

affectation of archaic taste, which at that date (1901) represented one of the latest refinements of French decadence, and was styled *l'art nouveau*. In a bed enamelled white—on which flowers were vaguely sketched with a mixture of primitive artlessness and Japanese freedom, by the hand of some fashionable London or Paris decorator—the girl was sleeping quietly; a very small face in the midst of a dishevelled tumble of fair hair, an exquisitely oval face, so perfect that it might have been modelled in wax, really too perfect to seem quite real; a small nose with nostrils almost too delicate and the faintest aquiline curve; large Madonna-like eyes, and very long eyebrows, curved down towards the temples like those of our Lady of Sorrows. Rather too much lace, perhaps, frilled the sheets and pillow-cases; too many sparkling rings were on the slender hands that lay lightly on the satin coverlet; too much magnificence, as we should think, for a child so young; but for that, everything about her was quite in harmony with the latest ideas of Western luxury. But there were iron bars to the windows, and besides these the chequered wooden screens—closely fastened, never to be opened—which gave a sense of restraint to all this elegance, the oppression almost of a prison.

In spite of the brilliant sunshine and the glad excitement of the swallows outside, the girl slept on late, with the heavy torpor that suddenly falls after a sleepless night, and there were dark lines under her eyes, as though she had yesterday shed many tears.