

months ago, when she had turned, in the morning-room, on the old man and poured out on him the last drops of bitterness that her soul contained. Since that time, when she had learned of her boy's own attitude to death—how he too had "his bad times," how he hid them from her, not because he did not love her, but because he loved her enough to trust her as well—since the moment when she had looked out of the window and seen the great Robbia *Pietà* leaning against the wall of the terrace, and had understood what its erection meant—since then she had had not even a temptation to resentment. It appeared to her now that it had not been death itself that she had feared for him, but its circumstances; and that as long as she could keep her attention fixed on death itself, its circumstances could not distract nor trouble her. Since that revelation she simply had not to struggle at all: it seemed that she had been lifted clean out of the realm where resentment is possible, where one soul demands attentions from another, where the small passions rage and fret, and faults are found and grudges cherished. It was like . . . it was like the world, she thought this morning, on which the snow had fallen—a wide white shining realm where roughnesses have ceased to exist, where colours have gone back again, not into the blackness that is their negation, but to whiteness which is their source and end. The whiteness is deathly cold, but it is not death, it is only silence; it lights, too, the dark roofs and corners of a house within, though it lies heavy on the house without.

She could think, too, broadly and passively, now, instead of actively and energetically. She could look back on the past, without even a flush of personal feeling—on Enid and her own jealousies, on Nevill's disturbing detachment, on the long chain of miseries—her omens, her terrors, her apprehensions, on the growing crescendo of Nevill's sickness, his headaches, his sudden blindness, on the horrors of the operation and of the drawing-room where she had learned the news that he must die, of her dull wretchedness at Hartley again and her flare of anger