

happy as I desire, perhaps, but no doubt I'm as happy as I deserve."

"No," she answered, "you are not. And oh, Gifford, there is so much sorrow in the world, the only thing which makes life possible is love, because that is the only thing which does not change."

"I am afraid it can never be for me," he said, after a moment's silence, "except the joy of giving love."

"Why?" she asked gently.

Gifford did not speak; he rose, and began to pace up and down in front of the porch, crossing and re-crossing the square of light which fell from the open hall door. "I ought not to talk about it," he said at last. "I've got it down at the very bottom of my life, a sort of foundation stone on which to build noble things. Your words make it spring up into a whole palace of beauty; but it is in the air,—it is in the air! You know what I mean: it must always be giving with me; she will never care. She never could, having loved once. And it is curious, Helen, but in a certain paradoxical way I'm content she should n't. She would not be the woman she is, if she could love twice."

Helen smiled in the darkness. "Gifford"—she began.

But he interrupted her, flinging his head back, in impatient despair. "No, it cannot be, or it would have been, don't you see? Don't encourage me, Helen; the kindest thing you can do is to kill any hope the instant it shows its head. There was a time, I was fool enough to think—it was just after the engagement was broken. But I soon saw from her letters there was no chance for me."

"But Gifford,"—Helen almost forgot to protect Lois, in her anxiety to help him,—“you must not think that. They were never engaged."

Gifford stood still and looked at her, then he said something in a low voice, which she could not hear.

"I must not say another word," she said hurriedly. "I've no right even to speak as I did. But oh, Gifford, I could not see you lose a chance of happiness. Life is so short, and there is so much sorrow! I even selfishly wanted the happiness of your joy, for my own sake."

Still Gifford did not speak; he turned sharply on his heel, and began his restless walk. His silence was getting unbearable, when he stopped, and said gently, "I thank you, Helen."