

The Black Speck

and this is how I heard it.

It was after dinner, and we sat in a quaint, square hall, before the brilliant fire of blazing logs. The light gowns of the women were, here and there, shadowed by the black coats of the men. The gay stream of talk that had flowed out from the dinner-table gradually deepened into the more subdued interchange of thought and experiences, and under the influence of the changing pictures in the fire and the soft light of the lamps, turned to the weird and unknown.

Then the narrator, taking his cigar from his lips, told us the following, and as his rich voice spoke of strange and weird fulfillment we drew closer together and were glad of the cheerful blaze upon the hearth:

Does any one here believe in dreams as fore-runners or warnings of events? Personally, I never did. But three years ago I had an experience that caused me to consider them from a new point of view and that not a pleasant point.

"Do you remember Fred Carter? Big Fred, always quietly cheerful and up-to-date on most things going that had nothing to do with imagination? Not that he was utterly devoid of imagination; he had just enough not to make him too matter-of-fact and keep him healthily adjusted.

"At least, that is the way I would have thought of it if I had had occasion to analyze him mentally, but I'm not much given to analysis, and Fred wasn't the kind of fellow to suggest it.

"But one night I somewhat changed my opinion. I met him at the club, looking hollow-eyed and jaded.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Don't sleep very well," was his laconic answer.

"Insomnia?"

"No, gloomily. I wish it was."

"Humph!" I said to myself. "Trouble. Can't be money, for Fred was rich. It won't do to step on his toes with questions."

"Well, old fellow," I said aloud, ending the pause during which I had been trying to think how to put my willingness to serve him into words without pressing the matter further than he wanted to go. "If it's anything in which I can serve you, be sure to call on me."

"That's just it," he replied, staring listlessly at his crossed knees, as he leaned back in a deep armchair, "no one can help." He considered his knees further, then looked at me with a wistful gleam in the hopeful expression that had taken possession of his eyes. "I'll tell you about it, though you'll think me an idiot to let it worry me, but I can't throw it off, try as I may.

"You know I was never a fellow given to 'isms' and all that sort of thing, or fads or the occult; I've been an everyday sort of chap, I suppose, with all my wits about me. When I've gone to bed I've slept from the time my head has touched the pillow until the last moment of getting up, and never a dream the while, pleasant or unpleasant.

"But about six weeks ago, at Dover, things changed. I was out on Jackson's yacht with a party and we made a run on a gloriously perfect night—like I have never seen. I had exclusive possession of the prettiest and most interesting girl on board, made doubly interesting and pretty by the moonlight.

"Well, when I went to bed that night you would have supposed that if I dreamt at all I would have had visions of goddesses and angels. Not at all. For the first time in my life, as I can remember, I did dream, but a ridiculous, cheap dream, it seemed to me then, that had nothing whatever to do with goddesses or angels or anything else that had reality or romance connected with it. It was tremendously vivid, but it seemed such an insignificant dream, as I said, that I recalled it next morning, only to forget it.

"But having dreamt that same dream every night since then without a single exception, its proportions have become overwhelmingly immense. When I put it into words it will seem absurd, absolutely nothing at all, yet, it is taking all the life out of me.

"It begins: With a long road, a dusty road, stretching straight like a vista. Down at the far end a small, black object appears, like a dot at first, but not a dot, more elongated, like an exclamation point. Up that road it comes toward me, slowly, then faster, faster until it rushes up as if whirling in a mist, and I can't make out just what it is; then, as it gets up to me and I put out my hands to seize it, hold it, it vanishes. And where? Down my throat! Isn't that absurd?"

"He tried to smile, but, failing, he took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead, which was wet.

"If I could once grasp it, catch it in my hands and hold it off until I could rid myself of it, I am sure I could make out what it is. But up, it comes and just as I put out my hands to catch it the thing disappears—down my throat! Now, what kind of a dream is that? Yet, if I don't get rid of it, can't shake it off, that miserable little black speck running up that road will wreck me mentally, I feel sure."

"Looking at the change in him, I did not doubt it. But what could I advise? He was always having change

of air and change of scene; his physical health was perfect; his mind was untrammelled by a care or burden; he was temperate in every walk of life. What explanation then could I suggest? Absolutely none.

"The mere idea of sleep has become hateful to me," he went on. "I hate night to come. I put off going to bed as long as I can hold off, or when I do go I try to be so worn out I shall sleep without dreaming. But it's no use—the instant I lose grip of myself that dream pounces upon me."

"There is only one remedy I can suggest," I said, trying to speak lightly, and that is, fall in love. Get your mind so absorbed with one subject that no other can possibly squeeze in, and love is the only monopoly that doesn't admit others. Try it."

He shook his head. "Does one fall in love simply by making up one's mind to do it?"

He fell into gloomy silence. Suddenly he raised his head with a determined jerk.

"I swear I'll master it! I'll keep going morning, noon and night—do everything that one can do to keep thought dead, and tire out the body. Then I will be master, not it!"

"For the next two weeks I was out of town. When I met Fred again, one look at his face told me that he had boasted in vain.

"Look here, Fred," I said, with a thought that seemed to me then a heaven-born inspiration, it came to me so suddenly. "I'm off next week on an exploring trip to South Africa; better get your kit together and come, too." It was only by an effort I saved myself from adding: "It will do you good."

"For a moment he brightened at the suggestion, but then relapsed into his previous hopeless dejection. By dint of talking it over, however, and going into detail of the scientific part of the trip, I gradually got him interested and when, a week later, I set off he was my companion.

"We left in the evening. The next morning when he got out of his berth he caught hold of me with a bone-breaking grip.

"It's gone, man," he exclaimed, his face radiant with relief. "It's gone! Went to sleep as soon as my head touched the pillow and not the breath of a dream troubled me the whole night through. You've saved me, old fellow, you've saved me," and his gratitude was pathetic.

"And so it was the rest of the trip, and his spirits rose with every night he passed in dreamless sleep, and when we were finally camped and at work, surrounded by the solitude of nature, the sun brazen and the nights chilling, he actually gained flesh in his new-found freedom of mind.

"When he was not assailing me with my botanical explorations, he would take a guide or two and go off in search of the rare game. One night the guide came back without him, reporting that they had lost each other while starting a strange animal from a thicket. The night wore on and he did not come. I was just on the point of rousing the men and starting a search party when I heard the pony's hoofs coming at a rapid rate, reckless of usual habit. As I stood out from the fire the pony swerved by me and Fred threw himself from the saddle, his face livid.

"My dream!" he panted in a whisper, his eyes dilated with horror. "The realization of my dream!"

"I stared at him, struck dumb. What did he mean?"

"It was just after night," he went on, still in that strange whisper, as though the fear of the unseen had smothered him, "I was riding toward camp, past a certain thicket, when a sound came from it, an awful sound, at first like the low chuckle of an owl, then rising, rising, like the wail and triumphant cry of an eagle, until it tore the air and curled round me and over me and seemed to tear my flesh and suck my blood. It was awful! infernal—I don't know what!"

"He shivered. All the health and life and hope had gone out of him.

"And as it made a coward of me," he went on; "it came to me like a picture—my dream! The voicing of my dream. It terrified the pony, as it did me. He bolted, but he could not go fast enough for my desire. But it is in my ears, worse than the dream."

"He clenched his hands, and throwing back his head, gave the cry.

"Never in my life have I heard its equal. Clear, shrill, yet resonant, it was ghoulishly wild, humanly revolting, it seemed to warp itself into the marrow and freeze there! The perspiration ran from every pore of me, the flames seemed to shrink together and burn blue. The silence that followed was awful in its possibilities of what might be.

"Carter's lips moved again. I threw out my hand. 'Don't!' I shrieked in terror. 'Don't dare do that again!'"

"The tone brought him back to the present, with nothing but its horror left to him. The ghastly agony of his face was unspeakable. The night was filled with a nameless terror that there was no hope of combating, for Carter! I Poor, helpless fellow! I could have put my head down on the ground and cried from the misery and the horror of it.

"It took me more than a day to get over that night. But as we had no repetition of its gruesome experience we gradually regained our spirits. We worked hard and always together. On the last day but one, before our time was up, we took a half holiday, each one spending it as fancy dictated.

"When night fell and we assembled round the fire, one was missing—Fred. I sat up for him; that other night's experience so vividly in my mind, it was absolute torture. Before day-break I woke the others and started two searching parties. Instinctively I led mine in the direction from which he had returned on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion.

"At sunrise we found him, stretched on the grass, dead and stripped.

"Natives!" muttered one of the men.

NO MORE PRISON FOR HIM.

After Being a Prisoner Twelve Years, Slatin Pasha Did Not Wish to Marry.

It is well known that old bachelors are perverse, so we may repeat the remark made by a famous bachelor a year or two ago without arousing suspicion of expressing sympathy with it.

The Austrian who early sought adventure abroad, and who, as Slatin Pasha, rose high in the Egyptian service, spent many years of his life a captive in the Sudan. When at length he was rescued, the ex-prisoner was feted and lionized in Cairo, and many a lady set her cap at him. Presently the rumor arose that the hero was engaged to be married, and one night at dinner a lady asked him pointblank if it were true.

"Married?" explained Slatin. "What, me? No, no. I had already been prisoner twelve years—nevaire, no more."

Slatin Pasha was among the most active officers in preparing for the Anglo-Egyptian expedition against the Mahdi, and so much work fell upon his shoulders that he almost broke down. As he was toiling one roasting afternoon, he said to his superior officer in a confidential tone:

"I wish I were back among the dervishes as a prisoner. There, at any rate, I was not worked to death."

Oddly enough, this chance remark was overheard, repeated, and ultimately printed in an anti-British newspaper in Cairo. A copy drifted down into the hands of the Khalifa, the successor of the Mahdi.

The chief at once summoned his followers and pointed out to them how life as a fettered slave among his countrymen was better than existence under the dominion of English dogs. The tribesmen howled with approval at this new proof of the brutality of their English enemies.

ON THE BRINY DEEP.

There is one good thing about an ocean voyage, remarked the globe trotter.

What is that? queried his companion.

Why, a man can get as tight as he pleases every day and everybody will think he is only seasick, answered the traveler.

POWER OF THE FREE PASS.

Did old skinflint object to his daughter marrying an actor?

No. It was shown to him that he could get free seats every time his son-in-law comes to town.

WONDERFUL DEVELOPMENT.

Watts—The development of the sense of touch in the blind is sometimes almost a wonder to me.

Gorrox—I have it pretty well developed myself. I have got so I can tell a borrower two blocks away.

A BRILLIANT SUCCESS.

Biggs—How did Brown-Smith make all his money?

Boggs—He invented a new method of advertising a patent medicine.

Biggs—And then sold the idea to a patent medicine firm?

Boggs—Not much! That's where he showed his cleverness. He hired a man to invent a patent medicine for him and used the idea himself.

A SUPERFLUITY.

But why, asked the shade of Patrick Henry, did you have Anne Rolygon's head out off?

Well, answered Henry VIII., she really did not need it. I was head of the house, you know.

WHEN TO BE IN DEAD EARNEST.

We want a clergyman who can see a joke.

I can see a joke all right, but I don't want any humorous arrangements about my salary.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

Smith—Brown has just finished a flying machine that he has been at work on for the last ten years.

Jones—Indeed! And is it a success?

Smith—Yes, with one exception; it refuses to get off the earth.

NO EXCEPTION.

Bill—Why is a crow the most sensible of birds?

Jim—Because he's fond of grub stakes, perhaps.

Bill—No, it's because he never sings without caws.

AN EASIER WAY.

Jimmy the Tough—Yer say yer made money at de races. Did yer pick de winners?

Bill the Sneak—Naw! I picked de winners' pockets.

THE RIGHT TIME.

Jones—That new preacher knows his business.

Mrs. Jones—What makes you think so?

Mr. Jones—He waited until Bobby got whipped before he tried to convince him that fighting was wrong.

UNGAVAS' TREASURE CAVE

IT CONTAINS FABULOUS STORIES OF GOLDEN INGOTS.

White Queen of the Far North Indians is Dead—John W. Dale, Who Discovered the Rainy Lake Gold Fields, Now King Over Untold Wealth.

After a reign of many years Andaga, the white woman who had for a long time ruled over a small band of Indians occupying a territory some 300 miles north of the line dividing the United States and Canada, is dead, and her daughter Nita, the wife of John W. Dale, the young man who discovered gold in the Rainy Lake country, has been crowned Queen in her place, says a Fort Francis, Ont., letter.

Such is the news that has been brought to the settlements along the Rainy River by an Indian runner, and it is the first information of a definite character that has reached the outside world from the Indian country for nearly three years, when Dale, who had been prospecting in that region with two companions, returned to Ft. Francis, accompanied by the young woman who is now his wife, and related a tale so startling that its truth was doubted.

Dale said he had discovered a storehouse full of gold, and had had a narrow escape from death at the hands of the Indians, who, he said, called themselves the Ungavas, and had a white woman for a Queen. He, with his companions, had been assisted to escape by the young woman, the daughter of the Queen, who had later fled with Dale.

Dale and the girl were married in Ft. Francis several weeks after their arrival here, and finally returned to the land of the Ungavas, in the hope that the daughter might make her peace with her mother, the Queen. That she was successful in her undertaking is shown by the story of the Indian runner, who has just brought the news of the death of the Queen, and crowning of Mrs. Dale in her place. At-tah-wago, the runner, says the Queen was taken ill several weeks ago, suffering from what he describes as "burning in the head and devils in the chest"—probably pneumonia. The finding of the Ungava Indians with their white ruler—the woman who has just passed away—and the discovery of the storehouse of gold was brought about in a peculiar manner.

GOLD IN THE DUCK'S CRAW.

Dale and two friends were camping 20 miles up the Rainy River from Ft. Francis, according to the diary, and, running short of food, had killed ducks which had just come in from the north. In the gizzard of each duck was found considerable gold, some of it quite pure, and some of it mixed with sand and gravel or bits of peculiar rock.

"That rock came from the far north, from the Hudson Bay country," said Dale, after critically examining the contents of the gizzard of one of the birds, "and when we find where the rock came from we will also find where there is gold in unlimited quantities."

Procuring supplies in Ft. Francis the little party set out to find the gold fields. For several days they traveled, passing through a country which for wildness and general desolation probably has no equal outside of Alaska. On all sides stretched a vast pine forest, as yet untouched by the hand of man, only broken here and there by mighty masses of rock or extensive swamps, in which wild rice grew in profusion.

After several days of hard traveling they came to a range of mountains, plainly the divide of the country over which they had passed and the territory further to the north.

Ascending the mountains they saw at its base a lake, the edges bordered in places with wild rice, and in which countless thousands of ducks of all kinds were swimming, and feeding. Beyond the lake, a few miles away, was what appeared to be a village of circular tents, the white walls standing out boldly against the virgin forest of dark pines beyond. It was barely noon when the three men reached the foot of the mountain and halted on the shore of the lake, whose sandy beach showed traces of gold. Hardly had the prospectors paused near the water's edge when a party of 20 or more Indians, dressed in furs, and carrying firearms of an antiquated pattern, stepped from the wild rice, with their weapons on a level with the breasts of the startled men. As the gold seekers were greatly outnumbered they did not even attempt a resistance. Their rifles were taken from them, and with a guard ahead and a guard behind they marched along the shore of the lake to the village.

THE WHITE QUEEN.

Finally they were led into a huge inclosure, where they were taken before a raised platform, upon which sat a white woman, about 60 years of age, as near as they could judge, and a younger woman, not over 24 or 25 with a face that plainly showed both Caucasian and Indian blood. Both of the women were loaded down with ornaments of gold, roughly fashioned, and strung on what looked like pieces of rawhide.

They received the strangers gravely, but seemed to take kindly to Dale from the first, and under the impression that he already knew of a secret cave in which the tribe's gold had been ac-

cumulated for many years, talked freely with them.

According to the story of the man, she was stolen by the Indians from her parents, who were at Ft. Francis country. She had been taken before the chief, then a young man, who, infatuated with her, had claimed her as his wife. He was born one child, the young woman, who now sat beside her, and the death of the chief, several years ago, the widow had become the ruler of the tribe, which, driven North by the Indians, had settled in this rich gold country.

Dale and his companions could but little hope for themselves, especially as they had admitted their search of gold. The fact that they were placed under a heavy guard did not tend to raise their spirits. They felt sure that death was but a few days away, at the most, however, Dale was full of resource and was an attractive.

"We will leave here to-night," he announced Dale one evening, "and he had spent most of the day in talking about the village with Nita, the Queen's daughter. "Fact is, I made an impression on Nita, and she is going to elope with me. You see, I'm going to be shown the way out of the midnight, after which Nita and I will visit the treasure cave, take what we can carry and then join you in the night. Guided by a figure wrapped in furs they started for the mountains. As they began the upward journey Dale fell behind, and they saw whom they knew was Nita.

After a hard journey through the wilderness the two men arrived at Ft. Francis, where, they told the story, they were laughed at as men who had been temporarily crazed by the hardships they had undergone.

THEIR STORY DERIDDED.

A party of their men gathered about a month later in the barroom of the American House, the two-story structure which passes as a hotel in Rainy Lake City, when the door opened and in walked Dale, somewhat worse for wear, and accompanied by the Indian girl, who was cared for by the wife of the proprietor of the hotel. Later Dale and she were married in Lower, Minn., by one of the Roman Catholic priests who periodically visit this section of the country.

Two or three weeks after their marriage the Indian girl began to feel for her home in the far North, and finally she declared she was going back. Dale tried in vain to persuade her to remain in civilization, but she would not listen to it, and at last her husband decided to return with her to the Ungava country. Since then he has not been heard from until the Indian runner brought the news of the elevation of Mrs. Dale to the position of Queen."

FRENCH FINANCES.

The Government Has Gone Into the Advertising Business to Help Its Treasury.

France, whose national debt has been growing every day since it paid 500 millions of redemption money to the many, after exhausting apparently every conceivable means of raising money, has lately taken to advertising as a means of money making. This method has already been seized upon by numerous municipalities which have sold the space on certain public buildings to advertisers. As the railway stations, gendarmeries, custom houses, trepots, barracks and numerous other public buildings, as well as the post offices in which several kinds of money poly goods are sold, are entirely under the control of the Government, it is evident that it has advertising facilities at its command which extend to an extent and value anything that private advertisers can offer. The value of these may be greatly enhanced by legal restrictions upon the owners of private property, preventing the sale of space for similar purposes.

The latest device of this sort is a "let re annonces," or advertising poster, plain letter sheet. One half the sheet of ordinary letter size paper and rather poor quality, is devoted to advertising, except a space about 4-1/2 by 1-1/2 inches, reserved for the address of the printer. The letter is written on the other half of the sheet, which is then ingeniously folded and held together by a gummed flap. The whole thing is sold for 10 centimes; that is, two-thirds of the price of single letter postage, or exactly the same as a postage card.

By this means the publisher saves one-third the postage and gets his paper and envelope for nothing. Naturally the scheme is worked by a corporation, Societe Anonyme; but, as it is a postage at one third off and has the wages for sale at the post offices, it is practically a Government enterprise. The new system will evidently take the place of the postal card; it will increase the sale of postage stamps, and enable the Government to make a substantial profit out of the project.

"TOMMY ATKINS."

"Tommy Atkins," has become the nick-name of the British soldier from the fact that the printed forms used in the army have the name "Tommy Atkins," printed to indicate where the user should write his name.

IN THE MATTER OF MANAGEMENT.

It is better to laugh than to cry, said the young girl, brightly.

Not if you're trying to manage a husband, said the woman.

Mystery of Sha

CHAPTER I.

long, long, is the winter night, and slowly dawns the day, and there is a slain knight in my bower, and I wish he were away."

The light grew stronger, and crept down the lowered blinds that hid the gay flowers on the balcony, yet crept the sweet smell to enter through the open windows, spread it softly over the carpet, and showed a woman's gold thimble lying there when she stole toward the shut folding doors from the other side of which a sound or movement had come to her ears. Here it seemed to pause for a moment, as if afraid, then stealthily crept underneath them, and traversed an oddly-shaped apartment that lay in a place not much bigger than a recess, and partly hidden by a pink muslin drape, now pushing roughly on one side and held there by something that had fallen heavily between them.

In pity seemed the light to touch there it lay, a strong figure lying down, with sunny crown and hair, and brows pressed to the cover of a wide couch, upon which a woman was lying in a deep sleep, her head pillowed on her outstretched arm, and her face a picture of perfect innocence and youth.

With the smooth coverlid drawn to her chin, and her air of happy dreams she securely slept, she looked as if she had not stirred since she laid her head down—as if, indeed, she would not wake her, though the light kept ever widening, and growing, till the pink hung room was full of a soft, primrose atmosphere fit for such a privacy as she, yet was strong enough to rouse the man who lay with his head doubled up beneath him in attitude unnatural and strange.

Serene the clock ticked away the moments and the minutes to hours, the fresh china shepherds and shepherdesses on the mantel-piece had long nodded each other good-morrow, the pictures on the wall exchanged glances, first of amaze, then of inquiry, as to who was the new-comer who distributed their privacy, and some, alas, in such woeful and uncourtly guise!

The white mouse, looking perchance for his absent little master, popped his pink nose out of the cage that was never very far from the prisoner, and, agghast at what he saw, went in again.

In the street without, in the house within, the cheerful noises of everyday life began, and swelled each moment louder, so that when a footstep in the next room caused a vibration of the floor, she opened her eyes, and lay listening and broad awake. The couch was so low that what lay at its foot did not come within her range of vision, as she fixed her glance on the folding-doors, watching for them to open, and her maid with the tea come in; and as she looked, one swung back, and through it came Rose, erect, pimpante, in her smart cap and apron, smiling too, as if she had some special cause for satisfaction that morning. But as she came forward, something—something between her mistress and her, arrested Rose's attention; the cups on the tray in her hand rattled violently with the tremor that shook her, and shuddering, she backed away, with starting eyes fixed on that—backed till she came to the door, and escaping through it, shrieked—such a shriek as clove through walls and window, and made the passers-by stand still in the street, with that heart-quake which men know when tragedy stalks red-handed through their midst.

Meanwhile her mistress, guided by the woman's eyes, had raised herself, and by some dreadful instinct born of courage, felt herself drawn toward instead of away from it—so that on her hands and knees she crawled toward the still figure, which dumbly spoke its own eloquent message of eternal separation from her and all living things.

A hand's-breadth away from it she paused, looking down at the tressed, silky, fair hair set in a wide halo of blood—blood that had soaked and welled and ebbed for many an hour through the long summer night into the coverlid at her feet.

One arm was doubled beneath his chest just as he had fallen, the other lay stretched out to its full length pale palm uppermost—a hand that would never sew or reap any more, never help or hurt any one any more, never be filled with those gifts that the prime of a man's life well-spent may reasonably be hoped to bring.

Steps were coming, people were coming, with a thundering rushing sound, and hastening madly to that horror in the house, that smell of blood in the air that we call "murder" and while our flesh recoils at it.

The master of the house came first, humanity—came in to see the murdered man lying there, and his wife on her knees beside him—across the body their eyes met, and oh! what a glance was there!

The glance of horror, wonder, and pity with which she had first gazed down at the murdered man, had been followed by one of dawning comprehension, changing into one of passionate loathing and contempt. This, too, was gone, when her husband came, and their eyes leaped together.

He thought me guilty, and he killed that bound—and he did well," she said, with a wild sense of exultation that brought a strange light to her eyes, and a heave to her breast, and in that as the Elizabeth Breachling moved the likeness without a down, hiding away, as the dead.

Up they went, up from the house-door, the drawing-room, the dining-room, the second of a theatre, peering, mates, tables.

Outside, rigid, his apparently or of space his feet.

Rose, the first, pushed through, an attempt on the dead body, then she gazed at the chair, which the coach, the recess, lonely figure, her misting, the slipper, but when she got up, and folds of silk, and there alone his rights.

"Let us anguish, gain passage, give grace, forgive him, with her spiced him, his man who shone higher, a woman should be!"

One of a and turned foot of the and hands small how which a away during Barry R enough face took that by many day, bitter, that bright her back from mis again. The so unmanly their station, with amazement have been conviction were "in about the er's share. To Elizabeth after that, remember what and question, her lover openly by tion, accu All this the mem to take a Gather Elizabeth one side, body, and them, the room out of si

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"Don't sleep very well," was his laconic answer.

"Insomnia?"

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"Humph!" I said to myself. "Trouble. Can't be money, for Fred was rich. It won't do to step on his toes with questions."

"Well, old fellow," I said aloud, ending the pause during which I had been trying to think how to put my willingness to serve him into words without pressing the matter further than he wanted to go. "If it's anything in which I can serve you, be sure to call on me."

"That's just it," he replied, staring listlessly at his crossed knees, as he leaned back in a deep armchair, "no one can help." He considered his knees further, then looked at me with a wistful gleam in the hopeful expression that had taken possession of his eyes. "I'll tell you about it, though you'll think me an idiot to let it worry me, but I can't throw it off, try as I may.

"You know I was never a fellow given to 'isms' and all that sort of thing, or fads or the occult; I've been an everyday sort of chap, I suppose, with all my wits about me. When I've gone to bed I've slept from the time my head has touched the pillow until the last moment of getting up, and never a dream the while, pleasant or unpleasant.

"But about six weeks ago, at Dover, things changed. I was out on Jackson's yacht with a party and we made a run on a gloriously perfect night—like I have never seen. I had exclusive possession of the prettiest and most interesting girl on board, made doubly interesting and pretty by the moonlight.

"Well, when I went to bed that night you would have supposed that if I dreamt at all I would have had visions of goddesses and angels. Not at all. For the first time in my life, as I can remember, I did dream, but a ridiculous, cheap dream, it seemed to me then, that had nothing whatever to do with goddesses or angels or anything else that had reality or romance connected with it. It was tremendously vivid, but it seemed such an insignificant dream, as I said, that I recalled it next morning, only to forget it.

"But having dreamt that same dream every night since then without a single exception, its proportions have become overwhelmingly immense. When I put it into words it will seem absurd, absolutely nothing at all, yet, it is taking all the life out of me.

"It begins: With a long road, a dusty road, stretching straight like a vista. Down at the far end a small, black object appears, like a dot at first, but not a dot, more elongated, like an exclamation point. Up that road it comes toward me, slowly, then faster, faster until it rushes up as if whirling in a mist, and I can't make out just what it is; then, as it gets up to me and I put out my hands to seize it, hold it, it vanishes. And where? Down my throat! Isn't that absurd?"

"He tried to smile, but, failing, he took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead, which was wet.

"If I could once grasp it, catch it in my hands and hold it off until I could rid myself of it, I am sure I could make out what it is. But up, it comes and just as I put out my hands to catch it the thing disappears—down my throat! Now, what kind of a dream is that? Yet, if I don't get rid of it, can't shake it off, that miserable little black speck running up that road will wreck me mentally, I feel sure."

"Looking at the change in him, I did not doubt it. But what could I advise? He was always having change