

had once absorbed her own. She never sought to know whence the man came; it was sufficient to know whither he had gone, and that he had been hers for a brief dream of life. It was better to have lived the one short thrilling hour with all its pain, than never to have known what she knew or felt what she had felt. The mystery deepened her romance, and she was even glad that the ruffians who slew him were never brought to justice. To her mind they were but part of the mystic machinery of fate.

For her the years had given many compensations, and so she told the Curé, one midsummer day, when she brought to visit him the orphaned son of Paulette Dubois, graduated from his college in France and making ready to go to the far East.

"I have had more than I deserve—a thousand times," she said.

The Curé smiled, and laid a gentle hand upon her own. "It is right for you to think so," he said, "but after a long life, I am ready to say that, one way or another, we earn all the real happiness we have. I mean the real happiness—the moments, my child. I once had a moment full of happiness."

"May I ask?" she said.

"When my heart first went out to him"—he turned his face towards the churchyard.

"He was a great man," she said proudly.

The Curé looked at her benignly: she was a woman, and she had loved the man. He had, however, come to a stage of life where greatness alone seemed of little moment. He forbore to answer her, but he pressed her hand.