

her true life had always been centred in her home. And she was content that it should be so; content to let outsiders dub her 'Victorian' for refusing to be swept into the maelstrom of modern restlessness; to let the 'progressives' swirl past her—social reformers, seekers after new religions, new panaceas for every ill; content to find time for cultivating the art of friendship, not merely in her own class, but among Mark's tenants on both estates.

Leisure to possess her own soul and the hearts of others was, for her, a simple necessity of life; and that very necessity, by limiting her sphere of action, was half the secret of her influence and charm. Ideals are uncomfortable things socially, but they have the merit of keeping their owners fresh; and the world's more strenuous workers found, in her home atmosphere, a refreshment and inspiration worth some sacrifice of activity to preserve in an age of wholesale experiment in life and art and religion. They might rate her for living in a backwater; but, as intimacy grew, they realised that she was more vitally in touch than themselves with the world's greater issues; that her uneventful days were rich in experience, informed by a central purpose and an unshaken faith in certain abiding truths—periodically obscured and neglected, yet as certain to return, with power, as sunshine after rain.

"When religion decays and irreligion prevails, then I manifest Myself. For the protection of good, for the destruction of evil, and for the firm establishment of national righteousness, I am born again and again."

Krishna's ancient prophecy, printed in gold on an illuminated scroll, confronted her as she entered her sanctuary. The scroll had been a birthday 'surprise' from Mark; an achievement of school-boy days when he was altogether her own; and the thought upset her equanimity afresh.

Look where she would, the room was full of him: