

the estate. It is just beginning to pay again, too," he added, regretfully. "When I came into it it was utterly impoverished, and every available stick of timber had been cut down; but my expenses have been very small, and if I have fulfilled no other hope of my life, I have at least done something for my ground-down tenantry; for every penny which I have saved, after paying the interest, I have spent on improving their homes and farms, so that the place is now in very good condition, though I have been obliged to leave the pleasure-grounds utterly neglected."

"What are you going to do with your son?" asked the General.

"I have just got him a commission in the army," said Lord Chetwynde. "Some old friends, who had actually remembered me all these years, offered to do something for me in the diplomacy line; but if he entered that life I should feel that all the world was pointing the finger of scorn at him for his mother's sake; besides, my boy is too honest for a diplomat. No—he must go and make his own fortune. A viscount with neither money, land, nor position—the only place for him is the army."

A long silence followed. Lord Chetwynde seemed to lose himself among those painful recollections which he had raised, while the General, falling into a profound abstraction, sat with his head on one hand, while the other drummed mechanically on the table. As much as half an hour passed away in this manner. The General was first to rouse himself.

"I arrived in England only a few months ago," he began, in a quiet, thoughtful tone. "My life has been one of strange vicissitudes. My own country is almost like a foreign land to me. As soon as I could get Pomeroy Court in order I determined to visit you. This visit was partly for the sake of seeing you, and partly for the sake of asking a great favor. What you have just been saying has suggested a new idea, which I think may be carried out for the benefit of both of us. You must know, in the first place, I have brought my little daughter home with me. In fact, it was for her sake that I came home—"

"You were married, then?"

"Yes, in India. You lost sight of me early in life, and so perhaps you do not know that I exchanged from the Queen's service to that of the East India Company. This step I never regretted. My promotion was rapid, and after a year or two I obtained a civil appointment. From this I rose to a higher office; and after ten or twelve years the Company recommended me as Governor in one of the provinces of the Bengal Presidency. It was here that I found my sweet wife."

"It is a strange story," said the General, with a long sigh. "She came suddenly upon me, and changed all my life. Thus far I had so devoted myself to business that no idea of love or sentiment ever entered my head, except when I was a boy. I had reached the age of forty-five without having hardly ever met with any woman who had touched my heart, or even my head, for that matter."

"My first sight of her was most sudden and most strange," continued the General, in the tone of one who loved to linger upon even the smallest details of the story which he was telling

—"strange and sudden. I had been busy all day in the audience chamber, and when at length the cases were all disposed of, I retired thoroughly exhausted, and gave orders that no one should be admitted on any pretext whatever. On passing through the halls to my private apartment I heard an altercation at the door. My orderly was speaking in a very decided tone to some one."

"It is impossible," I heard him say. "His Excellency has given positive orders to admit no one to-day."

"I walked on, paying but little heed to this. Applications were common after hours, and my rules on this point were stringent. But suddenly my attention was arrested by the sound of a woman's voice. It affected me strangely. Chetwynde. The tones were sweet and low, and there was an agony of supplication in them which lent additional earnestness to her words."

"Oh, do not refuse me," the voice said. "They say the Resident is just and merciful. Let me see him, I entreat, if only for one moment."

"At these words I turned, and at once hastened to the door. A young girl stood there, with her hands clasped, and in an attitude of earnest entreaty. She had evidently come closely veiled, but in her excitement her veil had been thrown back, and her upturned face lent an unspeakable earnestness to her pleading. At the sight of her I was filled with the deepest sympathy."

"I am the Resident," said I. "What can I do for you?"

"She looked at me earnestly, and for a time said nothing. A change came over her face. Her troubles seemed to have overwhelmed her. She tottered, and would have fallen, had I not supported her. I led her into the house, and sent for some wine. This restored her."

"She was the most beautiful creature that I ever beheld," continued the General, in a pensive tone, after some silence. "She was tall and slight, with all that liteness and grace of movement which is peculiar to Indian women, and yet she seemed more European than Indian. Her face was small and oval, her hair hung round it in rich masses, and her eyes were large, deep, and liquid, and, in addition to their natural beauty, they bore that sad expression which, it is said, is the sure precursor of an early death. Thank God!" continued the General, in a musing tone, "I at least did something to brighten that short life of hers."

"As soon as she was sufficiently recovered she told her story. It was a strange one. She was the daughter of an English officer, who having fallen in love with an Indian Begum gave up home, country, and friends, and married her. Their daughter Arama had been brought up in the European manner, and to the warm, passionate, Indian nature she added the refined intelligence of the English lady. When she was fourteen her father died. Her mother followed in a few years. Of her father's friends she knew nothing, and her mother's brother, who was the Rajah of a distant province, was the only one on whom she could rely. Her mother while dying charged her always to remember that she was the daughter of a British officer, and that if she were ever in need of protection she should demand it of the English authorities. After her mother's death the Rajah