

CHAPTER IX

THE LIGHT BEYOND

OUT of the obscurity of the next few weeks, he brought, with the memory of Banks hovering about his bed, the vague impression of a woman's step across his floor and a woman's touch on his brow and hands. When he returned to consciousness the woman's step and touch had vanished, but Banks was still nursing him with his infinite patience and his silly, good-humoured smile. The rest was a dream, he said to himself, resignedly, as he turned his face to the wall and slept.

On a mild January morning, when he came downstairs for the first time, and went with Banks out into the open square in front of the hotel, he put almost timidly the question which had been throbbing in his brain for weeks.

"Was there anybody else with me, Banks? I thought—I dreamed—I could n't get rid of it——"

"Who else could there have been?" asked Banks, and he stared straight before him, at the slender spire of the big, gray church in the next block. So the mystery would remain unsolved, Ordway understood, and he would go back to life cherishing either a divine memory or a phantasy of delirium.

After a little while Banks went off to the chemists'