

CHAPTER THE LAST

"O very woman, god at once and child,
What ails thee to desire of me once more
The assurance that thou hadst in heart before?
For all this wild, sweet waste of sweet, vain breath
Thou knowest, I know thou hast given me
Life, not Death."

SWINBURNE

AND out there in full moonlight, while the two talked, the dusky speck, seen of Nevil, moved restlessly to and fro in the open sandy space, where no balustrade intervenes between sheer rocks and the sea.

Not even night and silence could baptize the face of Lilamani Sinclair with the dew of peace. Fleeing from her overwrought self, imprisoned within four walls, she found only that self, and none other, here at the edge of things. None other: that was the horror of it. But then came another; a ghostly presence, unseen, yet acutely close to her shoulder, whispering insistently at her ear. And the voice was the voice of Jane. One half of her now knew it for a product of nerves and imagination; the other half shivered, at the chill nearness of it, like a naked body in the winds between the worlds.

And through all these importunate unrealities of sight and sound, Nevil's voice, with its note of remonstrance, sounded clearer than all. "You don't quite realize what a big sacrifice you ask of me." "Give up Bramleigh, Beedon, and practically live abroad——"

Oh, it was impossible, past thinking. How could t