a shining reality in his life, he had b

a toast to my own defeat."

-lingered on his lips.

lines caught his eye:

CHAPTER XI. Delatole was dressing to dine out. As he struggled with a collar button he turned his head to listen to the lazy lilt of a song coming from a room across the hall. His face wore an ill humored frown. It was very evident that the song and the singer impressed him with equal unpleasantness.

'Do stop that humming, for God's sake!" he cried out at last. "It's enough to drive one mad."

There was no reply, and a few mo ments later Tom lounged across the hall. He was very different from the wavering, tempted man who rushed from Virginia's presence that snowy night almost two years before. His face had lost the flashing earnestness that rose from an ecstatic heart. It had taken on resolute lines and an expression of worldly sub-The cheeks were slightly hollowed, the eyes placidly heavy, cold, showing the baggard lines of dissipation.

"Was I singing? I swear I didn't know it," he said languidly. Delatole surveyed him with a cold, unchanging glance

"Still in your blouse and slippers. Won't you look in upon the theater par-

ty at all?"
"I don't care a hang about it."
"Aren't you afraid Mrs. Baudoine will

did all the running—not I."

Delatole drew on his gloves in silence.

when marriage seems good unto you?"

im from beneath Tom's lowered lids.
"My opinion about marriage has not ditional shabbiness of unrecognized gen-And a burning glance was flashed at him from beneath Tom's lowered lids. altered in the least. But if a man can ins had called on him with this play, a depressing chill,

vigorous day by day. It's really a liberal education to be allowed to hear you.

gotten in his desk for more than a year.

And the man who had brought it—where

One face—it Surely you haven't finished yet. You

said more than this vesterday." mind you once more that you owe me money. More than that, I want it. I'm sick of your spiritless languor. I never knew a man let himself drop as you have done. Because you go at a rapid pace is no reason why you should die mentally. I haven't. But you can't drink at all without drinking too much and keeping it up too long. In fact, you are an extremist in everything. There's a genius in moderation."

"Don't stop for breath. I am a-thirst for the rest. More—more," said Too."

"Yery dear to you," Tom said slowly."

"Sea factor to the ground:

DEAR SIR—I inclose this note, as it may not be possible to have an interview with you. The be with an awful fear. But he did not pause. The streets swayed around him as he walked on. Once he turned as if to glance at some flowers in a florist's shop, and he saw the pale lamplight and the gray dusk casting a weird radiance over the face. He was being followed. He seemed to hear those dogging steps and the gray dusk casting a weird radiance over the face. He was "No, I haven't finished. I want to re-

without moving an eyelash

"You shall have it all. The time has come for plain talking," and there was a savage snarl in the words. "I want treasure back.

positive hatred. "That is one of those charmingly up from the street, as if she had heard fear. soothing speeches we must learn to ex- that cry and mocked him. pect from those we live with. But you are wrong. The trouble lies here. I unfortunately must still be sincere and must put something of myself into everything I write. When one believes in nd cares for so little, it is very hard. I have not yet matched your stride, you see-you who with one arm around your neighbor's wife could write an essay on the beauty of morality."

The door banged, and Delatole's footsteps grew fainter in the echoing passage. In the silence that followed Tom still lay motionless, his wide open eyes fixed upon the ceiling, the small unobtrusive sounds of a quiet room fluttering the loneliness that settled around "How I hate him!" and though the

words were but a whisper their reality was intense.

He thought of the past. That year in Paris—every detail of it returned to him as he lay there—that

crowded, riotous, unholy year. His first taste of pleasure, his exuberant appreciation of life carrying him along with "No one will know if I make it mine." the rush of a laughing stream going down hill: the new, fevered atmosphere the days spinning by in a sort of moral foolish, too, and his fast beating heart, vertigo; the crowd that called him to "No one will know," he said again, and there was a note of defiant joy in follow where it was brightest, that

"If it were mine!"

And now? Now he was back in famil- play.

A sound attracted his attention. It disinclination to the trouble of resisting, following pleasure with a foreknowledge of weariness, in debt to Delatole while straining at the wornout cord that bound them, struggling against the maddening inactivity that palsied his faculties in the art still dear to him.

A sharp, quivering breath came from his lips.

Delatole had spoken truly. Something had withered within him, or in the degradation of his life he had lost it forever. He had striven to write and always in vain. His ideas were no longer vivid, stirring, flowing to a logical sequence, but dim, abortive—a haze of tangled threads. Heaps of closely written paper, upon which the best efforts of his head had been expected in the content of sadness creeping in like a knell for many of the multitude who marched onward to its swing. A flicker of pain crossed his uneasy eyes. He knew that march. Virginia had often played it, and it pulsed through the warm night with a wake of memories. Her face in its diurnal beauty rose before him; then a slim, white robed body with finger pointing at the play, crushed in his grasp. Yes, her very voice was in his ears.

"You will not—you will not steal it, Tom! You could not fall as low as that!"

He deposed into a chair, hiding his face upon his clinched hands, A sudden nostalgia weighed sickeningly upon his muscles were braced to a painful face upon his clinched hands, A sudden nostalgia weighed sickeningly upon his muscles were braced to a painful face upon his clinched hands, A sudden nostalgia weighed sickeningly upon his muscles were braced to a painful face upon his clinched hands, A sudden nostalgia weighed sickeningly upon his muscles were braced to a painful face upon his clinched hands, A sudden nostalgia weighed sickeningly upon his marched onward to its swing. A flicker of pain crossed his uneasy eyes. He knew that march. Virginia had often played it, and it puised through the warm night with a

ten paper, upon which the best efforts of his brain had been expended with the him. his brain had been expended with the him.

sneers—I can pay my debts—I can start of life had died. His eyes were graves afresh. It will be life, hope, bread to my soul. I'm not going to let a fancy befool me. If it had fallen from heaven, it could not have come more opportune; to fact of his conscience? Bah!"

"Pass by me now Leve year feet."

But for all his bravado the violence of You have taken all."

"Pass by me now. Leave me free. You have taken all." the temptation made him stand petrified peering into the shadowy corners. Every creak in the silent house appalled him as he mentally weighed the chances for and he mentally weighed the chances for an analysis of the chanc against detection. He passed his hand across his trembling lips, his narrowed eyes upon the locked door.

"I'll do it," he whispered.
All night he bent over the pages, copying the play, here and there touching it with wit that came to him then with diabolical readiness. His heart warmed trayed love for a chimera. But he must not remember that, and least of all to-by the mere changing of the names of night, in the silence, when his thoughts places and people.

were like knives in his heart.

He stood up, shivering, and from habit turned to the sideboard. He half filled a goblet with brandy and laughed aloud as the decanter clinked against the glass in his hand, a laugh that subsided to a in his hand, a laugh that subsided to a

As he stood up, a wan and haggard chuckle and rose again, beating upon the stillness like the wings of a caged bird.

"It-wouldn't be out of order to drink a treat to up own defeat."

When he re-entered his studio a few CHAPTER XII. months later, his eyes were flaming, though the smile—a hideous contortion From that day Tom was never alone. His secret went with him everywhere. An open letter on his disordered desk faced him as he sat down. The closing lines caught his eye:

When after a month's hurried preparation the play, rechristened "In the Name of the Czar," was put before the public,

lines caught his eye:

I will finally withdraw "The World's Way" from the road in a fortuight. Now that four act society drama is what I'm waiting for. In two years I've had only two curtain raisers from you—rags of things that only drew at all because your name was to them. If I can't rely on you, I must look elsewhere. If you're not going to write any more, for God's sake say so. Grorge Plunker.

He read it and tore it to bits. There was a sob in his throat as his eager hands went searching through the mass of papers for half sketched plots and notes of ideas not worth the leaves they were scrawled upon. He would not even leave a grayn. All should be destroyed.

He listened with a growing equanimity to these whisperings. He saw the phi-

"Aren't you afraid Mrs. Baudoine will send out a search warrant for you?"

"Let her send."

"Cool for a prospective bridegroom."

"Prospective idiot!" And Tom settled himself ve; y comfortably on his back on a low divan. "I'll never marry Mrs. Baudoine. As the girl in the song says, "Something tells me so." Couldn't you, with your managerial tactics, help me out of that scrape? You know she me out of that scrape? You know she dream of the send of the search warrant for you?"

He listened with a growing equanimity to these whisperings. He saw the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave him. Besides he possessed it absolutely. He never considered that some day it might possess him.

It was now early in December. The theaters had just deluged Broadway with thousands of matine goers. The dream of the serve which a growing equanimity to these whisperings. He saw the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave him. Besides he possessed it absolutely. It was now early in December. The dream of the serve was the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave him. Besides he possessed it absolutely. It was now early in December. The dream of the serve was the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave him. Besides he possessed it absolutely. It was now early in December. The dream of the serve was the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave him. Besides he possessed it absolutely. It was now early in December. The dream of the serve was the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave him. Besides he possessed it absolutely. It was now early in December. The dream of the serve was the philosophy of getting on the friendliest terms with his secret, since it would nover leave he was a supplied to these whisperings. He saw the philosophy of

He worked with an eager intensity, as if following his heart's desire, even went vanor of the sky. At the perspective of

Delatole drew on his gloves in silence.

He grew white, and when he came to the foot of the divan and let his eyes travel slowly over Tom's supine length a rage only half controlled made his lips tremble.

"In my opinion," he said slowly, with emphasis, "you'll be in a fair way to need the material help of Mrs. Baudoine's money very soon."

"Really? Oh, then there are times when marriage seems good unto you?"

He worked with an eager intensy, and the stair, and sestire, even went of following his heart's desire, even went of the scrawled sheets right and left, then paused abruptly and looked with puzzled eyes at what he had dragged out—a long roll of manuscript, dusty and tied with gray the did not remember it, had never er seen it before. Yet, wait. Now that it lay unfolded before him, a fully written la Just before his departure for Europe, whiteness debauchery leaves, and warm

only fail, if he can't even support himself, the most practical thing is to find some woman silly enough to shoulder the responsibility."

"Go on. Your English grows more vigorous day by day. It's really a lib."

"It's really a lib."

And the man who had brought it—where the sea of other faces to meet him, the Still kneeling among the mass of dusty eyes strained, piteous, dark with an arpapers, he turned the leaves. A letter raignment, a challenge.

Tom's jaded heart suddenly livened

"Don't stop for breath. I am a-thirst for the rest. More—more," said Tom "Very dear to you," Tom said slowly. "I know just how you felt, Mr. Felix fast, and sank back, feeling bewildered, Dawson, when you wrote those words, stunned, sick. 'Very dear to you.' You shall have your Felix Dawson, the man he had de-

frauded, was alive. He turned the first page with a pity- It had been so easy for Tom with the my money. It seemed there was some hope of getting it from this Bandoine marriage, as I don't believe you'd write another word."

"Don't you?"

He turned the has page with only the first. After that he knelt amid the destruction of his own work, paying tribute with enraptured senses to the genius of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man. The manuscript flutor when the last climax of another man and the death and gradually to assimilate this supposition until it became as the marriage, as I don't believe you'd write another word."

"Don't you?" "No. It may be you've tried and can't—it may be you don't care. In either case I've been bitterly disappointed in you. You're the last embryo genius I'll put on a pedestal. Genius? By heaven! that's rich. Why, you've fallen into psychical ruin. You exhausted yourself in 'The World's Way.'"

An unwilling, dusky red started up in Tom's hollowed cheek. It ebbed slowly away as, opening his eyes wide, he smiled at Delatole with an expression of positive hatred.

tered to the floor when the last climax was reached—a climax that made every nerve vibrate and awoke his senses like a trumpet call—and with strained, hot hands he grasped the chair.

He looked around the silent room and down at the bundle of half furled papers. Oh, that imagined life pictured there through laughter and sighing, like gems through dust and tears! It was more precious than a magician's wand.

"If it were mine—if it were mine!" he said aloud, and a woman's laugh drifted

"If it were mine—if it were mine!" he said aloud, and a woman's laugh drifted idemnation; an opponent to face, to

His coming meant ruin, disgrace be fore the world, but it meant also a sudden, sickening awakening to the nature and consequences of his act, a shame and hatred of himself. He was a thief in the commonest sense.

When the horse was pulled up at the curb before his door, it was almost a shock. He had been sitting upright, his hands grasping the apron of the hansom, looking straight ahead, but blind, not eyen aware that it had commenced to

Delatole called to him as he went down the hall. He paid no heed, and mtering his study flung himself into a thair. His face was clammy and wan. Something must be done. What? What could be say when Felix Dawson faced him? What defense could he make? That he was coming he was absolutely sure. He must be near now. Perhaps in five minutes he would cross He sprang up and turned the key in the threshold. Suppose Delatole heard the door. Then he stood listening. The him. Suppose the blow fell that after-

action was guilty, almost before the noon. He sat absolutely still, his eyes fixed upon the door, his veins holding a fluid, It was foolish to tremble so, of course, icy terror instead of blood, At last, to his intense relief, Delatole

thrust in his head, saying:
"Are you going to dine here? Well,
I'll be back in time to have a demithe breathless cry as he picked up the tasse with you. I want to see you. Don't go out."

And now? Now he was back in taking iar New York, bound by honor by a woman who wearied him, inclined to rid himself of the obligations he had assumed in the beginning through sheer sumed in the beginning through sheer rolling sweetness, with that flowing until the crossed to the window and flung it like a rolling sweetness, with that flowing until the chaos in his brain was rent sud-The danger of betrayal over for the derbeat of sadness creeping in like a denly by one sententious thought: knell for many of the multitude who "This man you dread has no pro

enperior, a judge. "Yes, I do."

"A long time ago I left a play with you. This afternoon I saw it acted at Palliser's theater, your name on the pro-

gramme as its author."

This was the moment of supreme disforces within him were roused to a throbbing sense of self preservation. be very wicked but for one strain inherent in his nature. The waywardness rolled like a sea, only to break upon this letter and even tried to forget the man's as upon a bar and surge back strength-name. By morning all was done and less and abortive. No, he could not lie to him. His glance wavered, the cigar dropped from his trembling fingers, he moved a little nearer Felix Dawson, his

heart in his eyes.
"What will you do? Wait before you speak. Hear me." He stopped sudden-ly, pierced to the heart. "My God! what must you think of me?"

"What do I think of you?" asked Dawson, the low, resonant voice suddenly quivering with contempt. "I would not touch your hand for all the money in the world if I starved tomorrow. You seem to me like a rich man who searche through a beggar's rags and steals his last coin. You are utterly detestable to me. You coward! You thief!"

Tom started and flung back his head.
"No, I'm not that. I'm not what you believe. I didn't rob you of your one possession and add it to my many. I took it when I was mad with despair. You must believe me—you must. It was here in this very room," and he held out his arms, looking around the place, an almost childish pleading in his eyes. "I came in knowing I had failed. I accepted defeat with what agony perhaps you can guess. It was then I read your play for the first time. More than a year had passed since you left it, and I thought you dead. It would mean nothing to you, everything to me. I took it. I ask you again, what will you do?"

There was understanding in Felix Dawson's eyes, but no softening. His heart was like a wrung out sponge—it knew no extremes. The one passion left him was a morbid love for the play he had written.

"Poor, wronged dead men. They cannot all come back as I have done. But unfortunately for you," he said, with a slight curl of his lip, "I was not dead. I came here three times in the summer following. The place seemed shut up. The rest of the time I have spent in a hospital. Facing death and eternity, I forgot life, I forgot you. God has cursed me for many years, and I never bent to the rod. And now, when I had thought the long, bitter day was to end in storm and darkness, there is a prom-

ise of a new dawn."
"You mean?"— and the words were a terrified breath on Tom's lips.

"What can I mean but that you are to give me my play?" he cried. "I can't. Don't you see that it is impossible-now?" The prayer had gone from Tom's voice. It was dogged, des-

would undo it all if I could, God knows how readily." He paused, and his voice, though quiet, was like the strokes of steel upon steel. "But before the world it will be different. If you have no will be classed among them and be forgotten. You'd better accept my terms. Think again. Take the money. I'll be

glad to give it to you. But the play must remain mine. It is too late for anything else. Don't you see? Can't Dawson seemed scarcely to listen to

him. He was looking past him, a faint, dreamy smile upon his pale lips.
"That's your view of the situation years to touch success. I've always just missed it. I made my last throw when I wrote 'Dr. Fleming,' and it wor Money? Do you think money will make up for the loss of the thing most precious to me? Deny me as you will; I'll take my chances. You've robbed me of what I love. That play was friend and sweet-heart, fire and food, to me for a year. It is part of me. All I have hoped and suffered appears in its lines like a reflec-

tion in a glass. Oh, yes, I'll have it back." He walked to the door, the bluish dusk shading his white, earnest, clear cut face, and clothing him with mystery. Long after he was gone Tom stood listening to the splashing of the rain. His brain was aftre with questions.

Dawson would accuse him, but it would amount to nothing; he would be thought a man driven frantic by misfortune. But the money—that was a different matter and an unpleasant one. He would never put another penny of October 23, 1893, and to me directed, upon and to enforce that certain decree of force.

ten paper, upon which the best efforts of his brain had been expended with the feverish intensity a man feels in running a race, had been cast aside as worthless.

The day was surely coming when his world would know the truth and liken him to a plant that puts forth radiant blessoms once and withers in a night.

How miserably he had failed! Was there no escape from social annihilation except by trading on the infatuation of a woman 10 years older than himelf? And once once when he had himelf? And once once when he had himelf? And once once when he had thought like one inspired, and honor was the property of it. I can choke down Delatole's less muscles were braced to a painful rigidity, his face was greenish white. He was prepared to deny the charge absolutely, to decry the man as mad.

"You will not steal it. Tom," rang the soluted as worthless. The face was gone. The German march had dwindled to an echo.

"Yes, I will," he said steadily, as if defying an invisible mentor. "Ill take there no escape from social annihilation of a woman 10 years older than himelf? And once once when he had thought like one inspired, and honor was thought like one inspired, and honor was the property of it. I can choke down Delatole's like an accuser come to demand justification. The man who wrote it must be dead—he is dead—and—there's no copy of it. I can choke down Delatole's like one inspired, and honor was the property of the lie on which he had surely builded, he looked by a dogged, passionless assurance in the stability of the lie on which he had surely builded, he looked Felix Dawson in the eyes, and then his mascles were braced to a painful rigidity, his face was greenish white. He was prepared to deny the charge absolutely, to deery the man as mad.

"You will not steal it. Tom," rang the solutely, to deery the man as mad.

"You will not steal it. Tom," rang the solutely, to deery the man as mad.

"Yes, I will," he said steadily, as if defying an invisible mentor. "I'll take the was prepared to deny the charge absolutely, t Miss Ray Frank, which college, sold by his studying at the Hobrew union college, the terms standard as a rabbi, and said der

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tune. But the money—that was a different matter and an unpleasant one. He would never put another pemy of the play's payments to his own use. They must be saved for Felix Dawson—saved secretly—and some day he might be induced to accept them. This meant sudden poverty for himself and might excite curiosity. He could say he was paying his debts, or some of the speculations recently indulged in might be fortunate. He was not afraid. He felt secure.

Coffee and liquors were on the table when Delatole rushed in.

"Pass over the absinthe, Tom," he said, with a smile and a comfortable kind of shiver. "Gad, this room looks cozy after the rain. Hear it, splashing in bucketfuls. I had to go to Emerson's and have a bite with him—listened to nothing but praises of you from the soup until I broke away before dessert. He says you're a genius. But that's nothing new. Haven't I always said you stood alone? This last play settles the point beyond dispute. The Russian color is admirable! How the deuce you caught it I can't tell, when you never had your nose in Russia. But who can explain the vagaries of genius? When you wrote that play, Tom, you prepared a delight for posterity."

Ah, it was to hear words like these that Felix Dawson demanded what he created. Money, after all, was the smallest part of the triumph. Tom roused himself and found Delatole smiling at him in his most engaging way.

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