

as in all her letters, the same neat, clear hand. She was mistress of herself in the face of death. And she began with the balanced sentences which it was her manner to compose ; phrases so calm that André could almost have doubted their finality, since he had not seen her stiff and white, had not held her dead hand.

THE LETTER

‘ My friend, the hour of our parting has struck. The Iradeh by which I believed myself protected has been annulled, as Zeyneb no doubt has told you. My grandmother and my uncles have made every arrangement for my marriage, and to-morrow I am to be handed over once more to the man—you know.

‘ It is midnight, and in the silence of the sleeping house there is not a sound but that of my pen ; nothing is awake except my misery. To me the world is blotted out ; I have already taken leave of all I ever loved ; I have written my last instructions and my farewell letters. I have divested my soul of all that is not of its very essence, I have driven away every image—so that nothing may come between you and me, so that I may give to you alone the last hours of my life, and that you alone may feel the last dying throb of my heart.

‘ Because, my friend, I mean to die. A quite peaceful death, like a deeper sleep, that will not disfigure my prettiness. Peace and forgetting are here, in a phial under my hand. It is an Arabian