

"Thee remembers what I said to him, that night in Cairo?"

Hylda closed her eyes and drew in a long breath. Had there been a word spoken that night when she and David and Nahoum met which had not bitten into her soul! That David had done so much in Egypt without ruin or death was a tribute to his power. Nevertheless, though Nahoum had not struck yet, she was certain he would one day. All that David now told her of the vicissitudes of his plans, and Nahoum's sympathy and help, only deepened this conviction. She could well believe that Nahoum gave David money from his own pocket, which he replaced by extortion from other sources, while gaining credit with David for co-operation. Armenian Christian Nahoum might be, but he was ranged with the East against the West, with the reactionary and corrupt against advance, against civilisation and freedom and equality. Nahoum's Christianity was permeated with Orientalism, the Christian belief obscured by the theism of the Muslim. David was in a deadlier struggle than he knew. Yet it could serve no good end to attempt to warn him now. He had outlived peril so far; might it not be that, after all, he would win?

So far she had avoided Nahoum's name in talks with David. She could scarcely tell why she did, save that it opened a door better closed, as it were; but the restraint had given way at last.

"Thee remembers what I said that night?" David repeated slowly.

"I remember—I understand. You devise your course and you never change. It is like building on a rock. That is why nothing happens to you as bad as might happen."

"Nothing bad ever happens to me."