

of it filled her with pleasure. She stood perfectly still, letting the wind blow cold and strong in her face and loosen her hair. The sky was dull and grey, and vague thoughts swept through her – of the Future, of her leaving this little island and going so far away, of all that she knew and loved, all that she wished to be. ‘O I wish I was a poet’ she cried, spreading out her arms. ‘I wish I could interpret this atmosphere, this influence.’ She found a little bird fluttering near in a bush, its wing broken by the storm, and held it close to her, overcome with a feeling of tenderness. ‘I am so strong’ she said, ‘and the strong are never hurt. It is always the weak who are pained.’³ She walked home more slowly. Now that the excitement of climbing had left her she felt tired and depressed. Clouds of dust whirled up the road, dry particles of sand stung her face. She longed for the evening to come, yet almost dreaded it.

When tea was over Juliet went back to her room, tried to read and failed, and walked up and down – nine steps one way, nine steps another. The feeling soothed her. She heard the front door bell ring, and knew that the guests had arrived – but she stayed there till Margaret sought her out and brought her down with great indignation. The room seemed full of people, but Juliet was not shy. She held her head a little higher than usual, and an expression of almost indifference came into her face. David stood by the piano, unfastening his music case. She shook hands with him and shot him a keen quick glance of recognition. Then she curled herself up in a corner of the sofa and watched the people with amusement and interest. She liked to listen to little pieces of conversation, create her idea of their lives. There was the usual amount of very second rate singing concerning Swallows and ‘Had I Known’. Margaret played several nondescript pieces on the piano – and sat till David’s turn came. Juliet watched him with great pleasure and curiosity. A bright spot came into her cheeks, her eyes wide opened – but when he drew his bow across the strings her whole soul woke and lived for the first time in her life. She became utterly absorbed in the music. The room faded, the people faded. She saw only his sensitive inspired face, felt only the rapture that held her fast, that clung to her and hid her in its folds, as impenetrable and pure as the mists from the sea . . . Suddenly the music ceased, the tears poured down her face, and she came back to reality . . . She put her handkerchief to her eyes and when she looked round became aware of the amused glances of the company, and heard the steady almost prophetic-sounding voice of David’s Father: ‘That child is a born musician’.

The rest of the evening passed she knew not how. Something had come to life in Juliet’s soul, and it shone in her transfigured face. For that night she was brilliantly beautiful – not with the beauty of a child, but the charm of a woman seemed to emanate from her. David was con-