

golden moon disentangle herself leisurely from the last of the tree-tops, and dissolve as leisurely from orange-golden to the amber glow that puts the stars to shame. She had been wondering now for a week and more without arriving at any definite conclusion, save that, for her father's sake, she could put off speaking no longer. Absorbed in her own anguish of uncertainty—her unreasoning self-torment over the unavoidable, intensified by ill-health—she had not realized, till to-night, how wrong it was to keep silence when half a dozen words might set her father's mind at rest.

And he—her lord—himself the giver——?

That there could be any shadow of doubt on such a matter, was to her Eastern heart a calamity almost beyond endurance: her crowning punishment at the hands of her outraged Gods. Joy in the knowledge that at last the great consummation was hers, had been strangled at birth by the old serpent suspicion—scotched, not killed—that, in the deep of his heart, her husband might be hoping to evade the full price of possession; the stigma of passing on the Sinclair title and estates to a son who had not pure English blood in his veins. Not unnatural; that she must needs admit. Pride of race was an instinct she could very well understand. Yet, in such a case her heart cried out that he had no right—no right——

A dry sob shook her; and covering her face she sank into a low chair, set always near the threshold.

Before they left Bramleigh she had known how it was with her. But at that moment the fulfilling of her first gift had absorbed him to the exclusion of all else. Better wait, her heart had whispered, and tell him after—at Antibes, where all things would speak to him of those early days when father, family, country had weighed as feathers in the scale against his great love and desire of her.

But, alas, waiting gave time for thought; and thought