

THE ARROW OF GOLD

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of those shoulders, too. . . . You hear, Allègre, I must have a bit of her shoulders, too. I can see through the cloth that they are divine. If they aren't divine I will eat my hat. Yes, I will do your head and then—*nunc dimittis.*'

"These were the first words with which the world greeted her, or should I say civilization did; already both her native mountains and the cavern of oranges belonged to a prehistoric age. 'Why don't you ask him to come this afternoon?' Allègre's voice suggested gently. 'He knows the way to the house.'

"The old man said with extraordinary fervour, 'Oh, yes I will,' pulled up his horse and they went on. She told me that she could feel her heart-beats for a long time. The remote power of that voice, those old eyes full of tears, that noble and ruined face, had affected her extraordinarily she said. But perhaps what affected her was the shadow, the still living shadow of a great passion in the man's heart.

"Allègre remarked to her calmly: 'He has been a little mad all his life.'"