

of a picture. He saw again the snow-swept plain, the wavering shapes of illusion, the mock suns dancing in unholy revel. The colour of the North burned before his eyes: a madness of the North unsealed his lips.

"I used it to cover a dead girl's face," he replied, bluntly.

The story had been as gray as a report of statistics,—so many places visited, so much time consumed. The men smoking cigars, lounging on cushioned seats in the tepid summer air, had listened to it unimpressed, as one listens to the reading of minutes of a gathering long past. This simple sentence breathed into it life. The magnitude of the undertaking sprang up across the horizon of their comprehension. They saw between the mile-post markings of Sam Bolton's dry statements of fact, glimpses of vague, mysterious, and terrible deeds, indistinct, wonderful. The two before them loomed big in the symbolism of the wide world of men's endurance and determination and courage.

The darkness swallowed them before the group on the veranda had caught its breath. In a moment the voices about the cannon raised in greeting.