

THE VOYAGE

FIRST DAY.

THE sea trembles in silver links; each crest is caught in the mesh of dawn.

I couldn't sleep any more, so I came up to get into the vastness of it—the dawn, the sea. I feel that my whole universe is staggering in births, in dawns, in huge lights that are creeping up out of void. God, but I am frightened of life! My love, you have made me as unknown as the sea to myself. I feel part of the world.

It is not he or I, but Nature, that is triumphant; this is her ecstasy of success. Virgins, perhaps, are the dead of her

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

world, lost spirits of life, ghosts that flicker out to extinction. It is possible that their souls reinhabit the pallid vitality of flowers, or seek to impress their form on some futile creature of the woods. At least, they are lifted out of life unchanged, into the mystery that made them out of nebulae.

I seem to have broken into a new world, to have been caught into a net of gold. The water presses close, like instinct—the endless craving, unsatisfied, unworn; the eternal youth of desire, that gives the eternal, futile surrender.

I let him brand me with himself, to make me belong to humanity.

I had been with him before in the Temple, in that last, marvellous summer. I had seen it, and the fountains, and the mysterious, luminous shimmer of the distant river; the wide, crimson flowers; the latticed windows opening out on old gar-

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

dens, veiled with the scent of white hawthorn.

And this last time was the last day, the last hour and moment of Romance, of Romance as it had been. The river was struck red with sudden flames of the winter sun; the sky was livid; the stones dripped moisture; the books on the shelves looked for ever closed.

I remember I went back to the window and looked out, where before I had seen the flowers, and had felt the perfume of the hawthorn.

And he had been silent; he had waited without moving,—he had waited as he had waited ever since the first day we met; waited till I should turn and let him come to me.

And now I am taking my new life out alone, to face the sea, and become part of me, undefiled by the contact of usual life.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

I could not endure to feel, that this marvel of what men and women are, should decline from its height of branded surprise.

When I left him, that flaming afternoon, I could not have stayed at home as I promised. I went to the music, the thing that had led me on, the very essence of what I had done.

It was Brahms—a string quartette. The unshaken music caught my flying nerves in steady hands.

I remember looking at the people, as I walked past them to my seat—it was only half an hour before the end—and wondering if they could know that I had just been assisting at the birth of music, the very heart of the desire that was crying from the violins; the meaning of all the beauty that was turning the air of the hall to the vibrations of the voices of the captured gods.

SECOND DAY

THE very waves look ashy and ineffectual this morning; even Nature has her fatigues. Life, too, does not supply the setting for a constant tragedy.

It is the contrast between excitement and ordinary life that has put exaggerated emphasis on such things as those of the other day; it is the fatigue of nerves asking for rest. You wouldn't call running a crime because you were tired after it. If nerves could talk, how they would laugh at our morals! Imagine arranging a social code for muscular exercise!

One should vary experience by scenery, by winds; by, as I am doing now, the magnificence of the sea. Then it would be easier to balance the sense of strength,