

Only for royalty would he have done what he did for these inconspicuous people, strangers in a strange land, and Julia did not recognize that she was under the spell of an exquisite art, the product of centuries of culture and rule, she only felt at ease as she came up the steps with this man, so ordinary, easy-going, and friendly, and withal apparently so commonplace.

For them he robbed the great hall of the Château of its vastness, and made the suits of ramour seem vaguely the shells of their own ancestors, the stiff men-servants their own attendants.

Under the pretence of shewing them the tapestry on the stairs he managed to lead them to the doors of their own rooms on the first floor, twin bedrooms intercommunicating, where a valet and a maid were putting things in order, or pretending to do so, whilst waiting to receive the visitors and do their bidding.

When they came downstairs again, St. Die, who was not waiting for them but who chanced to meet them all the same, led the way to the drawing-room where afternoon tea was in progress.

His wife received them. There were twenty-five or thirty people in the room, the windows were open to the western terrace, which was lit by the late afternoon sun, and Julia, handed over by her hostess to a stout young Englishman, found herself discussing horses with a volubility and an interest quite alien to her nature, and finding out the fact that it is not till we have to make conversation that we find how much we have to say on topics that we imagine we have never considered.

An hour later Jack Candon, who had quite lost sight of his wife, found himself in the sunken garden of the Château with his host. They had come out on the terrace for a smoke, and had wandered through the gardens deep in a philosophical discussion, and absolutely blind to the beauties around them.

St. Die was laying down his theory of the origin of life, and Candon, violently dissenting, was about to attack the St. Die theory, when, glancing up he saw Julia at one of the windows of the first floor.

St. Die, looking up also, bowed, and Julia with a smile and a little nod to the two men vanished.

"It is the nursery," said St. Die, "my wife has taken your wife to see the children. 'Ah!' he broke off, turning to a rose tree on which a careless gardener had allowed some withered roses to remain, 'this is what I hate to see.'"

He began to pluck the dead roses off, and Candon, glancing up at the window on the chance of Julia looking out again, saw, not Julia, but someone else.

A girl had come to have a peep. A girl more lovely than any of the roses in the garden. She was dressed in brown, a very sober and Quakerish garb, hinting of the governess, and her eyes were fixed on Candon.

Then she turned away, but as she turned she glanced back at him.

"So you see," said St. Die, finishing with the rose tree, "my theory may be said to be like the theory of Arrhenius—but with a difference."

"Yes," said Candon. "I see what you mean."

The words came mechanically. The theory of St. Die's as to origin of life strutted and spread its tail unharmed, the stone he had picked up to fling at it fell from his hand; that long fatal glance was like the long pull of the bowman that sends the arrow deep into the victim, bedding it up to the feathers.

Throwing away the stump of his cigar, Candon turned with his host and strolled back to the terrace.

Entering the house by way of the drawing-room he went upstairs.

Julia was in her bedroom looking over the frock she was to wear that evening, singing to herself.

She had discovered the fact that great people are just as nice as small, and far easier to get on with as a