

She did not resent his approach which seemed so natural.

"Where?" she asked with an answering look which told him that she knew.

"Once in Manila three years ago," said Wyatt, "and once again I believe in Colombo, and then—yesterday. Tell an exile of few friends that you remember."

"I—I think I do," she said, but he was sure she did.

She moved towards a chair in a sheltered place and he followed her and stood near as she sat down.

"You were thinking of England just now," he said.

"Don't all exiles think of home?" she asked sadly. She leant her chin upon her hands and added—"Yes, I want to get back to England."

"The East has been hard on you," said Wyatt.

"It's hard on us all, isn't it?" she asked. "Except in steamships I've hardly spoken to a white woman these five years."

"What part of England do you come from?" he asked.

"Sussex," she said.

And Wyatt laughed happily.

"That's my country," he said. "I—I knew we should be friends."

It seemed that with her he found a voice for his silent thought; for he was suddenly happy. He told her the story of his years in the East and spoke of his ambition, that others might think so small, to return to his native downs and his father's house, with an ancient windmill near by, which stood under the northern shadow of three old pines. In the depths of his nature, half beneath his conscious mind, he took her there with him and made her mistress of his demsne. As she listened and smiled it seemed that she was a true mate long wished for. His imagination led him on swiftly, for the long oppression of his alien years was lifted from him and the voiceless misery of the lonely past mocked him no more. A grave and pleasant silence came to him and

then once more he spoke suddenly.

"If you go back to England would you like such a place as that?"

He saw a sudden alarm in her and did not understand it, for long suppressed passion grew in him and his instincts pushed him on.

"Would you, would you?" he asked. "I'm not a stranger, you know it! You *must* see it! Will you live there too?"

He saw her hands clutch each other and she said with strange harshness:

"You don't understand! My husband is with me in this ship."

Wyatt sat without speaking for quite a long time. Then he rose and went to the rail and stared at the desolate sea, while she did not move. And he wondered at his haste and utter madness. His instincts had swept him off his feet, and yet—and yet—he knew they had spoken the truth! Suddenly he turned round and went back to her and said—

"I am sorry, forgive me; I didn't know—I didn't know."

Once more he looked at the sea, but his visions were blurred. No longer could he see the house upon the downs, under the pines and by the mill. But a moment ago he had seen it all as he had seen that they two were by nature mates. For whom then was she in mourning? Still standing with his hand upon her chair, he said—

"No, no, I'm not sorry I spoke. Don't believe I'm sorry."

She said nothing. And Wyatt spoke again. He wondered at himself, even as he did so.

"Listen to me a minute. I must speak. Until I met you I never met anyone I could have been mates with! Just tell me one thing."

And she said—

"What thing?"

"Only the truth," said Wyatt. "It's a very little thing to take away with me. I want to know whether you, too, think we might have been mates."

And presently she looked at him and he held out his hand to her and