

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

ators, of which Senate he is a member, it was felt that some new crisis is near at hand; but that, instead of being sudden and all concluding as has all along been supposed, it was now decided that the coming fulfilment would be gradual and in stages. This was all that he volunteered as I was passing through the room; and, seeing that he was engaged in earnest debate with three friends who had come quite a distance to discuss the question, I did not think it becoming for me to interrupt them. However, he will be glad to explain it all to us in detail this evening. And now, to go back to the pansies, what else about them?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Why not."

"I can easily see why not. Is it impossible to unburden ourselves of things and desires impossible of fulfilment, or is it hope that hopes against hope that in some way the impossible can be accomplished? If I am unhappy, why should I not be silent? And then, why might I not speak out and be done of it? It is this. In spite of the knowledge of how welcome I am here, you know I am yet after all in one sense only a stranger; except to the extent, as you kindly insist, that you have adopted me. I am like a wandering star away from its natural orbit. I am lonesome. No, I don't want you to think for a moment that you are not kind to me; you, all I meet are the perfection of kindness to me. I know what I would like, and yet somehow I feel convinced it cannot be."

"But possibly it can. Tell me."