

"I don't know why you don't marry him," he said slowly. "You probably will. Then you will settle in the suburbs, and you will join the golf club, and the mothers' club, and the Episcopal church, and have a front lawn."

"And a little lamp with a red shade?"

"No."

He tried to pierce the darkness.

"Please, no. Not the little lamp with the red shade."

"And it is for that I would not marry him."

The sentence rang in his ears as they sat on a minute in dangerous silence. There was a cry for mercy in it, a plea, a wealth of love, but he heard it only faintly as one catches a strain of distant music on a breeze, and so he listened to hear it again. She sat immovable in the shadow strangely huddled up.

"Helen!" he cried.

He spoke as if into a dark room, not sure if she was there.

"Yes, Paul."

It came as softly as the whisper of a rose leaf to the south wind. He seated himself on the floor near her Turk fashion.

"Helen, will you let me dream—here—a moment?"

She drew a quick deep breath spasmodically. Her face burned till it ached. In her effort to keep back the stifled cry in her heart she grew dizzy. He groped for her hand, found it and closed over it. It was a very warm little hand, and it was clenched.

Thus they sat for an eternity, and what each dreamed then became forever a burning part of their lives. They remembered it as a man born blind, permitted to view one gorgeous sunset before sealing his eyes again and forever, might remember.

A tap at the door broke the spell and brought them to their feet. It was the butler bearing a telegram.

"The boy said it was very important, sir, and they sent him from your house here, sir."

Then he went out.

Helen drew back to the piano where she might find support and watch him.

Tearing it open, he read it, and as he

did so his eyes kindled with a mad light that made her tremble.

He straightened as a soldier at command of his officer.

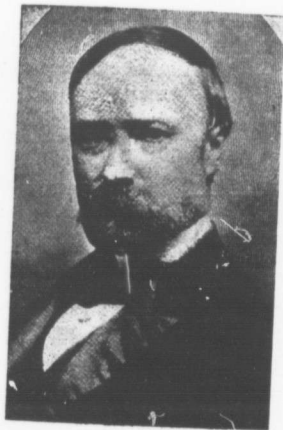
"Listen!" he exclaimed, turning towards her:

"Can you start tomorrow for the Balkans? Wire at once!"

It was from his old weekly "I must leave to-night! Oh, it's bully! The big Balkans—the fighting—the picturesqueness! I can see those mountains now!"

He talked like a schoolboy rather than a man who had been a dozen times on similar assignments. It was this enthusiasm they paid him for and—it was the "Wanderlust."

"John! John!" he shouted. "Where is that butler? Never mind I'll wire from the hotel!"



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