

possessed of a fine intellect and a singular charm of presence, Mary Alleyne had, notwithstanding the drawing power of her personality, married late in life; and so frail was she physically that after marriage it was only her husband's will which held her back from a state of chronic disablement. He, however, refused to allow her to be ailing, and she moved obedient to his imperious purpose and equally imperious passion. This weakness, however, was only physical: in spiritual things—and hers was a nature whose most vivid experiences were found on this plane—she was most vitally alert. She followed the rule of the religious life, as she had been taught to interpret it, with an unswerving and passionate loyalty. It made up the sum of her happiness. Her love for her husband and her child had been part of it, consecrated and offered up to God. There had been no clash in her of two ideals, for to her mind the material was but the texture of the spiritual, sanctified by the central fact of her creed—the lifting of the human into the divine. In her, the two worlds, united and yet eternally apart, the paradox of which has baffled philosophers and tortured saints, were easily at one. This was the principal fact about her: it stood isolated and emphatic. Mary Alleyne's eye was single: she took the world very simply.

Her husband, on the other hand, took the world simply also, but from the opposite standpoint. He was an honest materialist, for whom the things from which his wife drew her very being did not exist. He had been born into a Church