

Anna's constant regret that she could not go to the battlefields and nurse, but she would not leave those that depended upon her here. In some small measure I can take her place. They give a first course in London I am told. And I am strong, very strong."

She paused abruptly and moved forward and took his hand.

"Good night and good-bye," she said. "I shall sleep here to-night. And please understand that you are free."

"What do you mean?" Rush's face set like a mask, but the colour mounted. The grip of his hand was merely nervous, and when she withdrew hers his unconsciously went to his hip and steadied itself.

"I mean that so far as lies in my power I shall harm no one again as long as I live. Moreover, I have seen how it was with you for some time, although I would not admit it, for I intended to marry you. Perhaps I should have done so if it had not been for Anna. It took that to lift me quite out of myself and enable me to see myself and all things relating to me in their true proportions — for once. It is my moment — If I am ever to have one. You no longer love me, and if you did I should not marry you. I say nothing of the injustice to yourself—I could not take the risk of disillusioning you." She laughed a little nervously. "I fancy I have done that already. But it does not matter. Go and marry some girl near your own age who will be a companion, not an ideal with heart and brain as well as feet of clay."

"You are excited," said Rush brusquely, although his heart was hammering, and singing youth poured through his veins. "I shall leave you now —"