

here in Brittany, because I love the place and the people. And even now, to-day, after what I have suffered and gone through, I can get more pleasure out of a bit of colour, out of one glimpse of a curling emerald wave before it breaks into foam, than I could find in all the cities of the world."

He became silent, compressing his lips. Téphany, realising that the man was actually suffering from the silence he had so long imposed upon himself, said quietly :

"In the old days you raved about form, Michael ; now it's colour."

He snapped at her bait, and spoke most interestingly of colour and curious effects obtained by the use of certain pigments. It became evident that he had studied his subject exhaustively : experimenting with patience and ardour. Listening to him, conscious that the man had sacrificed, or at least had subordinated, personal ambitions to his desire for a wider and deeper understanding of his art, Téphany felt an immense pity flooding her heart. Very dimly she apprehended the truth that her old friend stood self-revealed as one of the very few who dare, knowingly, to abandon what the world calls substance for something ideal, ephemeral, to be seen, to be touched, but never to be captured.

"As for form," concluded Michael, "to you, Téphany, I will say this : I pursued it till it became my slave. I can draw anything I can see, but the colour in the simplest object defeats me."

"You succeed sometimes," she objected. "That child in the courtyard, for instance——"

"Oh—that ?"

Her curiosity, rapidly becoming inordinate, impelled her to mention the child, through whom she might learn more of the girl, the woman.

"Yes—that. It is the best thing I have seen of yours : one of the best things I have ever seen anywhere."

He drew in his breath with a sharp gasping sound.

"If you had known—well, yes, you are right. But I