

several minutes considered the pattern of the carpet with profound attention. The Indian, determined to gain his point, found encouragement even in such negative acquiescence.

"No harm, but rather benefit to your art," he went on, exchanging the forcible note to one of persuasion, "from some years spent in other lands than England. And since you have done so well with Eastern subjects, you will be the more able to combine closer study for yourself with the light and warmth that are so needful for this child of the sun you have taken to wife. Better than all, give her a year in India, Nevil——"

Lilamani's husband looked up quickly. "No, not that, sir. Not India—yet."

From the moment Sir Lakshman began to speak he had known it was impending. Yet the actual word came as a shock. So also did his abrupt refusal to the man who had believed victory in sight.

"And why not India?" he asked, up in arms at once for his own country. "Surely——"

"Please don't think me unkind or unreasonable, sir, or take my refusal amiss. I can't explain myself. But you must accept my word for it that India's out of the question."

As if to clinch the matter he rose, braced his shoulders, and going over to the open door stood there in a long silence, while the opposing forces of passion and ambition, pride of possession and worshipful devotion to her through whom he had found himself, clashed within him mightily, yet without sound. Gazing abstractedly down the pearl-grey path of radiance that ended in the ghostly glimmer of the Mediterranean, he noted, with vague interest, a dusky speck that moved from one pool of shadow to another, far away, down by the balustrade where the rocks fell sheer to the sea. That this moving speck concerned him, even remotely, he did not dream. Unthinkingly he saw it vanish