

Befall

“At first... the Creightons, under the shadow of the disaster which had befallen them, had felt grateful that at least they could still make an honest living.”

Something bad or unpleasant to happen to someone or something.

Bread-winner

“But... the situation came to be accepted as an irremediable fact; and it defined itself by contrast to other households where the man was the bread-winner.”

A person who supports oneself and those dependent upon them by his or her earnings.

Contempt

"It had... been the property of some great “booster” who had aimed at giving expression to his contempt for mere practicality by building into it many reentrant angles,”

A feeling that someone or something is not worthy of any respect or approval.

Decay

"It was a very large house, for a small town. But, as rapidly almost as it had been run up, regardless of expense, it had decayed.”

To go slowly from a bad condition to worse by losing characteristic quality, strength, health, etc.

Drudge

"More and more Tom Creighton... – partly under the passive pressure exerted by his wife who simply ceased doing certain things – began to be the household drudge”

A person who does boring, monotonous, or unpleasant work.

Encumbrance

“Rarely, henceforth, did she consider his wishes; she acted and spoke as if she considered him an encumbrance.”

A burden, impediment or annoyance.

Flagrant

“What, to its original owner, must have appealed as its very beauty, had, in its decay, become its flagrant and ostentatious ugliness”

Shockingly noticeable or evident.

Flaunt

“At a distance, it greeted the new-comer many-eyed, snowy, garish like a decayed woman of the street who flaunts her paint and her cheap jewelry,”

To show something in a very open way so that other people will notice.

Garish

“At a distance, it greeted the new-comer many-eyed, snowy, garish like a decayed woman of the street who flaunts her paint and her cheap jewelry,”

Crudely or tastelessly colorful, showy, or elaborate.

Improvident

“Nearly every western town has some such... relics of a past prosperity which proclaim... the improvident lavishness of a generation of newly-rich promoters,”

Not foreseeing and failing to provide for future needs.

Infirmity

“Then, slowly and carefully, so it would not hurt – but also... to impress a possible spectator with his infirmities – he turned his head and peered along the street,”

Physical weakness, frailty, feebleness of body, resulting from some defect, disease, or old age.

Irremediable

“But, as time went by and the memory of past sufferings and anxieties faded, the situation came to be accepted as an irremediable fact,”

Unable to be repaired, cured or corrected.

Leisure

“And Tom, having more leisure to smoke in than formerly, was sorely tempted to ask for a pound and a half, but refrained from doing so”

Time free from work or duties which one can spend as one pleases.

Ostentatious

“What, to its original owner, must have appealed as its very beauty, had, in its decay, become its flagrant and ostentatious ugliness”

Something displayed in a manner calculated to attract attention.

Perpendicular

“As the traveller approached, he saw the broken panes... the cracking and warping boards, the bulging walls, and the once perpendicular corner-posts sadly out of plumb,”

Of a person or thing: maintaining a standing or upright figure or posture; erect.

Plight

“People took pity on their plight,”

A condition, state, or situation, especially an unfavorable or unfortunate one.

Plumb

“As the traveller approached, he saw the broken panes... the cracking and warping boards, the bulging walls, and the once perpendicular corner-posts sadly out of plumb,”

The state of being aligned perfectly straight down or up in a perpendicular position.

Pretence

“Just as he would see the poor, foolish pretence on passing, in the street, the once gay but now aging cocotte overflowing with fat.”

The act of pretending or alleging falsely.

Rebellion

“He paused at the recollection; a feeling of impotent rebellion overpowered him; and he spat his words out venomously.”

Resistance to or defiance of any authority, controlling power, or convention.

Reentrant

“It had... been the property of some great “booster” who had aimed at giving expression to his contempt for mere practicality by building into it many reentrant angles,”

Reentering or pointing inwards.

Refrain

“And Tom, having more leisure to smoke in than formerly, was sorely tempted to ask for a pound and a half, but refrained from doing so”

To stop oneself from doing something.

Revolt

“But when, on the first of October, his wife had brought him a pound of a different brand, cheaper by thirty cents, he had silently revolted.”

To act in a way that shows that you do not accept the control of someone or something.

Spite

“But suddenly his thoughts took a turn. Sit outside? Let the fires go out? Save fuel? Ostentatiously and out of spite?”

A desire to anger or humiliate a person because you feel that you have been treated wrongly.