

mortgaged estate to keep going, as far as possible on old lines. What's more, I have grown to love the Plan a way I never thought possible. As for my work, I'm amateur no longer, but an acknowledged artist—of profession—if no more——”

Sir Lakshman raised his hand. “Consider one moment, Nevil, in speaking of that last. It has been my pleasure and pride to see that no one is more ready to acknowledge how much of your so rapid success is owing to Lilamani here. Ask your own heart then—does it square with your British sense of fair play, that you reap all benefit of these changes you speak of, while she must pay all the price?”

“Of course not. Surely you know me better than that.”

“So I was imagining,” the other answered with his good smile. “And in such a case you will listen fairly to what I shall say. A couple of months here will not make Lilamani unfit for facing your English autumn and winter again so soon, and your friend Broome, if willing for a longer lease, will surely be trusted to look after your interests as if they were his own. Why not, then, leave your estates in his care for a year? do not say for always; but for a term of years, that may be more free——”

“My dear sir,” Nevil broke in sharply, “I'd infinitely prefer rather not. I don't think you quite realize what a sacrifice you ask of me. Last year, as I've explained, my position was utterly different. But, now—with so many new interests opening up—to lease Bramleigh Beeches and practically live abroad——!”

“Not even for the sake of bringing greater health and happiness to that wife who has made, for love of you, a sacrifice bigger than you—not being Eastern—can even understand?”

Sir Lakshman drove home each word of his plea with quiet, forcible distinctness, that did not fail of its effect. Nevil Sinclair extinguished his cigarette stump, and