

ing into cloisters supported on pointed arches. These last ran round two sides of a garden, green with orange and lemon trees and the tall fronds of bananas. There was a murmur of water somewhere softly splashing into a basin, and the air was full of a faint but delightful smell of violets. I was conducted along the cloisters to a flight of stairs that led from them, and was just preparing to mount when my hostess came down to meet me. By way of a thin disguise I will speak of her as Mrs. Falkland. Her greeting was of the kindest, and, with a thoughtfulness which I fully appreciated, she told me that in the dining-room she had ordered some luncheon to be awaiting me. We went there. It was a room on the ground floor opening on the cloisters. It was lofty, if somewhat narrow. It was spanned by a pointed arch, which helped to sustain the bare beams of the ceiling. The walls, covered with a smooth pinkish plaster, gave the scene an aspect of non-European simplicity, whilst a sparkle of plate on the side-board and on the table at once betrayed the presence of European comfort and luxury. It was a pleasant, piquant mixture, and produced a strange sense in me of conditions untried hitherto and altogether mysterious.

My repast over I was taken to the rooms above. The stairs led to a sort of lofty hall, shaped like the letter L, directly over the cloisters. Its stone floor was strewn with Oriental rugs; its bare plastered walls were hung with Oriental embroideries, and here