

bred a host of fears that grew and whispered and distorted themselves with a fiendish versatility; speaking always in the voice of That Terrible, whose unforgettable sentence was the germ whence they had sprung. Had this great hope of motherhood come sooner, no doubt she had accepted it more simply and sanely. But now, ill-health and strain and long brooding on the one idea inclined her to see all things a little out of their true proportion, till at moments she wondered if she would ever find courage to speak at all. Well she knew that, if her fears were grounded, not all her chivalrous tenderness and reticence could blind her to truth. From such knowledge he could not shield her—he could not! One look into his eyes would suffice. And if—if——!

Sooner death for herself and her gift, than that he should not deem it the crown of all, was her desperate thought. With a shuddering sigh she let fall her hands. Oh, when—when would he come? His eyes had said he understood, and with each moment of waiting courage waned.

Her room adjoined their dining-room, and the steady murmur of voices through the wall recalled that earlier day, when her fate had hung in the balance. Suddenly the voices grew louder. Was her father, in sheer love for her, making fresh trouble on her account, just when she had that to tell which might be deemed the greater trouble than all?

A torment of restlessness took hold of her. She rose and paced the room, every sensitive nerve of doubt and suspense strained almost to breaking-point. Then she stood still again upon the threshold, and saw how the moonlight seemed magically to be drinking up the shadows along the wide path to the sea. The brooding calm of it all drew her with the potency of a command. Again, as on that still morning of frost, sudden longing seized her to be out there alone in the heart of silence. Surely there, if any-