

"You have been wondering how I got into this part of the world?" he began, as he gazed musingly into the fire. There was a note of interrogation in his voice, but I allowed him to tell his story as he would.

"I suppose you have already guessed I wasn't born around here. There's a fine old place down in Virginia I once called home. That was twenty long years ago, and I have never spoken of it to anyone before. But somehow you have seemed so different from the others I meet here that I feel I can trust you with my secret.

"As I was saying, my father was the owner of a large estate in Virginia. I was the only child, and as such had about everything I wanted. That's a bad thing for any young fellow, and it was especially disastrous in my case. Of course I entered the university. It had always been the dearest dream of my father's life that I should go through and get my degree, as he had done and his father before him. There was a tradition in our family of long-standing that a Paget was not fit to enter life as a gentleman until he had pursued his full course in college. My first two years were spent as many another young fellow has spent them. I was there for a good time, and I fear I was rather reckless. My father, however, had not forgotten when he himself was in the university, so he paid the bills.

"All went finally well until the summer of my Sophomore year. It was that summer that I first met Margery Delmar. There were lots of other fellows who had felt her charms, but they had all gotten over it. But it was very different with me. After that eventful evening my destiny was sealed, and every thought of a college career faded from my mind. Of course my father was furious when he found what I intended doing. He felt that I had wronged him by making an end to all the fond hopes and ambitions he had been cherishing for me. In the heat of his displeasure he could see nothing but base ingratitude on my part. But I didn't see it just that way, and when he threatened to disinherit me entirely I left the old home.