

also was of the old, Southern life; he knew it all, and how her days had gone; she was only further South than his sisters in Virginia. He knew, too, how the last eighteen months had gone; he knew how they went with the women at home.

They sat by the jewelled fire and talked and talked — of all things but this and that. War, like a spent thunder-cloud, drifted from their minds. They did not continuously talk; there were silences when they looked into the exquisite flame, or, with quiet, wide eyes, each at the other. They were young, but their inner type was ancient of days; they sat quiet, subtle, poised, not unlike a Leonardo canvas. Before ten o'clock she rose and said good night and they parted. In the paralleled room Cary opened the window and stood gazing out. There was a great round moon whitening a garden, and tall, strange trees. He saw an opaline land of the heart, an immemorial, passion-pale Paradise, and around it all the watery barrier of the flood . . . Désirée, in her own room, walked up and down, up and down, then knelt before her fire and smiled to find that she was crying.

The next morning, although he was up early, he did not see her until eleven o'clock. Then he came upon her as she quitted the wing in which had been laid the crippled overseer. All around was an old, formal garden, the day grey pearl, a few coloured leaves falling. The two sat upon the step of a summer-house, and at first they talked of the recession of the water and the plantation round which had kept her through the morning. Then, answering her smiling questions, he told her of his home and family, lightly and readily, meaning that she should know how to place him. After this the note of last evening came back, and with its thrilling sound the two fell silent, sitting in the Southern sunshine, gazing past the garden upon the lessening crescent of the flood.

Late in the afternoon, as he sat in a dream before an excellent old collection of books, the door opened and she appeared on the threshold, about her the cloak of the other night. He rose, laying down an unopened book.

"I am going," she said, "to walk down the avenue to look at the levee."

They walked beneath the slant rays, through the deepening shade. Before them was the great river; turn the head and they saw,