

was something about her that was almost boy-like in appearance, though her small and slightly built figure, with its slender waist, was essentially feminine. She carried a pair of serviceable gloves and a cane; and he noticed that her hands were white and slender, like those he had seen in the Florentine paintings of the Madonna, though there was something resolute in her grip upon the reins.

Her donkey was standing very still in the deep shadow of the palms which clustered around the front of the house; and the rider's grey hat and skirt seemed to merge into the dusty haze of the fading light, so that there was about her something very elusive, almost of the quality of dream.

"Are you Father Gregory?" she asked, after the first slight bow had been exchanged.

"I am," he answered.

"Well, won't you ask me into your house? I have ridden over especially to see you."

Father Gregory hesitated. "I am sorry," he said. "It is our rule here that women are not allowed to enter."

"How extraordinary!" she answered, a suggestion of a smile playing about her mouth. "Are we so dangerous?"

"No, not in the least, my child. We defend ourselves only from waste of time."

"Are you very busy just now?" she asked.

"I am at your service," he answered gravely.

"If you will dismount, we can stroll over to that mound, where we can sit down, and you can tell me to what I owe the honour of your visit."

"Thank you," she said, and at once dismounted. Her donkey-boy, who had been standing under the palms at a respectful distance, emerged from their shadow and took charge of her donkey. As they walked away from the house, she pointed with her cane to the distant Nile. "Can you see that