

tion. That, I thought, would end his enmity. And I read your letter to dead ears. He was seated there believing that all the evil he wished me had come. I suppose the belief brought him peace. He was a stubborn old man."

Marcia would have spoken, but there was a lump in her throat. She opened her lips only to close them again.

"I wished to see you, Marcia," he continued, "because I wanted you to understand that I have only one feeling in my heart towards you, and that is a feeling of wonderful gratitude. For many years you have been the most sympathetic companion a somewhat depressed person could have had. The memory of these years is imperishable. And I want to tell you something else. In my heart I approve of what you have done."

"Oh, but that is impossible!" she replied. "I cannot keep the bitter thoughts from my own heart. I am ashamed when I think of your kindness, of your fidelity, of all that you have given and done for me throughout these years. And now I have the feeling that I am leaving you when you need me most."

He smiled at her.

"Your knowledge of life," he said gently, "should teach you better. The years that lay between us when you first gave me all that there was worth having of love in the world were nothing. To-day they are an impassable gulf. I have reached just those few years which become the aftermath of actual living, and you are young still, young in mind and body. We part so naturally. There is something still alive in you which is dead in me."

"But you are so lonely," she faltered.

"I should be lonelier still," he answered, "or at least more unhappy, if I dragged you with me through the