where, peace and courage would revisit her soul. At least she would escape from those distracting voices that might go on for another hour.

When nerves and imagination are overwrought, impulse seems the voice of inspiration. The garden called her. She would go. Already she was fastening her cloak with unsteady fingers, thankful for the mere relief of movement after the nervous tension of waiting.

Outside in the passage she started and stood still. Through the sitting-room door the voices sounded clearer; Nevil's raised this time in manifest remonstrance. Again, as on that night at Cadenabbia, all thought of right or wrong was blotted out by the imperative need to know; and again came punishment, sharp as the stroke of a sword.

"My dear sir, I'd infinitely rather not," she heard Nevil say, with a touch of impatience. "I don't think you quite realize what a big sacrifice you ask of me. Last year, as I've explained, my position was utterly different. But now—with so many new interests opening up, to lease Bramleigh Beeches and practically live abroad——!"

Lilamani heard no more. She had no business to hear. His anger at Como came suddenly back to her. And clapping both hands over her ears, she sped like a thing pursued, down the shallow staircase, through the empty public dining-room, out into the night——

And the two in the sitting-room, guessing nothing of danger to her they loved, from tension of waiting and nerves at strain, continued to weigh her fate in the balance, even as they had done a year ago, in that very room, on a moonlit night of March.

Nevil's wish to join her, after a brief concession to politeness, had been increased by a vague sense of disturbance, almost of antagonism, in the air. Too well he knew that Sir Lakshman had cause for anxiety; nor did he look to