THE GATES OF FULFILMENT: BY MARY KATHERINE WOODS

"And it may be, when the journey of life has been over barren hillsides of rock and stubble, that one enters the country of death by the gates of fulfilment."

ALF a dozen men had been killed in the riot, a score of others injured, one policeman had been shot down, and a woman had been crushed in the crowd. It had been one of the most terrible things that had happened in the city for years, this sudden mad uprising among the city's foreign folk. The students of political economy and the agents of the Society for Organizing Charity discussed the question of whether the cause of the riot was abstract inherent lawlessness or a concrete poverty and hunger and desperation. The police arrested the leaders of the mob. Newspapers and sociological societies and women's clubs discoursed dispassionately the Problem of the Unemployed. Then, when the excitement was over, and the uproar of would-be anarchy in the foreign quarter had quieted down to an almost apathetic murmur of defeated discontent, someone discovered that the whole trouble had been aroused by the socialistic ravings of a woman.

They found her in a wretched boarding-house in the slum district, by no means the frail and lovely girl student of Russian Nihilist tales, but a plain-faced, large-boned, middle-aged woman, a square-visaged spinster, whose word was law to the hundreds of aliens who were her followers.

Simply enough, smiling ironically once or twice, yet making her recital in a dull, unemphatic monotone, she told the police who she was and what she had done. Yes, it was she who had stirred up the riot, caused all the bloodshed, all the—her lips curled curiously—disturbance. She had done it, and, if she had a chance, she would like to do it again. She had been there, in the street, with the mob, but she had escaped arrest because she was a woman, and no one had thought of suspecting her, until afterward. But she was not afraid. She would go with the policemen now. That was a matter of course.

Her deep-set eyes turned on the officers now and then with a sort of flaming contempt,—the ancient scorn of the conquered for the victory of force. She smiled when they told her that they would dispense with the hand-cuffs, "out of respect for her sex," smiled with a genuine impersonal amusement. Then she went with the two policemen out of the house.

In the street the crowds gathered to look at her, as the officers led her away to the station-house. There was no resistance in the woman's attitude, only a grim acceptance in her face, a sort of mock-
ing recognition of the city’s power to punish and to kill. From her eyes there looked even a sort of dull triumph, a sardonic acquiescence in the law’s verdict on her action, a tragic “I told you so.” It was always this way, she seemed to be saying to the people who watched from the street; it was what she had expected; it was a vindication of all her bitter words. This was what happened when one thought and dreamed and talked of freedom in this country that men called free. This was what happened when women and little children were starving. This was what happened when one cared about the people who were suffering, when one tried to rouse them to a demand for better things. The police came, and that was all.

Vaguely, the men and women near her understood what it was that she would have said to them, read the wordless message in her tragic eyes, saw, through the gaunt pride of her defeat, the things that lay beneath her bitterness.

At the corner she paused, for an instant, and the policemen caught her arm and pulled her on, rudely enough. But as she stood there at the turning of the street the people who had followed gazed at her once more, silently. Her face, as she looked back at the men and women and children whom she had fought for, and whom she was leaving, was the face of a thwarted Madonna. A vast blind motherhood, denied, turned to bitterness and heartbreak and spent desire: splendid misdirected energies: unreasoning futile strength; the power to give, distorted and bent toward a close-lipped ability to struggle and to pay: all a woman’s passion for sacrifice twisted awry until it had become merely the madness of an ineffectual vengeance,—these things there were in her face as she looked back, toward the crowds.

As the woman and her captors turned to cross the street, a child, ragged, laughing, exultantly young, ran over the cobbles in front of them and stumbled on the car tracks. He picked himself up, still laughing, and started on. But the threatened fall had disturbed his baby mastery of himself, and at the next step he was down again, falling flat on the cobbles this time, straight in the path of the prancing horses that a careless truckman was driving up the street.

Instinctively, the two policemen loosened their hold on their prisoner, stepping forward to a possible rescue. But the woman was before them. There was a magnificent conquering strength in her as she dashed across the car track. She had caught the child in an instant, thrusting him almost fiercely toward the safety of the curb. As she dragged him aside she reached out her other hand, large, strong, ungainly, and grasped the hoof of the horse nearest her, pushing at it, vainly. Then she fell backward, her head against the car track.
FOUR WALLS

The baby was still laughing when they picked him up. His child eyes caught the gleam of metal on the horses' harness. The unthinking gaiety of youth was in the little face, that showed no realization of the danger from which he had been snatched.

Once, the woman opened her eyes, alert and questioning. For a moment they rested on the child, laughing yet by the curbstone. In her face there was an expression that no one had ever seen there before,—a triumphant tenderness, a radiant fulfilment of peace. Her hands moved, as if seeking something, as a mother's might, at night. Then she lay still, heavily, in the policemen's arms.

FOUR WALLS

 SOME people love four careful walls—
    And some love out of doors.
    When just a rain-drop falls
The indoor people watch behind a window-pane.
They're so afraid of Weather out of doors—
These chimney-corner folks—
They like to walk on floors—
The ground and grass do not feel right
Beneath their house-taught feet.
And when at times they venture out
They think what People they will meet
And never see the Wonder-world at all.

It is not hard to tell
The ones who love the out of doors.
A joy they would not sell
For any gold, smiles in their eyes.

AILEEN CLEVELAND HIGGINS.