts, my wife's brother has come for me."

She said it over after him—

"Your wife's brother."

There was a white, strained look on his face.

"I wanted you to hear it from me, rather than from a stranger. I ought to have told you sooner. You will not think that I have been regardless of your feelings—that I have selfishly exposed you to remark. My life has no sunshine in it. I have allowed myself to breathe

fresh air and stand in the light for awhile. It is all over now. I am going back to prison. I wanted to die—down there in that hell out of which I have just come, and I could not. It will not be any easier living now."

He had gone on and on, as if he dreaded hearing her voice. It was the first outbreak of his life. He had taken his punishment without a sign of flinching all these years; without even acknowledging to himself that he needed pity. Now, it seemed to him as if the world must needs stop moving because his courage had failed him.

She looked up at him when his voice stopped.

"Yes, I wish that I had known," she replied in a dull way.

He gazed into her face a minute, a look of deadly surprise and pain came into his own. Whatever it was that he saw there, his next words were more a groan than a speech.

"I never thought of that."

"I do not suppose you did," quietly. "Shall we go back, now?"

What more was there to be said between those two? Not another syllable passed between them till they reached the house. The morning's arrival was uneasily pacing the veranda. Hall presented him to Miss Roberts. He had faith in her nerve.

She greeted him with quiet grace.

"You are late in coming to the shore. We have had a very delightful summer."

"Business brought me, I shall go away immediately," with a glance at Hall.

He had a weak, good-natured face, a face that might easily be bad, in an irresolute way. Miss Roberts wondered if his sister's was like that. He was thinking that she was much older—not nearly so pretty as he had fancied her at that first glance.

Hall did not go into the house. The two men walked away together. At the very spot where Irene Roberts had sat just a few moments before Brainerd paused.

"You've brought evil news, of course. Wait a minute."

He turned away and went a dozen paces down the shore, and back again.

"Now," he said, through his clenched teeth.

"Alice!"

"Yes, go on."

"You must come back. We can do nothing with her. You've been gone now almost four months. Stacy is back again."

Hall ground his teeth with a smothered groan.

"You'll come back, won't you?" Brainerd said weakly.

"Come back to what? A disgraced name—a house that is perdition—to that—that—"

"Sue is my sister," with feeble defiance.

"Yes, she is your sister," quieting suddenly. "I'll go back with you, Joe."