

## II.

Dave Brandon was a man slow to think and slow to act, but like the famous mills of the gods, he was very thorough.

Coming from the north, from the solitudes, he had the shyness and deep abiding respect for womanhood that inevitably comes to those who live much alone. He had worshipped Mary from afar. When the disquieting rumors reached his ears he felt instinctively that they were untrue but their persistence worried him. Just when in the natural course of events he should have attained the status of a familiar friend Mary left.

Dave, rambling along with his geology hammer, knocking off pieces here and there, took council with himself, went over the whole ground. In the end he decided that a great injustice had been done. Smiting a nearby rock a blow that splintered the handle of his hammer, he swore to "even things up," and he resolved to begin the task of tracing down the despicable slanders. Had Dave been more given to society instead of finding friends in the fossils in Miocene sandstone his task might have been much easier. But at last he was almost sure that Charley Dexter was the guilty one, and instinct told him that Charley's inamorata, Lila, had a hand in it. He was loth to believe in Charley's baseness at first, for Charley was one of the leading spirits in the fraternity of which Dave had been proud to become a member. He was at the point, where, in spite of the fact that all trials converged to one focus, he was yet reluctant to proceed when chance directed that he should receive incontrovertable proof. Now and then he found himself enjoying the peculiar charm of the Bohemian affairs common among the more sporty element of his "frat." He had happened into one of the clubs up town and found a bunch of the fellows making merry. They welcomed him, and the tide of good fellowship flowed on. Later they were gathered around the table, telling stories more or less pungent. Charley Dexter was particularly gay. Presently through the haze of cigar smoke some words of Dexter's pierced the comfortable indifference of Dave and he leaned forward, alert to every word. As he listened a slow anger filled him, for the fellows before him were all men who bore the title of "good fellows," were prominent socially, they represented a class to him which he held as incapable of base motives. He controlled himself only by a great effort and listened as Dexter, flushed, swaying slightly from side to side as he grasped the table, retailed for the amusement of