

"Yes. I mean—not exactly."

"Who told you? Is it not splendid?" enthusiasm shining in her eyes.

"Splendid! Yes—that is, for him," replied the doctor without emotion. "I congratulate——"

"But how did you hear?"

"I did not exactly hear, but I had no difficulty in—ah—making the discovery."

"Discovery?"

"Yes, discovery. It was fairly plain; I might say it was the feature of the view; in fact it stuck right out of the landscape—hit you in the eye, so to speak."

"The landscape? What can you mean?"

"Mean? Simply that I am at a loss as to whether Mr. Smith is to be congratulated more upon his exquisite taste or upon his extraordinary good fortune."

"Good fortune, yes, is it not splendid?"

"Splendid is the exact word," said the doctor stiffly.

"And I am so glad."

"Yes, you certainly look happy," replied the doctor with a grim attempt at a smile, and feeling as if more enthusiasm were demanded from him. "Let me offer you my congratulations and say good-by. I am leaving."

"You will be back soon, though?"

"Hardly. I am leaving the West."

"Leaving the West? Why? What? When?"

"To-night. Now. I must say good-by."

"To-night? Now?" Her voice sank almost to a whisper. Her lips were white and quivering. "But do they know at the house? Surely this is sudden."

"Oh, no, not so sudden. I have thought of it for some time; indeed, I have made my plans."