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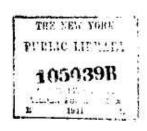


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TO
MY MOTHER





CHAPTER I

LITTLE group of people stood huddled together on the beach. They were looking away out beyond the breaking billows to where two swimmers, mere specks on the water, aided by the incoming tide, slowly but surely made their way towards the shore. A woman in black stood a little apart from the group, her whole attitude suggestive of intense anxiety, and she seemed to be holding herself in control by some master will power. Not a muscle of her face relaxed as she kept her field glasses fixed upon the two dark objects as they rose and fell with the waves. In the east clouds were rolling up in huge banks of blackness, while the grey warning of an approaching storm overspread the whole line of the vision.

The huge crested billows swept by the rising wind into ever-increasing fury, dashed and spent themselves upon the firm white bosom of the shore, and in all the tumult of their anger lashed and sprayed the rocks which here and there jutted out into the

sea.

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