

absorbing. But to-day the silence and emptiness seemed to affect her like a ghostly presence, impalpable, yet vaguely threatening. A chill sense of impending disaster swept through her. She felt suddenly tired; oppressed by the dead weight of the years that she carried with such valiant elasticity of body and spirit and heart.

Half a century of life had dulled but scarcely silvered her red-brown hair; had pencilled fine lines between her brows and at the corners of her too sensitive mouth. But youth still triumphed in the eyes, in the slender alertness of her figure, in the swift impulsion of thought and speech. Yet she lived and felt life—the whole world's life—too intensely not to suffer moments of sharp reaction; and this was one.

Hitherto, she had seen Mark's marriage as the chance of regaining a daughter. Now she saw it, rather, as the risk of losing her son, and her heart cried out that this was more than she could bear. In the past twelve years, she had suffered loss on loss, with a sort of fierce stoicism, the nearest approach to resignation that one of her nature could achieve. Now, being a mere mother, she must stand aside and watch him drifting on to the rocks——

It simply did not bear thinking of; and, gathering up her letters, she went in search of work, the unfailing anodyne for every ill.

At that time under Keith's critical supervision, she was translating Emile Faguet. She was also studying Russian, with other translations in view; and she had correspondents in all parts of Europe, many of whom she had never seen. But these activities were fringes, merely, on the main work of her life—the revival of arts and crafts and home industries among Mark's people, and the linking up of all similar efforts throughout the United Kingdom.

Yet, for all her activities and far-reaching aims,