

Betty, an' git it over. An' tell me the truth, for I will not take anythin' less."

His voice was strained and unnatural. Fear was sickening him, but he would not show it.

"Are you to make both sides to the bargain?" she said.

"No. I've given you my true love an' my respect till I die, Betty. I'm not good enough for you, though I'm givin' you the best I've got. But, if you love me, you'll believe me when I tell you it is the best o' me. What did you come to tell me, Betty?"

Then Betty broke down unashamedly.

"I've told you every night," she cried. "I've come down every night, through the snow and everything, and I've told you out loud that I . . . that I don't care about a thousand Roseens or . . . or anything. I love you. Jim . . . I love you. And you . . . you are horrid. You never say a word. . . ."

"Let me try somethin' more than talkin'. Now . . . your arms round me. Give it to me . . . quick. Betty, it was the thought o' this only kept me livin' up in the hills."