

definitely when his term of office expired. The Empire, he wrote, was a saner, sweeter, more spacious place of abode than twentieth-century England, which seemed temporarily given over to the cheap-jack, the specialist, and the party politician. And she—while loving every foot of her husband's country and her own—understood too well the frequent disappointment of those who came, on rare, hardly earned leave, from the ends of the earth; and failed to find, in picture-palaces and music-halls, in the jargon of Futurists and demagogues, the England of their dreams.

For this cause, her sole remaining brother had become little more than a memory and a monthly letter. Yet could she never account herself a lonely woman, while she had Keith for friend and mentor, Mark for son, and Sheila for—more than possible—daughter. What business had this unknown girl to step into their charmed circle and unsettle the very foundation of things? Never, till to-night, had it seemed possible to Mark's mother that she could arrive at dreading the fulfilment of his heart's desire. Yet that was what it amounted to. Dread lurked behind her surface irritation. The touch of second sight in her composition made her vaguely conscious of danger in the air. Small wonder if she anathematised Maurice Lenox for his knack of picking up promiscuous strangers, and, in this case, aggravating his offence by failing to appropriate his own discovery.