

at the end of their mysterious journey over the vast Pacific, sang to her a sad and melancholy refrain. Sad, worn with secret worry and sleepless nights, she had succumbed at last to the sinister, powerful influence that proved itself stronger than her courage. Her home held for her no solace but its isolation. Her mother had died years before and the recollection of that first sorrow added to the already heavy burden. Her father, absorbed in his lumber interests, was not one in whom she cared to confide, and ostensibly ill health covered the needed explanation of her return, an explanation her appearance abundantly confirmed.

To Mary the blackness of despair offered no ray of light. Over and over again she would go to the headland where the surging surf seemed to keep time to the uncontrollable intensity of her emotions, only to fling herself down at last on the earth and weep until physical exhaustion from her shuddering sobs had dulled the pain. As the days passed, listlessness settled upon her, and from this apathy came forth as reaction to her former uncompromising rectitude a certain cynicism.

Spring was full grown when to Mary, now somewhat contemptuously defiant to the voice of convention, came the tempter with a face like a Greek god, the mind of a musician and a poet, and a moral abyss which served him for a soul. He came in the capacity of an expert to install a new lumber plant which her father was having built. Certainly he was not one to let opportunity pass, and his cultivation of the acquaintance of Mary followed as a matter of course. He was skillful in the ways of women. He knew his power. The gift of music was his and he could make the piano plead irresistibly for his heart's desires. Under the magic of his touch the beautiful harp-toned old piano that had belonged to Mary's mother sang a new song and one which was entirely foreign to its stern, uncompromising soul. Graceful, intricate patterns began to weave themselves, evanescent children of capricious fancy that came and went like the shadows in the forest. It was as though the spirit of music had taken a holiday and, like some golden-winged butterfly, fluttered irresponsibly across the fields touching only the beautiful.

It was a new world to Mary, the world of art, and she abandoned herself to the enjoyment of its charm. Imperceptibly there grew into its careless patterns a gossamer thread that appeared and vanished, came and went, until its insistence began to make definite appeal, grew to be the warp that gave continuity to the seemingly