

Sleep? Not now. But he consents to sit down, and to have his brow smoothed.

"Yes," he keeps saying, "might as well call this the finish. I'll get over it. . . . Worst of it is, Polly, I'm not sick. Not really sick."

A pause.

"I'm good for a long time yet, with care. All the doctors admit that. But what to do——"

A much longer pause.

"I suppose—I might as well take that job on the *Press*."

"I would."

"It would seem like getting home, some way; and like starting over, and having to make good——"

They are silent again for some seconds. He rises again restlessly.

"Has it all been a waste, Polly? When you think of it all, what do you suppose Providence, or what-you-call-it, is about? And poor old Uncle Sam! To spend all that time and effort on me, and the others who didn't pan out. . . . Well, it must have been for something. . . ."

The blackness outside is beginning to pale.

"You know, it makes me feel . . . I'm no longer a kid. Remember the poem? . . . Well, youth's sweet-scented manuscript is closed. . . . What next?"

"The next," says Pauline, sternly, "will be bed. Let all those problems and reasons wait. Nobody gets anywhere trying to solve them, anyway."