

'Judith,' he said desperately at the door, after she had bidden him a cheerful farewell, 'I once thought I had reason to believe that you loved me.'

She was leaning rather heavily on the back of a chair. He had made only a short visit, but he had spent five years of this woman's life since he arrived.

'Not you,' she said : 'my idea of you. And that was a long time ago.'

She kept her tone of polite commonplace ; there was nothing for it but a recognisant bow, which Ancram made in silence. As he took his way downstairs and out into Kensington, a malignant recollection of having heard something very like this before took possession of him and interfered with the heroic quality of his grief. If he had a Nemesis, he told himself, it was the feminine idea of him. But that was afterward.

One day, a year later, Sir Lewis Ancram paused in his successful conduct of the affairs of Bengal long enough to state the case with ultimate emphasis to a confidentially inquiring friend.