

a sign that Phillip should refuse such a strange request. Phillip was taken aback a little, and he looked puzzled. The words were uttered in the utmost simplicity.

"Why, yes, we can arrange that all right," he said. "There is a spare room, and—excuse me a moment while I go and help to get our lunch." Phillip's wife was telegraphing to him to come into the other room and he obediently got up and went.

"Now, Phillip," whispered his wife, when they were out in the dining-room, "You know that is a risky thing to do. You are all the time inviting all kinds of characters in here. We can't keep this man all night. Who ever heard of such a thing as a perfect stranger coming out with a request like that? I believe the man is crazy. It certainly will not do to let him stay here all night."

Phillip looked puzzled.

"I declare it is strange! He doesn't appear like an ordinary tramp. But somehow I don't think he's crazy. Why shouldn't we let him have the bed in the room off the east parlour. I can light the fire in the stove there and make him comfortable."

"But we don't know who he is. Phillip, you let your sympathies run away with your judgment."

"Well, little woman, let me go in and talk with him a while. You

get the lunch, and we'll see about the rest afterward."

So Phillip went back and sat down again. He was hardly seated when his visitor said :

"If your wife objects to my staying here to-night of course I don't wish to. I don't feel comfortable to remain where I'm not welcome."

"Oh, you're perfectly welcome," said Phillip, hastily, with some embarrassment, while his strange visitor went on :

"I'm not crazy, only a little odd, you know. Perfectly harmless. It will be perfectly safe for you to keep me over night."

The man spread his white hands out before the fire, while Phillip sat and watched him with a certain fascination new to his interest in all sorts and conditions of men.

Mrs. Strong brought in a substantial lunch of cold meat, bread and butter, milk and fruit, and at Phillip's request placed it on a table in front of the open fire, where he and his remarkable guest ate like hungry men.

It was after this lunch had been eaten and the table removed that a scene occurred which would be incredible if its reality and truthfulness did not compel us to record it as a part of the life of Phillip Strong. No one will wish to deny the power and significance of this event as it is unfolded in the movement of this story.

AFTERMATH.

Some live their life in spring. Their flying feet
 Speed after Joy, and bind him prisoner fast.
 Grief knows them not, their very fears are sweet;
 A tremulous cloud soon overpassed,
 They roam at ease in Love's delightful land,
 And sing their songs beneath the rainbowed skies.
 For some God keeps his gifts with careful hand,
 And hope turns from them with averted eyes.
 They wake and toil through tedious day and night,
 With patient hearts they climb the up-hill path,
 Then of a sudden all the world's alight
 With the rich splendours of the Aftermath.
 Life find's its crown; for though the spring be gone,
 Fair Ruth still stands amid the golden corn.

—*Christian Burkr.*