

A FALSE PREMISE.

Katherine Hardin tramped along the wet road singing softly to herself. From time to time she glanced apprehensively about as if ~~fixing~~ she feared someone was following her. Whenever she did this, her lips tightened in a grim line and an expression of firmness, not altogether pleasant for ill-doers, ^{to see} came into her eyes. Then she marched on swiftly, her heavy boots and short skirt disdaining the fact that the road was wet and filled with briars and tangled vines.

She found a huge rock and sat ^{down} leaning her back against a gnarled maple tree. The mists ^{hung} ~~hung~~ white and thick over the mountain crest and crept over the tops of the trees in the valley below. Autumn was beginning to show in the brilliant reds and golds of the maples and sumach, and the squirrels frisked and chattered and chased each other in the tree over her head. Finally, she arose, and gathering a branch with flaming scarlet leaves, tucked them in ^{her} ~~the~~ belt and tramped back to the Inn.

Carey met her on the porch and gazed reproachfully at the flaming leaves.

"You went walking alone?" he said in a low tender voice.

"Yes," replied Katherine, but in a tone loud enough for all those on the porch to hear, "I wanted a little tramp in the woods."





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"Yes," replied Mattie, "but in a town I found enough for all."
"You went walking alone?" he said in a low and hoarse voice.

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Dr. List looked up from his paper and smiled appreciatively at her fresh healthfulness, "Very good, very good," he murmured, "a constitutional in the early morning, very good."

Katherine threw her hat and coat on a chair and sank into a piazza rocker with her hands clasped musingly behind her head. Carey was coming close to her, she could hear his soft step and feel his presence. He found a chair and brought it near her own.

"It was delightful in the woods," she continued addressing Dr. List. "You people who won't walk but just drive and sit about don't know what you miss by not going alone sometimes ^{into} to the heart of the forest."

"Why didn't you let me go with you?" said Carey softly.

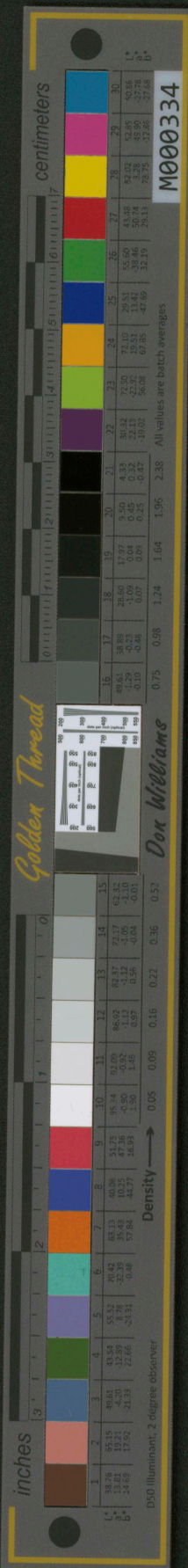
"I said alone," she replied in the same tone.

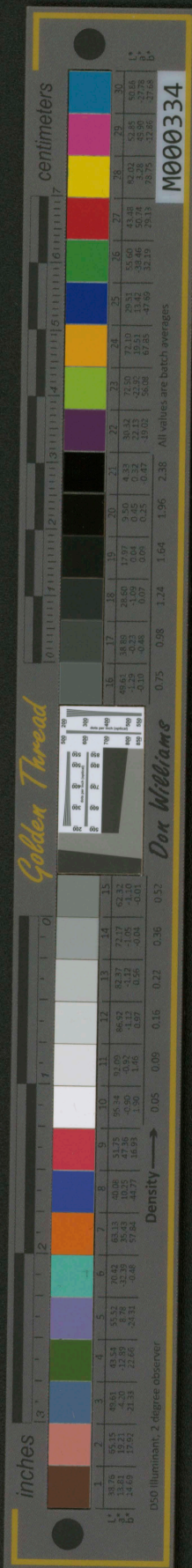
"Oh," said Carey and he rose and walked away. He looked injured and depressed, and Katherine laughed a little soft laugh, and then said "Puppy!" between her teeth.

Meanwhile Ernest Gardin, tired of the rather tame excitements of the Mountain Inn, whiled away his time in New York and planned each day to return, but each night found his plan still unfulfilled. On this particular day, he sat in the window of his almost deserted club and smoked contemplatively.

"Now I ought to go back to path," he mused, "but its beastly dull up there, and its a bit better here, though there isn't a soul in town."

He had been called down to the city suddenly on business, but





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"Now I ought to go back to path," he mused, "but the baby's half up there, and it's a bit better here, though there's a bit of a cold."

that business was completed.

"Kath can take care of herself," he continued. "She likes it up there, tramping over mountains and rustivating, playing golf in the day and bridge whist at night. Dear girl, I must bore her awfully. I'll give her a few days rest from me."

Hardin was sincere in this. He adored Katherine and he trusted her. Moreover, he was unselfish and believed that she could get along better without him than with him.

At that moment she was leaning back in the chair, her hands still clasped behind her head. Dr. List had gone in and the others who were on the porch had drifted away to their own occupations and amusements. Carey came and sat close to her again.

"You seem distrained," he murmured.

"Do I?" she responded brightly, "Well, you know the old adage about appearances and their deceit?"

"Yes, I know it, and I never found a better example than yourself."

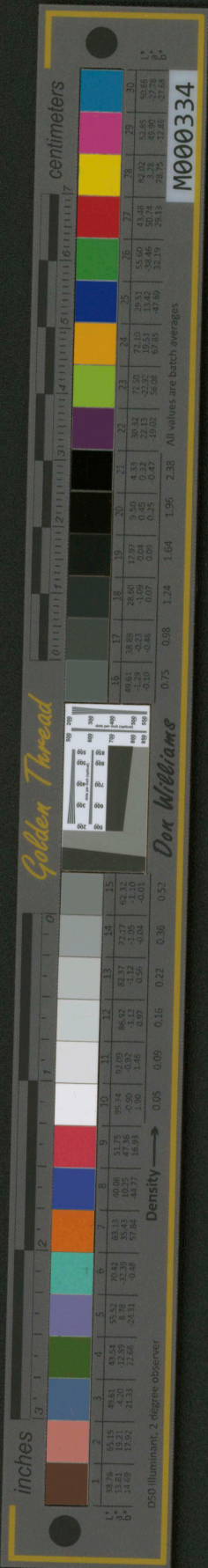
She turned on him wide eyes filled with mock surprise.

"Am I deceitful?"

"On, no, no, don't suppose for a minute I mean that. The re isn't a bit of deceit about you, only you constantly conceal your real feelings."

"But I don't," she protested, "there isn't one of my friends who does not say the contrary." She laid an emphasis on the word





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"Do I?" she responded brightly. "Well, you know the old adage about appearances and their deceits?"

"Yes, I know it, and I never found a better example than your-

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"Am I deceitful?"

"Oh, no, no, don't suppose for a minute I mean that. The fact is a bit of deceit about you, only you constantly conceal your real feelings."

"But I don't," she protested, "the only one of my friends who does not say so."

She laid an emphasis on the word

"friends" that should have conveyed a meaning to Carey. Evidently it did not, however, for he went on.

"Your friends do not understand you."

"Well, it isn't given us to understand one another fully. ^{at} It would be monotonous. Think of a world where you knew ^{ac} exactly what every one would do under given circumstances. Wouldn't it be a dull affair?"

"yes, for the world, but it is good to understand those whom we like."

"Oh, yes, as I said before, my friends understand me--"

"They think they do."

"--And Mr. Hardin does, and that is sufficient."

"He does not understand you well, he cannot. He does not appreciate you."

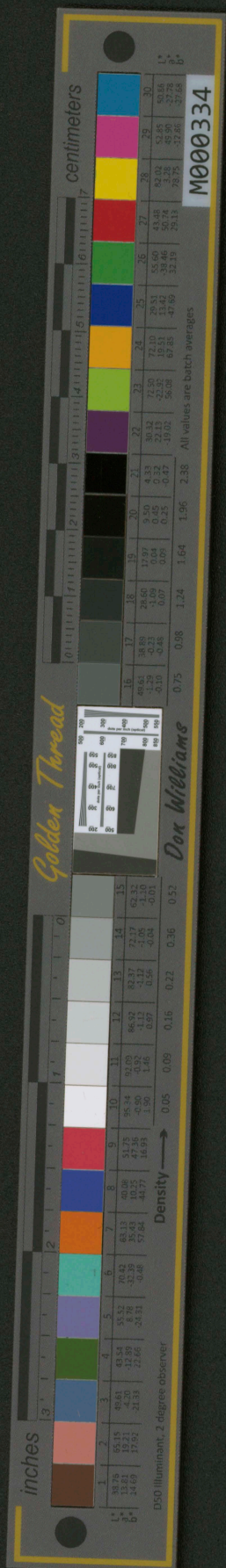
"You speak as one who knows, Mr. Carey," she said coldly, "It is refreshing to find someone with such positive inside information."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Hardin, I don't want to offend you."

"I am not offended," she replied wearily, and rose to go. He placed himself before her as if to block her path.

"Now I shall not let you go until you assure me of your forgiveness."

She looked down at him and the same grim smile came into her eyes that she had had in the woods. She was a tall woman with broad shoulders and an athletic look. There was not an ounce of





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"Now I shall not let you go until you assure me of your for-

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She looked down at him and the same grim smile came into her

eyes that she had had in the woods. She was a tall woman with

broad shoulders and an athletic look. There was not an ounce of

superfluous flesh about her. Her whole personality bespoke cleanliness, out-door exercise, wholesomeness. He was a trifle shorter than she, thin, wiry, soft-stepping.

"Forgiveness?" she inquired, then laughed a ringing laugh., "Forgiveness for what? You amuse me, Mr. Carey."

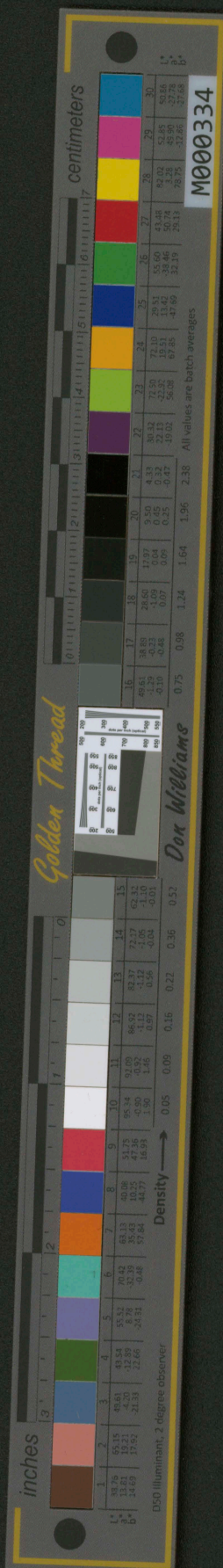
He still stood stubbornly in her way, and a flush crept up under his sallow skin.

"pardon me," she said sweetly, "May I pass?"

"Not until you have answered my question," he retorted doggedly.

Her face went very red, and with a sudden movement, almost before she realized herself what she was doing, she put one strong hand on his shoulder and twirled him out of her path. Then she went in the door of the Inn without giving the startled man so much as one backward glance.

People who did not know the ~~garden~~ very well, said they were "eccentric". This meant that they could not understand how two young people could be such good comrades. Those who did know them, said they were idea and model. Katherine believed in Ernest. He might be away from her for months, but when he returned she would know that he came back with a clean conscience and an honest record. But they were such good comrades that there was no occasion for their being much apart. She would be ready to go with him at a minute's notice, wherever his fancy led. Ernest returned the compliment of trust. There was no gush about either of them. They were simple





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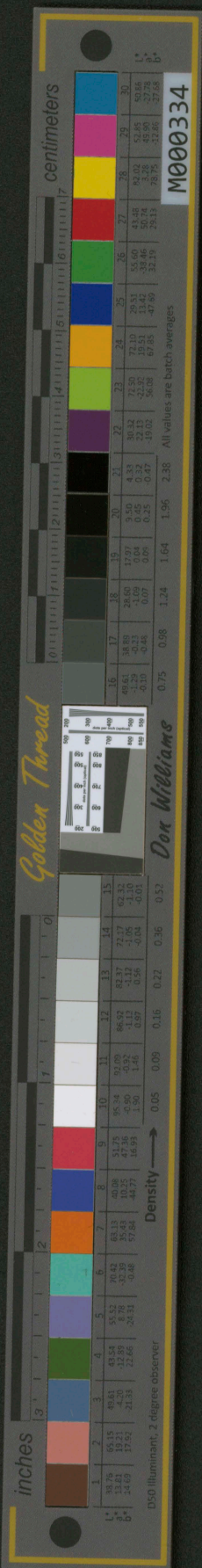
companions and good friends rather than passionate lovers.

The honeymoon was well over and they were just entering that happier state of complete understanding when Kellogg Carey first met them one summer at a house party. This was ~~just~~ two years before the opening of this story. After the fashion of mankind, he promptly broke the tenth commandment. He was single and a little, very little, past thirty, and he had a comfortable competence. But he was a warden in fashionable St. Swithin's, and he bent his knees devoutly every Sunday and chanted a reverential petition for help in keeping the commandments. Therefore, he should have known better.

Katherine was kind to him after her fashion. He interested her. He could play golf and whist well, and Ernest seemed to like him, so she set herself out to please. Carey rubbed his hands and congratulated himself. He had never had a liason with a married woman and he welcomed the prospect of one with such a woman as Katherine with glee.

That summer passed uneventfully for his suit. Katherine was blindly oblivious of the smiles that the other members of the house cast at her when Carey approached her. She was still too much interested in her husband to be conscious of other men as men, not as figures to fill out games. When the winter came, they saw something of Carey. They met out, and at church and Ernest would have him call and have dinner once or twice. Still Katherine was unconscious.

There was some talk of a slumming expedition at Mrs. Cothwaites one night, and Carey took it up eagerly.





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"You will go, won't you?" he said to Katherine.

"I don't know," she replied doubtfully. Ernest was away and the prospect of an expedition of that nature without him did not appeal to her.

"Oh, dear, yes," gushed Mrs. Cothwaite, "It will be truly Bohemian. We'll go about ~~hall~~ all the doubtful corners and poke into queer places and then we'll wind up with supper in a Chinese restaurant with chop-sticks. It will be perfectly delightful."

"Won't you go?" persisted Carey. He had managed to separate her from the rest of the group.

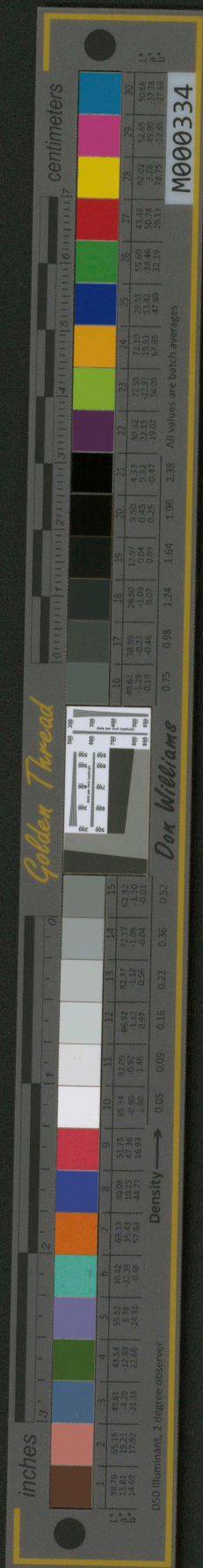
"No--" she said slowly, "I don't believe Ernest would care to have me go in that sort of thing."

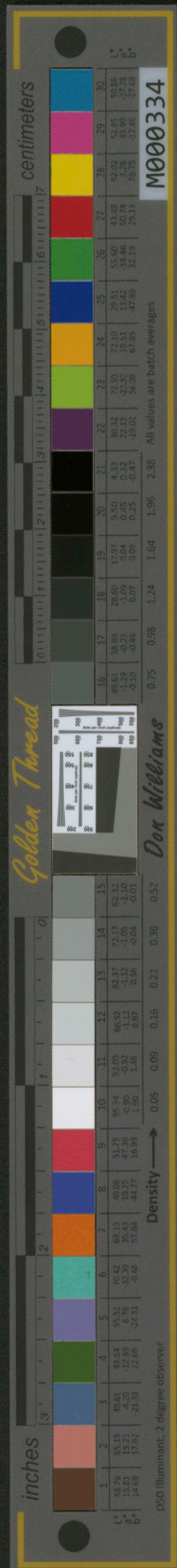
"But he's not here," said Carey wonderingly, "he's away out West. You must amuse yourself."

"Mr. Carey," said Katherine severely, "do you think for a moment that I'd do something when Mr. Hardin was away that I wouldn't do when he was here?"

"Oh, no, no," he replied cautiously, "no, no,--but I didn't think --I didn't know--" but she had walked back to the chattering group and left him standing helplessly staring after her.

Then she and Hardin went to Europe and were gone for a year. When they returned, Carey was the first of the callers, and the most gushing in his expressions of delight at their return. She sighed a little when Hardin asked him to become one of their party that summer at the Mountain Inn. She would have liked to beg her hus-





"You will go, won't you?" he said to her.

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"Won't you go?" persisted Gerty. "I had managed to separate her from the rest of the group."

"No--" she said slowly, "I don't believe Ernest would care to have me go in that sort of thing."

"But he's not here," said Gerty wonderingly, "he's away out West. You must miss yourself."

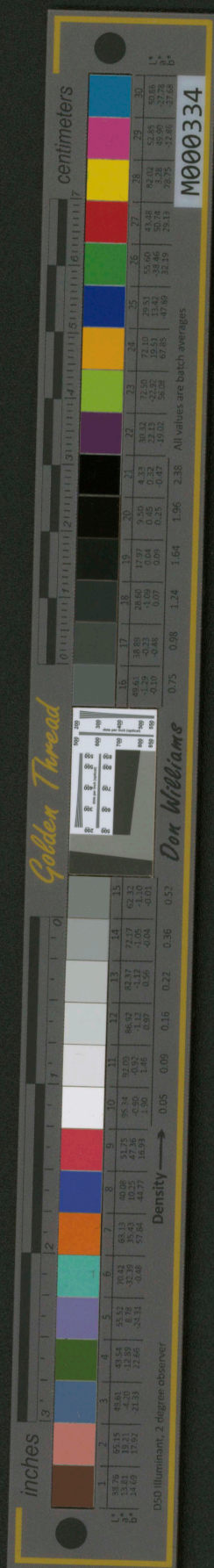
"Mr. Gerty," said Gerty in the severest way, "do you think for a moment that I'd do something when Mr. Goshwaite was away that I wouldn't do when he was here?"

"Oh, no, no," he replied cautiously, "no, no,--but I didn't think--I didn't know--" but she had walked back to the waiting group and left him standing helplessly staring after her.

Then she and Goshwaite went to Europe and were gone for a year. When they returned, Gerty was the first of the callers, and the most gushing in her expressions of delight at their return. She slipped a little when Goshwaite asked him to become one of their party that winter at the Johnson Inn. She would have liked to be for her-

band not to tell him about their summer plans, but there seemed no adequate reason to give for such a request. To say that she suspected Carey of being in love with her would not only sound conceited, but would probably cause Ernest to dislike a man who was possibly innocent, for after all, it was only a suspicion, and they had been away ^{or} ~~for~~ a year. To tell her husband that she did not like Carey would be illogical and senseless, for she had no reason that she could give for her dislike. Carey was gentlemanly always, and rather a favorite in his set and Ernest had been heard more than once to praise his fine qualities and commend him for his generous impulses. Then she reproached herself for doing the man an injustice. He doubtless had been trying to be pleasant ~~xxxx~~ to her, as she had been to him. Perhaps, he too, misunderstood her motives. So she resigned herself to the summer at Mountain Inn, and like the philosophical woman that she was, gave herself no further thought about the matter.

They had been at the Inn for a month, and Carey, as Katherine phrased it to herself, had "Behaved ^{pretty} real nicely". Indeed, he had paid assiduous court to Miss Crocker, and the Inn had set up a romance. Katherine knew, however, that the attentions to Miss Crocker were all paid with one eye on her. She knew he was trying to pique her. He had lingered by her side several times when they all went mountain climbing, and had tried to say little sugared things. He had once caught her hand surreptitiously and pressed it. She wiped it violently on her skirt and reddened angrily. Carey laughed amiably;





inches

Golden Thread

centimeters

D50 Illuminant, 2 degree observer

Density

Don Williams

All values are batch averages

M000334

8.

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caught her hand conversationally and pressed it. She whiped it vio-
lently on her skirt and reddened angrily. Gary frowned slightly;

he took this as a sign of shyness and prudence. Once they were sitting at a card table and he pressed close to her, she pretended not to notice, and it happened again, so that now she nervously placed another between them or gave up playing altogether if they were compelled to sit at the same table.

One day she had been out on the golf links all morning and coming in at noon, flushed and happy, she met Ernest in the hall with his bag.

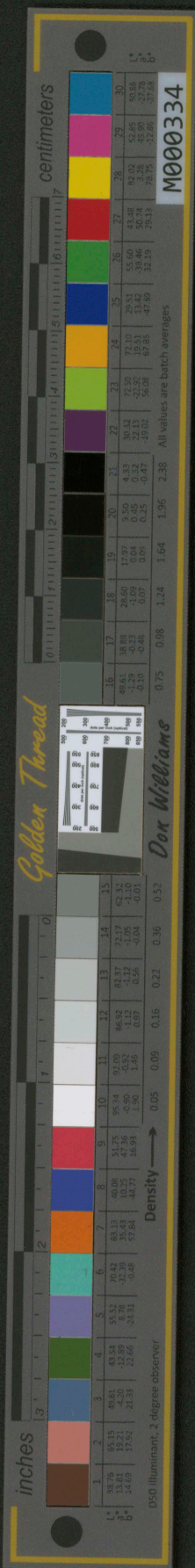
"Why, Ernest," she gasped, "you're not going away?"

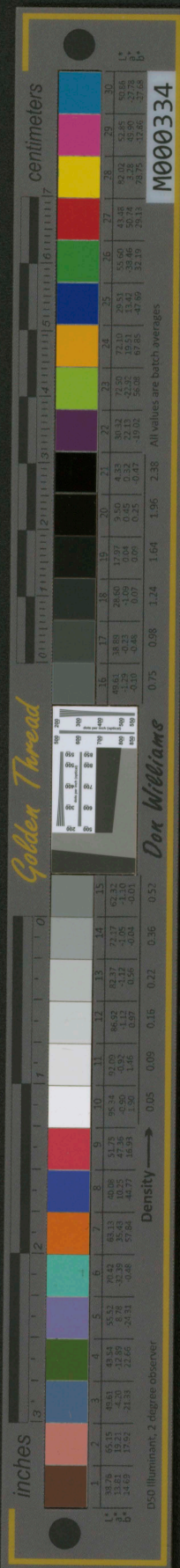
"Yes, little woman," he said hurriedly, "awfully sorry. Glad you got in, though. Thought I wouldn't get to see you before I went. Just got a message from Blackton, serious business. Barely got time to catch my train. Be back soon." He kissed her, and thrusting the telegram which had called him to the city in her hand, rushed out and sprang into the trap to go to the station.

Katherine went slowly up to her room, her eyes filling with tears. Miss Crocker, who had not seen the meeting in the hall, but who had noted Ernest's departure and heard Katherine shut and lock her door, spread the report that Mr. and Mrs. Hardin had quarrelled, and he had run off to the city to punish her.

"If only I had gotten in in time," Katherine was saying bitterly to herself, "if only I had. I would have gone to town with him, rather than stay here with that man. I know just what he'll do now."

When she went out on the porch before dinner, a dozen pairs of





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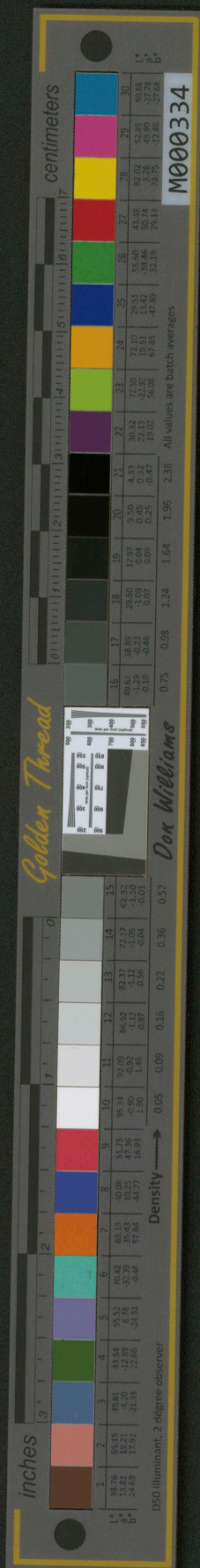
eyes were turned keenly on her, a dozen pairs of eyebrows were up-lifted meaningly as the eyes noted her serene self-poise. Miss Crocker inquired sympathetically if her head ached, and Mrs. Lamar proffered her viniagrette. Carey was eager to find the most comfortable chair for her. A hot flush of mortification passed over her as she realized the significance of these attentions, and a sudden feeling of resentment against Ernest as the innocent cause of it all possessed her, but only for a moment. In the next instant, she was smiling serenely into the dozen pairs of eyes.

"No, Miss Crocker, my head is not aching, thank you. I leave such feminine luxuries for young girls, like you." Miss Crocker was older than Katherine, and everyone knew it.

"You are very kind, Mrs. Lamar, but I never use a viniagrette. Don't bring me the most comfortable chair, Mr. Carey. Keep it for yourself, or for Mrs. Lamar. Comfort is a great consolation, but I don't need it."

Mrs. Lamar winced. It was well known that her husband travelled the greater part of the year in Europe to avoid living with her.

Carey had begun his attentions to her at once, but Katherine had skillfully foiled him somehow. He thought it still prudent, and smiled when he saw himself in fancy overcoming all her scruples, and making her give expression for her affection for him. But so far his efforts to obtain a tete-a-tete with her, she had managed to evade; his veiled allusions and soft whispers she had pretended not to notice. So a week had passed, and still Ernest had not re-





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11.

turned when she so abruptly put Carey out of her way as she entered the Inn door.

"I suppose I ought to apologize to that puppy," she said to herself in her room a few minutes later. "It was a most unlady-like thing to do, but I was provoked and the temptation was simply irresistible." She shook with laughter at the recollection of the look of bewilderment on his face. "Oh, if Ernest would only come back," she said vehemently, "I don't want to have an open break with that man. It would be so--so--gauche--and all that, but he disgusts me so!" She gave herself up to bitter thoughts about his peaked, sallow face, like a ferret's; his yellow eyes and pale hair, and spitefully drew a picture of a snake with Carey's head instead of its own.

Later in the day, she walked boldly up to him where he lolled in a hammock under the grape arbor.

"I'm very sorry I was so rude to you this morning," she said gently, "but I had asked you to let me pass, you know, and I was anxious to go to my room."

"Oh, that's all right," he replied cheerfully as he sprang to his feet, "I didn't mind that in the least."

"That's very good in you to say so," she said turning to go.

"Don't go away," he pleaded, "sit down for a moment, won't you please? I have something to say to you."

Katherine paused, considered, and glanced around nervously. The arbor had a wide opening which faced the Inn. They could be seen plainly from the porch. At least, it would not look like a clan-



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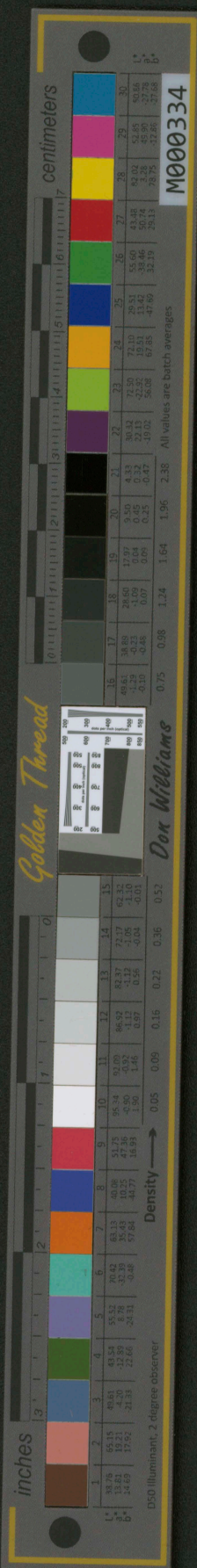
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seen plainly from the porch. At least, it wouldn't look like a chair-



destine meeting.

"Well?" she inquired, seating herself, and folding her hands in her lap.

He said nothing, but gazed intently at her, ~~his~~ eyes contracting and widening like one who fears and exults at the same time.

"Well?" she said again, "What is it?" she was calm and prepared for the worst. In a swift moment she had decided to have it out at once and be done with it.

"Oh, I haven't anything especial to say to you," ~~he~~ replied at last. "I merely want to talk to you."

"Is that all?" she laughed, and in the laugh there was a note of decided relief, "Well, it seems to me that you are always talking to me. Our party here is so small that we are all thrown more or less with each other constantly."

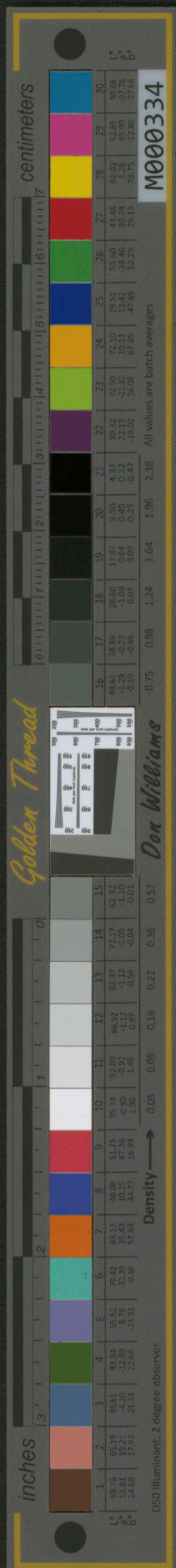
"Yes, I know," he said, "but it is hard to get a chance to speak to you seriously. It seems practically impossible to find you in a serious mood. You are always laughing and joking and hiding your real self."

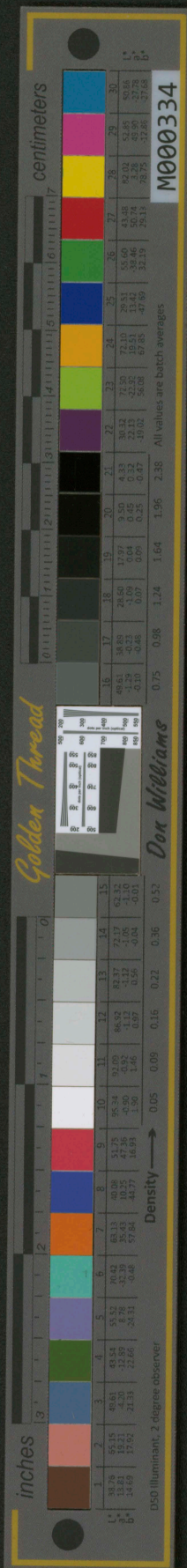
Katherine was interested and argumentative at once.

"How do you know that I'm hiding my real self?" she flashed out. "Why should I, why should any of us be serious here? We are all on a holiday and grave faces are unbecoming on holidays."

"perhaps," he assented, "but it is easy to see that your high spirits are not always unforced."

"Is that so?" she was laughing at him now.





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"Well?" she inquired, seeing herself, and folding her hands in her lap.

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"Is that so?" she was laughing at him now.

"Yes--I know you pretty well,I think,Mrs. Hardin,I think I understand you--I told you that this morning. But you are ^a study-- a very interesting study to me."

"How delightful," she laughed,"Here I have been going my way unsuspecting all this while,and suddenly I learn that I am a study to someone. Charming!"

"Now you are laughing again," he said reproachfully.

"Oh,no,I am not," she turned her dark eyes full upon him,"I assure you,I am not laughing. Do go on. I am interested." To herself she was saying,"There may be some way to check his fool without quarrelling with him."

He leaned back with a chagrined expression on his face,and there was silence in the arbor for a moment.

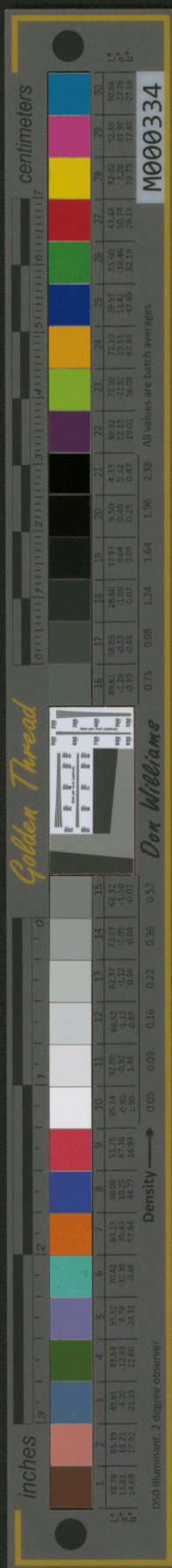
"If only you would be serious with me," he murmured.

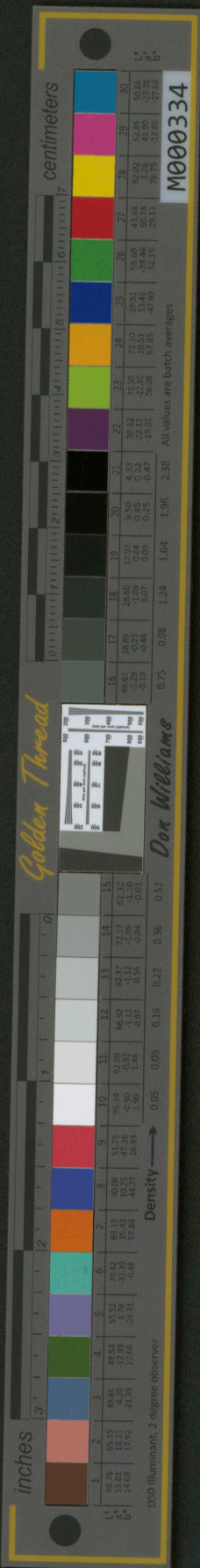
Katherine felt herself annoyed by the insistence of the word "serious" and made no reply.

"you are a study to me," he continued,"you go about now laughing,making merry and joking;you are the life of the Inn,in fact,yet all the while you are concealing your real feelings."

Katherine's eyes began to flash,but she answered coolly,"Yes?"

"There is danger,however,of your going too far in that sort of thing," he went on,"You may impress superficial observers with the idea that you are cold,hard-hearted and unfeeling. But there are others who are not deceived. I am one. But you mustn't carry the policy of concealment too far."





13.

"Yes--I know you pretty well, I think, Mrs. Hardin, I think I understand you--I told you that this morning. But you are a lady-- a very interesting lady to me."

"How delightful," she laughed, "Here I have been going my way unsuspecting all this while, and suddenly I learn that I am a study to someone. Charming!"

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14.

"Why, Mr. Carey, are you one of those men who insist that a woman must wear her heart on her sleeve?"

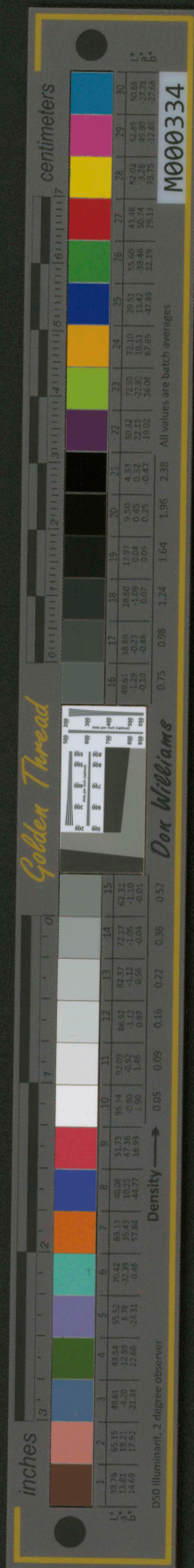
"Far from it, and as far as the world at large is concerned, you act perfectly right, but don't you think," here he leaned forward and spoke lower, "don't you think that sometimes when one is troubled it is better to speak it out, to confide in someone?"

"No," said Catherine slowly, "I don't. In fact, it is a dangerous policy."

"Usually it is, I must admit, but there are instances and instances. Mrs. Gardin," he spoke earnestly and there was a tremor in his voice, "I want you to feel perfectly at ease with me. I want you to feel that you have a friend in me. If there is any way that I can help you, don't feel constrained in asking me. I would ^{like} to be able to serve you in any way. Will you feel that and believe it?"

"Thank you, Mr. Carey," said Catherine in a light cool tone. "I never feel any hesitancy in asking my friends' help if I need it." She rose as she spoke and passed out of the arbor, but this time Carey winced at the unmistakeable emphasis that she laid on the word "Friends."

Her face was burning when she reached her room again, "Oh," she groaned, pacing the floor rapidly, "oh, oh, to think that he should say that to me. He thinks that Ernest and I have quarrelled, and that he can offer me his protection. The little yellow-faced scoundrel! How can I tactfully make him know his place without causing an open breach so that everyone will know? Why doesn't





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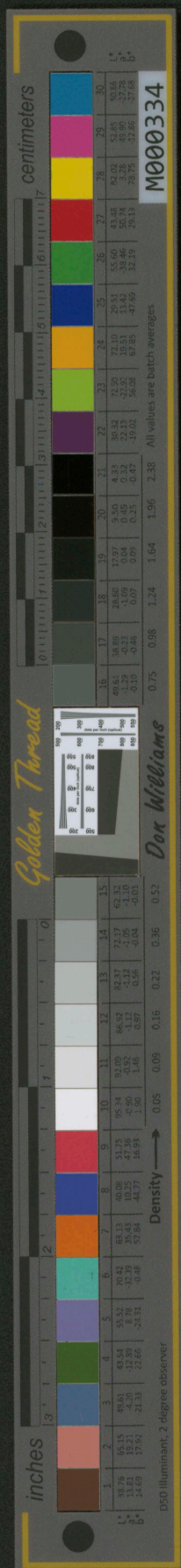
Ernest come back?"

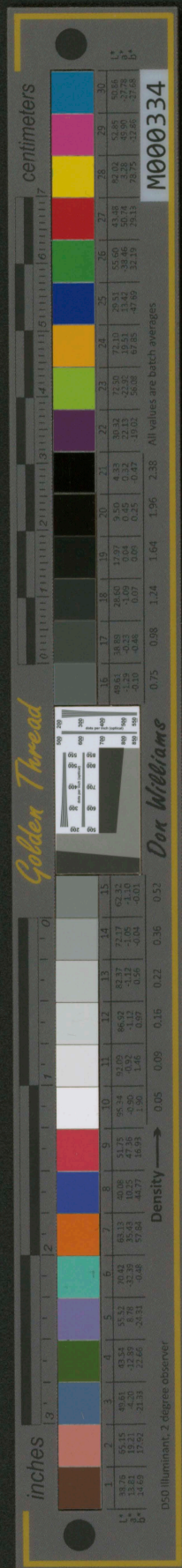
At that very moment, however, Ernest had encountered Pattison, and after a long confab, had accepted that gentleman's strenuous invitation for a week on Long Island.

"Kath will get along," said Ernest to himself, answering some doubting questions put by his conscience, "and she'll be glad of the change for me. I'll just drop her a line."

The days dragged slowly enough for Katherine. She walked and and rode, played golf and whist and sang and danced with her customary vivacity; but she ~~felt~~^{felt} nervous and harassed and irritated. Ernest had frequently run off on little excursions like this, but it seemed too provoking that he should take it into his head to do so just now when she needed him most. A wild thought on inventing some excuse to go to the city entered her head, but it seemed silly now, for she knew everyone in the house believed that she and Ernest had quarrelled and such a step would only give color to the rumor and make it seem that she was rushing to him to effect a reconciliation.

Carey was ardent and pointed in his devotion to her, and Miss Crocker revenged herself by saying cattish things which kept Katherine in a state resembling the condition of a healthy baby with prickly heat. He was subdued at first in his manner when they had a moment alone, which she contrived should be seldom. Still, he showed to everyone in the Inn that his interest centered upon her. Once when several of them had started for a walk, and were stopped by some visitors coming from a neighboring cottage just as he had succeeded in playing himself by Katherine's side, he flatly refused to





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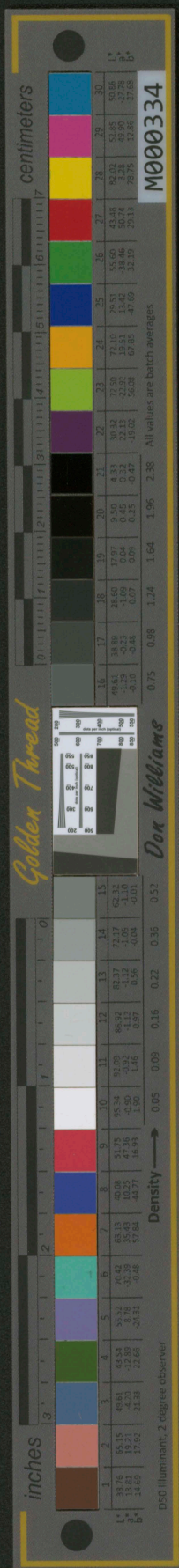
turn back, and when his objections were overruled, was so sulky all the rest of the evening that even unseeing Br. List commented. Again, when he found that owing to Katherine's manipulations, he was to play cards at another table than hers, he flung himself out on the porch where he stayed all evening alone, smoking violently.

Thus things went on until the day of the coaching party. Katherine was exuberant on the top of the coach, feeling relieved, perhaps, because Carey had refused to with the rest. He was driving ahead of the coach in a little low phaeton. He plead a headache as a reason for not going with the others.

"I will reach the farm-house before you," he laughed, "and have everything ready for you."

They were a merry party who sat down to luncheon at the farm-house, and ^{now} ~~last~~ were the praises of Carey who had managed the whole affair. After luncheon, it was proposed to walk about the farm and explore. Little groups drifted off, falling insensibly together, and Katherine found herself alone with Carey. He seemed little aware of this at first. He talked carelessly for ^a ~~an~~ while, and finally, when ^{turned} ~~they were walking~~ down a shady lane, he tried turn the conversation into a more personal channel, Katherine feverishly talked books, plays art, music, golf, everything she could think of, scarce giving herself time to breathe.

"It seems to me, Mr. Carey," she said at last, "that we are walking a long while. Haven't we seen all that there is to be seen?"





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17.

"Are you in a hurry to rejoin the others?" he asked tenderly.

"Well, I ~~wouldn't~~ care to be left," she replied.

"I have my phaeton."

"Yes, I know -but--that isn't the coach."

And as if in answer to her words, the coach dashed by them on the road, loaded with the merry crowd, vigorously winding horns and shrieking joyous farewells to the farmhouse people.

Katherine stood stunned for a moment and then began making frantic efforts to attract their attention. There was no use, however. The coach bowed on, and she and Carey were left staring at each other.

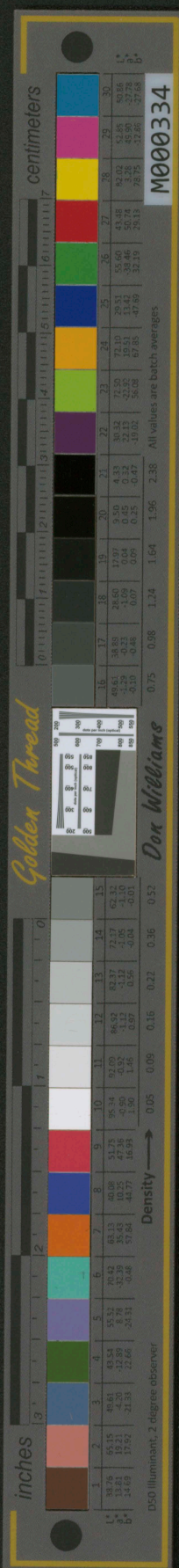
"It's no use being worried," he said placidly, "I'll drive you home."

"Very well," she replied calmly, but her voice trembled a little. She ~~was~~ ^{now} the whole plan now, the feigned headache, the phaeton, and the pretended sights to see. Well, she must get to the Inn, and there was nothing to do but to resign herself to a long drive with Carey and to the sneers and inuendos at the end of the drive.

Carey wasted no time. As soon as they were fairly well under way, he let the reins drop and threw one arm carelessly across the back of the seat.

"Won't you drive a little faster, Mr. Carey," asked Katherine sitting up very stiff and straight, "I'm very tired."

"Certainly," he answered readily enough, and whipped up the horse. They drove along in silence for a few minutes, then he said reproachfully, "Why such a hurry?"





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18.

"I am tired," she replied, but the horse had dropped again into a walk.

"Do you know sometimes I wonder at you," he said, "There are moments when you seem to let the mask drop and reveal your real soul beneath. Just then, there was such a tender wistful, earnest expression in your eyes, as though a secret sorrow was pressing on you. What were you thinking of? Would you mind telling me?"

"Not in the least," she responded cheerfully, "I was just planning a new autumn dress. There was a bunch of crimson maple in a clump of dead leaves, and I was thinking how well I'd like a golden brown with dashes of crimson here and there."

Carey did not laugh as she had expected him to; he looked hurt.

"Planning dresses when I'm with you?"

"Certainly, why not? I plan most of my dresses when I'm with Ernest, and he's the most interesting person I've ever been with."

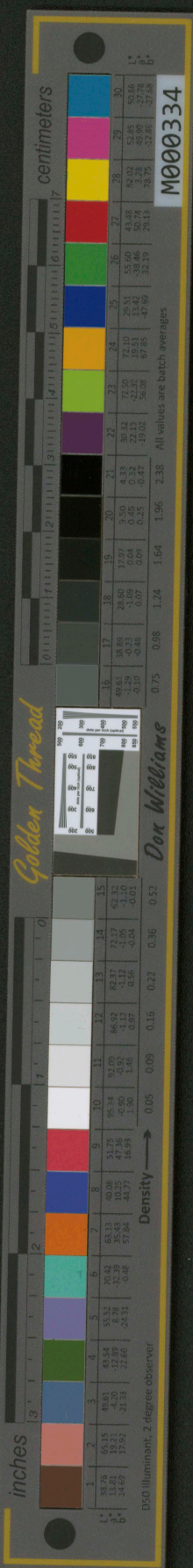
"What a wife you are!" he said gazing at her admiringly, "what a lucky fellow Yardin is."

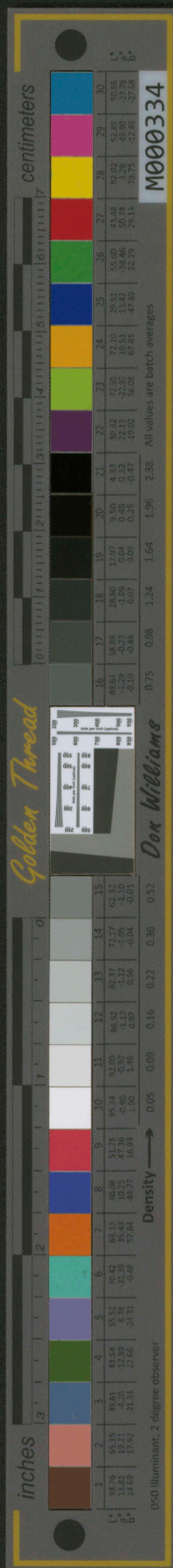
"Why don't you say what a lucky woman I am?" she inquired merrily.

He paid no attention to the query, "If I were near you much, I should be tempted to break the tenth commandment."

"But you wouldn't," she said, "There are too many beautiful young girls in the world." The expression sounded flat and tame to her, but she was talking against time.

"Bah," he replied, giving the reins an impatient jerk, "I was





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"What a wife you are!" he said, gazing at her admiringly, "what a lucky fellow, Ernie is."

"Why don't you say what a lucky woman I am?" she indignantly retorted.

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"Oh," he replied, "I wish the road was longer and darker," and

19.

engaged to one of those beautiful young girls" once, and she jilted me." His face darkened as he spoke.

"Sendable girl," said Katherine to herself, aloud she said banteringly,

"And you've gone your way single and unconsolated ever since? How romantic."

"Oh, no, I've forgotten all about the incident. We were both young and silly. She's quite a matron now. I've never married because I didn't meet the right woman until too late."

Katherine was silent. She looked nervously at the road. They had not gone one third of the way.

"What beautiful farms," she said hastily after an embarrassed pause. There was no mistaking the meaning in his last words or the look that he gave her.

"Yes, I've seen them before. But now, I'm beginning to feel the need of a companion, a woman who is my ideal."

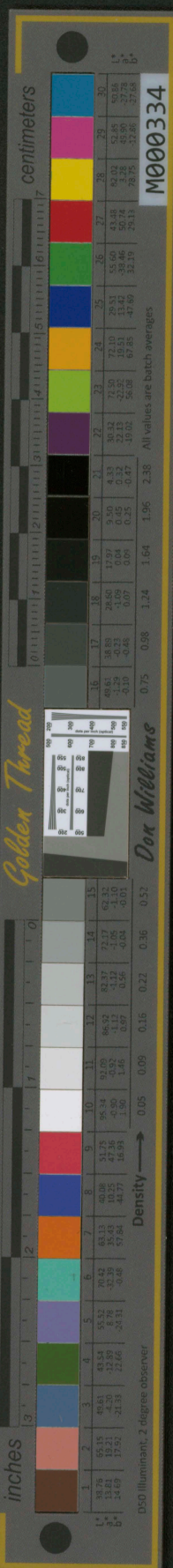
"I'm sorry that I haven't an unmarried sister or any neives old enough to be interesting, so I can't help you."

"You can help me," he said so low that she could scarcely hear him. Then he added, "If only I had met you years ago."

"It would have made no difference whatever," she answered hastily.

"Wouldn't it?" He was still driving with one hand, and with the other he grasped one of her ungloved ones lying in her lap.

"Wouldn't it? Then does it make a difference now?"



inches

Golden Thread

centimeters



D50 Illuminant, 2 degree observer

Don Williams

M000334

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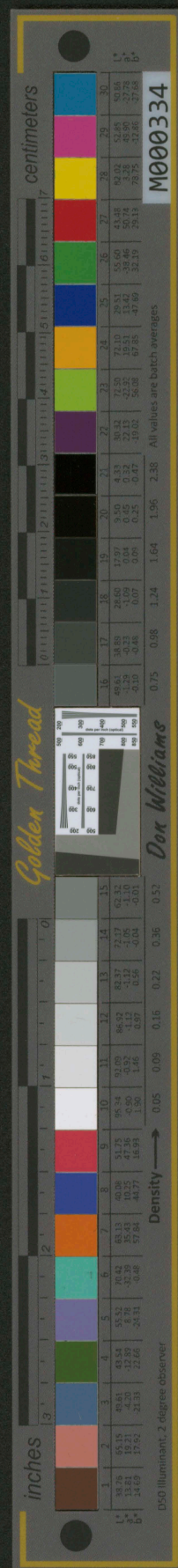
engaged to one of those beautiful young girls" once, and she tilted

She drew back as though a reptile had touched her,

"No," she said speaking rapidly and tensely, "no, it would have made no difference. I understand you perfectly, Mr. Carey. I have understood and seen through you months ago, but I have tried to be as polite and courteous as possible and avoid an open breach for my husband's sake. I did not want to involve him in a quarrel with you. I did not want any scandal. But you misunderstood me, or pretended to misunderstand me. You could not take the hints which I gave you, you forced yourself on me, and planned this whole ride home in order to say things to me that no gentleman who called himself so in truth would say to another man's wife."

He would have stopped her, but she put her hands up to check him and went on.

"I know your type and you represent it well. you are one of those men who go about flattering women into the belief that they are misunderstood and neglected by their husbands. Then when you have such an empty-headed woman in your power, you laugh over her with your friends. You believe that every woman only needs a chance. You started out with a false premise--that all married women are flirts. I know your stock in trade. you have used it well on me, but you were too engrossed in your own plans to see that I was only annoyed by you. you first tried to pique by your attentions to Miss Crocker, as if I cared whom you showed attentions to. And then, when my husband went away, believing that we had quarrelled, you pretended interest in my supposedly hidden sufferings, and offered your-





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She drew back as though a reptile had touched her.

21.

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All the pent-up scorn and disgust and irritation which she had experienced in the last few weeks were in her voice, and Carey shrank from her, his face paling and flushing by turns.

"As I said," she continued, "I tried to avoid an open break with you for the sake of appearances, but you have forced me to protect myself. Had you had more tact and discernment and less fatuous self-conceit, you would have understood me better."

"Do you mean all you say?" he asked bitterly.

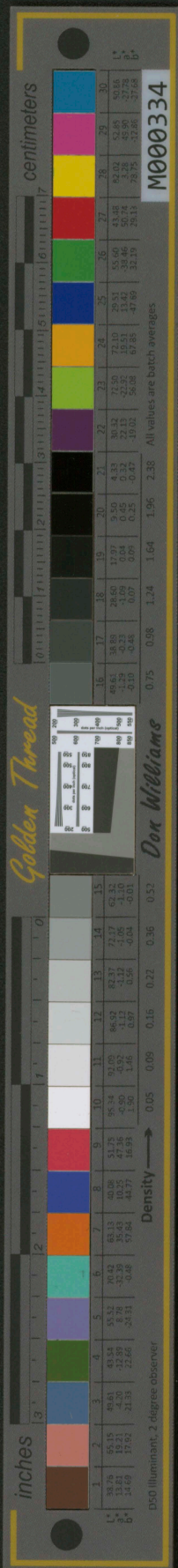
"Every word, and more that I can't express. Now listen to me. You have compromised ~~my~~ by forcing me to drive home with you alone, and I demand of you in reparation that you try to overtake the coach and act when we are with the others as though nothing had passed between us."

"I can't overtake the coach," he said sullenly and doggedly.

"Very well, then, I can. I know a short cut through the woods that ought to bring us to the main road before or as soon as the others, if we haven't wasted time while you let the horse walk." She reached out for the reins as she spoke.

"I can drive," he said shortly, holding on to the lines. She took the whip from its socket and lashed the horse furiously. They dashed recklessly through the woods and reached the main road just as the coach came dashing around a curve.





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"I can drive," he said shortly, holding on to the lines. She took the whip from the socket and held the horse firmly. They dashed recklessly through the woods and reached the main road just as the coach came dashing around a curve.

"How charming," said Miss Crockett sweetly as Katherine climbed on the coach, "What an idyllic ride for you and Mr. Carey."

"Hardly idyllic," said Katherine calmly as she bestowed her skirt. "It was very annoying for both of us. We had to hurry so to overtake you, you know."

When they reached the Inn, Ernest Gardin stood on the porch to welcome them.

"Hullo, hullo," he cried cheerfully, "so afraid you wouldn't get back in time, little woman," he said kissing Katherine, "think you could leave on the night train, Kath? Pattison wants us for tomorrow night."

"Nothing would suit me better," returned Katherine promptly.

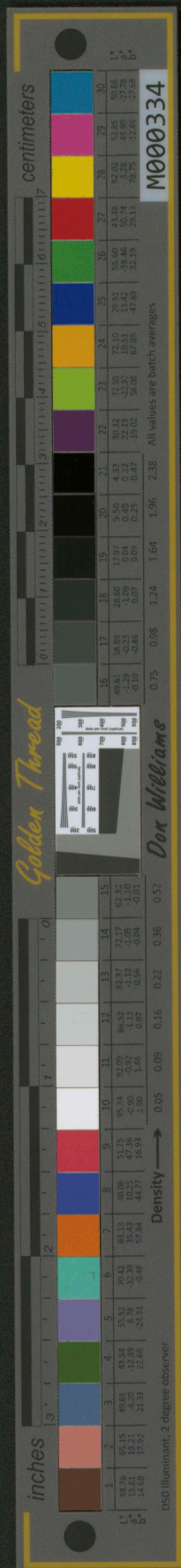
It was a month or two later when she was making out her list for the winter dinners, Ernest scanned it closely.

"How is it, little woman, that I don't see Carey's name," he queried.

"Carey--Carey--" murmured Katherine. She wrote the name down, scratched it out, then threw her pen down suddenly.

"Ernest," she said anxiously, "if I tell you something you won't make any row, will you?"

"Is it what Miss Crockett was trying to tell me last summer?" he inquired.



inches

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Golden Thread

centimeters



D50 Illuminant, 2 degree observer

Density

Don Williams

All values are batch averages

M000334

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