

a washout up the road, and she may be held up all night."

"That's encouraging," Tom remarked. "What I've seen of this place doesn't make me yearn to spend the night here. Where's the town?"

"This is it."

"Isn't there a hotel of any kind?"

"No, nothing in that line except the farm house half a mile down the track, where the night operator and I board."

"I suppose there's no hack?"

"None that I've ever heard of."

"What time do you light up here? They ought to let you use plenty of oil in such a lonesome place as this. It's getting pretty dark."

"Just a minute. Here's my call."

The operator turned to his instrument and Tom Harlow waited at the ticket window, hoping there might be encouraging news concerning the train for Medford; but he was doomed to be disappointed.

"I guess you may as well make up your mind to hang around here all night," said the operator after the instrument had ceased clicking (he spoke rather loudly for Helen's benefit); "they say the track is washed out in half a dozen places. There's been a cloud-burst."

While Tom drummed with his finger-tips upon the ledge of the ticket window the operator lighted the lamp in his office and then proceeded to illuminate the waiting room, which served for both men and women.

For a moment after the light had been turned on Tom Harlow looked silently at Helen, who sat with her back toward him, her head bent and her face hidden in her hands. The operator turned to his instruments, which were clicking frantically.

"Helen," Tom said very tenderly after he had paused beside her.

She looked up at him, and he saw that there were tears in her eyes. He reached for one of her hands, but she drew away from him and shrank a little farther into her corner.

"Helen," he said again, "I've come to explain to you. I supposed you were already at Medford. I was going there to tell you."

She stood up, and when he again attempted to take her hand in his she did not object.

"Let's go outside," he suggested, "outside, under the stars, where I can tell you everything—where nothing will be between us and heaven."

The operator was busy and did not notice that the waiting room was empty.

"You see, Helen, it was necessary for Mrs. Danforth to take somebody into her confidence," said. "For some reason she selected me. Her former husband, who was a scalawag, had informed the secret service agents that she had been smuggling jewelry. It was merely a case of blackmail. She had refused to support him and he had tried to get her to buy him off. She needed somebody to