

CHAPTER I

"Whom does love concern save the lover and the beloved? Yet its impact deluges a thousand shores."—E. M. FORSTER.

SIR MARK FORSYTH pushed back his chair, left the dinner-table, and strolled over to the bay window. He drew out his cigarette-case, but apparently forgot to open it. He stood there, looking out across the garden, that merged into rocky spaces of heather and bracken, and culminated in an abrupt descent to Loch Etive. Low above the darkening hills the sunset splendour flamed along the horizon, and all the waters beneath were alight with the transient glory. But the man's face wore the abstracted air of one who dwells upon an inner vision. Though the subdued flow of talk behind him entered his ears, it did not seem to reach his brain. "Bobs," his devoted Irish terrior, crept out from under the table and, joining his master, made sundry infallible bids for attention, without success.

Presently alluring whiffs of cigarette smoke, intruding on his dreams, reminded Sir Ma. of the unopened case in his hand.

"I vote for coffee on the terrace, Mother," he said, turning his eyes from the glory without to the dimness of the unlighted dining-room. "Then we'll have the boats out. There's going to be an after-glow and a half presently."

"I told Grant about the coffee two minutes ago, dear," Lady Forsyth answered, smiling; but her