

WHOLLY GIVEN OVER TO SENTIMENT 5

He paused and looked down at her for an instant, rather as if he hesitated to say what was in his mind. He did not know that he had already said it.

But she knew it, and she smiled at him, understanding — and sympathizing. "But you are glad you are on your way back to your work," said she. "So am I."

He drew a relieved breath. "Bless you," said he. "I'm glad you are — if it's true. It's only that I'm so refreshed by this wonderful fortnight that I — well — I want to go to work again — work with all my might. I feel as if I could do the best work of my life. That doesn't mean that I don't dread to see the first patient, for I do. Whoever he is, I hate the sight of him! Can you understand?"

She nodded. "It will be like the first plunge into cold water. But once in — —"

"That's it. Of course, if he happened to be lying on my lawn, all mangled up and calling for me to save his life, I'd welcome the sight of him, poor chap. But he won't be interesting, like that. He'll be a victim of chronic dyspepsia. Or worse — she'll be a woman who can't sleep without a dope. I have to get used to that kind by degrees, after a vacation; I don't warm up to 'em, on sight."

"Yet they're very miserable, some of those patients who are quite able to walk to your office, and very grateful to you if you relieve them, aren't they?"