THE QUICKENING OF CALIBAN:

BY

J. COMPTON RICKETT

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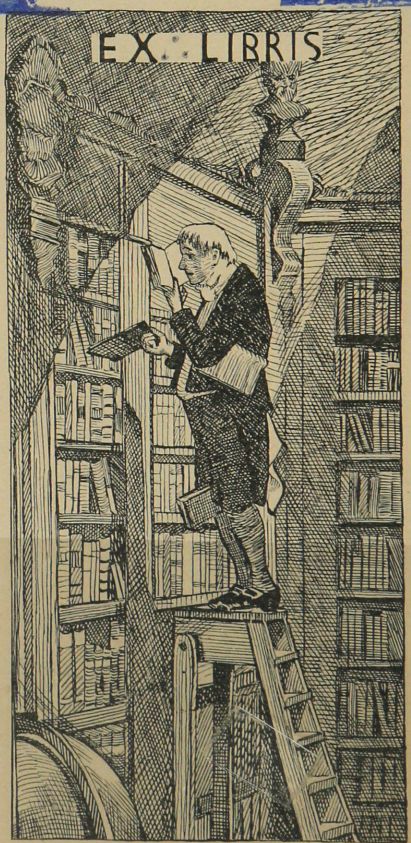

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ALTERNATE BRANCH OF
HUMAN EVOLUTION in AFRICA
- MISSING LINK?

THE QUICKENING OF CALIBAN

A MODERN STORY OF EVOLUTION

BY

J. COMPTON RICKETT

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRIST THAT IS TO BE:
A LATTER-DAY ROMANCE."

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I.

In the tropics Life is supreme, and the change of day to night only shifts the scene, but does not check the drama. Life stalks across the stage, the lion of the play, followed by his shadow, the lean, hungry jackal—Death.

THE morning surged along the river valley like a tidal wave, and Paul Ruefold put out the lamp, as he could now see the African village on the opposite shore. The cluster of huts with a featherwork of forest at their back, the large canoes with their jagged stems in air, stood out clearly, and the scattered barking and cackling showed that the village was awake, and that the work of the day had begun. His letters were finished, and were ready for the mail-bag. In a few hours the fussy frail steam barge would come down stream and tether to the bank. It would make up its fuel from the pile of wood and dried pods; the stern-wheel would again butt it forward on its voyage to the ocean. When the mail had been flung aboard, Europe would be out of

reach for another term of three weeks. Paul had risen early to write the most important of his letters in the cool of the hour before the dawn. The work was done, but it had taken his thoughts far beyond the mission compound, and as he glanced at the mirror fixed to the wall, his sight traveled behind the lean gray face reflected there to a scene of five-and-twenty years earlier.

He saw a town in far-off England, where the chimneys rose thick as the stems in a bamboo-brake. It was Sunday, and the pall of smoke had lifted from the valley and suffered the hillside to show a faded green. Paul was a young man of four-and-twenty, and with him walked a girl of his own age. They were returning from their afternoon classes at the chapel school, and were standing opposite to a vacant plot of ground. Paul could see it distinctly—the small square piece, cut like a notch out of a world of brick. A building had been demolished and the ground was rough and uneven, with here and there a tuft of grass, an old boot, and a fragment of crockery. Yet it was an enchanted spot to him, for there he drew the girl toward him and spoke to her of his fears and hopes. He did not like his father's trade, and had resolved to be a missionary. Would she be willing to leave the comfort of Laburnum Villa, the joy of the chapel services, and the excitement of week-night

meetings, for the wildness of the African desert or the loneliness of an island in the Pacific? She would do all that for the sake of Paul, and so the betrothal was sealed.

He followed the story. He offered himself to one of the great societies, and was accepted on probation. The romance of the unknown dazzled him, and the dull round of a town of forges and chimneys repelled. Now and again a breath from the stainless snow of Alpine heights awoke in him a nobler emotion. He obtained an appointment in the district of an African river. Two societies, instead of competing, had combined their forces, and they gave the head settlement the name of Union Vineyard Station. Here Paul had remained for more than twenty years, and had risen to the position of director of the district. Fever had assailed him, but he gradually hardened to its assaults, and although it never failed to return like old temptations, its power lacked intensity. Men died like flies about him, and others, broken by the climate, were forced to escape for their lives. Yet he remained, the master of the situation, with all the threads in his hand, the most trusted agent of the Council.

The girl in the midland town was never exposed to the risk of the climate, for his letters grew fewer, and at last ceased. Perhaps it was the

best for her; but her resignation was not complete until she knew, without doubt, that Paul had lost his half-caste wife after two years of married life. For of course there was another woman in the case, and the strange sad face of his long-lost wife now held the mirror. She had visited the station on her way to France from the Romanist Mission higher up the river. Paul was beguiled at the sight of her, and married her before difficulties could be raised. She had accepted marriage as a refuge from the French convent which awaited her. There was a strange story about her origin, which Paul would have forgotten had it been possible.

Many years ago a party of traders had pushed up a tributary stream which came from the far north to join the great river. They never returned, and it was reported that they had all been massacred. So far the story was common enough in African exploration. But the native account described their captors as men of large stature, with straight hair and light brown skin, entirely unlike the Bantu type. They were said to have been on a raid from their own land, a cleared and elevated region cut off from the world by the vast tangled forest which no white man had penetrated. It was further stated in the native account that one person had been saved, the daughter of a white trader. Ten years later a child was brought to the doors of the Catholic Mission in

a native canoe. The Sisters were amazed to see a half-caste girl about five years old. The boatmen stated that they had received the child at a village far up the northern stream. The bearers of the child through the forest said that she had been given to them by a woman of a different race, with instructions to take her down to the Catholic Mission hundreds of miles to the south, which, however, she described to them. The boatmen were promised a large reward if they brought back a piece of paper, written by the Sisters in their own language, as a proof that the child had been given over safe and sound. The Sisters found a stray word or two of French embedded in the unknown language of the child. There were traces of the Lord's Prayer, and of the names of Christ and of the Virgin Mother. The Sisters could not get any account of herself from the little one. The mention of "votre mère" kindled a flash of remembrance, but only set free a torrent of explanation in her own wild speech. So the sisters set to work to teach her French and English, bade her forget the past, cleared her mind of the rubbish which was useless to them, and built upon the site the clean fabric of the Catholic faith. As she grew into womanhood her beauty startled them, and they thought it wise to send her away to France that her vocation might be determined by the authorities in the mother-country. She had

learned the tradition of her birth from the children of the mission school, and the sharp little imps had not failed to tell her that she was neither black nor white, and worse than either. The Sisters had striven in vain to charm the sadness out of her heart with their caresses. She was quite docile, and yet secretly resisted the proposed journey across the black water. She knew that she belonged to Africa, and yet there was no kindred with whom she could claim fellowship. But the Sisters urged her to go, as they could not do any more for her, and knew not how to shape her future. They dreaded, most of all, the impudent stare of the white traders and officials, and yet were not prepared to give her the protection of their own garb.

At the end of two years Paul was alone again, for his half-caste wife died, and their only child, a girl, was taken in charge by the wives of his fellow missionaries. As the girl developed into the early maidenhood of a tropical country she was more with him, and for the last two years had acted as the mistress of his small household. She was now a woman, and it was about her future that his thoughts had been running in his letters to England. He had no anxiety in money matters, for he was not a poor man. He had saved a little from his salary; a legacy in England had come to him; and he was not guileless of private trading. He could provide for

Christina sufficiently well, but there was more that the girl now required—the company of other young people, the refinement of a life in Europe, which neither the books nor the culture which he had been at the pains to give her could supply. She was well-educated—he had done most of the work himself; but she must go from him for a couple of years—perhaps never to return.

To do him justice he felt the wrench acutely, but did not waver in his purpose. He might go with her if he willed it, but he shrank from an England which had grown foreign to him. He had no interest beyond seas which the budget of news did not satisfy, and he preferred to remain at his work, the model missionary. What was the worth of that work? He gave a searching look round the room. It was the dwelling of a modern Englishman, and betwixt him and the native yawned an impassable gulf. They might live side by side for centuries, but their ideas, their racial distinction, would remain. On the wooden walls of the chamber were fixed trophies of native arms and colored pictures from the London illustrated papers. Upon a shelf squatted the latest African god, resting on its way to the missionary museum, and the Gospel of St. Luke in some outland dialect was tossed just below it. A tapering spear with a poisoned barb and a large English sunshade stood

together in one corner. On the floor were strewn rush mats, made in the next village, and a carpet from Yorkshire. The higher and the lower met, but would not mingle. To Paul himself the African was still a mystery, and it was only the last man fresh from the training college who could solve the problem in six weeks. On a ledge above his desk stood a row of small bottles. They were sedatives and narcotics: but each drug stood to Paul for a human life. The men who had come out full of fervor had their hopes and purposes throttled by the fever. If they escaped from its clutch, they solaced themselves with a favorite drug at their lonely outposts, until the friend who had soothed them became a foe, that dulled their powers and slew them. He gave the name of a missionary to each little glass, and when he had gone through the line, added a spirit bottle to the list of the destroyers.

In the range of the station there were many converts from heathenism, but nearly all of them were employed either directly or indirectly by the Mission, and paid from its funds. The native teachers, whom he had trained from youth, were the most intelligent, and proved to be evangelists after a fashion; but the distant converts abated little of their natural ferocity, and joined Christian observance with pagan rite in a bewildering confusion. Paul remembered that the great missionary of the early

Church carried the new Gospel to peoples of his own grade in culture, whose religion was falling to pieces about them. Through the rents of their ruined temples it was not difficult to point them to the stars. He consoled himself in failure by thinking that St. Paul would have moved, more slowly, races whose religion, rude as it seemed, was yet alive, and the devilry of whose worship touched the supernatural. A respect for the white man, and a faculty of imitation, enabled the black man to put on the clean garment of Christianity, but the skin beneath remained unchanged. Paul had looked into the black face for twenty years without finding an answer to the riddle. Through every night the forest had moaned and muttered, and in the deeper silence of the quiet air the rapids miles away had uttered a low cry of entreaty, as if the great dumb land was straining after articulate speech with which to guide its teachers. Paul admitted to his own heart that little real work had been done, but he wrote his report and made up the statistics.

His musing was interrupted by a light step in the doorway. It was followed by other quick steps which beat a rhythm on the floor. Someone was dancing behind his chair, and, lifting his eyes to the mirror, he saw a tall, slim girl in English dress, with a short stabbing, native spear in her hand. She was treading the steps of a war dance, her body swaying

to the measure of a song unsung. She twirled the spear at intervals and pointed it with a threatening movement at the wall. Paul frowned at the picture in the glass, and then, turning in his chair, said to her, "Why do you disgrace yourself, Christina, by aping these wild customs? Can you find nothing better than that horrible tool with which to give me your morning's greeting?"

The girl stopped, put down the weapon, and was kneeling by her father in a minute.

"Dear dads, I am sorry, but I meant no harm indeed. I am just like the *River Queen* when they stoke her furnaces and don't start right away. I am obliged to blow off some steam."

His face softened, and he stroked her head. "Chris, my child, you are a woman, and not the little dancing girl who used to delight her father with her antics. But I shall call you the daughter of Herodias if you copy dances used to excite men to bloodshed. Where do you see such things?"

"Among the people at holiday times."

"Surely you do not attend, Christina; you are too much in the village—there are sights and sounds—why does not Mrs. Tartilt warn you, as I asked her to do?"

"Why, father, I am the daughter of a missionary, and it is my duty to go among the people. Mrs. Tartilt says she was brought up in very different

scenes, but having married a missionary she can't afford to be squeamish. The blacks are not like us. I have known them all my life, of course, and look upon them, poor things, as superior animals."

"Mrs. Tartilt is a superior animal!" exclaimed Paul. "You should not attempt any work beyond the compound. There will be an end to all this very soon. I want you to go on a visit to England in six weeks."

"Why should I go?" asked Christina, with eyes wide open. "I am quite contented to stay with you. I don't want to go there or anywhere else."

"Nor do I wish to lose you, my child; but you ought to see your own land. Besides, you should learn English ways and manners."

"I know all about them, father. Let me see: 'Charlotte Brontë,' 'Mrs. Gaskell,' 'John Halifax,' 'Anthony Trollope,' 'Mrs. Oliphant.' I could discover secrets in haunted houses, make tea for the curate, and accept an offer quite prettily if I were lucky enough to have a suitor."

"You will never get an invitation to a country house, or a chance of being haunted by the curate, if someone does not take you in hand. Now I want to tell you about your relations, and the plan I propose."

"I did not know that we had relations—at least Mrs. Mungrass told me that my mother's country

cousins grew tails; but certainly—of course, you must have them in England."

"Really, Christina, it is high time to send you away from the silly gossip of the Mission Station," said Paul, flushing scarlet. "The twaddling scandal of an English town is forced into rank flower in this hot soil. I propose to send you to London for a few months; you will see new faces, make new friends, and wear new dresses."

"Mrs. Tartilt has all the latest patterns in her sixpenny paper, and cuts out splendidly," said the girl in a whisper.

"Now listen," continued Paul, without taking notice of the interruption. "I have a brother in London, a little older than I am. His name is Marcus, and he has a chapel somewhere in the East End. He is a good man, and you should go to him in any trouble; but I do not wish you to live with him. My cousin, Gregory Fallowfett, is a lawyer in large practice, and lives in the West of London. He has a clever wife, and a daughter about your own age. I have written to Fallowfett; I think he will take you, and I have asked him to be my executor. If anything happened he would look after you, and all would be well."

"What is the matter, father?" exclaimed Christina, looking closely at him. "You are not feeling ill, are you? Your hands are cold; you are not look-

ing well. Why do you work so much at night? It is most unhealthy. Are you very tired, or have you a touch of fever again?"

"Just a touch of fever, I fancy, dear Chris; but I shall throw it off, as I have succeeded in doing a score of times before. Let us go into the other room and have our breakfast."

The tough traveler made light of the attack; he would go out, shake himself, and so be free from his bondage. This time, however, the fever proved stubborn; the usual remedies failed, and a common complication set in. A week later Christina had kissed his cold cheek, and he had been carried to the small graveyard, thickly sewn with crosses, on the neighboring hill.

II.

Grief is not the offspring of the accidents of life. She is only the guest of a day, and has to make room for the interests which throng the highway of the years. She makes a home amid the wastes and ruins of existence.

As the steamer made its way down the river, Mrs. Tartilt tried to comfort Christina by calling attention to the shortcoming of the mourning garments which she had hastily put together for the bereaved girl. "Black stuff, and plenty of it, we keep at the Mission, for, 'in the midst of life we are in death,' in Africa especially," she explained. "Don't let your fine friends laugh at us, but get two or three new frocks before you show yourself."

Christina murmured her indifference to the subject.

"You are indeed a lucky girl to be going to England, although I am sorry for your loss. Once I was afraid you would marry a young missionary and settle out here; but that danger is past."

"Why should I not marry a missionary?" asked Christina, a little roused. "You married one yourself, and I am the daughter of one."

"It is a poor life, without honor or reward. Some

of our children go to the graveyard, and others to Europe." She hesitated, for the girl looked serious. "I know that the Gospel must be preached to all the world, but it is hard for those who have to do it. The good people at home, who give to the collections, grumble at us for not making progress," she continued. "It is easy enough to give the guinea a year, but there is no reward for the sacrifices we have to make. A missionary is always a missionary, and when he returns to England nobody wants him."

"You always appeared comfortable, Mrs. Tartilt."

"The place is tolerable," replied her companion, "and would be better if the Church of England mission families were more friendly, and the mail to England were quicker. I shall be glad enough to bid good-by to it. Men do not suffer the trouble and inconvenience we have to endure. Colored girls are cheap, but lazy and dirty. You could not expect a woman born and bred in Islington to take kindly to Africa. My hope is that my body may rest at Finchley, in my mother's grave."

"My hope is to come back," said Christina warmly. "I belong to Africa and love her."

"Of course, my dear, I quite forgot, you are not altogether of English blood. Be careful, Christina, to keep secret that story about your mother."

"Why should I?" asked the girl, lifting her head

proudly. "I am not ashamed of my mother nor of her birth. If I have some warm African blood in my veins, I am the better for it."

"That would not matter at all," replied the other. "It is not that, it is——" and she stopped.

"That my grandfather is a light colored native of Africa."

"You have never been told, I see," said Mrs. Tartilt. "I hardly like to tell you myself, but you are leaving the country and, perhaps, ought to know. You might hear it accidentally away there. The story is—I don't vouch for it—that your mother's father cannot be called a human being."

"Is that all?" retorted Christina with a little pout of scorn. "I have heard that over and over again. Father would hardly grant souls to some heathen tribes; he called them worse than brutes."

"Well, my dear, you can make as light of it as you like, the lighter the better, but there is a race somewhere beyond the forest who are not reckoned to belong to the human family. They are intelligent, these people, and in some respects the same as other men. That is the story told by both the Arabs and the natives. The Arabs say that once they were men, but for their wicked conduct Allah degraded them to the brute level and refused them souls. The natives pretend that they were apes who, in the course of generations, grew into men, but

that they lost their way, and now are neither white nor black, man nor beast."

"A likely story to tell, Mrs. Tartilt. If there were any truth in it some traveler would have told us long ago."

"Don't look at me so angrily, Christina. I have only repeated the story as it is given round the station. No white man has ever seen them, or returned to tell the tale; they live quite off the trade routes, and there is nothing but curiosity which would tempt an explorer to look them up. You are not cross with me for repeating the rumor?"

But Christina felt hot and offended. "I knew there was a mystery," she replied, "and that I had some native blood in my veins—I can feel it; but to believe this absurd story——"

"My dear girl, don't believe it; put it out of your mind. Believe me, however, when I tell you that your appearance contradicts the idea of your being a quadroon. Whatever may be your ancestry, your mother's father was not of the negro type."

"How do I look?" asked Christina, turning a full face to her critic.

"Exactly like any other English girl when you are speaking," said Mrs. Tartilt; "but when your face is at rest, and you are lost in thought—well, you are just a little uncanny. I can't describe it in any other way, Christina."

At last the steamer reached the river's mouth, and unloaded at the wooden pier that belonged to the factory. There were several warehouses—one or two buildings flying different flags where the consuls lived or died—and a long, low wooden house which carried the name of "Hotel." Under the veranda, which projected far in front, two or three men were sitting at a table, drinking and playing cards. Somewhere at the back there was a native town, but it was out of sight; and the only sound, besides a burst of laughter or an altercation, came from the beach a few hundred yards distant. The sharp thud of a wave, followed by the slow dreary noise of its backward sweep, told of the smashing into surf of the long ocean rollers. Looking seaward, the white water was crossing and breaking upon the shoals beyond the river mouth, and further out on the peaceful blue a great steamer rested, surrounded by native boats. As Mrs. Tartilt and Christina walked past the veranda and entered the hotel, the group of card-players gave them an uncompromising stare. In the room on the ground floor, where they rested, a lattice only divided them from the party outside. The men had interrupted their game to refill their glasses, and while the black waiter was going to and fro with their orders they were talking.

"Nice slim slip that; I suppose the dowdy old

girl with her belongs to a Mission. Where do they come from?"

"Don't know—up river somewhere. The she-missionary always makes paint and feathers look fashionable by contrast. I can't think what rag fair supplies them. You were telling me about your latest catch?"

"Oh, I'm always on the move: an agent for entertainments is bound to be spry. Well, you know the 'Happy Valley' in the West of London—don't you, though; it's a sort of a superior music-hall, and the upper classes go there pretty thick. Halecroft, the manager, is a friend of mine, and he says to me, 'Bullock Sopp, I want a new sensation. None of your two-headed curiosities,' he says, 'but something quite fresh. You must throw us in this time a bit of science or history. I want to rouse a discussion—a row among the doctors, and such like. They must quarrel over it in the papers, and then it will draw.' I thought I could find him a new medium or spiritualist, but I could not pick up a good specimen. Then in the very nick, a correspondent over here wrote me about a brownie who was caught young and brought up by the mission fellows. He has chucked over the parsons, got on the spree, and is going fast back to his own particular devil. He can be got cheap, and, if he can be kept sober for six months, there's money in him."

"What do you call him?"

"Let me see; here it is—Forest Bokrie. The Dutch sold him to the Mission, and they gave him his outlandish name," replied Bullock Sopp.

"Where do your science and history come in?" asked his friend.

"I forgot to tell you. The doctors who have seen him say that he is a bit unfinished; not got comfortably through his evolution. You see 'Discovery of the Missing Link: the Ape-Man,' that will pay for posters."

"I have heard something about it," said his friend, who was a local trader, "but I don't follow out your plan quite clearly."

"You don't know the business; it can be worked up first rate. Introduce the man in European dress—short speech, a recitation in English. Next scene, a reversion to the primitive type—that's the phrase. Stage darkened, a forest scene, enter an ape creature which lodges in trees, and swings from bough to bough. A lecturer will give an account of its development; plenty of Darwin. Then private interviews with the doctors; they will dispute over a bone or a slope of the skull. Clergy will thunder at us, and doctors will join to fight the parsons. All this will do us good, and the turnstiles will merrily groan. I see my way distinctly."

"I dare say you do. Ta, ta; look me up on your way back; I must make up my mail."

"Be quick, Christina, the boat will be ready directly and I am sure you have had enough of this place," put in Mrs. Tartilt at this point. "God bless you, my child; you will forgive me for not seeing you on board. I do not mind going out, but I dread coming back through the surf on the top of a wave."

III.

She.—Listen, not to the bells of cows and goats, which make a tingling about these high pastures, but to the babbling of waterfalls in the chasms of the glacier, and to the echoing roll of ice which breaks away into the abyss. Look at those miles of snow which reach upward to the blue, hard as granite, yet as sensitive to color change as a girl's cheek. Do not the sight and sound win you to a faith in a beautiful intelligence?

He.—How should they touch me? A block of ice on the slab of a fishmonger's shop wastes by the same law, and has the same sympathy with color. I do not submit to be bullied by the accident of size. The true wonder is in the capacity we bring to its enjoyment. Your imagination gives you wings, but probably the goat with her pert stare, and the cow with her soft melancholy observations, reach all the essential meaning of the scene.

THE sunlight was struggling into the dining room of a large house in a London square. It was the late autumn sunlight, chastened by mist, and had the diffused softness of an illuminated transparency. From the window a few white trees could be seen fading off into uncertain outlines. London had now her foot on the demon of noise, and from the smooth roads the muffled sound of traffic came with the softness of the mist. There was breakfast on the table, and the mistress of the house, Mrs. Fallowfett, was filling the cups. Before the fire, in a lounge-chair, sat Gregory Fallowfett, her husband, reading his letters. There was another seat placed

for a member of the family who had not yet joined them. When the servant left the room Gregory pushed a letter across the table.

"You will see that the girl will be here in a few days. I must go to Plymouth, I suppose."

"Must we really have her here?" said his wife, in reply. "Let her own people—Marcus Ruefold, her uncle—take her in. We can ask the girl for a visit, and can please ourselves about the length of it. If she is nice, I am sure I shall be glad to keep her for a time."

"What do you mean by nice?" asked her husband, and he picked up the letter and began reading it again. "She is a well-taught girl, and understands English manners; poor Ruefold took care of that. It was his ambition to do well for his daughter. He told me in a former letter that she was a comely lass; what more do you want?"

"We can dispense with her good looks if she does not bring any of the customs of the bush into a London drawing room," said Mrs. Fallowfett.

"She will want all her good looks, poor child," remarked her husband.

"I hope that Vesper will take to her, or it will be awkward," said Mrs. Fallowfett.

"Vesper will surely be glad of a companion. We have spoiled her, it is true. An only child is bound to be spoilt, but she is not selfish."

"Really you are as dense as the fog is this morning, Gregory. Cannot you understand that a marriageable girl does not want a good-looking friend to follow her everywhere? What advantage is there to us in bothering about this child? She is neither penniless nor friendless; if she were, I can always borrow votes for an asylum."

"You must not treat everything in life as a matter of profit and loss," returned her husband. "Ruefold was my cousin. My own mother was sister to his father. I did not care much for the man, but his death in the wilderness touched me. The only child, a girl, the same age as Vesper—an orphan. I may be a man of the world, but I cannot harden my heart against natural emotion."

"So you will do a foolish act in order to gratify a passing spasm of feeling," said his wife. "You will be home in time for my 'evening,' I suppose. Do not forget that I have asked Sir Bathcourt Blizzard specially for you."

"What is that for?"

"He is on the other side in your big case, you said; and as he can be very disagreeable to his opponents, I thought that I might get him into a pleasant mood for you."

"How can you be so childish, Isabel, to imagine such a scheme?"

"Then the Bishop of Mercia will be here, and is

anxious to know your opinion—without fee, of course; but that is fair enough—on the late judgment in the case of——"

"That is enough; I will go to Plymouth, certainly."

"Yet you think I am a selfish woman when I am constantly contriving something for the good of my family."

"You ask your bishop whether you will not get a reward in his future world if you do a kind act to an orphan girl," said Gregory.

"You know quite well that I do not profess to be a religious woman—not yet, at least, until Vesper is married, and you have got your judgeship."

"Then why ask your bishop to come here?"

"Because he is a person of position and may be of use to us. Besides, a certain respect for religion is a necessary example to servants and others. I go to church because it is seemly for your wife to do so."

"Two thousand years ago you would have worshiped the gods of the household for the same reason."

"Perhaps I should; human nature is not changed much, I should say. We must make the most of the life we live in, and settle with the other life when we enter it, if we ever do."

"That is sound philosophy for a man, and I hold

it as a working theory; but you women are not consistent. All of you have a secret superstition hiding round the corner. It is a survival from the ancient time of woman's subjection, when she had 'to call in a new world to redress the balance of the old.'"

"Well, I cannot be wrong in caring for the present interests of my husband and daughter," persisted Mrs. Fallowfett.

"I ought to agree to that; but we will suppose that Vesper is married and I have got my judgeship, what then? By the way, I am inclined to think that my judgeship will cost me a good slice of income. Never mind. I have lost bloom, and am too stale for the bar, we will assume. Having hoisted me up to the bench, what then?"

"We shall not have exhausted the interest of life even then," suggested Mrs. Fallowfett.

"Yes, we shall. Like the bears at the Gardens, we shall have climbed the pole notch by notch, and at the top, with open mouth, we shall be describing languid circles in the empty air in the hope of getting something more. You will then go in for celestial buns—I know your habit of mind—and will reproach me for my sordid and earthly taste."

The door opened and a young girl entered with a soft and tired step. She was certainly a pretty girl, but a little faded in her youth, and was precise and restrained even in her morning greeting to her

parents. Her father touched her cheek and turned to his paper as if he were disturbed, but wished to conceal the fact. Her mother handed her the breakfast, and then asked about her night's rest. She had slept fairly well, after three o'clock. She was rather tired, but would feel better as the day advanced. Mathers took so long with her work overnight; the maid was sleepy and stupid. Yes, and the dance was a slow one; there was nobody for whom one cared. "No," with a faint blush and a quick glance at her mother, "Mr. Vincent Gracebroke was not there."

"What are you about to-day and to-morrow, Vesper?" asked her father, still looking at his papers with apparent unconcern.

"Too much, too long," he remarked, when his daughter had run through the list of her engagements by day and night. "You will lose you health and your spirits. You are working harder than a boy would do in chambers—for what good? You do not even enjoy the life."

"She must be seen where other people go," put in her mother.

"She will be seen where other people go—in the coffin, if we do not mind," retorted Gregory. "Drop some of these engagements, my girl, and takes Christina about town on a country cousin round."

Then he told her of the approaching arrival of

their visitor at Plymouth. Vesper promised graciously to do all in her power to make London enjoyable to the cousin from Africa, and then protested against the idea that she was suffering in health. "Mamma is quite right, I am not really hurt by it; and one must follow others and be seen at the usual places. It is not all pleasure, I know, but if you do not pursue it like a profession you fall out of line, as barristers would do if they went away in term time."

At the same moment a young man was engaged at his breakfast in his rooms, overlooking a broad graveled space. On the left, the chapel of his inn was emerging from the sea of mist, and on the right hand an inclosure of trees and grass recalled the green meadows far away. The quadrangle was quiet enough, but on the other side of the buildings London roared along the busy street, beat against the ancient gateway, and scoured beneath the prim old windows. Vincent Gracebroke opened his letters, read them carelessly, but lingered over one which contained a card of invitation. Mrs. Gregory Fallowfett was "at home" on a certain evening, that was all. He looked at it twice, lighted his pipe and fell into thought. He had his life before him; he was not yet five-and-twenty; fortune had favored him; he was healthy, well made, well off. He had

fair ability, a taste for work, and no responsibility to hamper him. No great passion had ruffled the surface of his mind or disturbed his appetite. He did not care for excess, and this had, so far, kept him virtuous. He had a theory of life, and he wanted to keep in sight of it. He could afford to take things easily for a few years, as he started with advantages which many did not possess. But he intended to play his part, to belong to the decent half of society, and to build higher on the platform from which he had started. It came home to him that he was failing to form those habits which are necessary to success. He was considering whether it would not be wise to cut off the music hall and to cultivate the society of the best men in his own profession. It would be an easier task if he could arrange to enter the family of one of those men. He was not a conceited fellow, but he thought that Vesper Fallowfett might listen to him. He was not in any hurry, but saw that this invitation would give him the opportunity he required, and that continued delay might open the door to a rival. The confidence of youth in its capacity to do all that it proposes is the outcome of a good circulation, but contentment is nevertheless its product.

Meanwhile Gregory Fallowfett had fulfilled his intention to meet Christina at Plymouth. Mrs. Fallowfett treated her with an effusive kindness, but

Christina felt by instinct that there was nothing real beneath the veil of words. The girl possessed that animal faculty of distinguishing the true friend from the false. Vesper treated her at first with a polite curiosity, but after a few days she relented toward one whose age and position were so close to her own. Vesper had imagination enough to put herself in the place of the stranger; and imagination, united to a natural goodness not yet spoiled, begot sympathy.

IV.

Our flying fancies are light and frolicsome as the winds, but love is sad and solemn, heaving with the long sweep of the grave ocean.

CHRISTINA watched the guests at the Fallowfetts' with close attention. She could see that both the hosts and guests were playing a part, and yet they lent themselves readily to the play. The interchange of superficial courtesies, the collision of ideas, the lights, the music, produced at length an excitement which was pleasurable, like in kind, but less in degree, to the African dance, which, beginning with measured paces, rises to a frenzy with the beating of the drums, the clapping of hands, and the nervous infection caught from a common movement. The music and singing charmed her, although there was a certain unreality about the finest efforts. With the recitation she was not satisfied, for she remembered black orators who had addressed the reverent circle of their tribe with a power and earnestness which the hired speaker of the evening did not approach. She pitied the performers, imagined that they must feel hurt because the interest of the audience in them ceased with their performance. She made a timid advance of recognition to them, but her offers were rewarded

with a blank stare. Evidently they looked upon her as a governess or poor relation, whose attention to them did not carry a compliment. There were also the Bishop of Mercia and the great advocate, Sir Bathcourt Blizzard, to be seen. She made a pardonable mistake in confusing these great men, as, unlearned in clerical dress, she did not observe the distinction between them. The bishop was tall and spare in figure, with an eager, dark face, and restless manner. His business ability had lifted him to the throne, and, out of earshot, his energy in conversation more betokened the restlessness of the courts of law than the calm atmosphere of the episcopal palace. On the other hand, Sir Bathcourt Blizzard was venerable in appearance. Portly in figure, he had a gentle, benevolent expression. The gray hair and precision in speech added to the ecclesiastical illusion. In the course of argument he lifted his hand and extended his fingers as if in the act of pronouncing a blessing upon his opponent, but the conversation reached Christina in a fragment or two, and she found that it concerned the merits of particular race horses. Vesper introduced her cousin to the bishop, and then passed on to the neighborhood of Mr. Gracebroke, placing herself within reach of his observation, but apparently engrossed with the greeting of other friends. When he detached himself and spoke to her she

received him with well-bred surprise—as if his presence had just become known to her.

The bishop became interested in the story which Christina told him of her life in Africa. The condescending tone which he had at first adopted toward the uncovenanted service in mission work melted under the artless words in which the girl related the struggle with paganism and fever in that lonely corner of the world. He forgot the steps of rank, the shading of theology in his own land. His grasp upon the pastoral staff relaxed, and for a brief minute he threw himself into the fight, shoulder to shoulder with the other white men who were forcing the line of European morals and faith a foot forward upon the Black Continent. He was sound enough to feel the joy of mastery in the old football field rising into the heroism of the Christian athlete. He was almost ashamed of himself for the momentary illusion, when Mrs. Fallowfett broke the charm and led him away from the slip of a girl who had woven the spell about him, but he muttered to himself an apology, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings."

Sir Bathcourt Blizzard's quick observation had already marked Christina, and he took the place of the bishop by her side. Nothing escaped the attention of that able cross-examiner, whose experience in common law was unsurpassed. He saw that there

was something worthy of remark in this young girl, and to him the lowliest individual might offer points of interest. Not with the voice of the storm, which could sweep the court and shake the bench, but with those soft and melodious notes with which he drew, as by a charm, information from the most coy witness, he obtained from Christina in a short time all the facts of her life. More than that, he realized that there was a mystery behind the facts which could not be solved by ordinary legal process, but which made the recital almost romantic. He spoke a few fatherly words to her in parting, and remembered her later on. To the girl, the most pleasant companion of the evening proved to be a fuming little man who was fretting about from one frivolous group to another in the hope of catching on to a favorite topic. With the intention of keeping him quiet and contented for a short time, the host brought him to Christina, and asked her to give Professor Racer some facts about Africa.

"Where am I to begin?" asked Christina, with a smile.

"At the very beginning, my dear young lady; when you woke into existence. I mean, when you began to take notice, how did the world shape itself to you?"

Christina paused for a reply, and then said. "You have put a hard question. The earliest memories

come to us only now and then, like faint clouds which melt and reappear. It is not easy to think amid this talking and noise. Do you mind following me into the conservatory?"

"I shall be delighted," replied the professor, and he went after her through the crowded rooms, conscious of the polite surprise about them, and secretly amused.

"Here, surrounded with palms and flowers, we can let our thoughts escape from the fog of London," he added, as they found a retired corner.

"The first thing I can recall is the shining black face of my old nurse. I can feel myself rocked in her arms again as she sang me to sleep with a chant of her own village. She only turned Christian for the time she was hired, and went back to her pagan ways afterward. Nevertheless, she was sweet and good to me, and I cannot help loving her under my faith. Then I remember a ride in a canoe with my dear father, in a head wind, and the joy of rising and falling on the waves. Then, oh, then—I can hardly choose for you—memories come thick and fast. White people who arrived at the station and did not stay for long; or who stayed and disappeared, and the chapel bell tolled for them. Learning my lessons on a stool at my father's feet, growing higher, sitting by him at the table, and saying grace at meals. Growing taller still, learning how to keep house, to

teach the pickaninnies at the schools, to copy reports, make schedules, and so on; until father died like the others. It is not a happy place for the English, and if I had to live there for a long while I think I would rather be an African out and out, Professor Racer. They are friendly to the climate, and they spend their days and end their lives just like happy brutes." The girl had tears in her eyes as well as in her voice, and her questioner kept silent for a while. He was a man of unrest, and behind the quick, nervous action which seemed to the surface observer to show a superficial mind there lay a reserve of thought and emotion. He was the recipient of the crude doubt and struggling faith of many a youth. Although he smiled at their difficulties, the ghosts of his own doubts were continually reappearing in their questions and misgivings. He struggled for certainty, he must grasp certainty, and had given up first Christianity and then religion, only at times to swing back in a worry of doubt as to his own material opinion. The phrase which Christina had used arrested his attention. "Happy brutes" fitted exactly, and if the growth of knowledge and the widening area of experience made the brutes unhappy, that was a detail which did not touch the argument.

"You did not see any trace of soul—spirit—in the African, Miss Ruefold? Take them as a whole, dare

you put them higher in the scale than intelligent animals? Endow a dog with speech, give him ten thousand years of experience, teach him to dance upon his hind legs, to use his fore paws in handling his food and begging for more, and there you have a good imitation of your black man. Every thought, word, and action of this animal would depend upon the suggestion of circumstance. Is it not so in the case of your African? The dark forest is full of strange sounds at night, and he peoples it with gods many. The wind sweeps over the open land, the sky quivers with lightning, and the upper world receives its share of deities. The missionary comes with his science of Europe and his creed of Jesus Christ. Under the touch of the white man the African believes and is baptised. The white man dies, and when his black convert is left alone in the bush, nature again asserts its lordship. I beg your pardon, I am afraid I have offended you."

Christina had flushed painfully, for she felt the force of the criticism upon her father's calling, and resented it.

"Look about you, professor, if you please. Do you not see in England that people are as much guided by circumstances as in Africa? I am sure that we are all acting a part, and have not even the satisfaction of pulling our own strings."

"Better and better, my dear Miss Ruefold," ex-

claimed the professor, laughing outright. "You have reached the conclusion before me, and I am chasing you out of breath. We are only automata, even the best of us. The doll which I tortured in early youth to plague my little sister was a simpering composition which shut its eyes when tilted. The doll which you discarded a few years ago probably walked and talked, and perhaps could be wound up to sing a snatch of a song. There you have the difference between Europe and Africa. So with our religions. They rise in rank with our rise, and in order to spare ourselves the supposed degradation of being like dumb, driven cattle, we idealize the forces which make and mar our lives. I am afraid I have said too much for your peace of mind, but you must give me credit for good intention. I am not one of those men who insult women by conceding to them the right to an unlimited illusion. Nothing is to be gained by leaving them in undisturbed possession of their emotional creeds. Better that a girl sufficiently old to think for herself should enter upon a right path of thought early in life than she should have to surrender her convictions, hardened by habit, later on, with unspeakable pain to herself, and often with damage to her character. That is the view I should take if I had daughters of my own. I am not so fortunate; I have not been married."

"Africans have souls to be saved—at least, that is, most of them. They do say, I have heard, that there is a people of the kind you describe. They told me something about them—men with fine bodies, but without souls. They live far away to the north, beyond our station; no one has ever returned who visited them except——" She bit her lips in shame, for the story of her own mother had almost escaped her.

"The bourne from which no traveler returns," he said lightly, desiring to relieve her from embarrassment. "It is probably only a romance, Miss Ruefold, but it is a curious little bit of superstition. That reminds me of a paragraph I have just read in one of the society papers about the discovery of the missing link. He is expected to arrive in England in the course of a few weeks. My scientific interest was dashed by finding that he was to be exhibited at a place of entertainment called the 'Happy Valley.' The paragraph went on to speak of the great expense and difficulty involved in his education and importation, so that I am afraid the whole thing is a fraud. You cannot have heard anything of it?"

Now Christina remembered the conversation of which she had been an unwilling hearer before she embarked, but she did not like to mention it to a stranger. It was clear to her quick wits that she

was expected to know nothing of the "Happy Valley." She was, however, saved from the necessity of a reply by the intrusion of two other persons upon her who had been standing for some time on the other side of the shrubs.

"Christina, we had lost you; I have been quite concerned!" exclaimed Vesper, whose eyes were brighter than usual. "Let me introduce you to another friend—Mr. Vincent Gracebroke, Miss Ruefold. Will you take me back, Professor Racer, and find me some refreshment?"

"I hope you found the professor a pleasant companion," Vincent began, as they followed into the house.

"You know him, I see," she remarked.

"Yes, we were at Cambridge together—that is, he was a coach in those days—he is a lot older than I am; now he has a professorship. He can talk well when he pulls up in time and does not bore. He never snubbed us as the tutors and other officials were apt to do. I suppose we deserved the snubbings, but it is pleasant to air your own opinions."

"You often changed your opinions, did you not?" suggested Christina, as she was expected to say something.

"Frequently. In fact, you really don't understand your own views until you have put them plainly to somebody else. That is the advantage

of freedom of expression; you get a chance of changing your opinions before it is too late."

"When is it too late?" inquired the girl. "You can make a change when you like—I mean when you find it necessary."

"Not always," said Vincent. "A fellow gets stuck up about himself, then falls into the hands of a clique, his opinions are run into their mold, and cooled down to cast-iron. He defends them through fair and foul because they are the views of his set."

"I should have thought that a sensible man would decline to be the slave of his own opinions," said Christina, with a smile.

"Exactly, and that was the value of Racer to us. He formed a society for discussion, and called it the 'Grass-green Club.' We went in for first principles, and reorganized society, and the universe. I believe that we were saved by our wild talk from much loose thinking afterward."

"There is Miss Fallowfett again," put in Christina, who had found a more congenial topic than the fortunes of a Cambridge debating society. "She will understand the professor better than I can hope to do."

"Racer, yes; Mr. Fallowfett knew him before he went up. Tell me your first impression of England, Miss Ruefold," he added hurriedly; and from his wish to change the subject Christina concluded that there

was a significance in the gentle murmuring which had come to her at intervals in the conservatory. Her impression of England was not to be given at that moment, for a servant stood at her elbow and asked to speak with her. She went outside, and the maid told her that two persons had called and asked for her, but they had declined to give their names.

"Who are they?" asked Christina. "I do not know anyone. Are they working people or gentlefolk?"

"I do not like to say, miss. The man looks a gentleman poorly off, and the little girl wears rather common things."

"Where are they?"

"Sitting in the hall, miss; they saw the rooms were full, and the gentleman said he would not give any trouble. He did not know it was a party night, or he would not have come. He only wanted to speak to you for a minute."

A little elated with the attention she had received, and unusually excited by a scene which was altogether new to her, Christina went down the staircase feeling slightly annoyed at the ill-timed interruption. The hall was not so well lighted as the room she had left. The house was full of noise, but the empty space at the foot of the stairs seemed lonely by contrast, and the two figures on the bench at the end looked stranded and forlorn. They

turned to her as she approached them, and she saw the worn face of a man well on in middle life. His hair and beard were gray, and he was dressed in rather ill-fitting black clothes. The girl was about twelve years old, delicate, with large gray eyes, which were fixed in wonder upon the stately young woman who was approaching the pair. She stood before them, and the man rose and put out his hand with a timid respect for the girl, who had evidently surprised him by her carriage and assurance.

"I expected to meet a sickly, nervous child, who required English air to make her strong; but you are a healthy young woman, Christina, and a handsome one—God be with you. I am your uncle Marcus, your father's brother. To-day I found that you had arrived; you did not write, and we have come at once to welcome you. I see it is an awkward moment, so we will not stay, but come and see us as soon as you are able, and our house is always your home, my child."

Christina remembered that with the heedlessness of youth she had omitted to write to her relations, and she expressed her regret. Now that she looked at him attentively she could trace her father in her uncle, but the girl was a little stranger to her.

"This is our only daughter Zephyr. The others are boys, and away in the world. Strange, is it not that your father, his brother, and his cousin should

each have one only daughter? Kiss your cousin, Zephyr."

The child looked up with some awe at the strange tall girl, but the gray eyes softened, a light came into them, and, as Christina stooped, the little one put her arms about the elder's neck and whispered, "I know I shall love you; come and see us soon." A rush of emotion swelled the heart of Christina, and she kissed the child again and again. "Kiss me also, Christina," said her uncle, and the next minute they had gone away.

When the girls had retired for the night Vesper soon dispensed with the help of her maid and opened the door which connected the two rooms. "Chris," she said, "come here, I have something important to tell you."

Christina soon understood that the subject of importance would take some time, and the two girls settled themselves comfortably before the fire.

"What do you think of Mr. Gracebroke?" began Vesper.

"In relation to me, or to yourself?" asked Christina mischievously.

"You have guessed, I suppose. Well, he did ask me to-night. I have suspected his purpose for some weeks. I think the boy really likes me."

"You are probably right in that, as he asks you to be his wife. What answer did you give him?"

"Put him off, of course. I did not intend to spoil him by accepting him all at once. I suppose I shall do so presently."

"But you love him, Vesper?"

"You innocent child, I like him well enough, and he likes me. I dare say we shall get on together."

"But you would not marry a man you could not love, and who had not convinced you of his own affection?"

"You are not in Africa now, Miss Chris. There it is simply a matter of so many beads or cattle, and the girl is given over. Here we have the beads or cattle under the form of settlement, but the girl has a voice in the matter. Love, in your sense of the word—a devouring passion—is the marriage of the circulating libraries."

"Vesper, you know that persons do marry for pure love frequently."

"Not once in twenty times, and when they do it is often a lifelong mistake. Passion is often felt for an individual with whom marriage is impossible, I admit; but girls in our position are trained to keep it under restraint. Of course there must be no repulsion; the conditions of age and position ought to suit; and a promise should not be exchanged until the girl and man know and really like each other. Sometimes that feeling ripens into passion after marriage, I am told," added Vesper discreetly.

"I am sure I wish you every happiness," said Christina, rising suddenly, wishing her cousin a good-night, and passing into her own room.

A little later, when the light was out, and the fire had dropped low, Vesper called through the open door, "You must think well of me, Chris. I am not so hard as you take me to be. One must be sensible and worldly, if you like the word, at such an important moment in a girl's life. I like him, Chris, and I think that I—love him. It is strange—is it not?—the power that we girls have to move men's hearts. We must prolong the situation as far as we can, and not give ourselves away, must we not, Chris?" But Christina was asleep.

V.

Will you do your work fitfully, happy when a shaft of sunlight strikes the tools, listless under a gray sky? Will the lathe and handy glue-pot tempt you to careless joinery for a quick return? Or can you toil steadily at plank and block until your purpose grows into shape, then to discover another Workman at the bench beside you, not seen before, who will plane the harder knots for you, and who will unite your work with his own, thus lifting your ideal in the act of fulfilling it?

ON the day following, Gregory Fallowfett suggested to the girls a beginning of the "country cousin" round of London sights. "It will do even you good, Vesper," he remarked, "to see some of our stock shows. Those of us who are town-born know much less of our native city than the Scotsman or the intelligent foreigner. I myself have never been to the Tower or to the top of the Monument."

"Christina had better begin with the Zoo, I should say," put in Vesper. "She will be more at home with the wild animals; they will remind her of her native land."

It was a word spoken in jest, but it hid a truth. Christina was moved by the creatures who were restlessly pacing their dens. The care with which they were tended increased the pity she felt for their

hopeless captivity. It was no chance of war which had made their prison, but a deliberate intention to change their lives and to thwart their instincts. She had never seen wild animals in confinement, and although she had occasionally heard the voices of the creatures of the night, and seen them dead as trophies, there was a give-and-take in the struggle between man and beast which satisfied her sense of justice. Vesper was amused at the disquiet of her companion, and joked her upon her sensitive feeling.

"If you are going to trouble yourself about these well-kept brutes, you will have no compassion left for the horses and other domestic animals who have not half the attention which is shown here. I thought there were still slaves left in Africa, and that all kinds of atrocities were practiced upon human beings. Is not an ill-treated man a more pitiable spectacle?"

"I do not think so," answered Christina. "The man has his intelligence; he is one in nature with his captor. He can combine to fight for freedom, and his soul will, in the worst case, escape like a bird from the snare. But these creatures surrender their all to us, and are absolutely helpless in our hands."

"I do not suppose they feel it in the manner you imagine. If they had you for two minutes, Chris,

you could then judge of their sentiment toward us. We are animals too, are we not? We cannot afford to give away the supremacy which it has taken thousands of years to acquire."

"Yes, we are like them, I know, and it is just that knowledge which stirs my sympathy. I am one with them, and the fellowship is a very sad one. I cannot walk about this place any longer. Let us leave it, Vesper."

They saw London thoroughly, and at last Christina begged to be taken into the outskirts. She was oppressed by the size of the city, and by the swarming crowds.

"I learned the populations of the world in my geography book," she said, "but I never realized the meaning of four millions. The thought of them almost stifles me. Is there no wild country near to London—no wilderness where a few people might scatter and be themselves?"

"Epping Forest," suggested Gregory Fallowfett.

"On a bank holiday," added his wife. "My dear child," she said, addressing Christina, "they will not let us run about half-clothed in England. Not even with an African sun will the police permit the cheap and ready African costume."

"You do not understand me, Mrs. Fallowfett," she replied. "I like your English ways. They are pleasant and proper, but there are times and

seasons when we want to be free, to speak and act naturally, to use our limbs freely, when we are young."

"You can join a gymnastic club," said her cousin Gregory. Vesper made a small grimace at her mother.

"What freedom do you wish?" asked Mrs. Fallowfett, with genuine astonishment.

"You would not like me to run briskly along Oxford street, or to clap my hands if my heart were filling with the joy of life," said Christina.

"Not with me, if you please," put in Vesper. "If you tried that in London, you would get caged like your brothers and sisters in the Zoo."

"It seems that a girl must not do a noble or kind action if it is peculiar and attracts attention."

"You will get over that in the course of time," said Gregory. "You are new to it all, but you will find that my wife and daughter are the best people to put you right, and we, too, shall be the better for a little fresh blood."

But in spite of the good-tempered consideration which he really felt for Christina, he had to extend his sympathy to his wife when she told him that their visitor had fastened a cord to the chandelier in her room, and had used it so vigorously as a trapeze that the gas-fitting had come to ruin. There was no opposition, therefore, on the part of the family when

Christina proposed to go on a visit to her relations at the other end of London.

"Would you like to take something to Mrs. Ruefold? They are quite poor and can hardly make two ends meet," said Mrs. Fallowfett, as she looked through her tablet of engagements. "I am going to the stores this afternoon and could get a present for you to take."

"Very kind of you, I am sure," said her husband, mischievously intervening; "the Ruefolds would highly appreciate your generosity."

"I was thinking that Christina would rather trust her purse to me than rely upon her own experience," replied Mrs. Fallowfett hastily, and then she muttered a remark about the numerous claims upon her.

Marcus Ruefold was the pastor of a church in the far east of London. It was a district which had seen better days, when clerks and local tradesmen lived in the houses, which still retained rough front gardens and an air of comfort. Now they had gone to live in the open country, beyond the scents of the factories. The by-roads and garden spaces had been covered with small streets, which teemed with the factory hands. There was still plenty of air, for the houses were low, built before the age of model dwellings, and the main thoroughfare was a broad road along which the tram-cars constantly jingled. The heavy square chapel was "run" on the old lines.

and had not declined to the condition which would warrant the new birth into the mission hall. Marcus Ruefold had toiled patiently in the ancient rut, keeping the small traders and the decent poor faithful to the place, in spite of the attractions of the ritualist service and the Salvation Army trumpets on the one hand, or the Secularist orators and Sunday concerts on the other. It was hard work, and needed the grit of a man to do it. The income flickered and wavered, but he never asked for help, and no philanthropist sought him out. Now and again a "new movement" was started, and the boom of its first success rumbled through London and shook the old chapel; but the modest work held its own, while frequently the new movement died away into circulars. The Ruefolds lived in a plain little house in a side road, but Christina felt it was home from the moment when Zephyr, who had been watching at the window, ran to the gate, and the awkward maid opened the door of the cab. A motherly woman stood at the top of the steps and took Christina into her arms. When her uncle joined them downstairs he said, "There has not been an opportunity of asking you about your father and his work, Christina. It is reported that he died like a martyr at the stake. It was his devotion, I take it, that killed him."

Christina hesitated. She loved her father, but in

her own heart she knew that he fell a victim to the accident of climate, as any ordinary trader might have done.

"I knew he was quite faithful to the cause," she replied, "but I don't think that he worked harder of late. When he was a young man he expected to die like the other men; but as he grew older he thought he had become salted to the climate and was safe."

"I know what you mean," replied her uncle. "His work appeared to you so homely and regular that it was easy to lose sight of the heroism. We cannot keep martyrdom at full flame, but it is none the less martyrdom because the fire is a slow one."

"You have done as much, Marcus, every bit," put in his wife. "You have sacrificed everything for your people. He has refused to leave, my dear, again and again, when most flattering offers have come to him," she interposed, addressing Christina.

"You must have a rough sort of people to deal with in these streets. They must be worse than our black folk, for they have to unlearn so much before you can get them to accept the truth."

"It is a dangerous thing to treat people as a class, my dear," replied Marcus. "No teacher can influence a class in the gross. It is only when he recognizes the variety of character and tempera-

ment, when he begins to separate the mass into individual men and women, that his own influence comes into play."

"That is true," put in his wife. "You may break up a mothers' meeting into characters distinct enough to furnish a stage act."

"I shall want some more talk with you, Christina, about missionary work," said Marcus. "I have an idea that we are not altogether right in our method—we Christian English, I mean. If I were king; if I had, not much, say two thousand pounds of my very own, we would go abroad, my dear Jane, we would try our new plan. I should be no loss to London, Christina," he continued. "Twenty preachers are ready to leap into my place here. Each of them has a brand new way for reaching the hearts of the workingmen. Let them try; but give me also a chance of work under other skies and with a different race."

"Well, you can't do it yet, Marcus," said Mrs. Ruefold, who had been waiting for an opportunity. "In the first place, we have not got the two thousand pounds which you demand; in the second place, the climate would be death to Zephyr; and in the third place, tea is waiting, and we all want it."

When Marcus had retired to the little square den which was dignified by the title of "study,"

Mrs. Ruefold assured Christina, with that confidence which the wives and daughters of unsuccessful men always possess, that her husband was not properly appreciated, and that his abilities ranged too high for the common people. "I should prefer a black man and his idols to a dingy dock laborer, squalid in his poverty. It is the squalor which affects one more than the color of the skin. Your uncle Marcus has a strong antipathy to the smell of fried fish. With all his philanthropy he can hardly pass a fried fish shop in the afternoon, even to do a charitable deed."

On Sunday Christina saw the chapel at its best. The walls were painted a cold French gray; the gas flared brightly in the gloom of the morning fog, as well as in the cleaner darkness of the evening. The pews were filled with a decently clad congregation. The galleries were empty, except for a few adventurous souls dotted here and there; but the galleries represented the chance members of the congregation. To the surprise of Christina, she saw Professor Racer with two ladies. She mentioned this at the brief family meal after the morning service, and was told by Mr. Ruefold that Mr. Racer frequently came to his church, "Those two ladies are his sisters; they live in the neighborhood; their brother is their chief support, and in the vacation he is a frequent visitor at the church."

"But does he really care for the service?" asked Christina, with wondering eyes. "I have recently met him, and thought that he would never enter a church."

"Yes, he will; his bark is worse than his bite. He loved his mother dearly, and at her dying request he follows the forms of religion. I hope he will be all right at the last, but you must give men like him time in which to swing round. By the way, Jane, we will ask him to-night for supper and a pipe."

"You must come and see my people, Miss Ruefold," said the professor, when he came round in the evening. "Some of our Cambridge men go in for coins or seals. I collect sisters, as a cult, you understand."

After supper the men brought out their pipes and, it must be added, sipped their whisky and water. Out of the subject of the preacher's address grew a discussion to which Christina, in a corner of the room, listened attentively.

"I am prepared to admit all you ask for," said the minister, "but I give a different explanation to the one you proffer."

"Then let me hear it," said his companion. "If you abandon your Old Testament account of the origin of mankind, the whole religious theory tumbles to pieces. You accept an evolutionary theory of the birth of man. Very good; but hav-

ing accepted it, you desire to introduce a personal Creator into the operation?"

"That is so," replied the minister, "and I think I can show you that such an intervention is really necessary. Smoke quietly for a few minutes, and I will try to demonstrate it. We must admit that the evolution of species is a gradual and selective process. Nature throws aside many broken pots before she has fired the one which is to serve as her type. In some cases her process leads to a dead-end, from which there is no escape. You will not get any further improvement out of certain insects and animals, for example, like the bee and the beaver. Now the presence of man is evidence of a selection which has been going forward through the past ages of animal life. There is indeed a purpose running through the whole process of evolution. From one animal a branch has been thrown out, giving a new type, before the first had vanished from the world. So the upward progress had been continued, until a human creature had struggled out of the mass, and taken its place as the master. Is there not in all this, guidance, control, forethought—in other words, a Creator working patiently for a given end, and taking infinite pains and time in the process?"

The professor laid down his pipe. "Now may I speak?" he said eagerly. "Your argument would be water-tight if you could show that your product

man was perfect when he had emerged from the battle of the centuries. But you must bear in mind that the development has continued into historical times. It is even now proceeding slowly, in accordance with laws which have been tested under our eyes. No, you are safer under the pages of the Book of Genesis than behind such a rampart as you are trying to throw up. There is a dignity about a Being who 'speaks and it is done,' and who creates the world in six days. I can respect the teaching which I cannot accept. Do not ask me, however, to take in exchange for that sublime and impossible idea the figure of a Divine Workman who can make experiments, but who does not understand the material upon which he works. No, the mistakes, the misfits of life, would be a reproach to a Personal Creator. We are the more reverent who worship Force, stirring and expanding dead matter; Force as certain and relentless as a river, wearing its own crooked course along the path of least resistance; Force modified by the matter through which it drives, and breaking into a delta of many manifestations. That is the only theory of life possible at present."

"Go back to your pipe, you Sadducee, and listen to me," said Marcus. "I will accept your live force, and your dead matter; they are both part and parcel of the material universe. Leave them alone;

let us watch the effect. Your live force will play with matter as a squirrel does with his revolving cage, and a meaningless revolution will be the result, or it will tumble the dead material until it is without form and void. Hush! wait a bit. Mind descends upon the chaos; the Spirit of God broods upon the living material, and a Divine purpose brings cosmos out of the confusion. But the working mind is leisurely in its progress; it guides, corrects, controls."

"Why this waste of patience and time, my dear Ruefold? Why did not the Almighty Creator mold the mass at once into the forms he required? If he wanted an Adam he could knead him out of the red clay, and the new man could call the animals about him for his company, without the thought of cousinship to make the meeting an awkward one."

"If you will attend seriously, I will tell you. Allow that matter is eternal, then the Eternal Mind deals with the co-eternal matter according to those laws which are native to the material. As a chemist can combine or decompose the natural objects he handles, calling into being new forms, yet unable to subtract from or to add to the total sum of his material, so may the Great Intelligence be limited to the processes which give certain results."

"No miracles are admitted then?" interrupted Racer.

"Of course, I do not exclude miracles. The miraculous may be a quick and unusual method of reaching a result—a method of special application. There are plenty of alternative routes known to science. The divine idea of man worked out by the Infinite Mind produces at last a human creature, equipped in frame and brain, but without the spirit; therefore the actions of this creature are governed by circumstances and suggestion modified by inherited instinct. Unto this creature God imparts the breath of the Eternal, a quickening spirit. A new era begins, and while the same law is at work in the mortal body, the spiritual man comes under that lifting and refining process which, from the moment of the new birth, is seeking to complete in the creature a likeness to his Creator. The laws of the two spheres clash—flesh and spirit are contrary the one to the other. Presently the body fulfils its fixed round and goes back to the earth, which cries out for it, from which it sprang, and to which it belongs. The spirit, with the joys and woes of its lower existence thick upon it, returns to its Maker for a new form through which it may work out its own destiny. The material falls back into the common stock, the spiritual returns literally to the God who gave it. Eternal life is the gift of the Eternal Spirit, and an individual existence must depend upon the responsible use of the gift. Here, again, we

have the Highest Workman engaged. We are co-workers with God in the salvation of the individual self; grace is the supreme intelligence, laboring according to the essential laws of spirit. Creation and redemption are summed up in the sentence, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'"

"Your account is interesting," said the professor, after a pause, "but I cannot see that it rests upon a basis of ascertained fact.' The Bible does give an explanation, which is founded upon tradition, respectable on account of its antiquity. I do not accept it, but would rather swallow it whole than have to adopt a brand new theory. We run on parallel lines when we both admit the facts of evolution; but I contend that Natural Law, which you want to place under a Supreme Intelligence, is quite able to take care of itself, and to carry forward that higher mental development which you associate with the endowment of spirit. How can you separate the poetry of the book of Genesis from the facts to which it bears witness?"

"As I separate the flame from the lamp, the trumpet from the music breathed through it," answered Ruefold. "You shall not cramp me in a fortress which cannot resist modern artillery. I will descend into the plain and meet you with your own weapons upon equal terms."

"Then you must admit the theory of intelligent

men, without a share in the spirit life, having roamed the world in past ages, and that vestiges of them ought to remain?" said the professor.

"Undoubtedly; the primeval remains scattered about the world can be explained in this way."

"And if the evolution of mankind was not from a single stock, that it is quite possible there may be still men on the earth who have not yet passed through the rudimentary stage?"

"Quite possible, and even probable," replied Ruefold.

"You are right, uncle, it is true, and I know it quite well," came a voice from the dark corner.

"Miss Ruefold, I had quite forgotten your presence," said the professor to Christina. "I hope we have not bored you with our wrangle."

A little figure appeared in the doorway. It was Zephyr, with her light hair twisted into small screws, which turned her into a weird little goat.

"If you please, professor," she began, with the manner of a lesson committed to memory, "mother does not wish to drive you away, but she says it has struck twelve, and she is afraid your sisters will think you have come to harm."

"Bless my heart, so it is!" said the professor, jumping up. "Well, we must be on the lookout for the possible man-creature, Ruefold," he continued, as he put on his coat.

VI.

We should look reverently upon the lowest form of organic life, for in its simple folds may lie hidden the most complex purpose of God.

"THE HAPPY VALLEY" is a successful music hall and place of entertainment. It does not spare expense in advertising when it brings a novelty before the public, and the arrival of Forest Bokrie in England was announced by an artistic poster of enormous size. The scene was a tropical forest, and several armed Europeans and negro servants were cautiously approaching a creature, half-brute, half-man, who was standing at bay and brandishing a tree branch. Overhead, among foliage, could be partially seen the forms of like creatures, who were peering through the cover. A few gaudy birds and colored creepers were brought in to brighten up the picture. At one corner of the sheet a portrait of the same creature was given; but although the features were the same, the figure was represented in a loud sporting suit of English cloth. The manager of "The Happy Valley" gave his own portrait at the opposite corner. At the foot of the poster ran the announcement: "The Mystery Solved; the Missing Link Found! Come and see Forest Bokrie, the Man-Ape of Africa! Twice daily, at 3 P. M. and

at 8 P.M. Doctors and clergy admitted free to the private interviews after each performance." It was not long before the new sensation had found its way into Behemoth Square, and was talked over at the dinner table of the Fallowfett family. Christina had concluded the week's visit to her East-end friends and had returned to the Fallowfetts; Vincent Gracebroke brought the details of the new show to the girls, and was pleased particularly to watch the interest in the eyes of Vesper's foreign-looking friend. He really liked Vesper, and considered her perfectly suited to be his wife. There was a repose, a propriety about her, which harmonized with high-class furniture and good connections. But that strange, tall girl already exercised a piquant attraction for him. She had an unexpected fund of natural feeling which broke out in unaccustomed places; and although this might be embarrassing in the wife of a rising professional man, it was highly diverting to the present young gentleman without encumbrance.

"Yes, Miss Rueford, I have really met him face to face at last," he said on one visit. "It was late last night, after the performance; the poor brute was tired and could not talk much. Oh, yes, he is as human as you or I; he speaks English fluently, with only an accent slight enough to give it a flavor. They taught him a great deal at the mission school,

and he is certainly near enough to monkeydom to possess a considerable power of imitation. He could learn anything and remember it, too, I should say. He actually quoted Horace to me; but the odd thing is that he can't act without a suggestion."

"If he is so clever, why do you speak of him in that tone of contemptuous pity?" inquired Christina.

"Because there is something amiss, my dear Miss Ruefold; but for the life of me I cannot tell where the difference comes in. I should guess it is some flaw in the moral quality; the mission people had awful difficulty. He was cunning enough to get all the education he could out of them, but they could not control him a bit after he became a man."

"What is he like, Mr. Gracebroke? Tell me once again."

"In his evening clothes, and with his gloves and boots on, you would only notice his great height—about six and a half feet—a slight forward thrust of the body, and the retreating facial angle. He has a somewhat long muzzle, like a dog's jaw. His eyes are large and brown, with a big animal's unconscious stare in them. There a is peculiarity about his fingers and toes. The doctors say that some are joined like a baby's glove. I really hardly know whether he possesses the traditional caudal stump; but taken altogether he is curiously near in type to a superior

and highly developed animal of the ape race. He really warrants an expenditure of half a crown for the public and five shillings for the private performance."

"I wish I could see him!" exclaimed Christina. "Are the people kind to him? Does he seem very sad?"

"Really, Christina," interposed Vesper, forcing a laugh, "don't waste your surplus emotion on a creature such as that. Buy a pug dog and pet him instead of this monster. You will have to change your name to Titania."

"I must—I mean I should like to see him. Poor fellow; he is all alone amid thousands of hard faces."

"You need not be uncomfortable about him, I assure you, Miss Ruefold. He is making a hatful of money, and the only danger for him is that he will throw it away in some wretched bit of folly."

"Could you take me, Mr. Gracebroke?—or get me a ticket rather," she added with a quick blush.

"Do you mean to the 'Happy Valley,'" asked Vesper. "Impossible; you do not understand—you do not know the difference between places of amusement. Pray do not continue the subject; mamma will explain it to you."

"I can take care of myself," answered Christina proudly; "no one will dare offer me a word. Never

mind, I will not ask you, Mr. Gracebroke; thank you for all your trouble."

"I think it might be managed," said Gracebroke, glancing at Vesper, who looked away. "Racer is going—your friend the professor, Miss Ruefold—and if he and I joined our forces we could carry you safely through fire and water. An afternoon performance is quite as effective as the evening in this dark weather, and you would be restored to your friends in ample time for dinner."

So it was arranged, for although Vesper showed an icy disapprobation, and Mrs. Fallowfett pitied the girl's taste, Gregory Fallowfett only laughed, and told his wife and daughter that if they pulled the reins too tightly they would drive Christina into some escapade which might compromise them all.

When they reached the "Happy Valley," Christina saw that one end of the building was filled by the stage, but round the circle of the hall there was a large free space. There were two deep galleries running the whole length, and beneath them were sundry side-shows, filling the recesses. Before and after the stage performances, the mesmeric experiments, spotted ladies, and strong men could be seen in a leisurely manner and duly appreciated. Overhead ran a tangle of rope and wire, with looped-up swings, but the gymnast just now was subordinated to other attractions.

When the curtain ran up a forest scene was represented, with a clearing up to the footlights and a deep glade in the rear. In the clearing a party of traders assembled. They lighted a fire, pitched their tents, and prepared to encamp for the night. There were three men and two women, and one was carrying a child. When their preparations were made they took their evening meal together, and the black porters who were with them gathered into a group and ate apart. Night was darkening, the fire was made up, a watch was set, and the party retired to sleep. There were strange noises in the forest, but for a time nothing actually disturbed the travelers. The men set to watch were overcome as well, and dropped asleep at their post. What was that figure which was stealing up to the camp as softly as a cat, sometimes erect, sometimes on all fours? It approached the party, when one of the guard awoke. There was a shout of alarm and a discharge of firearms. In the confusion the creature escaped, and after a conference in the startled camp and a beating of the neighboring thicket, order was restored. But high above the sleeping group the spectators observed a movement in the branches of a tall tree. Hand over hand the same creature descended—now testing the strength of a bough, now arresting his descent halfway to listen for a sound of detection from below. Sharply

he turned from this side to that, horribly alive, from his ugly muzzle to his long clinging feet—a man in form, a beast in agility. The creature reached the last support and extended its long flexible body to the full before it dropped, without a sound, on to the moss at the foot of the tree. He stopped for an instant, and then crawled on feet and hands swiftly to the tent where the women were sleeping. There was an interval of suspense, and out rushed the thing, nearly upright now, clasping in its arms the sleeping child. On, on he fled to the glade, when the child awoke and cried out. Her voice aroused the others. The mother in a frenzy started for the glade, the men pursued; but the guns might not be used for fear of hurting the child.

Now a storm broke; thunder boomed, lightning darted, the rain hissed. In the midst of the tempest the party returned in detachments. The women were weeping and wringing their hands. The men hung their heads; the pursuit was in vain. Then a shout was heard; the last two men returned. They were dragging a captive between them. What was it? The mother pressed forward. Had the child been found? No; they had captured a wriggling little brute, evidently belonging to the creature who had robbed them. He had taken their child, and they had secured, in retribution, this fierce little cub, who could not keep up with the headlong flight of

its parent. The curtain fell at this point upon the first scene. Of course the part of the ape-man had been played by Forest Bokrie, and a lad had been employed to represent the smaller creature. Christina had never seen a stage play, and this dramatic scene fascinated her.

The next picture was the mission station—a painfully clean block of buildings with a tangled country in the background. A few men were grouped at the front in impossible black coats and white Panama hats. Forest Bokrie entered dressed in a half European costume. He shook hands with the authorities, showed them by experiment his skill in gardening and at the carpenter's bench. He was directed by them to the schoolhouse, when a leopard in pursuit of an antelope leaped the fence. The officials fled to cover; but Bokrie, casting aside the impediment of his English dress, mastered the animal, and it slunk away. Then the curtain fell again. The third part of the entertainment was restricted to the appearance of Bokrie in evening dress, accompanied by a fluent person, who gave a discourse upon the education of the captive hero, and his introduction to English manners. He touched upon the physical differences which were exciting interest, and invited the attendance of both religious and scientific men to the private discussion of these points in a room adjoining.

Christina was moved painfully at the scenes she had witnessed. It appeared to her as if the drama of her mother's life had been unrolled before curious eyes. She recoiled from the thought that her own mother might have begun her life in a scene like that. She was aware that the picture had been colored and exaggerated for the purpose of effect; but she felt a dread, at that moment, to learn more about Bokrie, lest her repugnance should be deepened, and that disgust might destroy her sympathy. She shuddered at the thought that the blood of these monsters might even be throbbing in her own veins. Gracebroke was disappointed at the slight interest she showed, and imagined that the girl's delicacy of taste had been offended, and that consequently a reaction of feeling had set in.

Christina pleaded a headache, and retired to her room for the rest of the evening. During the few days following she avoided a reference to her visit, and the ladies, believing that a cure for her craze was in active process, left the subject alone. But the girl was really too engrossed with the question to trust herself to argue it. She knew that she would not obtain help from her friends at home, and guessed that Gracebroke really shared in their prejudice. Yet her instinct told her that there was more behind to discover. She knew that there was a scientific puzzle which was drawing the attention of intelligent

men, but as a woman she was debarred from personal investigation. To prove that this poor creature ought not to be counted as a pariah among men, to demonstrate that his growth of mind warranted the hope that a higher nature was ready to descend upon the afflicted body, were the objects of her secret desire. Her woman's tact suggested that the best method was to use the influence which she possessed with the professor, and thus to compensate for the restriction imposed upon her sex. She wrote to Racer, asking him as a favor to seek an interview with Bokrie, and shrewdly added that if he could arrange for a meeting apart from the showman he was much more likely to reach the truth, for Bokrie would not then repeat the stock story which had probably been written for him. The professor crushed the innocent note in his hand, and, with that caution which marks the man who is attaining middle life without marriage, committed the discourtesy of not sending a reply. He had a good reason for compliance with the artless request, for his own curiosity had been excited; but he was ashamed to give countenance to a scientific interest to what might, after all, turn out to be an advertised fraud.

The people in charge of Bokrie were naturally jealous of any independent visits to him; but Racer managed with a little trouble to get the number of

the house in the dreary street near to the hall where Bokrie was exhibited. The unsuspecting landlady believed that she had a very tall Indian gentleman for a lodger. He was called for by a cab regularly every afternoon and evening. He did not return home until early in the morning, but he gave no trouble, as he took his meals out of the house, paid his bill weekly, and rarely spoke to anyone. He had a friend who came for him, and who frequently had to guide the latch-key at night. The faded, fly-blown lodging-house rooms on the first floor were about as great a contrast to the African wilderness as could be drawn. They were empty when Racer was shown into them, with the promise that the Indian would arrive before six o'clock.

After the visitor had looked about him, and found nothing to suggest the den of the wild beast, his patience gave out, and he was in the act of dropping a card upon the table—not without a flash of humor at the idea of leaving a card upon a possible ape—when the street door opened and there were voices in the little passage below the stairs. He waited, and in another minute was rewarded by the entrance of a thick-set, red-faced man, who advanced to the table and stared at him. Bokrie followed, and stooped as he entered the door. The first man continued to stare, and was apparently perplexed, but soon made up his mind.

"Thank 'ee, sir, I don't care for your name," he said, as Racer bowed and pushed the card across the table. "I know what you have come about, and the name doesn't signify to me. You are either the 'Golden West,' the 'Phœnix,' or the 'Cat and Monkey'; or you have perhaps come direct from the 'Starry Splendor.' Yes, the 'Starry Splendor' bears me a grudge for bringing this gentleman to the 'Happy Valley,' and they want to cut in. All in good time, but you have got to negotiate through Bullock Sopp, all of you."

"I beg your pardon," replied the professor mildly, "but I have no stake at all in these places of entertainment—not one single share. I really wish I had, Mr.—I forget your name—Mr. Bullnose Hopp."

"Very neat indeed; you may not hold a share. That's quite likely; but you are paid a good 'com.' on your introductions. Let's understand one another. I have no objection to your getting at the value of the article—none in the least; but the business must pass through the hands of yours truly. Come now, if you are the 'Starry Splendor,' say so at once; it is of no use to beat about; and now to terms."

"My dear sir, I am only quite small potatoes, and there is nothing of a starry splendor about me. In my whole life I shall not earn the amount which the 'Starry Splendor' divides among its lucky pro-

prietors in a single twelve months. I want to have a few minutes' chat with your friend, not with a view to any commercial speculation. I am a poor professor, employed in the University of Cambridge to teach youths who have the grace to listen. If there is anything of importance to science in your new find, I shall send a flock of visitors to swell your takings."

Here Bokrie spoke for the first time. "The man talks fair and square, Sopp; let me alone. I shall take no harm."

"Don't you trust him, the little wretch; he looks mischief," said Bullock Sopp, highly incensed at the interruption, and losing all respect for the feelings of anyone who thwarted him.

"Nonsense, Sopp, you treat me as a child; don't try that game on," replied Bokrie.

This assertion of independence roused the full powers of the agent, who had visited the refreshment bar at the back of the stage more than once that afternoon. His language required some editorial control.

"You debased, chicken-hearted young nigger, are you going to teach me? Aren't I keeping you out of the nether regions every instant you are off the stage? Do you think I am doing that for the sake of the mission angels? No, it's for my own cash book, not for you, who have more tail than soul, and not enough of that to keep you going long. You wait

a few months, and when the public give you up you may go to perdition for all I care. I shall have done with you—there now."

This was an unwise outburst from Bullock Sopp, for he had brought Bokrie over, and knew the possible results of rousing his temper. He looked for the fire-irons, but Racer was standing, an interested spectator before the fender, and blocked the way. The creature before them seemed to change with his fury, and to lose his human likeness. His dress, his surroundings grew incongruous, and the two men drew together in a sympathy of fear. Wide as was the crevasse between them in thought and feeling, a deeper chasm separated the men from this animal. His arms were raised in a threatening attitude, and his stature grew imposing as he towered above them in the shabby little room. For a second he stood irresolute, and then, pointing to the door, he shouted, "Go, go now, or I will tear you in pieces like this!" and he caught up a stick and snapped it into fragments. Sopp realized his indiscretion and the danger of the situation; so muttering something between an oath and a farewell, he dodged round the table and got away. Racer felt the risk of exposure to the wrath of a being who might not be held answerable for his actions, and was disinclined to furnish copy for the morning papers. He was a pigmy compared with this giant,

but he took the position coolly, and sat down until the effervescence of the other man's anger had subsided. After taking a few strides about the room Bokrie recovered himself, and, turning to Racer, said, "Have some whisky?"

"No, thank you, and if you will permit me to say a friendly word, I should advise you to keep off it yourself. You have been excited, and it won't do you any good."

"They tell me it is the brandy I ought to shun, and that the whisky won't do me much harm; but they tell me any lie which suits them; I don't know what to believe."

"The climate here is so different to that of your native country, Mr. Bokrie, and the police are at every street corner in London. I would be most careful of my cups and of my company, if I were you."

"Certainly very good advice; sounds like the parson's talk at the mission house. That fellow Sopp—he tries to rule me according to his own way; makes money out of me; he is not a gentleman like you. But he wheedles me mostly, and then he does what he chooses—all for himself, you understand; not for my good. That is my nature, in a word. You can do all you please with me if you give me kind words. I can't escape other people's influence unless I am made angry, then I can man-

age for myself; or I take too much drink, and then devils whisper to me, and I obey them."

"Well, sir, I am sorry for you, and I should like to help you, but I am a man of science and have only come to see you for the sake of my work. Will you sit down and tell me something about yourself?"

Bokrie eyed him doubtfully. "What do you want to know?" he asked. "Bullock Sopp gives me twenty pounds a week, but I believe he gets one hundred out of me. He says he wants the difference to pay for the expense of bringing me over. If you will allow me thirty, or even twenty-five pounds, I will throw up my contract with him, and give you a chance. He has got it on paper with little red seals, but what does that matter? I can chaw up his paper and his seals, though he does threaten me with the police court. They would not touch me, or if they did, I am ready to die fighting."

"What can you want with the money, Mr. Bokrie?" inquired the professor.

"Nothing or everything. There are beautiful things in the shops I should like to have. Precious stones such as you will hardly see in Africa, and lots of fine things. He tells me I have not money enough to buy them, and when I go in to ask a price the shop people lock the cases, stare at me, whisper, and laugh. Besides, he gets me to spend

all I receive; I don't know exactly how it goes—largely upon him I should say—so that I am poor at the end of each week."

"I am sorry for you, I am sure," said Racer, "but I can't undertake the charge of you at present. Does that scene at the 'Happy Valley' represent the way in which your ancestors lived in the woods?"

"That bit of lath and plaster tomfoolery? No, indeed. That is all got up by the manager and Bullock Sopp between them. I did not care about it, but they said it must be so. It was not the truth, they knew, but the British public did not ask for the truth. I can scarcely remember the way in which we lived; I was such a little beggar when they caught me, and I have to work back through so large a lot of information they have crammed into me to get to my earliest days. We did not live in a forest, although they dragged me through miles of it when they carried me off. Open country I can remember, with knolls rising into hills, and patches of wood here and there. Plenty of running streams, pasture, cattle, and little slips of cornland close to the villages; well-made huts, spears, and swords, kilns and forges; so we were metal workers."

"But the people themselves?" pressed Racer, growing interested.

"They were tall and strong, something like myself.

I know they must have been clever, after a kind, much more skillful than the negroes. We had a greater number of animals in use than the white people have—dogs, apes, and others—and they worked well for us because we understood their nature. Language—yes, of course, we talked fluently to one another, but I can only remember an odd word or two. Better than you, we knew the meaning of every sound the lower creatures make, and could imitate them; so that the animals served us well. I am sure that this knowledge had not been acquired; it was traditional, as you call it. I have put piece to piece of the fragments left in my mind, and sometimes a matter which was indistinct and blurred comes out clearly after I have been thinking hard upon it. My people, in a remote age, must have spread over the north west of Africa, but they have been driven out by invaders who entered the continent from the eastern side. We are only a remnant of the original people, and have found a refuge for the last few centuries in a land beyond the great forest. I believe that we are an intelligent race, yet we never combined into great kingdoms, but were always broken into village societies under temporary chiefs. We could never act together in masses as other natives have done, and this kept us weak. Then we loved life and enjoyed it too well to give it up for an idea. We know there is nothing

beyond the darkness of death, and that we are only the children of the day. We require to be made very angry indeed before we will fight. Who would sell his right to the earth and air and sun for a reward which must go to other people? Your priests and rulers have persuaded you that it is a fine thing to die for your country; but the man who is befooled like that is sacrificed like a slave to the glory of his master."

The professor had jotted down a few notes as Bokrie was speaking, and, until the man stopped of his own accord, had said nothing. "You have no spirits or gods, I suppose, as you do not believe in an after-life?"

"Not in your sense of the word—mere dream men, or heroes of fairy stories. We see certain things around us which we cannot explain by our own experience, and we put them down to the work of living beings hidden from our eyes, but we never hold the absurd opinion that these beings live forever; but know that they must die like every other thing. The flowers and trees have souls, which droop with the death of the plants. Animals and men have their souls also; when the soul grows old the man or animal must die, whether the body is ready or not. If the body is injured, the soul tries to repair the damage, but the body cannot help the soul, for the soul is the life."

"That is your explanation of existence," said Racer. "Well, it is more intelligible than some of the theories which are crammed down our throats when we are too young to fight against the spoon. However, if your race only follows but cannot lead, how does it come about that they have invented many things which show a high state of knowledge?"

"We are well furnished here," replied Bokrie, touching his forehead, "and we have got a great deal from the habits of other animals. We improve upon the method of the lower creatures, for when you are at work, you know, one thing suggests another, and the work grows under your fingers. Then we must have learned a little here and there from captives of other tribes and from conquering races before we escaped from them. We never forget a single thing; a fact seems to go down from father to son like the instinct which passes through the generations of the beasts."

"Thank you, Mr. Bokrie, for your interesting story. I will not keep you any longer, for you have to appear in public again to-night." The professor placed his chubby little fingers in the long, clinging hand of his friend, and felt the muscular fingers close over his own with a firm grip. "Good-by," said Bokrie, "if you must go without the whisky. Don't repeat all that I have told you to Bullock

Sopp. You may meet him outside; he always comes back."

Racer escaped the ordeal of another interview with the agent, and made his way to Behemoth Square that same evening. Casually he introduced the subject at the dinner table, and it did not appear to have been prompted by any request from Christina. "He is an intelligent brute, if he is only a brute, and really I learned a great deal. I wish the Germans would conceive a passion for the country of these divine apes, or that somebody would start a Royal Bokrie Land Company, and get a charter to explore and annex it."

"Do you consider there is any mystery at all about it?" asked Gregory Fallowfett. "The man is a native of Northern Africa, I suppose; but nature has dealt rather harshly with him. If you discovered the tribe from which he has strayed, you would probably find nothing extraordinary about them."

"There is more in it than can be met by so simple an explanation," replied the professor. "Bokrie is a queer compound of common sense and brutality; he is a sort of marble faun and Frankenstein rolled into one. I am sorry to say he will probably be lost to science in a few months if he goes on with his present life. He is in the hands of an agent—a rough, cunning fellow with vulgar

tastes, who tries to keep Bokrie amused and pacified by running him through the lowest round of pleasure in London. Then they both take to the bottle, and the end of it will be that Bokrie will sink below the level of the brutes from which they say he has sprung."

"We need not take that to heart," said Gracebroke, who was one of the party at dinner. "Lots of fellows are going the same road who have souls to be saved, or who think they have. We must make up our average of losses whatever the philosophers or the ministers of religion may say. Some of us are born under a lucky star," he continued, turning to Vesper. "We have a taste for the better things of life, and are attracted to books, music, and to ladies' society. Life in its best form pleases us, and we go up to the top of the class, not because we are better than the others who fail, but through the native-born disposition which is no credit to us."

"That is rather a large order to accept, is it not, Miss Fallowfett?" said the professor, also addressing Vesper. "We shall expect great things from him now, and if he fails, will have no mercy, as he has given away the virtue of his coming success."

"You seem to take a great deal of interest in a most uninviting subject, Mr. Racer," said Mrs. Fallowfett. "If this man has all the peculiarities in body and mind which are claimed for him, I cannot

see that it would attract me very much. Probably the music hall people will start something else next month, and then Mr. Bokrie will drop out of sight."

"He must not go under, Professor Racer, without one hand to help him," suddenly said Christina. "If there is no one in the whole of this great town who will make an effort, girl as I am, I will do it myself."

There was a deep silence at the table, until Gregory Fallowfett said, "Tut, tut, Doña Quijota, ladies can't go about redressing human wrongs unless they consent to wear the garb of a society and give their whole lives to the work."

At this moment Mrs. Fallowfett rose, and the two girls followed her out of the room.

VII.

Withhold thy pity, lest pity should tremble into affection, and an all-compelling love lift the least worthy step by step, at last to sit beside thee.

GRACEBROKE listened to the appeal which was made to him by both the mother and the daughter. He set to work to discover more of Bokrie in his haunts. To break down the infatuation which Christina showed for the man-curiosity it would be necessary to dispel the romance and show him in his true habits—an object attractive to the physiologist, but disgusting to the ordinary person of healthy mind.

Gracebroke was accustomed to visit a variety of entertaining places in town in order to study life, but the pursuit of this study demanded a series of repeated inquiries. He sauntered into one of these places in a listless and casual way on a certain evening, prepared to spend an hour there if the proceedings did not fatigue him. It was a retired spot, known only to the initiated, bearing the title of "Under the Greenwood Tree," and was approached through an alley. It was a spacious vaulted room under a large hall, and was arranged to appear as rude and rough as possible. It was practically a supper room, and had a reputation for good food;

but it combined music and entertainment with its grosser charm, and these were frequently improvised and contributed by customers. The company was fairly good, and men of letters often forsook their more refined eating shops for the primitive manners and good cheer of the "Greenwood Tree."

It happened that on this same evening Bullock Sopp had brought Bokrie there, and the two were taking supper at a table by themselves. It was not the place at which Gracebroke expected to meet them. He supposed that the savage would have required tinsel and glass, and he explained their presence by a reversion to a cave dwelling. As a fact, Sopp anticipated meeting with a dramatic critic there, and wanted to arrange for a private interview and a public paragraph. Gracebroke lost no time in seizing the opportunity. He took a seat close to the pair and introduced himself. He took stock of Sopp, and fixed his profession with fair accuracy. Then he threw out a hint that he had some slight connection with the papers, and might be of service to them. The bait took. Sopp made room for him at the table, and Gracebroke ordered his supper and a bottle of sparkling wine. He shared the wine with his friends, and it was followed by another bottle. He did not forget to fill up the glass of Bokrie again and again, so that the chilled and rather depressed demeanor of the man might be

thawed. Bokrie had taken sufficient already, and of this Bullock Sopp ought to have been aware.

The spirits of Bullock Sopp began to rise, and he related an anecdote or two of a broad and humorous kind about the search for Bokrie. He went off guard, and did not observe a suppressed excitement in his ward, who tried to follow the songs with snatches of incoherent imitation, and beat time with his feet to the violin and the cornet. The chairman of the evening then asked if any of the guests would favor the company, and after a short hesitation a man got up and delivered a prose dramatic piece. Now the ice had been cracked, another guest followed quickly with a comic song, and then there was a pause. Bokrie's eyes were glistening, and he had subsided into an unnatural quiet; but Bullock Sopp was deeply engaged in the history of a successful attempt to outwit a brother professional in securing a Veiled Mystery of Baghdad, and there were so many digressions incidental to a proper account of the same that Bokrie escaped his attention. The ape-man had got up, walked to the end of the room, and mounted the stage, before Sopp realized that anything unusual had happened. The chairman looked at the recruit in blank surprise, but without preface Bokrie began to dance softly, humming and droning an unintelligible song. It was an attempt to sing something in English, but

soon foreign words slipped in. He increased the pace of the dance; it grew more wild, and at last he flung himself about the platform in a frenzy. The language broke off into uncouth sounds—a clicking and barking like a beast of prey. This caused amusement at the beginning and called out applause; but in a short time it was clear that the man was losing control of himself, and the exhibition became painful.

The chairman approached the performer and politely thanked him for his assistance, but asked him to desist, as the audience were quite satisfied. This speech was hardly heard through the noise, and Bokrie appeared to take little notice of the intervention. Two or three persons rose and left the hall, and Bullock Sopp, sobered by the disturbance, approached Bokrie quietly and tried to soothe him. It was of no use; the creature had got the mastery of the man, and the coating of a civilized education cracked and tore off in ribbons with the expansion of the brute beneath. He shook away from Sopp angrily, and when the agent again laid hold of him a second time, he pitched him heavily forward on to the floor in front of the stage. Matters were growing serious, and the waiters, who were afraid to touch Bokrie, summoned the manager. He advanced, accompanied by two burly barmen as his assistants. Bokrie pretended not to see them until

they were almost upon him; then seizing a chair he swung it upon the head of one of his assailants, stretching him senseless. The other two closed with him promptly, and many gathered about, on the chance, when the struggling and rotating mass of arms and legs would give them an opportunity, of striking in.

Gracebroke stood back and watched the turbulent scene. Most of the customers had escaped, but a few stood at the entrance, following the fight with curious eyes. Tables fell over, and crockery added to the crash, or was clinked about and ground by the feet. Bokrie roared and bellowed in some unknown tongue; the men shouted oaths and directions to each other. Once they all fell in a heap, but Bokrie was up before the bystanders could rush in, and it was then seen that the strength of the men who were clinging to him was giving out. His muscular power was not sufficient to dispose of them at once, but his enormous staying force was setting their utmost efforts at defiance. The police had been sent for; but before they could reach the place one of the waiters, with a bewildered remembrance of the manner in which riotous meetings are dispersed, turned off the gas.

Gracebroke prudently made for the door to save both his watch and his reputation, as he did not wish to be mauled by the police, or summoned to

give evidence about a disreputable row. The doorway was blocked, and as he was forcing a road for himself he felt two long hands upon his shoulders, which dug into his flesh like claws. On his neck came hot breath from someone stooping behind him, and then with a violent thrust he was driven aside. There were exclamations in front; the mass divided, and a dim form shot out. He was gone before anyone could realize it, and when the lights came and the policemen opened their notebooks, Bokrie had raced beyond pursuit, and Sopp had also disappeared. People in the street had observed a flying shadow, but no clew to his line of retreat remained.

The proprietor of the establishment did not care to discover the name of the disturber, and avoided the notoriety which a magistrate's investigation would have given to his premises. Gracebroke went home, satisfied that he had a story sufficiently highly colored to produce the effect which he desired on the mind of Christina. He regretted that for one brief moment it had not been possible to have placed the girl in a position from which she might have safely observed the vagaries of her favorite specimen, for he was most anxious to divest her mind of any sympathy with Bokrie. He gave her an expurgated account of the incident; but, to his chagrin, Christina did not show the

shocked surprise which he had anticipated. She remarked that it was a shame that the poor fellow had been prompted to take so much wine, and almost implied that Gracebroke was the culprit in that matter. She fully understood the power which strong drink exercises upon the natives of Africa, and passed lightly over the peculiar manifestation which the liquor had called forth. The low grade of the man, instead of provoking her abhorrence, quickened her compassion.

"'Almost a brute,' you say. If that be true, he stands the more in need of our pity." Gracebroke saw that it was useless to argue with her in her present mood, and that to win her from her fancy he must present the actual Bokrie to her.

One day, quite by accident, she met him. She had gone to a shop in Regent Street in her cousin's carriage. She was alone, and, having finished her purchase, had left the shop and was about to get into the brougham. A few doors away there was a cluster of people round a window. They were inspecting some photographs which had just been put into position, and above the pictures the words in large letters caught her attention: "New photographs of the man-ape, in various costumes." There was Bokrie, dropping hand over hand from the tree upon the sleeping camp; Bokrie carrying off the child, with the hunters in pursuit; Bokrie at the

mission station; and at last the man-ape, like an English gentleman, sitting in a chair in evening dress; and again with his hat and cane, starting for a walk. She looked at the portraits, and then glanced at the crowd to see whether they were impressed. There, at the edge of the cluster of onlookers, stood the identical man, staring at his own likeness. There could be no mistake. She compared the creature and his portrait carefully; it was he without doubt. Her heart was beating quickly, but she never hesitated for one moment. He was here, within reach, and she must speak to him. The coachman had followed her progress slowly along the street, and had now drawn up at the curbstone. She gave no heed to the possibility of over-hearers, or to the curiosity of onlookers. She held out her hand, but he never saw, and she had to touch his arm to attract his attention. "Mr. Bokrie, I believe," she said. He touched his hat, as he had been instructed to do, and looked at her with cold indifference. He had been addressed by respectable young ladies before this, and had been solicited for his autograph.

"You do not know me—of course you cannot know me," she continued; "but I have heard of you, and have long wanted to speak to you. I am an African girl myself."

He looked in wonder at her features and straight

black hair. "I mean an English girl born in Africa. No, I am not altogether English, after all; I have some points in common with you. You are being ill-treated; you are going to the bad they tell me; I will try and save you. Here is my address on this card; take it, and if you are in any trouble in the future send for me, and I will do the best I can for you."

Bokrie stood stock still; his mouth was slightly open. He stared at her stupidly, but said nothing. In a moment more she was gone; the door of the carriage closed, the carriage disappeared. He looked at the card, read the name and address three times, and put the card carefully in his pocket.

One afternoon, a few days later, Gracebroke came to Behemoth Square in great good humor. "London will soon be deprived of one of its shining lights," he remarked, after greeting the ladies, and accepting a cup of tea from the hands of Vesper.

"What is amiss?" said Mrs. Fallowfett placidly. "Is it the Bishop of London, Sir Bathcourt Blizzard, or the Lord Chief Justice?"

"It is our friend Forest Bokrie, in whom we all take so deep an interest," replied Gracebroke carelessly, avoiding the eager glance of Christina. "I was driving along the Embankment this morning, and as I passed the Savoy there was a mob in the road and on the pavement, following a man who was

in charge of several policemen. His hat had been lost in the contest which had evidently preceded his arrest. I stopped the cab, and as far as I could gather from the spectators he had been dancing and singing in front of Cleopatra's Needle, and had met the suggestion to move on by promptly knocking down the constable. I am not quite sure whether I got the true story, for a crowd, however interested in an accident or an arrest, is seldom well informed; but the conclusion of the episode went on under my own eyes. Our friend Bokrie pulled up sharp at the point where I stopped. I expect the police were giving him more assistance in his walk to the station than he cared to accept. There was a sharp tussle, and as the whistles were blown, I knew that it would end in more constables and a stretcher. Before the arrival of the re-enforcement, Bokrie fastened upon one of the men and fairly worried him with his teeth and claws, as if he were, in fact, an animal fixed to his prey. It was with the greatest difficulty that he was got off, and the poor fellow—his victim—was terribly mangled and disfigured. I am sorry to describe such a disagreeable scene, but by my doing justice to it you will not have to waste any pity upon him when he gets the punishment which he deserves."

"Horrid wretch!" murmured Vesper, as she filled the cups, and accurately counted the pieces of sugar.

"Well, I had but one opinion of the frightful brute," said Mrs. Fallowfett. "I would not have seen him for any money."

Christina said nothing, but she crept away to her own room. On the table there was a note for her in an unknown hand. On opening the envelope, she found the card which she had given a week before in Regent Street; and on the back of it were scrawled the words:

"DEAR LADY: You said you would help me—come at once.

"Your respectful servant,

"FOREST BOKRIE."

Below, the name of a police station was given. The girl slipped the card into her pocket and stood for a few minutes deep in thought. The room was cozy, the fire was bright and danced upon the book shelves and the pretty furniture. It would be hard to give up these things, to offend her relations, perhaps to find herself alone in London with a tarnish on her name. She knew that her cousin Gregory had some control over her until she was one-and-twenty, and that he took charge of the money which her father had left for her. She opened her bag, and found that she had twenty pounds in notes, besides the gold in her purse. She put them into her pocket, sat down and wrote a few lines without a

signature: "Wait until to-morrow; I will be at the court and try to help you." She put on her hat, and even then, at the last moment, hesitated. But the thought of her mother came to her, and she compressed her lips and ran down the staircase. She entered a shop a few streets away, where she was not known, and borrowed the London Directory. In it she found the chambers of Sir Bathcourt Blizzard. Asking the shop people to engage a messenger, she left the note addressed to Bokrie to be sent on to the police station, and then told a cabman to take her as quickly as possible to the neighborhood of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Christina knew sufficient of England to be aware that she would not find a man of this eminent position at home in such a district of London, but she hoped to get some information from his clerks. She hardly realized what she wanted from him, but he had treated her with kindness when she talked to him at Behemoth Square, and she determined to make an appeal to him on the first instance. She was put down at a gateway, and picked her road across a paved yard, ill-lighted and deserted, feeling already sick at heart with her mission. She found the door on the first floor, and her knock was quickly answered by a youth who ushered her into a bare ante-room, and left her standing there for several minutes. A middle-aged man entered and looked at her in a sharp, impatient manner. He

had been disturbed at his work, and was irritated at this causeless interruption.

"See Sir Bathcourt? Certainly not. He does not receive visitors here, as you must know quite well; and besides, he would require you to state your business."

"I have not come to see him on my own affairs, but to ask his advice on behalf of somebody else."

"Ask his advice?" said the clerk aghast. "You can't call here in a casual way and ask for the advice of Sir Bathcourt Blizzard. You must first go to a solicitor and have a case stated. Then if we think fit to——"

"But I have no time for all that; is is a pressing case—to-morrow morning. The judge may do an injustice if it is not put properly to him."

"My good lady, you must be out of your mind to come at this hour. Go away; think it over, and consult your solicitor. Unless it is all a mistake," he added severely, "and you imagine that you can coax Sir Bathcourt to help you in a manner which is unseemly and not professional."

"Please don't be so hard upon me," pleaded the girl. "I know Sir Bathcourt Blizzard; I have met him at a friend's house. I am sure that he will see me."

The clerk looked at her again, and being reassured, asked her to step into the consulting room,

which was bright and comfortable. He gave her the evening paper, wrote a short note, and enclosed Christina's card with it. He thought it would be wise to shift the responsibility for declining an interview to the shoulders of his chief. He knew that Sir Bathcourt would be found at the club, and had received instructions to send on some papers there later in the evening. The messenger returned in half an hour and reported that his master would follow in the course of a few minutes. When he arrived he did not recognize Christina, and he scrutinized her with a sharper suspicion than even his subordinate had shown. But the innocent freedom with which she extended her hand disarmed the doubt respecting her. She reminded him of their previous meeting, and of his interest in her story of Africa. He recollected the incident, and was touched by the confidence in him which she showed by bringing to him her girlish trouble; for he rapidly concluded that it was a freak of some kind which had induced her to consult him. He listened with attention to the story of Bokrie, told from her own point of view, and then asked a few questions.

"You have only seen this man once, Miss Ruefold. Twice? Well, you have only spoken once to him. He may be a vulgar ruffian, quite unworthy of your sympathy, and I am inclined to say that this will prove to be his true character."

"I know he has acted like one," replied Christina; "but if all I believe is correct, he would not be responsible."

"Well, well!" exclaimed the lawyer, who was growing rather impatient, "that is a point you can never prove. I will give you the address of a firm of solicitors, who will do the best for your client, and my clerk shall go round in the morning and explain matters to them. They are decently good in criminal cases. That is all I can do for you, and I strongly advise you not to allow your own name to be mixed up in it. Your people do not know that you have come on this errand? I thought not. I will send for a cab and take you back to your cousin's house myself. That will make it all right, and save you from a severe scolding."

His smile encouraged her to speak out of her full heart. "May I trespass on your kindness a little further?" she said, looking earnestly at him.

"Of course; speak on."

"No one can save him, Sir Bathcourt Blizzard, but yourself. If you undertake the case, there would be hope. I am afraid I am asking too much," she added, observing his look of astonishment, "but you would have an interesting case to defend, and would be helping a defenseless stranger; you—oh, you—would be doing such a kind action for me."

The advocate considered his reply for a moment,

and then, with that impulse which had won many friends to his side, he gave way to the appeal. "It is most irregular. Really I am almost afraid to tell my clerk, Mr. Markholt. He will be sure to disapprove; but I must try to carry out your wish."

He struck his bell, and the clerk entered. "Markholt," he said, "I want you to go to Warksworth & Waster's the first thing to-morrow and get them to instruct me in this case," and he gave the particulars required. "I can't go to-morrow or the next day; tell them to ask for an adjournment, or to get a committal; don't let it be settled out of hand. They can see the magistrate and the prosecuting inspector of police privately, and they may mention my name. No, we don't ask for bail," he added. "It is easier to keep the fellow in prison than to look after him as a free man."

Sir Bathcourt Blizzard fulfilled his promise and took Christina home. Her conduct was condoned by the approval which had been thrown over it by so eminent an authority on the distinction between indiscretion and wrong doing.

So it came about that the newspapers cut out the report of a scientific meeting, and reduced a speech of the Bishop of Mercia to three lines, in order to devote three columns to a police case. The court was crammed; there were ladies on the bench. Mrs. Fallowfett obtained a seat for herself, but refused to

take Christina, as she was sure that a police court was not a proper place for a young girl. The reporters described the excitement in court when the prisoner was placed in the dock, and expressed surprise at his quietness, as they were hoping that he would require half a dozen policeman to hold him. An assault of an aggravated character was soon proved against him, and then Sir Bathcourt Blizzard rose to open the defense. He relied entirely upon the absence of moral control; the distinction between his client and other men. He described the discovery of Bokrie, the training he had received from missionaries, his importation into England, and his unwholesome and exciting life at the "Happy Valley." He gave the magistrate to understand that the friends of Bokrie would take better care of him in the future, and that ample compensation would be made to the poor fellow who had suffered from the ferocity of the prisoner. Bokrie stood still enough, with his heavy brow and protruding jaw expressing a depression of spirits which might be taken for penitence. The counsel concluded the defense by an earnest appeal to the magistrate to deal mercifully with the creature from a distant land, who was striving to rise into a true manhood, but in whom the moral sense was only just beginning to develop.

The reply delivered by the solicitor for the prosecution attacked the statement for the defense on the

ground that it said too much or too little. If Bokrie were a responsible man, he ought to answer to the law for his outrageous conduct. He contended that a mere fine would not be sufficient to restrain a man of so ungovernable a temper from further outbreaks. Bokrie was earning a large salary from his engagements, and the loss of a small sum of money would be nothing to him. On the other hand, if he were not to be held responsible for his actions he ought to be confined as a criminal lunatic. To leave him to the care of his friends would not be sufficient, as the man could not have any friends in England except those who were interested in his public exhibition, and with the loss of his liberty his value would cease immediately. At this point a communication was made to the magistrate, who stated that as a proper compensation had been offered to the complainant and accepted, he would on this occasion fine the defendant, but that this leniency would not be shown again. He warned the friends of the prisoner, therefore, to exercise the supervision which they had promised, as he could not undertake, in a court of summary jurisdiction, to draw those fine distinctions as to moral control which the learned counsel had urged upon him. Any foreigner, however distressed, who came before that court, with the usual number of limbs and human speech, would have to be treated as a man responsible for his actions.

VIII.

When you see a fellow man slipping down the precipice, twist a rope with the shreds of your own reputation for his rescue.

CHRISTINA stayed at home all the next day, for she felt the reaction from the excitement. She was not altogether surprised that a strange gentleman wished to see her, and that he would not give his name. It was in the forenoon, and her friends were out; at this unusual time she could see her visitor without fear of interruption. She would not lose the opportunity, so she dismissed the headache with the facility possessed by people of the nervous temperament, and descended to the drawing room. There she found Bokrie, as she expected, and he ran forward and took her hand, muttering a string of incoherent blessings upon her.

"Don't say any more, Mr. Bokrie, please," said Christina, disengaging her hand, "but sit down and tell me that you will promise to keep out of these scrapes for the future."

Bokrie looked at her steadily, and, having satisfied himself that there was not the anger in her face for which he had prepared himself, turned about to examine the room. He went from object to object,

taking up the ornaments, examining each one, and then passing from picture to picture, with now and again an exclamation of delight. Christina waited until he had finished the tour of the room, and then repeated in a coaxing tone, "Now, Mr. Bokrie, please to sit down." But something arrested his attention in the street, and he stood for a minute before the window; then the sound of a bird in the conservatory sent him striding to the other end of the room, where he passed out of sight amid the the palms. Christina was annoyed, and felt a dread rising that he might prove unmanageable; so she raised her voice and cried sharply, "Mr. Bokrie, I insist upon you behaving properly!"

The man appeared at once and stood irresolute at the doorway, with a trace of anger in his face. But that passed off, and, bending his head, he came forward deferentially and took the chair pointed out to him. Christina waited for him to speak, but as he remained silent she opened the conversation by asking "whether he realized the mischief he had been doing lately." Bokrie shook his head and gave a sly smile. "I can't call it bad, for it has brought me to see you."

"Seriously," said Christina, "you will give me a solemn promise to keep guard over yourself in future?"

"I will give you the promise willingly, and any-

thing else you ask me for, Miss Ruefold. But I shall not be able to rule myself, in spite of it, if a stronger power comes upon me."

"What do you mean?"

"I am really not like people about me; I am affected by the thing of the moment, and, if several things claim my attention, by the strongest influence of the lot. Even now you must look at me, you must talk to me, or my attention would drift away to a noise in the street or to the pattern of the rug. An obstacle in my way excites me to anger; a gentle tone soothes me; but if my passions get the mastery, they just burn out; I can't quench the flame. Your sharp command brought me out of the glass house, ready to resent it, but—oh, forgive me, Miss Ruefold!—when I looked upon you again, your face brought me to your feet like a faithful dog."

This avowal of admiration did not disturb Christina at all. She gazed across the gulf which separated her from him, perplexed at the problem he presented, and only desirous of using her growing influence for his own benefit. She reflected for a while, and then said, "Cannot you call to mind the trouble and disaster you have brought upon yourself when you are tempted to give way to your impulse to do wrong?"

"I can remember quickly enough," he replied; "but that does not restrain me in the least. That

piano lies open to your fingers; it will speak if you touch it—so do I. Bad men get the worst notes of my nature, but good people waken the gentleness I have in me. If you were always near to me you could do with me as you would; you should lead me with a thread of silk. I have been to church; yes, again and again. I love the organ; the sweet voices joined with the music. The good words of the preacher charm me. Yes, I will lead a better life. I feel good, but the music dies away, the congregation leave, the lights are put out, the place is dark and cold. It is all gone—all the goodness, with the lights and the music—and I am at the mercy of the noisy, staring world."

"But you think, Bokrie, surely?" persisted Christina, forgetting the courtesy of speech in her eagerness.

"Think! yes, a great many things. Take me away from that tiresome leaping and crawling in the theater; keep Bullock Sopp off, and the grinning fools in the audience, and the policeman, and I will work for you, Miss Ruefold, as your slave. I can show you secrets which, with all their cleverness, the people hereabout never discover—little signs and touches of nature in the sky and on land, and the meaning of the cries of animals one to another. I would walk behind you discreetly—far behind—when you went out in the streets, and no one should

dare to approach you rudely. I can eat coarse food, and would be very little expense. I could carry coals and do rough work in the house for my living. I am sure I should not disgrace you," he added, as he saw the color deepening in her cheeks. "Under your eyes I could live the good life."

"Mr. Bokrie, you know enough of England to see how impossible a plan you are proposing. I have no power to engage a servant for this house, and if I had, it would be a very poor way of lifting you up. I will introduce you to friends of mine. You have met Professor Racer, I think, and Mr. Gracebroke. Yes, and there is my uncle; I should like you to know him."

"I don't care for your friends; they may be pleasant and polite, but they overhaul me for a curiosity. If anyone can make a human being of me, you are the person to do it."

"I want to do more than that; I should like you to feel that in me you have a sister—one who understands how strange this life is to you, one who herself sometimes goes through the same experience."

"Do you worship a God, Miss Ruefold?" asked Bokrie, after a pause.

"I suppose I do," answered Christina. "Yes, of course," she continued, as her conventional opinion came home to her.

"Then I will worship God—your God—you understand. Yet, as you have been good to me, I will tell you a secret. Listen," and he lowered his voice and looked round, "there are no gods—not one. This world is full of spirits, which flicker in the dark, like marsh-flames—flicker and go out in the darkness. The clever white people keep superior gods, like their good furniture and other fine things. They don't like to die like common animals, and so they have invented a better world. We children of nature, we know our mother well. She keeps nothing back from us, and we are quite sure that there is no fresh life for us."

"This is dreadful, Bokrie, truly shocking. You must want to live again, to see your friends and comrades once more."

"I want to have the best time possible here, and then when I grow old I shall stretch myself peacefully on the brown earth with a heap of dried leaves for a pillow."

"Not yet, Mr. Bokrie, I hope, and meanwhile let me try and do something for you. I suppose it would be impossible to persuade Mrs. Fallowfett. If I could get you a card of invitation to a nice house, would you go?"

"No," answered Bokrie promptly. "I have tried that form of amusement, and I know just what it means. I should be stared at coldly at first,

and then, finding that no one cared to talk to me, I should slink into a corner and sulk for most of the evening. If I went to get any food the servants would be uncivil; they would give me a wrong hat and steal my umbrella."

"It was a shame to treat you like that," she said, amused and compassionate. "Never mind; if there is no one else to keep you in company, I will do it myself."

"Will you really, Miss Rueford?" he exclaimed; "then I will go wherever you wish me to go." Christina held out her hand for parting, and gave him a little smile. He bent low, kissed her finger-tips, and went away. The servants collected at the back of the hall and tittered as they watched his departure. The rumor of the identity of the early visitor with the advertised ape had spread through the house, and it was a relief to find that Miss Ruefold, who was already a popular member of the household, was safe and sound.

Christina, was determined to fulfill her promise at the first opportunity, and when, soon after this interview, she received a card from a certain learned lady to accompany her friends the Fallowfetts, she obtained, through Professor Racer, who was a literary friend of the hostess, a card for Bokrie also. During the first part of the evening the girl looked with sharpened attention as visitors arrived or left,

and yet his stooping figure never appeared. At last she gave him up and entered into more animated conversation with the people who came round her. Gracebroke, who had already paid proper court to Vesper, sat down beside Christina in order to escape for a few minutes from the propriety of the home country into the freer atmosphere of an untamed continent.

"I hope you are not annoyed about anything, Miss Ruefold? I tried to catch your attention an hour ago, but failed, although you were looking straight at me, and through me, I may say, at the dim forever beyond."

"I am sorry, I am sure, but I was looking for a friend to arrive."

Now Vincent Gracebroke could count the male friends of Christina upon the fingers of one hand without calling in the thumb. There were himself, Racer, Bokrie, and Sir Bathcourt Blizzard. He did not add her two married relations to the list. The first two were in the room at the time; the last never appeared in this lady's house.

"You don't mean to say that Bokrie is coming here to-night?"

Christina gave an affirmative look.

"Then I hope he will keep tidy. I will see the butler and tell him to keep the fellow off the champagne."

"You will do nothing of the kind," said Christina. "If he does come, I will not have him slighted; he comes at my suggestion."

"At any rate, you shall not be annoyed by a scene, if he makes one. I am here, fortunately, and will take you away before the fun begins."

"If there is any difficulty, I shall try to manage him myself," replied Christina. "I feel a responsibility to our hostess for bringing him here."

"She knows about him, of course, and takes the risk," said Gracebroke. "She delights in celebrities and notorieties. With your feeling for Bokrie, Miss Ruefold, it is strange to me that you should be willing to let him come here. Society does not object to a good row, but it must take place at a distance, out of doors, or after cards and supper at the club. You may take your brother's life, for all it cares, if you carry your pistols and seconds across to a Belgian paddock. Now the worst about Bokrie is that you never know when he is going off. He is like a musical box with fixed tunes. If you touch the wrong key by accident, he will start a war march you don't want, and play it through to the last bar."

"You all treat him as if he were a wild beast, and he acts like one, occasionally, to satisfy you. Treat him with kindness, not with a pat of the hand you would give to a dog, but with the sympathy of a man, and you will soon see a change in him."

"You are indeed eloquent about your ward; but really, is it worth the trouble, Miss Ruefold? If you succeed in your scheme of salvation you will have destroyed the poor man's individuality, and he will prove of no further use to the showmen. He can't have much money; I know that he has several good engagements in view. Would it not be better to allow him to work these out, and, when he has ceased to draw, put him through the moral mill and turn him into a limp saint?"

"I am afraid you do not believe in moral reform of any kind," retorted Christina.

"To say the truth," he answered, "I have little faith in it myself. One world at a time for me; and if a man is fool enough to throw away his chance here and go to the bad, he will not get the good back by psalm singing."

"Did you not have a mother who cared for you when you were small and helpless, Mr. Gracebroke?"

"Well, yes; I had a mother, of course. You make a point there; mothers do care for their little brats. So do animals for their cubs. It is nature, I suppose; and the mothers get some pleasure from the trouble and self-denial."

"Or else they would leave their young to die," put in Christina sarcastically.

"We all act from the same motive, Miss Rue-

fold. I am staying here because it is pleasant for me to put up sand castles for you to pelt at. You endure my company for the joy it gives you to show me up as a hard, unfeeling wretch. That so-called poet over there in the front room is reciting a poem that he has composed, to his own intense satisfaction, although not another person in the house cares twopence about it, and we, in the back apartment, have not caught a single line. Those who fail in society, or in their love affairs, take up religion as a profession because it affords a solace to their wounded vanity. Where can you find throughout the whole world any other motive than self-love? We are not governed by the Christianity we talk about, but by political economy, which is selfishness in its simplest form."

"You don't act upon your own doctrine, Mr. Gracebroke; you are always taking pains to please other people—to please me, for instance."

"To please you—yes; but that is to please myself," he answered quickly.

"Do you not believe in self-sacrifice in any sense?" she asked.

"Not a bit. I hope you are not too shocked."

"Not shocked; only a little sad. It seems to me that while I am trying to lift Bokrie higher, you are descending as fast as he is ascending, and that presently you will pass each other on the track. Forgive

me for preaching to you; I hope you are not angry with me."

"Not in the least, Miss Rueford; in truth, I am very satisfied with your lecture. If I could only persuade you that I stand far more in need of your favor than does that drunken ruffian, I should have scored to-night. Believe me, I want your hand to keep me from slipping further down the slope."

There was no time for Christina to ponder over this speech, for there was a name shouted by the servant at the door which she failed to catch, but the interruption made her alert. There was a hum in the room, and people were gathered about the door, so that until she stood up she could not see the new arrival. There, at the entrance, stood the stranger, looking in every direction, but failing to see Christina. She saw the dejection creep over his face, the droop of his shoulders, the helplessness of his attitude. She dared not make a sign, but hoped he would see her at last. He did not, and began to retreat, unnoticed by the busy groups, who had scarcely heard his name, and had not recognized him. As she watched, he backed further out, and was lost to sight. She yielded to the impulse and, without a moment for consideration, made her way through the crowd and followed him. He was not on the landing, nor on the upper staircase; but looking down, she saw that he had almost reached

the hall below. She ran and was by his side before he could turn into the cloak room.

"Mr. Bokrie, you have come to stay." He shook his head. "Indeed you have," she persisted; "you have come here to see me." With that remark she slipped her hand into his arm and gently drew him toward the stairs. He looked at her, then tightened his arm, and they went up together. There was a block at the door as before, but she made way for him and they entered the room. She was seeking the hostess, and, in the search for her, had to traverse the whole extent of the room twice, as they had overlooked her at the first round. Christina knew that they were the object of all eyes, and the conversation suddenly dropped. The groups did not break up, but she felt that a space was left about them wherever they stood, and she was sure that heads were inclined at the proper angle, and that glasses went up to the eyes. A few words from the hostess, who quickly left them, and Christina found herself alone with Bokrie in the midst of the crowd. No one came to them, and she dared not introduce him for fear of a rebuff. The chill of the world's disapproval struck in, and the reaction from her act of heroism had begun to depress her. She could not talk to Bokrie with any freedom, and she thought the position must be growing intolerable to him.

"There is not much to be seen or done here; it was very good of you to come, but I think that it might be better for you to go away. Take me to the door and leave me there," said Christina.

"Are you leaving, too?" he asked.

"Soon; in a few minutes," she replied, feeling quite wretched, and wondering how she would explain the incident to Mrs. Fallowfett.

"Then I don't care to stay a moment longer, but the short visit has been a pleasant one." She looked up at him when he parted from her and saw that his face was bright, and his head lifted higher than usual.

"Beauty and the Beast; quite a fairy tale," said a woman's voice on the left hand; and on the right someone said to her, "Let me take you back to your friends, Miss Ruefold." It was Gracebrook who was waiting for her, with the ghost of a smile. "It was hardly a success, was it?" he whispered to her, as they went along. She did not answer, and he added in a confidential tone, "I will stand by you, Miss Ruefold. I am afraid you will find Mrs. Fallowfett and Vesper a little rough on you." The ladies rose as soon as Christina reached them, and they all went for their wraps. During the drive home Christina was left entirely out of the conversation. She found her own room; the friendly door between the two girls was closed. Mrs.

Fallowfett went into her husband's smoking room and told him that "the farce must come to an end." He was astonished at the outburst, and was inclined to make light of the charge against the girl, until Vesper came in with flushed cheeks and tears in her eyes to support her mother's argument. He looked grave when he found that Christina had arranged for Bokrie to be there, and that her championship was not an indiscretion of the moment.

"I see we can't keep Christina; I am sorry," said Gregory Fallowfett.

"I will never have her with me in society again, never," said Mrs. Fallowfett firmly. "Anything that is reasonable, Gregory, I will do to please you, but I draw the line at bridling untamed girls."

Christina read her sentence in the cold looks of the ladies on the following morning. They never spoke to her, and left her alone after breakfast. Her cousin came into the room with a telegram in his hand. "Here, Christina, your uncle will take you at once, and I think you had better go to him for a time."

Christina choked a little and said a word of gratitude to her cousin. The maid packed her boxes, and the cab carried her eastward without a farewell.

IX.

Tired of the puppet-show of man,
We seek the immortals' side;
But who may learn their pace, or can
Keep measure with their stride?

MARCUS RUEFOLD sat in his study and tried to compose himself to his work; but his thoughts would revert continually to the telegram which he had received, and he picked it out of the waste basket and flattened the crumpled pink paper to read again the announcement of Christina's coming. The girl was his niece, and an orphan; her natural place was with him; the addition to his household would be a help to the family treasury. He had seen and admired her, yet he received her with an amount of misgiving. She was a girl who required a breadth and variety in life which he feared could not be found in his home. He had secretly resented the choice which his brother had made; but now that the experiment had broken down, he almost shrank from the responsibility which had proved too much for others. He felt that his dead brother's judgment was probably a truer one than his own, and that if Christina could not accept a position

which carried with it so many advantages, still less would she find in the straitened circumstances of a poor pastor's life the career proper to herself.

He was not much given to day-dreams. The speculative element in his mind he held in check by an elaborate devotion to his duty. If he suspected it of an attempt to capture his attention, he would invent fresh claims upon his time, or would enlarge the area of his common work. To-day, however, the introduction of this new member into his household had produced the effect of a crisis. The diorama of life unwound itself before his eyes, and he could take it in as a single picture. He had been haunted of late by the idea that he was getting deep into middle life without setting his hand to any distinct work. The respectable tradesmen formed the backbone of his church; their families constituted the church meetings, and were ever ready to respond to a call either to prayer or to social teas. He believed that he made small impressions upon them because they so readily answered to every appeal, and followed the track of religious observance with an unfaltering fidelity. In this opinion he probably treated them with scant justice, as they were trained by habit and association to a conventional expression of their feelings; but he lingered with more appreciation over the souls which he had snatched, like half-charred brands, from the fire, and

on others who had shaken out the inborn devil with a convulsive struggle.

Like his brother, in a similar review of the past, he recalled his earlier days—the course of training at the theological college, the village church, and then the removal to London. He remembered the hope with which he entered upon his new task, the sermons yet unuttered with which he meant to arouse the East to a sense of its privileges in the society of Christ, and the echoes which must wake the West to its duty to its neighbors. His fresh energies had failed to make that impression which he had whispered to himself, and the work and disappointment had lowered the personal standard. No longer could he hope to found a movement, or to build a tabernacle to hold the listening crowds who would throng to hear him; it was sufficient for him to help a few weary feet along the black road. Yes, he remembered the narrow limits of his lot, the determining effect of mere wealth upon enterprise and conduct. With only one half of the means at the disposal of his cousin, Gregory Fallowfett, he would turn the neighborhood upside down. The straitness of his position was beyond his wit to remedy, and he bowed his head before that Power which had set bounds to his ambition. For the spiritual world was an everyday reality to him. His daily task was to make men and women ready to

cast off their mooring to this world. He had stood on the quay again and again, and pressed their hands in a last farewell. The salt breeze blew from the sea of darkness in no unkind gusts against his face. The fight for decency, the turmoil and swirl of the existence of a population living on the edge of pauperism, had convinced him that for them the present could only be a rough school for the hereafter. When his mind was overcharged he would take refuge in consistent hard work. For the worry of speculative thought there is positive repose in the activity of doing good. In pursuit of these thoughts Marcus had forgotten to tell his wife of the immediate arrival of Christina, and when his daughter Zephyr ran into the room with the news of their unexpected visitor, he suddenly remembered the omission.

"Tell your mother that Christina has come to stay a long time with us," he said; but before the message could be delivered Mrs. Ruefold had brought the girl into the room. They all listened attentively to her story—not told without tears—and then Mrs. Ruefold broke the silence. "I am sorry for you, my dear; you meant well, and you have been treated harshly by your friends; but Mrs. Fallowfett was right—she was, indeed. You ought not to have taken the step you did, and in public, too. Women cannot be to careful of their good name."

Zephyr had set a warm, sympathizing cheek against the face of the friend she desired to comfort.

"Where is this Bokrie now?" asked Marcus.

"Going to the bad, I suppose," she replied with some bitterness. "Everyone is hunting him down; and now they have driven me away, so that I cannot give him any help."

Marcus, who had a natural sympathy with a lost cause, put in the remark: "Never mind, Christina, you may have helped him more than you now know. It is this way with my sermons. I think that I have failed altogether in some—I have really done so from the literary point—but the simplicity of my failures has frequently done more good than my polished successes."

"I am afraid I have really failed, Uncle Marcus," said Christina. "He wants to please me, poor fellow, and that is the only success I have got."

"You have done something if you have taught him manners in order to please you," said Mrs. Ruefold kindly, as she retreated to her household work.

"That is the only lifting power in this world, I truly believe," said Marcus. "It is the power of a person, not of a principle, which saves us struggling mortals."

Christina found plenty to do in that loosely defined area which her uncle called his parish. She

was impressed by the patient work which the pastor gave from week to week. There was no applause to encourage him. The deacons accepted his efforts with only a stolid satisfaction. Christina saw that like other men he was often jaded and depressed after a spell of hard work, and she counted the cost at which he maintained the ideal of the Christian life, both in the church and at home. The flaring Christmas came and passed. The season was mild and damp; the pavements were sticky with mud. The naked lights in the shops roared in the wind and turned blue in gasping. Overhead the bells made a riot, and in and out of the coarsely decked shops and glaring taverns the shouting, whistling crowds kept up a violent idea of seasonable enjoyment. It was not to Christina either the Christmas of the poets or of Dickens. She recalled the gathering at the mission station, the make believe of mince pies and of mistletoe; the countless stories of Christmas in the old country from the members of the party; the crowned pudding brought to the board like a fetish, before a crowd of awed natives, by the black cook, who did not think her salvation secured until she had learned the mysteries of its concoction. It was not the Christmas of Africa, but a noisy pretense that she would rather have seen from a distance.

One Sunday, early in the year, Marcus had looked

through his congregation, as it was his custom during the hymn before the sermon, and after counting the regular attendants, and glancing at the poor in the aisles at the side, he observed a stranger at the back, under the shadow of the gallery. The thought passed through the mind of the preacher that here might be the representative of some fine suburban church who had heard of Marcus Ruefold and had come to listen to him. Although Marcus was not prepared to hearken to the voice of the charmer, the temptation would be an agreeable seduction. It was a disappointment to find that the best passages seemed little to impress the strange hearer as he put up his eye-glass and stared at the people. It puzzled Marcus still more when this dandified young man asked the senior deacon in a superior tone the way to the vestry, and was waiting there for the minister on his descent from the pulpit.

"I have long wanted to hear you preach, Mr. Ruefold," he began. "Your niece told me about your good work, and I determined to see for myself."

"My niece?"

"Yes, Miss Christina Ruefold. I met her at the Fallowfetts' house, you understand. It is a great relief to join in a simple free service, after the music and the mob that you meet at a fashionable church.

There is reality here; but at the other place it is only a church parade."

"It is kind of you to say all this," replied Marcus, a little touched by the praise, but rather bewildered, "though I scarcely deserve it."

"The other form is so insincere that it sickens us young men, and we give the whole thing up. You hear a man sing-song the prayers and lessons and deliver a pastoral address. That same fellow has sat deep into the night, with you, talking Shakspere and stodgy philosophy. He was your neighbor at the 'Varsity'; a man of your year, whose opinions you know as well as your own, and whose vices, large or small, are no secret. There he is, however, put up to kill an hour or so of valuable time on Sunday."

"You are rather hard upon the young curates," said Marcus. "Everyone must make a start, and youth is not a crime."

"Well, I thank you for your address," added Gracebroke, "and I shall not forget it in a hurry. Here is my card; perhaps on some other occasion we may discuss the matter more fully. You must be tired just now; good-night."

Marcus walked innocently into the trap and gave his admirer an invitation promptly. "You will come and see us? Not this week? then next. I am disengaged on Friday evening; my niece will be glad

to see a friend like yourself. We live very quietly here."

Marcus walked home much pleased with himself and his visitor; but when he told the story at the evening meal, he found that he had made a mistake.

"That is the Mr. Gracebroke who is engaged to Vesper Fallowfett," remarked Christina. "I am glad that he liked your sermon, uncle."

"Why did he not call upon you without taking this roundabout way of getting asked?" inquired Mrs. Ruefold, and then she saw the color in the girl's face and divined the secret.

When they were alone Marcus threw his sermon into the drawer which contained the other past masterpieces, and settled himself for his single Sunday pipe.

"He seemed a most intelligent young man, in spite of his careful dress," he remarked with satisfaction. "I shall really be pleased to see him here. I may do him good; he is thoroughly tired of a priestly religion."

"My dear Marcus, have you not eyes to see?" demanded his wife. "He has not come for your sermons, but to follow Christina."

"Then why cannot he call in the ordinary way?"

"Because it would be an awkward thing for him to do without an invitation. Now he has his an-

swer for the Fallowfetts; you have helped him out of the difficulty."

"How did you find out all this?" asked her husband.

"By watching Christina when you were giving your account of the talk with the man."

"So that there is nothing in his congratulations after all," he said ruefully; and he turned to his pipe with a sense of injury seasoned by the humor of the situation.

On the following Sunday—a wet and stormy day—the galleries of the church were deserted, but there was one singular figure which had taken up a lonely position facing the pulpit. Marcus saw that this was not an ordinary wayfarer, who might have taken refuge from the storm on passing the chapel, and who listened to the sermon as an act of thanksgiving for a dry seat. He was a lean and hungry man, with restless eyes, and above the middle height. He was dressed well, so that his famished look was not due to starvation, but to some mental or moral famine. He leaned his elbows on the book shelf and bent forward, with a shifting gaze. Just below him was the clock, which preached the shortness of time in the intervals of silence. The man appeared to Marcus like an evil spirit waiting for the conclusion of his appeals to repentance that he might claim his prey on the stroke of the hour, when the day of

grace had run out. To address evil in person was a new experience to the preacher, but it added zest to the argument and pointed the appeals. Marcus mentioned the fact of this apparition to the family, and at evening worship Christina took occasion to turn round, and there, to her alarm, sat Bokrie above the clock. Of course, Marcus had heard of Bokrie, and the silence of Christina had given him a clew to the identity of his latest visitor. In the evening, therefore, the power of evil was no longer idealized in the form in front of him, but it was the natural man, waiting for the redemption of the body. He took for his subject the groaning and travailing together of all created things, and the low thunderous roll of the vehicles beyond the doors seemed to add a melancholy emphasis to his words. Bokrie always brightened with the hymns, and rose and beat time with his book, though it was manifestly held upside down.

At the conclusion of the service, Marcus quite expected another visit to the vestry, and arming himself with such stray facts of physiology as he could call to mind, prepared to receive the African stranger. But nobody came, and he found that he had slipped off his gown in a hurry and repelled his other friends to no purpose. Just before he entered his own house, he observed on the opposite side of the way a tall man, beneath a gas lamp, who was

regarding the windows of the house with much attention. He concluded that this must be Bokrie, and, crossing the road, he asked the man, somewhat roughly, whether he wanted anything.

The stranger recognized him, and said, "Oh, sir, if you are the relation of Miss Ruefold, tell me how she is. I have not seen her for several weeks; they told me that she had gone away from her other home, and that I should never see her any more. Her face has been with me in my dreams; her voice has been ringing in my ears all day long. I owe everything to her, and I must see her again."

"I cannot promise that Miss Ruefold will see you," replied Marcus. "She has come here for rest and change. You had better leave her undisturbed. Give me your address, and if she wishes to see you I will write."

Bokrie's face grew dark, and he fumbled in his pocket for a card. "I don't think I need write it down; you will be sure to know it," he said, and he named a terrace of small houses close at hand. "I have taken a lodging there; I shall stay as long as she remains with you, but I will not disturb her for one moment. Let me come to your church and sit in the middle of the big gallery. I can see everyone in the building, and when she enters, the church becomes sacred, and all that goes on is good."

"How do you get your living?" inquired Mar-

cus, descending to prose, as the rain was still falling, and the conference was conducted in the shining wet street.

"I have got out of my engagement at the 'Happy Valley,' and am giving a performance at the 'Cat and Monkey' every night, and twice on Saturday. I am making less money—all for the sake of Miss Ruefold. Tell her that," he continued, —"many pounds a week less, and all for her sake. Bullock Sopp says I must be out of my mind, but that is not so; I am only just finding it."

"I am sorry enough for you," replied Marcus, "but as I have just said, I can't answer for my niece. We must get out of this rain. If you want to say anything more to me you had better follow me into the house."

Bokrie stood humbly in the passage while Marcus sought for his wife and niece. At first Christina said she would not see him, and Marcus took him into the study and gave him her message, at the same time promising to help him as far as possible. The man did not offer to go, and his brow grew sullen and lowering. Marcus went to his niece again. "A word may suffice to quiet him," he said; "the poor creature is deeply grieved at your absence."

Bokrie's eyes were turned expectantly to the door, but when she entered, he stood before her

with downcast head and folded hands, like a penitent school lad. "I am told that it is through my fault you have had to leave Behemoth Square and to live in this ugly part of the town," he began. "You have been so good to me; you alone understand me; don't give me up. Say a word to me sometimes, and I won't be a nuisance to you—I promise."

"You must not stay now," said Christina; "come again; come——"

"To-morrow?" he put in eagerly.

"No, not so soon; well, on Friday; good-night."

He retreated, looking sadly at her until the last.

"My dear Christina," began Mrs. Rueford, a little ruffled at the disturbance in her household arrangements, "I hope that we are not to have a fresh admirer every Sunday."

"You won't marry that ugly Mr. Bokrie, Christina, promise me that," pleaded Zephyr. "Mr. Gracebroke is ever so much better-looking and——"

"Be quiet, child; there is no love or marriage in the case," said Marcus sharply.

"No, no; there is something better for me," replied Christina proudly, with a warm glow in her face.

"Girls ought to marry, my dear," said Mrs. Ruefold; "it is natural and Protestant. I hope those sisters at St. Gabriel's have not been putting wrong

ideas into your head; I only spoke playfully just now."

"Not at all, Mrs. Ruefold; but I have foreseen my vocation for some while. Zephyr will marry when she is a grown-up girl, but not I."

"And why not?" demanded her uncle.

"I have to seek my mother's kinsfolk far away in Africa; to help them presently to do—I know not what!" exclaimed Christina, and broke off the sentence impetuously.

"I may die first, and go to heaven," put in Zephyr, deep in a plate of blanc-mange.

"Enough of this for one night," said Marcus. "Now I want to tell you that I am pleased to have met Forest Bokrie, and that I mean to make a study of him for my coming sermon on evolution."

"What sermon, Marcus?" asked his wife, looking up in alarm. "Use your tongue as much as you like, here at home. In public, in the church, it is different. People cannot blame you for your private opinions; but if you tear up the Bible in the pulpit, it will be all over the place."

"I should be sorry to act impulsively, but I have given careful thought to the subject; the fire burns, and I ought to speak out."

"I don't see that you need do anything of the kind, Marcus," replied his wife. "If you want to

whip up the evening congregation, you might circulate bills for a series of interesting social subjects as Mr. Sackman does at Providence Chapel; or have the 'Lost Chord' on a cornet, as they do at the Bulfinch Road Tabernacle."

"Jane, Jane, cannot you understand me after all these years? Do you know that the message pursues me from house to house and waits for me at the corners of the streets? If you were stalked by a ghost like that, you would be glad enough to get rid of it by writing down, or speaking out, the word that has seized upon you."

"I would rather take a blue pill and a black draught than upset my church and distress my friends," said his wife. "You can't be well if you feel like that."

"The spiritual cannot be got rid of by drugs," he replied.

"But the deacons may, by heterodox doctrine," she retorted. "Mr. Pompas Read is not the man to stay if he thinks the simple Word is tampered with."

"An excellent man, but a painfully narrow one. Since he retired from his shop, his one object in life is to distinguish between the real butter of doctrine and margarine."

"Yet he takes six sittings," commented Mrs. Ruefold. "And how about Mr. Bannockburn Breeks?"

"An honest Scotsman who considers Calvinism a Scotch institution, and would defend it as he would his native land."

"Then there is Mr. Perkins Rust?"

"He is more likely to go to sleep than to take notes of my sermon."

"You will never get a call to a new church, Marcus," said his wife sadly. "You can speak racily, and draw applause; so that they will ask you on to the platform, but keep you out of the pulpit. You clever men are like the noisy, sparkling girls who are popular for an evening, but no one wants them for life."

"That is too bad, is it not, Zephyr, to liken your staid old father to the hoydens and tomboys? I must take my chance and face these terrible risks."

"I wish we could get away from it all," said Christina, with a sigh of unrest. "You would like Africa; you can think broadly there. Nature is so wide, and nobody cares."

"You are tired of this big London show already?"

"Tired! yes, indeed. I can't do any good here; I am only a burden to my friends."

It was true that the girl felt thwarted and overborne. Here was Bokrie on her hands, helpless without her, as he pleaded, and yet as awkward a follower as a tame elephant would be. She had discovered—unfortunately, too late—that she had permitted Bokrie to pay his visit upon the same day

which had been assigned by her uncle to Gracebroke. Gracebroke came quite early, under a vague impression that he was expected to arrive in time for afternoon tea. That was a movable feast in the house of the Ruefolds. Tea was a beverage produced at the shortest notice, and was given by Mrs. Ruefold indiscriminately to chance visitors—mostly of the poorer sort—to weeping women who came for comfort, and to penitent sinners as a cup of rejoicing.

Gracebroke was hardly at ease; the road had been long, the cabman exorbitant, the surroundings unfamiliar and uncongenial. His conscience continued to pester him with irritating warnings as to his duty to Vesper Fallowfett, and he did not relish the calls of that debt collector. The long ride had given him time for reflection, and the effort did not seem to be rewarded by an adequate return. Christina was quiet and repressed; she did not at all respond to his remarks, and the conversation threatened to flag. Looking at her in this new scene, she seemed to him a different person. The vivacity had given way to a discreet sobriety; her eyes wanted luster; her dress had taken on the tone of the place, and had grown somber and puritanic. It was hardly worth while to have come this distance to drink a cup of questionable tea and to discourse upon the weather and kindred topics. At last, in despair, he said:

"I suppose, Miss Ruefold, as you have given up your cousins and all other friends in the West, you have thrown over that poor beggar, Forest Bokrie, as well? You may care to know that he has disappeared from our part of the town. His familiar name is no longer seen in the advertisements of 'The Happy Valley,' and they have put a capital novelty in his place. It is a troupe of juvenile Japanese acrobats, the oddest little imps that ever you saw. You ought to go there; it is quite an entertainment for women and children. Really it would remove the disagreeable impression you must have received from seeing that half-beast exhibit himself. Would you like to go with your little cousin Zephyr? I should be pleased to take charge of you both."

"Do you know where Bokrie is at present?" she asked.

"No; at some small music hall in South or East, I suppose. Perhaps they have carted him off to the provinces."

Christina knew that he might arrive at any moment, so she said, quite simply, "I thought you knew that he was engaged in this part of London; you followed his movements so closely before. He discovered my uncle's chapel just as you did, and appeared there last Sunday. I am beginning to think we shall do nothing with him in England, and that the best plan would be to get him to return to Africa."

"I don't think that he will come to much good, either in Europe or Africa. Perhaps the best thing would be to send him back. He would probably marry a Kaffir Venus, settle down into a respectable cattle-lifter, and get shot by the Boers. I will give ten pounds toward his passage money. Let me look out a steamer for him to save you from further annoyance."

"Remember me kindly to Vesper, Mr. Gracebroke."

"That means that I am to take a formal dismissal. I must ask permission to make another call—at least upon Mr. Marcus Ruefold. I promised to discuss the sermon. Alas! I have forgotten the text."

He left, rather uncertain and bewildered about his own feelings, determined not to be curtly dismissed, and yet with a sense that the present meeting ought not to be prolonged. After going out he came face to face with Bokrie, who had just put his hand to the bell.

"Ah! you have come, have you?" Gracebroke exclaimed. "Spare me a couple of minutes, Mr. Bokrie, before you go in. I want to give you a word of advice; you know I have always been your friend." Bokrie suffered himself to be detached from the door and drawn along the street.

"You are doing serious harm to Miss Ruefold by coming here," Gracebroke began.

"How do you know that?" asked Bokrie stoutly.

"You have driven Miss Ruefold from her comfortable home in the West End. You saw the house for yourself—every luxury, many servants, plenty of amusement—and you see her in this dirty hole, roughly lodged, and having to wait upon herself. Now, if you follow her about and come to the house she will be forced to leave this place also. It is a home of a kind; but her uncle is a clergyman, and you will injure his character if you persist. Then the poor girl will have to leave again and hide herself somewhere else."

"She did not say that she was hiding from me," urged Bokrie.

"She did not want to see you, and only came down because you would not leave the house," retorted Gracebroke, making a guess at the truth.

"You have just seen her; then why not I?" exclaimed Bokrie, thoroughly roused.

Gracebroke laughed. "Yes, I indeed, but you are not quite the same as we Englishmen, you know."

"But she cares for me, too."

Gracebroke laughed again with good-tempered complacency. "Not quite to the degree; not quite in the same way."

"I don't understand, I don't see it. She would never have fetched you back from the hall, have

walked through that crowded room with you," persisted Bokrie.

"My dear man—for you are a man, in spite of all the showmen's fictions—listen to me. You are not a fool; can't you see that she cares for you in quite a different manner, as she might for a favorite dog or horse?"

"If she considers me a man, she looks on me as she does on you."

"As a possible husband, for instance?" answered Gracebroke.

"A husband; no, no! She is far too good for either of us," said Bokrie quickly.

Gracebroke was stung by the comparison between himself and this lower creature. "Of course, you will have as good a chance as I should have; try your luck. It is your one opportunity of getting the privilege you want. Unless she entertains your offer she will never let you live near to her."

"No, Mr. Gracebroke, you don't know what you are saying. I could never—never; she is beyond me, like the sun, the stars."

"Very well," replied Gracebroke roughly; "if she is so far above you, keep out of her way. If she is a star, a sun, don't let your great big body block the light for other people. If she treats you so well, go on, tell your story, take your answer, and have done with it."

He went away, leaving Bokrie on the pavement, mazed and wondering. The creature marched up and down the street for the next twenty minutes, in a confusion of thought which prevented him from renewing his summons to be admitted. At last the curious observation of a policeman recalled him to the necessity of going in. There was even then some loss of time in getting admission, for the young servant had caught some rumor about him, and refused to go to the door unattended. Bokrie had to wait, chilled and miserable, in the little drawing room, until Christina appeared.

"What had he to tell her?" The whole mental power of the man seemed to crowd to a point of expression for which he could not find words. He worshiped her, but he was dumb. The opportunity granted to the ancients of falling before a beautiful image was denied to him. He could not go down upon the faded Brussels carpet or prostrate himself upon the weak little chair before her. He would bring down the china figures upon the corner shelf and rouse the house with the vibration.

"Really, Mr. Bokrie, if you are not prepared to speak, I cannot be of service to you. Perhaps you are tired also, and out of sorts. Come another time; now good-evening."

She held out her hand, but he did not take it. As she moved toward the door he found words.

"Listen, Miss Ruefold, don't dismiss me like this. They say that I must not follow you about; I must not come here unless you listen to me as a lover. I dare not utter a word of love to you; but if you will suffer me to be called by that name, I will never lift my eyes higher. It is enough for me to breathe the same air that you do."

Moved by the force of his appeal, he took a step toward her. The horror and disgust which showed itself in her countenance drove him back. He covered his face to hide the look from himself, and she escaped from the room. Mrs. Ruefold came up, hearing the quick steps of Christina, but Bokrie had gone.

The shadow of the impending sermon on evolution covered the rest of the week. To Christina it was of absorbing interest, as she knew that a human being stood for the text. Mrs. Ruefold also listened with close attention, and as each point of novel character was advanced, she struck off a regular attendant against it. Marcus could see for himself the effect on his audience, and it was with as much disappointment as surprise that he observed the slight ruffling of the placid surface of the pews. He described the ascent of man to a fairly attentive audience; but Bannockburn Breeks had dropped off to sleep before man had awaked to a spirit life, and Pompas Read lost himself in the intricacies of mind

and matter, and contented himself with looking wise. Mrs. Ruefold, immersed in her own foregone conclusions, sat through the sermon in an atmosphere of distrust, and went home wretched. Something must happen in the week, she was confident, and it was quite a relief for her to hear the cars running regularly on Monday morning. But the only remark that ever reached her ears was a chance statement of Mr. Breeks to a customer: "Minister seemed extra eloquent last night."

In the middle of the week two letters lay upon the minister's plate at breakfast. One announced the death of a distant relation, who had left Marcus a legacy of five thousand pounds. The other was from the secretary of the Excelsior Religion Society, asking whether a mission could be conducted in the chapel for three months.

"They shall have it for three years if they like!" cried Marcus Ruefold, throwing the two letters across to his wife. "It may run to a few hundreds more, the solicitor writes," Marcus put in. "We will spend the spare hundreds at least upon our African experiment."

Christina danced with Zephyr round the room, and both girls went to look at the shop window of a dyer and cleaner, where there were three ostrich feathers under a glass case. It was the only sign of Africa in the neighborhood.

X.

He who is too slothful to clear away the sand about the Sphinx cannot hope to discover her secret.

ZEPHYR was disappointed with her early experience of Africa. In the secret of her heart she had expected to be received by hostile savages on the beach, like Julius Cæsar and Captain Cook. She knew that there were white settlements, but she imagined that missionaries would be set down upon an inhospitable coast, and only succeed in passing the guard of dangerous natives and penetrating to the interior after a free use of hymns and exhortation. Instead of this dramatic cleavage of the difficulty, they landed in small boats and had to satisfy the custom house. Then there was a long railway journey from the port of entry to a bright little town with plenty of foliage, which gave shelter from the copper glare of the African noon-day. And then, oh then! the picturesque and jolting ox-wagon, with its line of cattle as long as an express train; the black servants, the whips, the creaking and groaning. How delightful to outspan in the heat of mid-day, and then to travel under the light of stars and moon! There were no lions to wake

the night into a delicious romance, and very little four-footed game; for the hunters had swept the country, and had gone much farther afield. Convoys of mining materials passed them; horsemen, natives on foot, and wagons streamed along the great route from the coast to the interior. It was the South Africa of progress, of Boers, Scotsmen, and English companies. The small settlements of corrugated iron buildings rang with talk of diamonds and reeked with whisky.

As they traveled northward, the population was more scanty; the country half a desert, with dusty gray-green foliage. There were clumps of verdure by the water courses, but the spring rains were now over and the streams were running thin. Here and there patches of dried salt glittered with a ghastly remembrance of the lake which had finally evaporated.

From this tableland rose flat-topped hills like the seats of the prehistoric gods, but in reality marking the level of the old plain in a past geological age. This was not the Africa which Christina had known; the mighty river rolling along its hundreds of miles between the matted banks of a vast forest land. The handful of white people, the overwhelming crowd of the black races, the spawning wealth of life, were very different to the sparseness, the silence of this gray and brown country. Here the white

and half-breed peoples took the lead, and the native races roamed about the great stretches of country by stealth, as if they occupied it on sufferance. All day the sun poured down upon the dry soil, but after sunset the heat surrendered to a sudden and grateful coolness.

Their destination was a trading station and mission settlement in the wilderness. Marcus had to learn something of the languages and to make his final preparations for that push to the north which would carry him into the heart of Africa. He shrank at first from the change. The glare of the intense day blinded him after the dun-colored life of muddy England. His thoughts could not adjust themselves to the clear atmosphere of this ancient continent. Right and wrong appeared as sharply defined as the day and the night. There were no neutral tints, no shading to soften the boundaries of morality. The hybrids in religion flourished as little as the miserable half-breeds, cast off by both the black and the white. You were either a trader, given to cocktails and big "damns," without a clean shirt or a hymn book, or a regular church-goer, on speaking terms with the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed, a friend of every missionary in the place, and welcomed to afternoon tea in the bishop's garden. Either your black man was a nigger who could swallow diamonds, steal a horse, and make

prayer to a diabolical carved club, or he showed the whites of his eyes at a prayer meeting and groomed the cattle of the mission house. The well conducted skeptic is a product of the higher civilization of Europe. In Africa, if you do not accept the doctrine, you may do as you like otherwise, and take over the full value of unbelief in a coarse dose of immorality.

Marcus Ruefold traveled in thought along the mass of land from the Cape—which looks out upon that fragmentary Southern World that lives upon the crumbs which fall from the table of the wealthier Northern Hemisphere—to the Egypt in the far northeast, which treasures in scarred pyramid and dust-mound the accumulated science and religion of unknown centuries. It seemed presumptuous that he, the dweller in an island crumbled off the western coast of Europe, should presume to deal with that enigma of man's existence which may have engaged the thought of intelligent beings in Africa for years before England had slipped loose from that link of land which bound her to the Low Countries. The mystery may have been solved and the answer forgotten for a dozen times, and was it left for him to rediscover it? Were there men so low in the school of life that the power of Christ would have, in the first instance, to create a spiritual sense through which it might work? He watched

the men who were not vexed with the questions which assailed him. They gave the lessons of the Gospel as regularly as they would have done in a village church in England. They kept their hands to the plow with a dogged good will, even when the land had to be broken up and replowed after a year of labor. When they got old they fell back upon their society, went home, and drew their pensions. Some few, fired by the example of great names, did a little in the way of exploration; and others, with pecular gifts, worked at some neglected art or science, and gave the result to the natives.

XI.

The vast continent of Faith is washed by the restless sea of Doubt, and is forever changing its outline. Here the water eats into the shore; there it surrenders a new tract to the land. Yet the continent remains, and even if occasionally sheeted with ice and grooved and fluted under the march of glaciers, it will emerge again to be a home for flowers, birds, and higher forms of life.

THERE was a Zulu girl at the station who was not much older than Zephyr, but in figure she was almost a grown woman. She was employed as a maid by the wives of the missionaries, and was given easy indoor work, on account of her steady character and nimble fingers. She had been captured by the Boers in a raid, and had practically been bought by the mission from the man who was taking her home as a present to his wife. In this instance slavery was almost a merciful interposition, as the Boer bullets had killed both her father and mother. The young creature was nameless, or in her fright had forgotten her real name, so that her captors had to furnish one for her. Whether the two names they fastened upon her showed an effort to render her native title into the mixed speech of South Africa, or belonged to some lost worthy of the invading host, could not be determined. In spite of the baptismal "Susanna," which was

promptly given at the mission, the name of Lucifer Quagg attached itself firmly to her. As the mission ladies could not persuade the natives to call her by any other name, they softened the first one to Lucy. Lucy was not by any means a girl without natural attraction. Her skin was a warm brown, her features were pleasing, and her figure comely and elastic. She was glad to make friends with Zephyr, who was not quite strong, and required the friendly assistance which the brown girl was pleased to offer. Lucy had managed to pick up a fair amount of education, and was a favorite in the little society of the settlement.

The Ruefolds rented one of the houses which was vacant through the absence of a member of the staff on sick leave. There were walks in the early morning and long talks at night, when Lucy would come into the bedroom of Zephyr and tell her delicious stories of the wild doings before the white man became the master. There were border fights and massacres, followed by the boasts of native braves that they had driven the strangers into the black water. But the white man always returned; the avenging host gathered little by little out of the broad ocean. Here a trail of smoke, there a sail; the army grew larger; the horses and great guns arrived with the chiefs of the white Queen whose flag goes round the world. Lucy had heard of the

terrible struggle from her brothers who had fought in the armies of the Zulu king. About that great day they told her, when the impi extended its deep horns and closed round the brave Englishmen, who died fighting in groups, back to back. Zephyr could almost see the ordered lines, the curve of the impi, as it bent into the semicircle. She held her breath at the silence of the attack; one movement, one purpose, drawing nearer and nearer, unmindful of the puffs of white smoke, the occasional gap in the ranks, which was instantly filled.

"Never mind, miss, it is better as it is," Lucy would add, when Zephyr was stirred by these martial stories into an indignation sufficient to make her wish to lower the flag of her fathers before these brave people.

"Why should it be better?" retorted Zephyr. "I would rather that you had remained gloriously free. Why could not the Boers and the English leave you alone?"

"We should never have put up with the mission people," answered the Zulu girl. "We lived for war; the young men were taken away from their homes; it was sad for their families; there was no peace, no rest in the land."

"It was more exciting than the tame life we all live here," said Zephyr. "You were a picture with feathers and beads, a bit of cloth, and brown skin,

though I suppose that it must have been disagreeable on a chill wet day."

"Yes, the nice English cotton dresses are much better," replied Lucy. "And your pots and pans, your clean houses, are nicer than the bones and rubbish about our cooking ovens, and the rush and reed huts. The good Father above has been kind to you and given you the earth and the fullness thereof, as we sing in chapel; but the poor browns and blacks have to make the most of their holes and corners."

"I don't know that you have much to grumble about; you should see the little babies in our courts and alleys before you talk of our having the best of it."

"Well, miss, we are easily satisfied, and even contented animals keep sleek and well. God has not quite forgotten us; he remembered his brown children, and spoke to us in whispers before the white missions came. There is the rain-maker, you see; he must be taught of God. Those who have an evil eye learn from the devils. They can blast the field and blight the lives of people they wish to injure. But good men can remove the charm and undo the mischief."

"Where do you get these horrible tales?" asked Zephyr, with open eyes.

"They are not tales, miss; they are true, I prom-

ise you. The wizards and the witches, as you call them, are about here to-day. When they become Christian, of course they will only act for the good of others, but they keep the power all the same. You white people have much to be proud of, but you can't manage storms, let loose the clouds, or clear the sky. You don't know how diseases may be brought upon man and beast, and then taken off them without medicine or baths."

"Of course we don't know these things," broke in Zephyr indignantly, "because they are not true."

"You pray to God for rain or fine weather; in sickness you seek him, but he does not seem to interfere. Without any prayer you might find the medicine."

"These things are altogether in the hands of God," replied Zephyr, like a well-taught Sunday-school child. "We pray to him, and then leave all to his wisdom."

"Yet in the Bible it tells us that the prophets acted as our wise men now do," said Lucy. "They brought lightning from the skies and destroyed the wicked. They could take a disease from one person and give it to another."

"Where do you find that?" asked the astonished English child.

"Didn't we read about Eliza bringing rain, and Elisha giving the leprosy of Naaman to the bad

Gehazi? The prophets would take some simple thing and break it up or burn it, as a sign that a punishment would fall upon others. In the same way, a wise man with us will make a figure of a person and injure it. As the injuries continue, the person will waste away and gradually die. I have seen it myself again and again."

"You will have to sleep in my room, Lucy; I shall be dreaming of evil eyes all night," exclaimed Zephyr. "Yet when the morning comes back, I shall not believe a word of all you have been saying."

"Oh, my dear miss, no one shall harm you, and nobody could wish to do so; you are gentle and good. It is different with wicked people in high places, who cannot be reached by ordinary means. To pull them down by secret charms must be right and just."

"I suppose you don't believe in our religion, although you have been taught it?" asked Zephyr.

"Indeed, yes, miss; I need it much. When I am in danger I fly for help to the dear white Christ; but I use the means he has given me, just as you English have umbrellas and waterproofs in the rainy season."

"What means do you use?" asked Zephyr, getting mystified.

"Incantations and charms of different kinds," re-

plied Lucy. "See, here is one that I have hidden in my bosom," and she pulled out an ugly little bone amulet which had been secured by a string round her neck.

"If I were to tell tales," answered Zephyr, with a roguish look, "you would be kept out of the school until after the treat. Give it to me; I will throw it away myself."

"No, no!" exclaimed Lucy; "it might be your death—you, the gentlest, dearest white young lady I have ever met. It was made for the injury of someone I loved long ago; I stole it, and saved my friend."

"Then if I were to offend you, or mother wished to send you away, you would use it against us?" asked Zephyr, with a smile which proved that she did not much fear the risk.

"If I were a bad girl, yes; but bad people can do lots of harm if they like. I heard one of the ladies pray for the natives, and she asked that we might be brought low and kept low, lest we should be injured by the abundant blessings of life. Was that fair—to tell Jesus things against us, to ask him to make us humble by keeping back his blessing?"

"But, Lucy, you don't really believe that Jesus would listen to such a prayer? He would not allow himself to be persuaded."

"He is the God of the white people, your God,

and, of course, he will listen to you first. If he does not favor you, how is it that you are so far in front of us? That is not different really to my working a charm against a good person for spite."

"We ought to forgive our enemies," put in the orthodox Zephyr.

"Like the English and the Boers do after we have attacked them and burnt their houses," returned Lucy quickly.

"What is all this talking? Go to sleep, Zephyr, it is too late for conversation; and you, Lucy, eat your supper and go to bed," said Mrs. Ruefold, breaking suddenly upon their discussion.

Mrs. Ruefold had been also surprised at the details of life in South Africa. She had pictured to herself a pastoral life, the rude abundance of a land flowing with milk and honey. She found that the plenty had its price, and that, away from the settlement, milk, as well as many other provisions, could only be found in tins. Instead of the entire freedom which she had anticipated, there was a tenacity of life in the station scandal which left the ordinary small talk of the English village far behind. Before she had lived there a week she knew the pedigree of all the missionaries and their wives; the reason why this man had resigned upon suggestion, and the private affairs which had compelled another one to extend his leave indefinitely. The pastoral journeys of the

head missionary were more familiar to her than the itinerary of St. Paul himself. The arrival of the mail, the movements of the chief commissioner and his staff, the politics of the Boer Free States, the rumors of disaffection in a distant tribe, were the only matters which relieved the drudgery of teaching the rows of woolly-headed blackamoors. To the next generation the missionaries looked for a return for their sowing and sacrifice.

Mrs. Ruefold soon began to feel the monotony of her new life. The woes of the middle-aged seldom excite the pity of the world, or are celebrated in song or story. The sufferers have lost the romance of youth, and have acquired a faculty for silence and repression. Yet there are sufficient tragedies in middle life to move the chronicler of the human drama, if he looked for them, to his best efforts. The illusions which lose their rose-pink under the drab certainty of age; the crookedness of circumstances which reduces the hero or heroine to the commonplace of twenty years later; the terrible insistence of the law of average, which jealously regards any attempt to rise far above, or to sink much below, a doleful mediocrity. When Mrs. Ruefold was a young lass she believed in the promise of her husband's future. He would do great things, and she would share the success to which she could only indirectly contribute. But when she saw other men,

less well found at starting, pass him on the voyage, her doubts obscured the earlier admiration. She loved him, perhaps, the better for his noble aim, but she lost respect for his judgment. She had a practical faith in the unseen, but believed in a sober adaptation to the needs of the moment, and trusted that an over-ruling Providence would co-operate with her, from day to day, in this world, and help her across the threshold of the unknown. She hoped that a holiday in Africa would restore the balance of judgment in her husband's mind and keep him in the right way—that path which is trodden by the majority. She believed that the accumulated experience of the past remained with the race as a whole, and was not the exclusive property of individuals.

"I thought you shared some of my enthusiasm, although you do not altogether accept my ideas," said Marcus, when he observed her unwillingness to start upon their journey.

"I don't mind a rough sort of civilization, but I object to go among savages. Think, my dear Marcus, that while you are engaged upon your high-souled experiments, we women have to bear the troubles which do not occur to you. I am told that we should have to travel in litters, with a string of porters to carry the luggage, for the flies are fatal to horses and mules. There will be no spot for rest except in our tents, or in a vermin-infested hut."

"When you reach the station on the lake you will be among Europeans again. I will not expose you to the risk of any longer journey. My further excursions will be in the company of men seasoned to the work."

"And the dangers of the road," continued Mrs. Ruefold. "Marshland, where fever always lurks, cannibals to meet, Arab slave-masters who hate us, and wild creatures in the bush. No towns, no shops, not even a chance of getting your washing done. I have heard of these miseries from the women here. They think that we are mad to attempt the enterprise, and that we may lose our lives."

"Then I will go alone," replied Marcus. "You can remain here until I have had enough of it, for go I must. If I do not return, the boys will come home to you, Zephyr will be safe, and thank Heaven there is now enough."

"You can surely find more heathen within a hundred miles of this settlement than you can convert in a lifetime," she replied.

"I am not certain to find the people I want," he answered. "Their contact with the white population is not a preparation for the work of an evangelist. Give me one year face to face with the naked mind of the native, and I shall determine my calling for good and all."

Mrs. Ruefold found an ally in a visitor who

arrived at the mission house about this time. He was an American who had been sent by the societies of the United States to report upon the better distribution of missionary enterprise throughout the world. Of course, the range of the inquiry was limited to the English speaking missions; but the Rev. Potter Pankasset was on fire with the idea of bringing about a fusion of all, rather than a partition of the field. It was quite natural that Marcus and he should foregather. There was, however, a great difference between the two men. Marcus Ruefold was a visionary, but Potter Pankasset was a man of the ardent practical order. To him the waste of means to an end was an affliction. It was purely a question of economies.

"My dear Mr. Ruefold," Pankasset would argue, "what is the use of going back to first principles at this time of day? Neither you nor I can start a new sect, and therefore, if we are to attempt to teach Christianity at all, it is necessary to range oneself under one or other of the standards. I had rather be a Romanist priest with a purpose than a Puritan apostle bound to make experiments."

"That is all very well," answered Marcus. "If your present method of teaching had succeeded it would be unwise to disturb it, but does it satisfy you? Have you a sufficieut result after the century of noble toil?"

"The root of the difficulty is in misguided efforts," answered Pankasset promptly. "We tread upon each other's toes, and waste time in wrangling. Rivalry and timidity have been the bane of our mission movements. We find ourselves planted in an unsuitable situation; we dare not abandon it because another church also holds the field. If all the contributions of the Christendom of English speech could be given to one central executive, the best result would follow. The native mind would no longer be perplexed with the differences of jarring creeds."

"All very well," answered Marcus, "but how are you to obtain this united action? If you succeeded in fusing the societies at home, you would still find a difference in doctrine and ritual among the teachers."

"Some minor differences, I grant," replied Pankasset, "but a substantial agreement on the main points. Take the case of our magnificent Republic; you have the consent of all the States to the federal bond, and yet there is margin for individual freedom to the several parts."

"Yet you will have to meet a great diversity of religion and race. Will this uniform method convert a world of differing creeds?"

"Pray, why should it not?" asked Pankasset. "Have you any other missionary religion so well equipped?"

"I am tempted to think that it is not through

simple misadventure that the world has not yet been won for Christ," began Marcus. "After many centuries of intercourse with Asia—to leave Africa out of the question—how slight has been the impression which Christian Europe has made upon her. Perhaps a nation has to complete the cycle of its ancient faith before it is ready for the faith of Palestine. Religions which are alive may have a work of preparation to perform which is distinctly beneficial. Deeper still, are there men who have not yet reached that spiritual nature which makes a true religion possible?"

"Pardon me, but you look at all Christian work through glasses tinted by your own comparative failure. London is overcrowded and trodden out of spirit. Look at America; she is assimilating fresh material every day. Out of the cargoes of British, Irish, Teuton, and Norsemen she is continually building up the national life. An outbreak of racial peculiarity affects her no more than a tornado which may distress the corner of a State. So with missions; they will draw into their fold all the various elements which perplex you, and the church will be the richer for the variety."

Marcus listened to this argument with resignation; he could have put the case as strongly against himself. "Yet we hardly keep the enemy at bay," he said. "It is accounted a great matter if our con-

verts keep pace with the growth of the population. In some parts of the world our influence is only nominal after years of labor."

"Tell me, Mr. Ruefold, what you propose to do," said the American, turning sharply upon him.

"I cannot speak positively until I come into touch with paganism in its original form. I wish to study the religious ideas of a people before I begin my apostleship. I must reverence the spiritual sense wherever I find it; it is the medium through which the Eternal works. I will preserve carefully those fragments of truth which are embedded in every religion which holds the faith of man, and I utterly refuse to cast down the idol before I have transferred the reverence of the worshiper to something higher. The sensuous temperament of the African must also be taken into consideration, and an outlet provided for it. I may not succeed as an individual worker—probably I shall not; but others will follow me with more skill to shape my rough idea."

There was only one person who gave Marcus encouragement. To Christina the present resting-place had not the charm she had expected. It was an extension of England into Africa, and there was no escape from the small parish into a neighboring township. The very ostriches on a farm a few miles off seemed infected by the atmosphere of the station, walked with a becoming propriety, and eyed

the laxer bipeds with a cold glance of censure. She turned with an aching desire to the children of the land. Her failure with Forest Bokrie had not diminished her sympathy, but only changed its direction. Marcus Ruefold was the one person who could sympathize, as an idealist, with the visions of others. She knew that her own persuasion had helped to bring the family to Africa, and resolved that, so far as she could influence events, the expedition should not be sterile.

It is difficult to live in a religious atmosphere without either responding to its influence or growing insensibly harder. The member of a religious society who is familiar with the ritual or the catchwords of his faith will offer a stouter opposition to the appeal of the evangelist than the publican and the sinner. The spiritual life which is denied an entrance positively crusts the understanding. Not so with Christina. She had yielded, and, hardly conscious of the change stealing over her, was beginning to make a daily reference of the mystery and the difficulty of life to that speechless but overshadowing Love which disentangles its intricacies for us. She knew not how, but into the few words of morning and evening prayer there had crept a new meaning. It was no longer a stringing of phrases like the telling of beads, but after each petition she dared to look up.

XII.

That breath of life, we share with breathing things,
Glows in our veins, destroys and yet renews;
A bush that burns with fire, but yet remains,
A wondrous sight; yet one quick moment brings
The sudden darkness; only ashes left.
Then of our share in common life bereft,
We claim our heirship in the life of Him
Who came to earth a Light, a Living Flame;
As still He lives, our life must be the same;
Not a pale shadow flitting wan and dim,
But something nobler, ampler, more serene,
Than these fast panting years have ever been.

THEY went northward by sea, touching at ports under the flag of Portugal, and completing their arrangements for the inland journey at the capital of a petty sultan. They were put on shore at a ragged little town upon an open beach. From this spot the march began, and between them and the object of their journey stretched many weeks of tedious traveling. There was not much actual danger, but the annoyances were serious. Desertions occurred, and it was difficult to supply the places of the trained porters. The haggling for food and necessaries with the chief of a village, experienced in exchange, was often a protracted and noisy negotiation. The country was more disturbed

than they had anticipated, for the numerous European expeditions which have riddled Eastern Africa had left their effects and bewildered the native mind. The chiefs shifted their allegiance from the European captain to the Arab slaver, or back again, without apparent reason. The power of a single native tribe to expand into a nation by conquest, and so maintain a rude peace, was gone. In the old days a great danger could be avoided, because its orbit was fixed. If a tribe was on the warpath, you calculated its track, and escaped the devastation by a wide circuit; but now a danger might start up at your feet when least expected.

The absence of a fixed currency made the catering tedious; for the amount of cloth or wire to be given for food and wayleaves depended upon the caprice of each village headman. The constant passage of Europeans had raised the price of everything and invited extortion. Although the sojourn on the highlands of the South had started the party in good health, they could not expect to escape from the attacks of African fever. Zephyr was ailing and delicate; yet they found it difficult to fix a cause for their anxiety. The child entered heartily into the romance of the road, and showed neither flagging interest nor fear. She would stand by open-eyed while the little Zanzibari, who was guide, lieutenant, and steward, argued with a hulking savage,

of bloodthirsty mien and twice his size, over the price of a pair of fowls. She tried to allure the black baby children with pieces of sugar, and, when they ran from her in alarm, chased them into their huts without the slightest misgiving. On several occasions the presence of cannibals roused in her an intense curiosity. She delighted in the gentleness of their manners, and in the consideration they showed for the wants of others. She felt that the British Blunderbores had been maligned; that they were probably quiet old gentlemen with white hair and spectacles, who only ate baby on the sly at the club. She accepted the emigration to Africa without question or doubt. But to a child like herself the world is a diorama, and, having been admitted to the show, you take your seat, front or back (that is settled at the pay office), and enjoy the passing pageant.

Yet on Zephyr's horizon there were rising new points of interest. She felt toward her companion Lucy a certain respect for her piebald experience of life; yet she felt a responsibility for the Zulu girl. She knew her father was deeply engaged upon the problem of mission work, and her own idea was to conduct an African mission in miniature. Language, custom, and her ignorance barred the way to an active prosecution of the work among the girls and children around her; but the quick wits of Lucy

could overcome these obstacles and open the way. She believed that there was nothing to hinder the spread of the Gospel message, and that its simple utterance would be as light shining in a dark place. Lucy, indeed, was a puzzle to her; for although the girl had sat on the benches of the school, she continued a Zulu, with the superstition of her nation still clinging to her. Lucy was a difficult convert to handle; for she always admitted the force of the admonition which her young mistress delivered, but, with a liberality that Zephyr did not appreciate, she urged that there was allowance to be made for the other side. "You see, Miss Zephyr," she would say, after she had listened respectfully to a pathetic appeal, "my father and mother were very decent people; they did not steal nor drink. It is true that they had not your beautiful religion; but that was not their fault."

"Don't you see, Lucy," Zephyr would reply, "that your gods, if they are real, are only of use to you in this world, but they won't go with you into the dark?"

"Yes, miss, I quite understand that, and so I want to make friends with Jesus Christ and learn the Gospels; but our simple gods of the bush may understand black people's wants better than your grand heavenly Father."

"You don't really understand Jesus if you talk like that," pursued Zephyr warmly.

"He was never a black man, miss, and I am afraid that he cannot know all we think and feel. I am thankful to make a friend of him; we poor Africans have not too many friends. I hope he will keep a corner of heaven all to us by ourselves; we would rather not join in the same hymns with the white people."

At last Zephyr's spirits began to droop in sympathy with the failing of strength in her frail little body. The weakness which was growing upon her compelled the party to halt in as dry and healthy a spot as could be found. Marcus consulted his medical books and taxed the powers of his slender case of medicine; but he did little good with his treatment. There was not much fever, but the girl was wasting. and her strength, with now and again a reflux, was surely ebbing. Lucy was accustomed to attacks of illness in European women and children which ran a severe course, and subsided when the crisis was past. When day followed day without an increase of the fever, yet with that fluttering of the strength which was a significant symptom, she took fright, and communicated her alarm to the others. She exerted herself to obtain, in the villages around them, certain herbs which were accounted of value by the natives; but it was only after the orthodox remedies had failed that Zephyr's parents reluctantly permitted these strange broths to be tasted.

The Zulu girl gave herself up entirely to the patient, and slept at the foot of the bed at night. The report of the illness soon spread, and messages of sympathy came from the friendly headmen of the district. Some of the actively benevolent sent their own witch doctors to exorcise the evil spirit which had fastened on the white maiden. They thought that, as the wonderful drugs had failed, it must be a case of bewitchment. The girls and children would creep up to the encampment to get a glimpse under the tent, and when Lucy dropped into a doze on a warm afternoon, she would wake to a row of black eyes peeping beneath the canvas, and would rise in wrath to drive off the intruders. Sometimes Zephyr spoke cheerfully, as if her recovery were a certainty. This tone of hope brought a sensation of choking into Christina's throat, and it was less affecting to hear Zephyr speak of a possible future without her.

"If I go away, Chris," she would say—"if I go away from you all, you must promise to do your best for my little mission."

"What is that, Zephyr?"

"Why, the girls like myself, and the small children. They need a girl to talk to them in their own tongue; girls can only talk to girls. If I am not here, will you speak for me? Just tell them how I passed away, dreaming of them, thinking

and praying for them, will you? It may do them good."

Lucy treated the black population in an unceremonious way, and hustled them about in her anxiety to secure every advantage for her charge. Apparently the bodies and souls of a score of them were not equal to the one life she valued so highly. Marcus knew that his determination to get at the heart of heathendom had brought his child into danger, and all the natural sense of fatherhood pleaded against the sacifice. For a few days he passed through that experience which comes to those who work for the world—a longing for a restful obscurity—the homespun of the cottage rather than the purple of the ruler. He could not trust himself to sit for long with his child, lest his own sorrow should betray itself. He would cheer her with a few words, repeat a phrase or two of Scripture, and utter a sentence of prayer.

One night the weight of the approaching shadow oppressed him intolerably, and he spent several hours in an aimless walk in the open air. The heavens were clear and full of stars. He looked up to them with that appeal of helplessness which man has given for ages to those sparkling points. No, they were unconscious of suffering mankind, and only formed a part of that universal material which knows nothing of the moral life and its burdens.

He closed his eyes; the very beauty of the universe mocked him by its callousness. Where was that Eternal Fatherhood from which his own fatherly feelings had sprung? In groping after the unseen it appeared to him as if the Deity had retired to a distance and left the empty hands clutching at space. He walked backward and forward without a clear knowledge of where he was going. In his hand he carried a sunshade for a stick, which occasionally he put up mechanically. Perhaps unconsciously, he found a refuge under it from the shining dome of heaven. The same impulse may have moved him at last to leave the open and approach the deep shadow of some trees. The wind was rising, and the sweep of it across the exposed ground disturbed him. He started when a hand was laid upon his arm, and looked round impatiently. There was the little Zanzibari, respectful and silent.

"What is the matter?" cried Marcus hastily. "Why do you steal upon me like a ghost? Is Miss Zephyr worse? Speak!"

"No, master," he replied, "although the little lady will not be with us much longer. I have been looking for you; I know you are in great trouble, and feared that you might wander too near to the wood."

"Why should I not? Pray what can hurt me? We are well known, the people are kind enough."

"You keep out in the open, master, safe enough there," continued the man. "There are two bad fellows hiding in the wood; they want your umbrella."

"Want my umbrella?"

"Yes, a very good umbrella, green and white, Don't go too near; you would struggle for it; they might kill you. Stay in the open, master. I can watch under the starlight; you are quite safe here."

Marcus was touched by the devotion of this man, who had only a common contract with him for service. If this African Mohammedan watched his movements, and cared for his life, must there not be sleepless eyes upon him? It could never be that the Power which had led him so far would desert him at this troubled moment. He turned back to the encampment and entered the tent again. Zephyr was sleeping and waking fitfully, at best half conscious, moaning and restless. There was a lamp hung from the pole at the top, and it cast shadows about the canvas, as if the spirits had come from the forest to dance around the bed. The wind cried and howled like a hungry beast, and Marcus could not help thinking of the sharks which follow ships for days, as if they scented death, and of the carrion creatures which rifle shallow graves.

The thin breath came short and jerkily. She would whisper an inarticulate remark, which the

guess of love could only interpret. The hours crawled on, and just before daybreak a gray cloud swept over the pinched little face. The wind rose and fell, until, in one of its rough gusts, the summer breath so soft and sweet was swept away. Zephyr was gone.

On the advice of his lieutenant, Marcus negotiated with the local chiefs for a piece of ground in which to lay the body of his child. Refusing the offer which was courteously pressed upon him to accept it as a gift, he insisted upon paying the price for his African Machpelah. A short burial service, an English hymn, and they left the place for ever. In spite of the remonstrance of Mrs. Ruefold, Lucifer had brought the hired mourners of the village to dance round the tent with a clicking and clanking from bracelets and anklets, and although this droned dirge was distasteful to the parents, Christina regarded the effort with secret sympathy. The mind of the girl had stirred and grown much during this time. Her father's death had been accepted by her as a sad but inevitable incident. The passing of Zephyr was more to her—a gap in the natural course of life—a marginal note on the page which weakened the interest of the book by casting a doubt upon the continuance of the story. For the first time there entered into her mind the consciousness of a world beyond. The child, who

was to her a few days ago a breathing reality, had been removed somewhere, and was leading an ordinary life under new conditions. Upon Christina descended the mysterious powers of the world to come.

It was a tedious and melancholy journey back to the coast, but Marcus had surrendered the idea of proceeding inland for the present. They returned by a coasting steamer, and on to the old mission settlement in South Africa. Potter Pankasset was still there: a few excursions and some copious entries in his diary had filled that interval which to the travelers had been so full of pathos.

"What are you thinking of doing?" he ventured to ask Marcus.

"Rest and recruit for the present," was the reply.

"And after?"

"I must not let a physical accident divert me from my work," answered Marcus. "My child might have died in London; there was always fever more or less with us in the autumn."

"Since I have been here, I have heard about your brother and his position in the tropical district. Apply for a place on the staff at his old station," said Pankasset.

"They would never take me," threw in Marcus.

"Not as the chief, of course, but as a supernumerary. They don't object to theorists nowadays, if

brains are a part of the bargain. You would never ask them for a pension, and are just the man for them."

"I could not work under a society. I am too old for rules," said Marcus.

"My dear man, you must work with somebody; you can't charter steamers, make treaties with the natives, and open up the country all by yourself. Look you, the place is ready of access by water; you can get there at one-tenth of the effort you will expend in reaching the Big Lakes. Ah! you will level down to our average ideas in a very little time. Others have tried those short cuts across country, but they have all come back to the high road."

"Christina would not like Union Vineyard," muttered Marcus to himself.

"That young lady, your brother's daughter. Yes, I understand, she is too good looking to spend her days in Africa," said the gallant American.

Already Christina found that England was calling her back. There was a letter from Professor Racer, giving a long account of Forest Bokrie. She then learned for the first time that Racer had taken great trouble to keep Bokrie in view. He concluded that Bokrie had done something outrageous, and had put himself beyond the pale of pardon. He had found him, on one occasion, looking with a dejected air at the water in Victoria Park, as if he longed to bring

his life to an end, but doubted whether the water was deep enough to cover decently his lanky frame. But no thought of suicide had flashed across the clouded mind of Bokrie. Indeed, it is a question whether self-destruction is possible to the purely animal nature. In a frenzy, beasts have made away with themselves, but, probably, as an incident in their madness, and not with intent. The recoil from the present carried Bokrie back to the past. He recalled Christina as the thirsty man thinks of the fountain and palms he has left a day's march behind him.

He was earning a livelihood at the music halls scattered across the east and south of London by mimic combats with animals and feats of strength. The customs of civilized life had been burned into him by his earlier experiences, and he yielded obedience to them as the dog and the horse learn the laws of mankind, and conform to them by habit, even out of sight of the law-givers. A wholesome remembrance of his former adventures preserved his respect for the police and made him shy of the bottle. There may have also remained with him a sense of Christina's presence; the approval and disapproval which she expressed making the rudiments of a conscience. "Miss Ruefold would wish you to do this or would blame you for that" was at first a potent spell. But the fits of sullenness, with

occasional outbreaks of senseless rage, proved a serious difficulty.

Racer paid a man to look after him when his duties at Cambridge took the professor away. He tried hard to get his pupil to undertake a definite line of study. It was useless. Bokrie would begin well, show intellectual acuteness, and then wander off on some by-path, which he had touched accidentally, to find himself far away from the original subject. In the course of a few months there was a decline in the man's health, and Racer saw that the life of a great town was telling upon him. Then Racer proposed to get him a passage back to Africa.

"What am I to do when I get there?" asked Bokrie piteously. "Your London ways have spoiled me for a bush life. I cannot live in the old freedom now that I have tasted the fruit of civilization. You can't turn out animals you have broken to your service to the plains again, to range for themselves with the wild cattle. Let me wait in England; here I may see her once more before I die; she may come back."

Bokrie had been too cunning to tell the professor the reason for his dismissal, and so Racer had written innocently to Christina: "I think a word from you might allay the poor fellow's distress. He would come out quickly enough if you were to give the signal. Perhaps your uncle could get someone

to look after him until he got work, or could be sent into the inrerior. He will do no good here, and, if he stays longer, will drift either into hospital or jail."

"Tell him to come here; no, that was out of the question," thought Christina. Yet her heart was empty, her hands were free, and the old duty was waiting for her. The suggestion of Marcus to go to Union Vineyard fell in with her own wishes. If she returned to England for a little while, she might persuade Bokrie to go back on his own account, and her uncle would find him employment. Afterward she would join her friends, and take up her teaching at the mission school. This was the limit of her horizon. It was finally determined that Christina should return to England for a few months, and then join her relations at Union Vineyard. The sisters of Professor Racer had offered to receive her. But she was not to go alone. Lucy had been listening to the discussion, and at length burst in with the appeal:

"Take me with you, Miss Christina, do. I can't be left behind now little Miss Zephyr has gone. I feel so lonely, and you have taught me to love you."

"That is out of the question," began Mrs. Rue fold severely. "If Miss Christina needs a maid, she will find plenty in London."

"But no one to love her as I do," put in the girl.

"You will be only in the way," continued Mrs. Ruefold. "You know nothing of English manners, and your foreign appearance will attract attention wherever you go. No, it is not to be thought of."

Lucifer was struck dumb by this merciless argument, and looked miserable.

"I am afraid you would not be happy if I did take you," said Christina, seeking to soften the disappointment. "England is so different to Africa; you belong to this country, and would feel like a castaway in the damp gray air."

"Oh, Miss Ruefold, I feel like the girl we read about in school—the one who would not leave her mother-in-law. 'Where thou goest I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' If I keep close to you, miss, I am sure to be safe." There was real feeling in this petition, and the matter was arranged, at length, as Lucy prayed.

XIII.

I cannot worship under the naked dome of the desolate blue. The smoke of my sacrifice blows back to earth when it reaches the crest of the hill, or the flickering tree-top. Ask your Deity to stoop to the humble measure of my thought, and under any form—tree, beast, or man—I will do him homage.

THE two sisters of Professor Racer received Christina and her Zulu maid into their house. They were both good women, older than their brother, but without any of his special ability. To Martha and Phyllis life was a quiet round of domestic duties, agreeably varied by attendance at church services. An unexpected pattern of needlework gave zest to the regular occupations of a whole week. Yet as the close observer may detect a shape and marking peculiar to each leaf of the same bough, so there was a difference between the sisters which was apparent to the guests. Both were neat little bodies, who had retained the elastic movement of youth far into middle age. In dealing with strangers they always appeared united in opinion, and quoted each other with discreet approval, but this was due to the wish to maintain a "continuity of policy in foreign affairs." Martha was the elder, and she was strongly conservative; whereas Phyllis represented the "for-

ward" movement. She always found the most original patterns in wool-work, and when the necessity arose for changing the servant or reprimanding a tradesman, the unpleasant duty fell to her lot. Their brother was at Cambridge and could not leave his work immediately, so he wrote a word of welcome to Christina and sent her Bokrie's present address. He added that Bokrie had been more tractable during the last two months, and that the man's capacity for acquiring knowledge was greater than he had supposed. For the moment Bokrie had to follow his music hall engagements, and it was from these that Racer felt there was a danger of relapse. But the money was of consequence, and he did not see how the man was to be kept at study without some employment to furnish it. It was clear from this letter that Racer had some course in view, but Christina left him to be his own interpreter.

Bokrie knew that she was coming back from Africa, and this anticipation had soothed him, and quickened his industry. He seemed greatly relieved to find that she received him with her old kindness, and without a reference, even in her manner, to the last unfortunate interview. When he had recovered from his apprehension his animal spirits rose, and he showed the joy he felt at seeing her again.

"Yes, Miss Ruefold, the professor has been good

to me, but it was of no use until I heard that you were really coming. Then I could work at his books, not for my own sake, or to please him, but all for you."

"What are you doing?"

"A great many things—Latin, Greek, mathematics. I have a capital memory, and the missionaries started me well."

"And what is to be the end?"

"The professor wants me to go up to Cambridge. He says that I shall get all the soul that is begging in this world there, or not at all. Yes, I can pass his examinations—that is, if I don't break out just at the wrong moment. But that won't bring me up to you white people. You are the only person, Miss Ruefold, who will ever do anything for me, and if you fail, he can't do it with all his learning."

"I don't like to hear you talking like that," said Christina; "you treat me as if I were one of your African idols. What can a weak girl like I am do for you? I can only show you where to find the light."

"I must not say, I must not tell you," muttered Bokrie to himself, walking up and down the room. "You will be angry again with me," he continued, stopping short and looking at her.

"You had better say what you mean," replied Christina, not without curiosity.

"I went into a church—large, dimly lighted, with tall candles on the altar. The church was almost empty. There were only two or three persons in the big building. It was as still as death. My feet clattered on the pavement, and the noise made me ashamed, as if I had disturbed the dead. The windows were all pictures. There were paintings and images along the walls, and there was a perfume in the air. There were two women kneeling before the altar, and I knelt too, for there was a beautiful woman and her child standing on a pedestal above the table. Down from the upper windows fell a shower of sunlight upon her lovely head. The gold about her shone brightly, but not so brightly as the kind faces of the mother and her child. They were not looking at each other, not making each other happy, but they turned their faces upon the women kneeling before them. No wonder that I also knelt. The lady was like you, and I thought 'That is my goddess, my Christina.'"

"Hush, hush!" put in the girl.

"It is true, Miss Ruefold, I worshiped you there as I knelt. Then the organ quivered and trembled; there was no service, but someone was practising; it was played softly. The music dropped on to me like a cloud from the sky; it enveloped me in a mist. I seemed to lose the consciousness of time and place. But I never lost the face of the woman; it lived

and spoke; it was you indeed. I had died, and was living again, a new creature. I was fit for you now, and your love was drawing me up to yourself."

"Be silent, Bokrie; you must not even think such a thought. That was the Virgin Mother and her Son. You can then realize that there is another life; a new world? Tell me that you have got thus far."

"No, no, it was only a beautiful dream; but I will strive hard to be more worthy of you here; I won't trust the 'by-and-by,' which will only cheat us. Perhaps I may be able to climb as high as the thick candles which throw light on your feet."

"You grieve me to hear you talk like that," said Christina, with tears in her eyes. "We have lost Zephyr—you remember the little girl; but it is all true, Bokrie, indeed it is. We can hear the patter of their footsteps; they try to make us keep step with them."

"Professor Racer does not say that," remarked Bokrie.

"You must not take Professor Racer's opinion on these things," replied Christina quickly. "He is a great authority upon books, but he cannot understand that which he does not feel. Let me lead you along the right way, Bokrie."

"Not to-day, if you please, dear lady; I am bound to be at the 'Cat and Monkey' by half-past seven sharp."

Lucifer had seen Bokrie for the first time, and the impression she had received of her fellow continental was not a flattering one. "I hope you won't think too much of that black man, Miss Christina," she began, with a jealous appreciation of her mistress' interest.

"You ought to pity him, Lucy, and be the first to say a word in his favor," replied Christina, in a tone of reproof.

"He knows which side his bread is buttered," said the handmaiden, with a dogged movement of the head.

"He needs our compassion; look at his life," said Christina.

"I have heard all about it," put in Lucy.

"Caught like a hare in a trap when he was a child, and chained up in a mission school——"

"With plenty of meat and white bread," threw in the listener. "Much better to have three meals a day, than to pick up your living under the trees and take your food mostly raw."

"He was brought to England to work for his living like a monkey or a dancing dog," continued Christina, working herself into indignation.

"And making enough money by it to stock a large farm if he could only keep off the drink," chimed in her companion.

"Then, without sympathy or help, to fall lower

and lower, until he can hardly find work enough in this strange land to keep himself from want—a toy broken and cast aside," said her mistress, without noticing the interruption.

"And because he is too lazy to earn his living, he tries to reach the purse of a kind young lady by making himself to be all forlorn."

"How can you be so heartless, Lucy, to one of your own skin?"

"Dear Miss Christina, you are so good and easy; but take care of the whitey-brown folks—they are not to be trusted. They have rubbed their black skin until they are neither one thing nor the other."

Phyllis Racer offered Christina packets of picture cards and tractlets for the benefit of Bokrie; but Martha Racer objected to informal attempts at conversion, and desired to know why the collecting box stood on the shelf, if the missionaries were not equal to the handling of colored persons. Martha believed firmly in the "penny-in-the-slot" principle.

The Fallowfetts had known of Christina's return, and Vesper declared herself in favor of a reconciliation. It did not require much diplomacy when the girls were together. Christina had not realized how much she was in want of a woman's sympathy until she found herself in the arms of her cousin. Vesper felt that Christina had been hardly treated, and although she considered the girl's conduct as a

wicked waste of social opportunity, she secretly admired her for that scorn of the conventional life. There was another reason for her friendly feeling. The engagement with Gracebroke had been broken; the estrangement was gradual, but it was now complete.

"The fact is, Christina, you bewitched him. I am sure you did not mean it, but Vincent was not the same man after you left the country. I dare say he will come after you again."

"You insult me with the suggestion," replied Christina hotly. "You know that I shall never marry."

"I have heard other girls make the same remark; but when the right man arrived, the noblest form of life was found when half a dozen bridesmaids followed them into the church."

Christina had been talked about during her absence from England. The missionary societies had received reports of her uncle's movements. Travelers who had met the party in Africa had brought accounts of them to London. A note in a society paper, a chance allusion in public, kept alive the idea that Bokrie's position had not yet been determined in scientific circles, and that a romantic professor and an enthusiastic young woman had set to work to produce a soul in this African enigma.

It was unpleasant to the Fallowfetts to hear Sir Bathcourt Blizzard talk about his ape-client and inquire for the modern Portia, without the ability to tell him much about her. To have a relation who attracted attention by her originality gave a degree of distinction to the Fallowfetts; for to a world tired of its round of scandal Christina brought a new emotion. Under all these circumstances Mrs. Fallowfett thought she was doing a wise action in taking a large-minded view of Christina's former conduct, and in visiting Acacia Villa with open arms and a smile of benevolence. Christina was easily overborne, and put it to herself that in going back to the Fallowfetts she was only returning in the direction of her father's wishes. Of course Lucy went with her, and tasted the bitterness of the servant's hall. Here for the first time, among white people, she was made to feel the inferiority of her race and the terrible deficiency which she had to make up in her duties as a private maid. However, there were compensations. The hair-dressers' shops afforded her diversion; for here she felt that Europe and Africa met on equal ground. Except for the quality of the hair, the centuries of Europe had not placed her far in advance of her darker sister. The masses were supported in position by practically the same methods, and the particular arrangement of coil and frizzette was really a matter

of individual taste. The long pins which supported the fabrics were not only common to both continents, but could trace a descent from prehistoric skewers of an infinite antiquity.

Christina tried to persuade her maid to be dressed in those yards of soft material and of uniform color in which the women of India appear to advantage; but the girl firmly, though gently, resisted the attempt. She admired the costumes and head gear of Bond Street and Oxford Street. She insisted that in dress the European women and her African sister met upon common ground. Color of skin, social customs, forms of religion, might differ widely, but when they were choosing a dress or a bonnet, the whole sex was united in feeling. The primitive instinct was hardly disguised by the efforts at indifference which civilized nations impose upon their women. Christina gave way to her maid's wishes, and regretted the inferiority which only appeared when Lucy was dressed like the other maid-servants.

Christina was just entering an omnibus at Hyde Park Corner, when someone uttered her name. She turned, to find herself face to face with Gracebroke. She agreed to his proposal to turn into the park; for it seemed that it would be best for her to hear all that he wished to say, and to finish with the matter. He did not expect that she would accept the suggestion, and, at first, his tongue failed him.

They walked in silence; it was morning, and the park was empty.

"I am glad to have seen you again, Miss Ruefold," he began, when they had found a seat. "I know you think badly of me; I can see it in your eyes. Vesper has given me up; but will you also throw me over? I mean, of course, will you never care for me again—in the sense that you care for Bokrie? I envy the brute; anything that he does bad is set down to original sin, but my peccadilloes are signs of moral degeneration. I wish I had degenerated sufficiently to excite the sympathy of good women like yourself."

"You are not speaking seriously, and under a pretended confession you are making fun of my efforts for the good of others."

"Making fun! I should think not; and if I appear to do so, it is only to hide my own sore heart. Let that be a proof that I am not beyond hope of recovery; while there is pain the nerves are not dead. Believe me, if you can, that you are the only escape to me from blank, gross materialism. I could marry Vesper, and remain as I am, a man of the world, thrifty in its use, but a simple epicurean. With you that would not be possible. I could not offer you marriage, for in my present state you would be a constant reproach. The purity, the beauty of your life, would be a refined hell to me. Yet if you

give me a whisper of encouragement—I am now on the brink; if I let go my hold on you, I am bound to shoot down. I don't ask you to speak a word; but if from your silence I might gather that, after conflict, I might come again at some future time and——"

She stood up and was prepared to say something, but he stopped her.

"Spare me the utterance which would leave me no hope. Let me have at least a space for imagination. I can put into your lips gracious words which you might have spoken. Good-by; good-day." He left her before she could recover from her surprise, and she wondered whether it was only a fine piece of acting.

The great missionary societies were anxious to know whether there was any hope of reducing expenses by changing their methods, and Christina soon found herself in correspondence with one or two of them. Marcus Ruefold, with his one-man system and his free hand, was an object of cautious interest to them, and his course was followed with closer attention than they chose to admit. Restless critics worked uncomfortable sums in long division, and others advised the dispatch of new men without the two coats or the scrip.

On one occasion she met her old friend, Sir Bathcourt Blizzard, who treated her with the same in-

dulgent kindness, and listened to the recent chapters of her history. But it was clear that he put her story into a vacant space of his mosaic of life, treating it as a contribution to the general pattern, but not as an essential part. To him the hopes and fears, the doubt and belief of mankind, were interesting as a study. The machinery of advocacy had taken from pathos its tears, and from tragedy its red fire. He could produce the same effects; could even create the very emotion in himself when it was required for his persuasive rhetoric.

At last Racer came down from Cambridge and called upon Christina. She was startled to find that he had changed his opinion since he had written to her in Africa, and now thought that he was able, single handed, to bring Bokrie round.

"You have done your work, Miss Ruefold, by merely coming home," he explained to her. "Bokrie is a different creature already; your presence has calmed him. Like those patients who are sensitive to hypnotic influence, he does not require the passes of the hand or the spoken word. The doctor has only to be seen, or to send the message of peace. I think we shall make something of him yet."

"How are you setting to work?" asked Christina, a little surprised at this unexpected discharge from responsibility.

"I want to get him to Cambridge; he may do well there. Now, Miss Ruefold, I am going to make a strange request, but I hope you will fall in with it. Don't let us have another word of religion. Bokrie has had too much of it; I believe that it has retarded his mental growth. Let education have a fair field, and if his mind could be enlarged and filled with new thought, you will find that the power to select and direct—the attributes of the soul, if you like so to call them—will develop into average power. Then you will have a living man, with faculties complete, built up out of mental training. You can add religion or not, as you choose, afterward—just as you may teach him music or painting."

"When do you send for him?"

"At once; the sooner the better. It is not the freshman's term; but I want to get him out of London and temptation. I thought the money would be the difficulty; but, to my great surprise, the fellow has been saving; he has got a regular hoard. I believe that he intended to buy a gold fillet, necklace, bracelets, and I know not how much more for you, Miss Ruefold. Really, if you like to set up as a divinity in Africa, that fellow would act as your prophet, and burn incense to you. I know you will renounce your gold chains in favor of a year at Cambridge, by way of experiment."

"And you do not wish me to see him again?" said Christina slowly.

"I don't mean that. You will see him, of course; I could not keep him away from you. You shall have your turn again, if I fail to do the work. Meanwhile, let us see whether it is to be Diana or Christ."

XIV.

Man gave names to the animals, and then tried to tell the number of the stars. But the deeper he gazed into space the thicker thronged the worlds upon his sight. Then he gave up the task in despair, and turned to his lordship of earth, only to find that the life beneath his feet was a million-fold more than he had reckoned. So he left the problems unfinished in the hands of his Teacher.

It was a fine open evening at Cambridge, and Professor Racer and Bokrie were sauntering along the Backs. The spring was stealing into the trees, making a delicate gray haze in the lofty fretwork of branch and twig. The rooks kept one another to their nest building by drawling cries of encouragement. The air was lively with the sense of a "good time coming." There were voices which shot up behind walls and below bridges from the hidden river. Skirting every stretch of grass were parties of young fellows, and through every archway, or open screen of stone, could be seen the striped jackets hurrying to the tennis lawns and the boats. The long sweep of the college buildings in their variety and repose reassured the mind with the idea of stability, and chastened the vivacity of the spring with a sense of permanence.

Bokrie was fixed in lodgings within reach of his mentor. He had come up willingly, assured by

Christina that it was her wish for him to do so, and consoled by a promise that she would not leave the country again without giving him warning. More than that, she had undertaken to pay him a visit, at least once, in the present term. Racer had resolved to devote more time to him during these earlier days than he could regularly afford, as it was of great importance that Bokrie should be steered clear of those currents into which an unwary freshman may drift, and out of which it is difficult to extricate him later. Racer busied himself at the outset in getting introductions for Bokrie, and in watching the first effect of the changed life upon him. An English university is accustomed to gather its members from the East and the West, so that one more stranger passes unnoticed in the crowd of swarthy foreigners. It was, however, soon evident to the professor that he could not conceal the antecedent life of his queer friend, and so good sense showed him that the best plan would be to make a point of the interest of the case, and, by an appeal to the consideration of the authorities, to treat the experiment as a matter of concern to the whole community.

Already an indefinite rumor had spread among the tutors and heads of colleges, but the undergraduates themselves put the story into proper form, as most of them were acquainted with the "Happy Valley" and its leading stars. A mild note of dis-

approval had been given by the more conservative members of the ruling host; but, on the whole, it was considered that the introduction of Bokrie might be treated as an amiable scientific dissipation. Bokrie himself obtained that sudden popularity with the rank and file to which it is difficult to fit a cause. The better class of undergraduates picked him up from that compassionate interest which Racer sought to foster; and others took their part in the patronage in the hope that he would make good sport for them. Their hospitality, freely offered to him, threatened to ruin his opportunity for serious work, and Racer felt compelled to continue his companionship lest Bokrie might be sucked down in the maelstrom. For it was a new pleasure to the wild man to be free from the company of those who made a profit out of him, or who helped him to vice for the sake of pillage. There was no ill-nature in the selfish humor which made a butt of him, and if he had to be seen home by a couple of boon companions, his watch and money at least were safe. The power of his memory, which had impressed Racer before he came up, now asserted itself in a more remarkable way. He could read a book and repeat it verbally after the study of a single day. Problems which worked themselves by the application of known rules, and a kind of mechanical reasoning through suggestion, were easy enough to

him; but in a selection of facts and a careful induction he would be entirely at fault. Poetry, by its rhythm, and the images it called up, impressed him; but his mind stood still at the close of the verse.

Before the end of the term Christina fulfilled her promise, and spent two or three days in Cambridge. The two little sisters of the professor came with her. It was a gala time, at the end of the "May Week," and June had graciously put on her best weather. Although pretty girls were a glut in the market, there were admiring glances directed to Christina. The sisters of the professor could be identified at once. Bokrie was now a familiar figure, but who was that tall girl who was talking to him with such affable familiarity? She smiled upon the wretch, looked him full in the face, and treated him like a member of the family. It was impossible to think that she was his sister. On the other hand, it was treason to English maidenhood to assume that a girl would listen to the admiration of a creature from the bush. Bokrie was very well as a study in anthropology; but Englishmen cannot stand by to see an active specimen step out of its museum and carry off one of their women. The good humor with which Bokrie had been regarded when he posed only as a very superior example of a lower type, vanished when he had the audacity to act as if he stood upon a platform of equality with the rest.

Of all this Christina was happily unconscious, and the bright sun and summer sky brought back her forgotten gayety. She was glad to hear the story of Bokrie's progress, to encourage him on the prospect of his examination in the autumn. She was struck by the purpose which seemed to assert itself in his conversation, and did not know that it was only the catchword of the place—a quotation from the eager talk of his fellows—to which she was listening. A regret tinged her satisfaction in the recollection that religion had nothing to do with this improvement; but she comforted herself with the suggestion that after all the Christian air of the University might have helped him. The college chapels, the ecclesiastical architecture, were a witness to a power underlying the educational work. She ventured to give a hint to Racer both of her regret and of the hope, but he promptly repudiated them.

"No, no, Miss Ruefold; the University has far outgrown its mediæval dress. The form may remain for several generations longer, I dare say, but the spirit has departed, thank goodness."

"Yet you have your daily services; your old customs——"

"Yes, yes! I know that," interrupted the professor impatiently; "but they mean nothing. Those prayers read in musty chapels, on chill mornings, don't touch the morals of the men in the least.

Half the men who conduct them would be glad to have the farce abolished, but they dare not propose it. If you began to touch the old fabric, down it would come—fees, deanships, and comfortable roosts—in one common ruin. You remember that the classic paganism lived on as a ghost long after its soul had fled. But I must not talk like this to you, Miss Ruefold. I was forgetting the young woman and, for the moment, telling the coarse truth to a man."

"Don't hide your opinion from a scruple for my feelings," replied Christina, with a loss of tone in her voice. "Yet there must be some here who would not agree with you," she continued. "It would be a pity if the picked men of the country, surrounded by the witnesses of an age of faith, should have given up all that the past held to be dear. It is a faith which built these towers and made it possible——"

Christina looked at her companion for help to close the sentence.

"I am not so grateful to the past as I ought to be," said Racer, laughing. "Some believed, as you say, and gave their money to save their souls; others to get a good name, or because they could not carry the coin to another world. As to our being the picked men of the country, my dear young lady, you do us too high an honor. We are

neither better nor worse than the average man. We come here to polish such tools as we possess, and if there is nothing better to be had in the world outside, we stay here to earn a living. Some of us are experts of particular kinds of learning; but we are no bigger than if we had succeeded in literature, art, or commerce. In fact, the character of our work tends to make some of us mere sorters and index makers of ancient knowledge—journeymen in letters, if you like—for the men of genius to employ as hodmen in building their fabrics."

"Surely work like this is necessary to the thinkers; they could not do without such men, and both ought to work together," said Christina.

Racer put out his lip. "So they ought; but we are the bitterest critics of the men who enlarge the range of thought or who make history."

"This is not a dusty place where no fresh life can show itself," continued the girl. "To me it would appear always to be young. As soon as one set of boys leaves, another arrives. If I were a teacher," pursued Christina, with quite a matronly air, "it would keep me hopeful to be ever meeting with the unspoiled beginnings of life."

"It has a singular effect upon me," said Racer. "The picture on the river, the crowds of youths about the town, remain unaltered from year to year. Until you come nearer, and separate the mass into

items, you can hardly escape from the impression that it is the same picture, the same crowd, from season to season. There is also a quantity of human nature in our college fellows, dons, and the rest of us. The wives and children are governed by very unacademic considerations. The little jealousies, the college politics, which ruffle the minds of our principal people, are like the storms which agitate other teacups. Well, I must not blacken my neighbors, for I intend to arrange a meeting next October to introduce our interesting animal to the 'Varsity magnates. Some music, recitation, tea, and buns. It will be a sort of glorified penny reading. I will tell you in confidence," Racer went on, lowering his voice, "that I am going to make an interesting experiment. I have been deep in hypnotism lately, and I mean to try the effect upon Bokrie; he ought to be the very subject for it."

"But, Professor Racer, you want to call out the will power, not to suppress it."

"That is just the thing I am going to explain; listen. Bokrie will remain up through the 'Long.' There will be plenty of leisure for me, and he will get on with his work at a fine rate; the man has a marvelous memory. The suggestion to him will be: 'You have a mind of your own, will power which you can control. I give you a course of study, a rule of conduct. When you have sugges-

tions to act in a contrary way, fight them with your will power. I bid you put it into force in obedience to me.' You have the same process in preaching and other religious enterprises. The teacher refers to an unseen God, and suggests that his approval or displeasure are to be the motives for conduct: 'Thou God seest me.' It matters not whether the power behind the screen exists or not; the machinery has been set in motion by the idea, and will continue to work."

Christina looked at him sharply. "Then you wish to put yourself in the place of God."

"Just so," answered Racer. "I can do more for Bokrie at the present time than any far-away Deity who may stimulate the imagination of the sentimental. The persons we really worship are those familiar to us. For their sake we consent to adopt a formula, or repeat a creed. The true priestess of Christianity is the mother who charms the baby lips into the first words of prayer."

The subject of this conversation had wandered far in front of his two friends, and was describing to Martha and Phyllis Racer his impression of evening worship at King's Chapel. They had walked through the building, and were standing at the door, waiting for their companions to join them. Bokrie pleased the two ladies by his appreciation of the voices, and the determination he expressed to

master the intricacy of the English prayer-book. They were gratified when he told them that he could hardly repress the tears when he dropped to his knees with the congregation. But he spoiled the effect of the story by adding, dramatically, that he leaped to his feat, with an oath, when he was struck on the nape of the neck by something intensely hot, and found that he had been the victim of a guttering candle.

Racer stuck to his post throughout the vacation. He worked, walked, and talked with his pupil, until he believed he knew the inner heart of the man. Bokrie did not give an hour's trouble to his master. The influence which the kind treatment had given Racer over Bokrie paved the way for the first cautious experiments. Racer was delighted to find that not only could he wile away a slight ailment, and keep Bokrie to his work, but that his written instructions would control Bokrie when he was absent. After Bokrie had triumphantly passed an examination early in October, Racer did not doubt that he had completed the subjugation of the man. At the end of the month he arranged, in association with his friends, a conversazione at the Guildhall. There was a loan exhibition of toys of science; trophies from the Southern World; spoils of the East; paints and pictures; light refreshments; and a couple of detectives.

Two or three short essays on points of interest in the by-ways of science were given. Songs and music were introduced here and there, and at last it came to the turn of Racer to do his part. He gave a short account of the early forms of man; discussed the demands of science for the lost steps in his upward progress; repeated the story of Bokrie, and his up-bringing. He hinted that society and religion had both taken Bokrie in hand, and had failed. He reported the remarkable improvement Cambridge had wrought, and finally produced Bokrie on the platform to speak for himself. Racer was so confident of his success that for the previous fortnight he had relaxed the precautions which he had hitherto taken. He had seen very little of Bokrie, owing to constant occupation at the beginning of the new term, and had been satisfied to send him an occasional message about his work and to receive a few lines from him in return. He had met Bokrie the night before, and had arranged with him the part he was to take in the evening's proceedings. There was nothing in Bokrie's manner to suggest rebellion, but Racer had no time for close attention. Had the professor known all that had happened in the interval he would never have permitted Bokrie to appear on the platform. A man who had met Bokrie in the summer term, picked him up for amusement on his arrival in Cambridge a fortnight

before the meeting. The new friend intended to go in for medicine, and was toying with the romance of his profession before he buckled to its reality. He had just come from Paris, where he had been shown some experimets in hypnotism, and he was anxious to try his own power. A chance remark dropped by Bokrie suggested to him what Racer had been doing, and he determined to put his knowledge to the test. He succeeded so well that he repeated the effect, and delighted a select circle of friends with the buffoonery he got out of his subject.

He received a ticket for Racer's evening, and when he saw Bokrie mount the platform, he moved up close to the front line of the audience. All went well at the beginning. Bokrie quoted various passages from English authors correctly, and was about to finish with a recitation from Tennyson, when the spirit of mischief prompted the man in front to interpose. He fixed his eyes upon the orator and Bokrie stopped. The stare of the operator, and a movement of his lips, interpreted the unuttered command, and suggested a performance which Bokrie had given a day or two before. In a moment the English faces, the lights, were all blurred into a cloud, and Bokrie had returned to his native forest. He was shouting to his kindred in the uncouth tongue which he had utterly forgotten,

and was preparing to lead the savage hunt. Racer leaped on the platform and spoke in his ear, but Bokrie could not recognize him. The performer jumped down among the audience, and as they parted for him he ran through the lane, passed the doors, and, finding himself in the open air, suddenly sobered.

He was penitent enough when Racer called later on, but confused as to his exact offense. Racer rated him soundly, but shielded him from further inquiry and the matter was hushed up. Racer discovered how the mischief had been started, and the miscarriage of his plan confirmed the truth of his theory. He left Bokrie to his own devices for a short time, under the belief that the man would find the loss of his friendship a severe penalty. Unfortunately, the desertion produced a result which might have been foreseen. Abandoned, as he thought, by his one strong friend, Bokrie fell into the deepest depression. Some of the men looked him up, and, out of compassion for his forlorn lot, they drew him into a round of gayety. At a dinner-party of a roystering character the plot was hatched which brought Bokrie's university career to a conclusion. It was drawing near to the memorable 5th of November, and although Town and Gown riots had faded into a tradition, and an explosive entertainment had ceased to be in undergraduate

form, the opportunity for a piece of elaborate fun could not be passed over by these daring spirits. Bokrie was urged to play the principal part. He could not appreciate the humor of it, for it seemed to him only a dreary rehearsal in the open air of the performances which had sickened him; but he craved for the approbation of his comrades, as he felt he was under the displeasure of the higher powers.

When the afternoon had dwindled into twilight, a procession appeared on the King's Parade, which created much stir. A large car, drawn by a team of mules, came slowly along; a gorilla, dressed as a footman, walking with each pair. At the four corners of the car were different specimens of the ape tribe. From each one stretched a chain to the figure throned in the center of the car. This was Bokrie, looking gigantic on his elevated seat. He was dressed as an African chief, and behind him stood two negroes, carrying a banner with the inscription:

THE LINK NO LONGER MISSING.

The Mutual Friend of Man and his Country Cousin.

A mob quickly gathered, and as the leaders of the team were turning into the market place, their passage was barred by the police. Two proctors and their "bull-dogs" hurried up, for in spite of the

property man and the burnt cork, it was clear to the eye of experience that most of the company were members of the University. The smaller monkeys were lads hired for the occasion, and these coiled up their tails and took to their heels. The passengers on the car were disinclined to give the names of their colleges, and the united effort of the two sets of authority only succeeded in removing the mules from the conveyance. An attempt to storm the castle was met by a fusillade of squibs and crackers. The intermediate link sent up a rocket, and the two black footmen discharged Roman candles around their illustrious chief. This could not go on for long, and a last charge of the police and their allies disheartened the defenders and scattered them in all directions. Bokrie was left behind in the grip of two policemen, and when he realized that the play was finished, he asked to go home. There was a discussion between the officials about him, and not understanding the delay, he shook himself free and started to run. They gave chase, but he was too quick for them, and without giving thought to any other consideration than the bare idea of an escape, he made for the open country. They followed him as far as the lamps extended, and then gave up the pursuit, glad to be relieved from a disagreeable duty.

During that night a strange figure, dressed like a

savage, blackened and travel-stained, darted through many a lonely village. He took rest and food on the road, for he had money; but when he approached London he changed his clothing at a wayside cottage. On the following afternoon he was begging for work at the Thames side wharves.

XV.

The mountain of the Beatitudes is ringed about with the deep cleft of humiliation, and through this depression the lowly ones ascend to their triumph.

CHRISTINA heard that Bokrie had disappeared, for Racer sent to her a local journal containing a graphic account of the occurrence. It was entitled "The Apotheosis of the Man-Ape," and almost suggested that Bokrie had gone up with his own rocket, but had not come down with the stick. She expected that he would reappear after a short concealment, as it had happened with previous escapades. When a week had passed and he had not presented himself, she feared some worse evil, and wrote to Racer for advice. The professor was out of temper, and replied briefly that he hoped the man would come to grief, for he had become a nuisance to them all. Christina remonstrated, and reminded him that he had made his own terms, and as he had failed with his system, it was now her turn. Racer assented to the reasoning, and came up to London to give effect to the conclusion. He went the round of the hospitals and the workhouses, told the police, and inserted an advertisement to the effect that: "If B., who left Cambridge suddenly, without

his luggage, would communicate with A. and C., solicitors, he would hear of something much to his advantage." But the bait was not taken, and Bokrie's fate threatened to be a London mystery.

Then Christina put the case into Lucy's hands, and the Zulu girl took the list of music halls which Racer had given, and made her inquiries at back doors, and among servants and work-people. She walked about the streets adjoining the Thames and the docks for several days, speaking to every foreigner, at the risk of an insulting word or a threatened blow. She was losing heart, and had been making unfavorable comparisons between the native black man and the coarser native of London-by-Thames, when she lighted upon the lost piece of silver. She had made her way from the Tower into Eastcheap, and, looking down one of the steep lanes which plunge headlong toward Billingsgate, she caught sight of a string of porters, like ants, following one another with boxes and barrels on their heads. She turned into the lane and walked to the bottom. The groups of men standing at the corners and before the taverns were mostly fish porters who were enjoying a lazy smoke and lounge before going off to work. The activity of the fruit porters gave that zest to their recreation which is a part of the enjoyment of leisure. The fruit porters were steadily at their task, streaming across Lower

Thames Street from the wharves on the one side to the warehouses on the other. The roadway was blocked with vans and barrows, so that the cross-current was sometimes twisted or checked. Lucy stood for a few minutes watching the files of loaded and returning laborers, and her presence soon attracted the loafers, whose chaff of their toiling comrades was beginning to lose its freshness.

Finding that the customary clicking and whistling did not attract the girl's atttention, one of the group advanced to Lucy, and in mock courtesy, taking off his greasy cap, said: "My dear, will you give us a little bit of a song?" The girl turned away indignantly. "I ain't your favorite nigger, I know," continued the man; "but I can give you the step, my black-eyed Susan," and he caught the girl by the shoulders and danced round with her, in spite of her cries and struggles, to the roars of laughter of his companions. This might have continued for some minutes, had not a fist descended upon the man's head, driving his cap over his eyes and stunning him. When he had staggered against the wall and recovered his sight and sense, he glared at his assailant and rolled up his sleeves, for words failed him, and he wanted his breath for action. For a moment he checked himself, and he did not advance to the battle. Before him stood a giant fruit porter, with the left hand raised to steady

the box upon his bent back, but with the other arm, a long, dangerous weapon, free. The fish porter felt his courage slipping, but, in the presence of the familiar crowd, determined to face the enemy.

"Come along, you lanky bones!" he shouted; "come and show fight for your missus!"

Down went the box to the pavement, the padded cushion was dropped from the head, and Bokrie drew up to his full height. The fish porter made for him, and pounded gallantly for a second or two; but Bokrie gripped him, thrust him back at arm's length, and with one single twist flung him into the roadway. The crowd got angry and shouted:

"'Taint fair fighting, he's a foreign Johnnie; why don't he let drive like an English 'un?" and so on.

The defeated man, to do him justice, was prepared to come on again and take his thrashing; but the mob grew threatening, and Lucy, putting her hand on Bokrie's arm, implored him to come away with her. He picked up his load, and she walked by his side to the warehouse. She had to argue with him for some time before she persuaded him to leave his work for the day and to come home.

"I dare not see Miss Ruefold. What will she say to me, what does she think of me?" he repeated again and again. He told Lucy that he meant to hide from his friends in London forever.

Although there was difficulty in getting him into the house, he was quiet enough in the presence of Christina. He kept his eyes away from her, and listened to her chiding with a meek and melancholy countenance.

"I told you I could not make any real progress under the professor," he said, at last finding a voice. "But it is worse than that. I have lost your favor too; you will never be kind to me again. I shall go away and never see you, except in the beautiful church and in dreams. When the evening star comes into the clear sky, I shall say: 'There, there is my lady. She is above me, I shall never reach her; the way is too steep. I have fallen to the earth, on which I must always crawl; her heavens are out of my reach.'"

"Indeed no, Bokrie; you can come up to me," replied Christina, with a heart full of pity. "You don't need learning, or fine manners, to be a good man; but you must believe — must think. O Bokrie, Bokrie!" cried the girl, breaking away incoherently, "we have done our best for you, one after another, and yet here you are, none the better for it all. Would that the God of man and brute would take the task out of our hands!"

"Will you say a prayer for me, Miss Ruefold? Your God won't listen to me; I am not his sort; he would not have anything to say to me."

"Of course I will pray for you. What are you going to do?"

"I shall go to my work to-morrow; but I will come away at the dinner hour. Miss Ruefold, will you do me a kindness?"

"What is it?"

"Let me go for a walk with you to-morrow afternoon. I want to walk beside you as I used to do. I will act properly like other persons, and I have a new suit of clothes, bought at the great plate glass tailor's."

"You have some money left?" asked Christina, in surprise.

"I hid some before I left London. I was afraid to take it to Cambridge, lest I might spend it like a fool or lose it. When that has gone, the professor has still more."

"Where are we to walk?" inquired Christina.

"In the crowded street—anywhere, so that I may feel you near me. If your God ever finds me, it will be through luck, when I am by your side."

XVI.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

ON the next afternoon Christina and Bokrie moved about the muddy and gloomy city for an hour or more. Nobody looked at them or cared for them. In Cornhill and Lombard Street the crowd was better clothed and the asphalt was cleaner. In other respects it was the same surging river of humanity—whether it poured through Aldgate or rolled out at the Temple. If a blocked crossing checked it for a minute, it grew thick and clamorous. At the converging of streets there were confused eddies. The narrow courts and alleys poured light streams into the main currents, or relieved the swollen torrents by sucking in some of their superabundance. It was impossible to talk. There was only an opportunity of throwing a word from one to the other through the noise made by this turbulent energy. It was yet early in the afternoon, but the day—a gray ghost—was ready to retreat from the December sky, as if conscious of its failure. The shops were showing lights with an air of impatience at the pretense of daylight,

anxious to be done with the farce, and to settle into the honest darkness of the long night.

Christina was tired, not with the distance they had walked, but through the fatigued attention. She proposed to turn aside into a churchyard which had been converted into a prim garden. Away from the tall buildings, they were surprised to see how much daylight yet lingered. The path ran through the graveyard, cutting it into two unequal portions. It was a long lane fenced with a railing, and it connected two great thoroughfares. Thin, straggling lines of people were always threading it; but in the middle of the passage there were a couple of wooden benches, and these made a quiet resting-place. The roar of the great arteries fell lower, and the huge Georgian church behind rose like a protector of the wayfarer. Its unconscious ugliness on so large a scale almost reached the sublime.

They sat down, and for a minute or two there was nothing said. Beyond the railing in front of them there was a stretch of turf, broken by circular beds raked clean and neat, and by flat slabs of stone. A small fountain played in the middle of the ground, and, when the feet on the pavement were not too frequent, they caught its faint splash. On the rim of the small basin two pigeons were gracefully poised. The sparrows were dodging about in search of a supper, and claimed part of the food

which had been thrown to the pigeons. A high wall rose on the further side, pierced by the lighted windows of business premises. The vacant spaces of wall carried the names of the traders, and a row of gravestones—like a line of irregular teeth—was fixed against the basement, and set out in faded letters the names and virtues of departed citizens. Above might be read: "Calway & Gypsum, Printers and Lithographers"; "Smart, Marlrigg & Company, Ltd., Sole Agents for the Mammoth Hide Boots"; and below, little cherub heads fluttered over the worn-out inscriptions, and "Here lyeth," "of this Parish," a text of Scripture, or a verse of a hymn might be picked out by careful eyes.

Bokrie was silent, but he looked satisfied. It was enough for him to be for a couple of hours in the company of the woman he worshiped; the future must take care of itself.

"You know that we are sitting above the graves of those who died long ago," began Christina, after an interval of silence.

"Yes, Miss Ruefold; but it does not hurt them; they don't know it, and never will. They cannot have enjoyed their lives in this misty city. Better for them to have lived out their time in our bright Africa."

"So we think; but God can make up for all loss suffered in this world. I wonder whether they care

about the garden and the birds; the shifting of the headstones; the general covering-up and forgetfulness."

"You have a long life before you, Miss Ruefold; but the dust cart will soon call for me; and then, what does it matter? it is all over. I should not trouble much about the dust bin for myself."

"There is something over and above!" exclaimed Christina. "I know it, I feel it. It comes to me in broad daylight; in the dead of the night. The beyond, the far away, is all about me; I can touch it, and am satisfied."

A workman with a bag of tools sat on the next seat, and his neighborhood put a stop to conversation. Bokrie continued watching the passengers; Christina was deep in thought. The workman stared about in an absent, gloomy way; he was too jaded to care for sentiment. Presently he got up and stood with his hand on the railing, looking at the fountain and the pigeons. He searched in his pocket and brought out a piece of bread—a remnant from a meal. He leaned forward and offered the bread on the palm of his hand. A pigeon, foraging on the ground with ruffling jerks of its soft neck, caught sight of him, considered the offer for a second with its dainty little head on one side, and then rose into the air. Twice it circled round the man with the courage of familiarity; yet an invisi-

ble line marked the limit of prudence, and it would not come near enough. The man held up the bread higher, and the bird flew back to its own ground, thinking the prize unequal to the risk. Then the man slung his tools over his shoulder, and moved away.

"Do you see that?" exclaimed Christina. "Jesus Christ may have appeared to his neighbors and friends just like that man. He did a good day's work, felt tired, and went home to his supper. He thought when he was a boy that he was intended to do great things; but he grew up in his plain home to be the same as the rest of his class. No voice spoke to him, although he listened for it often, until his heart chilled with doubt, and he grew accustomed to the common round of life. One day the change came; the Voice called him; a Dove descended from above and alighted upon him. It nestled unseen in his heart. It never left him. There was no need to coax it to come to him. Forever after he knew he was the Son of God."

"Dear little pigeons! I should like to carry one in my coat. I would sing gently to it; I would be so kind," said Bokrie.

"You may have your wish, Bokrie, if you look to God. You have mind and body, thought and feeling. The cage is ready for the gift of the spirit—pray for it."

"No use, no use," he replied, shaking his head. "I am not like your Jesus; I was not born a son of God; I am only a big beast without a spirit."

"Go ask for it, go," she said, moved by a sudden impluse, which she hardly realized. She put her hand upon his arm and pushed him slightly. He stood up and staggered as he moved slowly away, as if a blow had been given him. She watched him. He steadied himself at the railing and moved on. Then the night appeared suddenly to close in upon him, and to swallow him up. In a few moments the last pale threads of daylight had vanished. He had gone from sight, but she dared not stir. There was a sense of some change which aroused and alarmed her. People were still passing; the lights were all about; the broad hum of the streets sang to her; a piano-organ struck up a lively air for dancing—she could not feel alone, and yet she felt herself to be the lonely spectator of a drama. She waited ten minutes or more, and then suddenly Bokrie stood before her.

"I have found it," he said, and she got up directly and looked into his face. He held his head erect; his eyes were bright; there was something new and strange in his expression. She waited for him to go on; her heart was beating.

"I hear music," he said, looking about.

"It is only a piano-organ," whispered Christina.

"There is music everywhere," he continued. "I thought the world was full of jarring noise, but all works for harmony, and I can hear the sound."

"Where have you been?" she mustered courage to ask.

"Only a few steps, close to that archway. I leaned against the wall and trembled. I heard the voice of God; it went through me like a flame, and the spirit entered after. It remains with me—I am a man."

They walked slowly side by side, and found themselves in the busy street again. Christina turned for home, and he kept near to her—not as the faithful dog, but as the one who cared for her with his greater knowledge and strength. He guarded her across the streets and directed rather than followed. No word passed between them until the doorstep was reached, when Christina bade him good-by, and said, "You have found the light at last, Bokrie; give thanks for it."

"It is due to you, Christina Ruefold," he answered. "I followed you to the gate of heaven."

He left, and she watched him down the street. Shabby in dress, ungainly in carriage, lanky in form—all these he was still; but the casket was alive with a new treasure.

He could not yet go back to his lodging; he could not sleep that night. He was afraid of

sleeping at all, lest he should awake to the old state and find his full liberty only a dream. He satisfied his hunger and thirst at a tea shop, and then started for a long trudge through the London streets. First of all he pushed westward, through the Strand, until he found himself at the "Happy Valley." He went round to the door which was used for the stage people, and thought of his own entries and exits. He had only to ask for an engagement, and he would be given once more a place on the bill. He felt a strong inclination to apply; to go through the old performance, and then at the lecture time, when the showman was describing his origin, to break in with the shout, "God has called me by name; I am a man!"

Young women drove up in their broughams; seedy workmen slipped in and out; well-dressed loafers hung about the corner, but nobody recognized Bokrie. When the evening performance began he entered the building and paid for a seat among the audience. It was a tedious matter to him, but he sat out its whole length, and wondered at the patience of those who had tasted better things. Then he got a meal, and turned into the heart of the West in the hour before midnight. He found himself in the rough crowd he knew too well. Gaudy women attended by their satellites plied their trade. Respectable people were pushing through

the throng on their homeward way. Delicate girls, carefully shielded from contact with their fallen sisters, were led daintily to their carriages. There were flashing lights, shouts of men and boys, the cackle of tipsy laughter, an interlacing of all sorts and conditions of men and women, and here and there a few indulgent policemen. He was in the center of Christendom, but he thought of the orgies of African paganism. Here was offered nightly sacrifice to the bestial powers.

After the boom of midnight from the bell at Westminster, he made his way to the Embankment. The full stream, patched with dark masses and dotted with lights, ran, like the mystery of life, between the sleeping shores. The sky had cleared, and the scattered points of light overhead formed to him strange characters which might solve the enigma if only man could find a key to the writing. So in past ages man had striven to snatch the secret of the future from those stars. There stood the monolith—a stranger in a strange land—which bore the hieroglyphics of a language once unknown. It had given up its secret, and perhaps along the shining page of the heavens the fingers of a man's hand might presently spell the message.

Bokrie withdrew his thoughts from this wider range, and settled them upon the slouching wayfarers, and the sleeping figures, clasping their rags in

their cold dreams. The command of thought, the power of sustained attention, was to him a happy novelty. He had a few shillings left in his pocket, and he divided the money among the worst looking of the outcasts. Nature frowned upon them; Society would not own them; it seemed to him that they belonged only to God. If the goodness had descended upon him, surely it would gather these miserable creatures into its ample folds? Here and hereafter he was kin to them, and as he touched the Divine with one hand, with the other he found his brotherhood with man.

He grew tired at last and dropped into a seat on one of the bridges. He fell asleep and dreamed that he walked with Christina in the African forest-land. They were never to be parted again; but the love they bore to each other found its gratification in the blessings they carried from village to village. As they passed through the land the war-shout melted into the Christian hymn. He must have slept for a long time, for when he was roused he felt cramped and cold, and the early carts were rattling over the bridge. A policeman flashed his lamp upon him, and shook him roughly. "Get out of this, young fellow, get to your bed; you will be sober by noon," said the officer. Bokrie felt the animal wake in him; the new spiritual force was off guard. The blood mounted to his brain; his fingers tingled. In

another moment rage would have mastered him, and the habit of the old brute life asserted itself. Just then he saw the picture of the graveyard garden outlined on the dark background. Christina looked at him in wonder; he felt the fire of the Voice within him. By the first great effort of self-control, he seized the reins of speech and motion, and they obeyed him. Without a word he returned to the Embankment and followed the course of the river.

The new day of labor had broken upon the city, although the sky was hardly gray. Bokrie left the river at Blackfriars, but returned to it once more at London Bridge. He leaned upon the parapet and looked eastward across the confused masts and spires. Behind the haze of mist and smoke there grew a patch of orange, a spatter of dull brown-red, and he knew that the sun was coming. He exulted at the thought that the sun which had left him a brute would find him a man. No backward sweep of his nature had deprived him of his gift. He belonged to the great company of the heavens; he would live on in the infinite reaches of time and space. He lifted his cap to the Great Unseen, and then he remembered Christina. Why should not he think of her as the highest of earth to him? He had been saved by her compassion from himself. She had led him by the silken cord of her pity to the doors of eternal life. There she stood—a pure

priestess—and made intercession for him. Her prayer had swung the heavy hinge of gold, and as the glory broke upon him he learned the prayer for himself.

Do not children climb up to God across their mothers' breasts and fathers' knees? Has not the Deity made human love the stepping-stone by which we reach to his Fatherhood? Did he not take the same way when he came down to us in the person of his Well-beloved? These were the thoughts which rose in Bokrie's mind as he turned back to his lodging. He would wait until the day was fully awake before he presented himself to the woman he loved. She should have the first offering of his new powers, and under her advice he would take the first steps on the opened road. There was no remorse for sin to mingle its bitterness with his rejoicing. The things of which he was now ashamed he had done in time past ignorantly. But the dread of a return to them made him shudder. He committed himself to the Highest Strength, and felt at peace.

XVII.

He.—The love of to-day is a warm and living thing; it is sufficient for the present. After death another sort if you like.

She.—No, no. The love I desire must live beyond the shadows. Else I will take the hands invisible, and share, even now, in the passion which shall endure for ever.

"WHEN do you say Christina means to marry him?" asked Mrs. Fallowfett, as the family had a few moments together in the week before Christmas.

"She does not intend to marry him," answered her daughter. "He is to leave for his native part of Africa immediately, and she will return to Union Vineyard. I think she wants to start some further scheme; but I don't suppose they will work together."

"Worse and worse," said Mrs. Fallowfett. "I thought that the girl would never come to good, in spite of the fuss made about her. It was only a flash in the pan; my first opinion was right."

"You are both wrongly informed," put in Gregory Fallowfett, throwing aside his newspaper. "Forest Bokrie is sane enough at the present time. I don't pretend to understand all that has happened, but Christina has managed to cure him, and there is

nothing else between them. But this Bokrie has played the game a little too long, and now he has to pay up the stakes. His lungs are hopelessly out of order—so the doctors say—and he can't look forward to a long life. They say that he may hang on a bit in Africa—that is, on the high, dry plateau. If he goes to that Union Vineyard, he will simply stumble into his grave."

"She is going there," said Vesper.

"Yes, I know," her father replied. "She is better with her uncle, teaching the blacks. That is the mischief of concentrating all your life on one object. If the object grows too good, or dies, you are left stranded. Now, a girl might take up art, and there would be no end to it; or society, which renews its youth every season. She might even discard one lover and be on with a new one. Yes, I see that I am on dangerous ground. What is the matter, Vesper?"

"Nothing at all. Of course you know that Vincent Gracebroke is keeping Forest Bokrie company in the train of Christina?"

"Surely he has not been ordered by his doctor to Africa?" exclaimed Mrs. Fallowfett.

"I don't think she wants him," answered Vesper; "in fact, I am sure she does not. But she has a passion for reforming men. She keeps them dangling after her with the idea that she is going to save

their souls. They like it until the crisis comes; then she is indignant at being misunderstood, and drives them away."

"You will not find Vesper give way to such trashy nonsense," said Mrs. Fallowfett. "She will never give you one-half the trouble which your ward has brought upon you. Wash your hands of the whole business, and hand Christina over to her uncle."

"I am afraid, my dear, that I have anticipated your good advice. I pay Christina her quarterly income, enclose a few lines of counsel with the check—just as some people send a tract with an ordinary business letter—and there it comes to an end. But Vesper does not even disturb my digestion with the shadow of trouble. She has permitted that Gracebroke to slip away without the embarrassment of an interview. Yes, I know that there is someone else, and don't mind so long as I can distinguish between number one and two, and don't exchange their Christain names awkwardly."

Vesper listened demurely, as if the sacrifice of both numbers would not have been a difficult matter to her, and that she could gently produce a third name after a reputable delay. Gregory Fallowfett admired Christina, but took her to be a splendid fool; yet her very folly seemed to be a corrective of the hard world, which tainted with its sordid motives the finer texture of womanhood. He saw clearly

enough that the emotional nature of womankind would make for itself a more dangerous outlet if denied the luxury of religious expression.

The New Year came, and with it Christina completed her arrangements for leaving England. There was nothing to keep her, no fresh enterprise to engage her thought; no clinging hands of love to detain her. Bokrie required her no longer; he almost promised to be her teacher as well as her protector. There was an ache at her heart mingled with the satisfaction. The situation would soon become a strained one. She could not keep him about her under the altered conditions. It was with a sense of relief that she heard the imperative medical order for him to get away from England. She did not understand its gravity, or realize that it meant a sentence of death. She wished Bokrie to start first, and she would follow in a little while. The Fallowfetts did not want her; the professor had gone back to his work in disgust with all experiments in reformation, and she was only in the way of his two maiden sisters. She might join a sisterhood; but Africa beckoned to her. The time soon shortened for Bokrie. His few friends almost pushed him on shipboard, urging him to escape before the east wind of the English spring swept over the threshold, and claimed its victims.

Gracebroke had not seen her since the brief inter-

view in Hyde Park, but he had spent an afternoon more than once in the East End. Of course he could easily have found her had he tried to do so, but he shrank from a call, yet was prepared to risk a chance encounter. The influence of the girl could sometimes be shut out of his life for days together. A bout of serious work, a round of excitement, wine, and light women, would keep the face of Christina away, or at worst would only permit a gentle specter to haunt him. When, however, an interval of rest or reflection befell him, the image of the girl and the fascination of her pure enthusiasm were restored. Taken at his own standard, his life was pitifully meager. He had money enough, but ambition was dying down, and he found his appetite for repeated doses of rank pleasure a failing capacity. He was not animal enough to limit his enjoyment to the animal kingdom. He had ignored the spiritual element, and doubted whether he had not made a blunder. Pure intellectual pleasure he found was hardly a possibility without a consideration for the spiritual. The intellectual would not work amiably with the brute animal, and was pining for a better mate. Again, by accident, he came across Christina. She had been with Lucy on an excursion to one of the show spots on the river, and the two were passing through Charing Cross station. A man raised his hat, approached them, and Christina saw that the

interview must be given. Telling Lucy to go to the waiting room, she held out her hand to Gracebroke and remarked that it was a greeting and a farewell in one, for she was returning to Africa. He was resolved not to lose her directly, and, after touching her fingers, he walked slowly across the open pavement, and she unconsciously fell into his pace.

"I am leaving also," he said, "this very night. Spare me a minute or two; I have plenty of time for the train. I am going first to Paris, then to Vienna, perhaps to Constantinople. It may be south of the Alps, Florence, Naples, Egypt, Tunis, Heaven only knows. You have ruined me for good and all, Christina. If you are going to Africa, I must touch the soil of the same continent, even if you are thousands of miles away. Tunis, Egypt, let it be there."

There was passion in his voice, although he kept it at the well bred pitch of conversation. A porter came up at that moment with the rugs and bags.

"The boat-train—get me a smoking compartment to myself if you can," Gracebroke answered. Christina had secured a moment for gathering together her forces.

"I have not done you the least harm," she said.

"Why do you not leave me alone?" he asked. "I

should have married Vesper, and have done all that I am capable of doing. Why did you thrust your ideal upon me—the beauty of your moral womanhood? I was contented enough before I met you, both with myself and with others. You have no right to abandon me to my own wretchedness."

Up came the porter again. "Did you tell me, sir, to register your luggage through to Paris?"

Gracebroke turned upon him savagely: "Register it to hell it you like—to Paris, of course."

"You are most unjust," replied Christina. "I never interfered between you and Vesper; never gave you the least encouragement." In her indignation she had stopped to deliver her defense. An engine screamed like the spirit of discord; a telegraph bell beat; people scurried past, jostling them in their hurry for the trains.

"Hear me, Christina; it is for the last time," he exclaimed; "I have only ten minutes. Bokrie has gone; now take me in hand. You don't love me, I can quite understand, but you can raise me if you will. Talk to me; let me visit you sometimes; your atmosphere will give me a sense of home. I know I am a difficult subject; it will take a long time, but I shall get self-respect in the place of my lost self-esteem."

"You must know that is out of the question, Mr. Gracebrcke. I am going to Africa to join my

uncle at Union Vineyard." The next moment she regretted the statement, for he caught at it eagerly.

"Then I will go there also. Union Vineyard, the station your father managed—your birthplace—how do you reach it? It will do me far more good than Egypt or Tunis."

"Your presence will be painful, and the situation will become an impossible one."

"Why will you not take me for a husband, Christina? That position at any rate would not be an impossible one. No man would be bound to a woman by closer ties; the salvation of his soul, the fulfilling of his heart's desire. Nothing should be lost to you, and surely something would be gained. You are made for sweeter things than even spiritual emotion—the tenderness of home, the love of children."

At first the appeal went to her heart; he had done his work fairly well. The noise of the station dulled, and for a few seconds she saw a picture—a warm fireside, the children at her feet, the baby in her arms. It was only a vision which flashed before her, and then she was herself again. She woke to see the flame which had kindled in the eyes of Gracebroke at the momentary hesitation she had shown.

"No, no," she hastened to say. "You would

grow tired; the reformer would lose her charm for you; we are better apart. I cannot think of it."

"One last word," he whispered, as the porter returned, anxious for his shilling, to warn Grace-broke of the train about to start—"if I cannot find peace anywhere, may I see you once again?"

Christina did not give him an answer, for in his farewell he had drawn her by the hand he would not release up to the barrier; but she did not resent the last pressure he gave. Then he passed out of sight. The signal lights were obscured for a moment by a gusty cloud of steam, and the train had started for the coast.

Lucy had been amusing herself meanwhile with the brilliant advertisements of seaside towns and the humors of the travelers. It occurred to her that she would not object to a lover on her own account. He must be something better than a negro—a fine fellow with a good position in the merchant service, colored, of course, to the shade she admired. She returned one day to the house of the Racer ladies with a gallant specimen captured in action near the docks, after a short engagement. He had certainly too much negro blood to satisfy her, but he was unexceptionable in his language, smoked a real cigar, and had exchanged handkerchiefs with the victrix as a sign of submission. Lucy was innocently proud of her conquest, and brought him into

port with the utmost good faith. But Martha heard a man's voice in the kitchen, and Phyllis, greatly daring, descended the stairs to encounter the enemy. Lucy was astonished at the distress of the two ladies, unconscious of having transgressed the bounds of propriety.

Christina, on her return home, could hardly restrain a smile when she discovered the cause for the tremor which had shaken the household; but she explained to Lucy that such freedom was not suited to London. The girl was anxious to see more of her admirer, and on the following day her mistress sent to the proper people for a character. The gay deceiver had at least three reputed wives in different ports, and this brought Lucy's romance to an end. But the household did not recover its former peace. Martha and Phyllis both agreed in regarding the Zulu girl with suspicion. Then Martha lost a brooch and accused poor Lucy of the theft. Phyllis could not offer any evidence, but expressed an opinion that jackdaws and black people were equally tempted to snap up trinkets, as they were both fond of bright objects. After a few days of tears and protestations the brooch was found in a drawer which Martha had overlooked. Christina felt it was full time to go, and she only waited for the professor from Cambridge, to bid him farewell, When he arrived he took Christina to task for leav-

ing England. If she must go, then let her return as soon as possible, and settle in South Kensington for a steady course of art or science. Bokrie—start the fellow into the interior; let him carry his music hall songs, or his hymns, whichever he preferred, to the benighted inhabitants of the forest land, and become a prophet in his own country.

"I am going back to my old work, as I have told you," said Christina coldly to all this.

"I don't want to be rude, Miss Ruefold; but, my good young lady, how can you talk about old work? At your age everything is new; you have not a past in the ordinary sense of the word. I don't want you to bury yourself in the African desert for the next ten years."

"Thank you; but Bokrie requires me for a short time longer."

"I thought you had mended him in your fashion," said the professor. "Will he not run by himself without further tinkering? What was the transforming operation worth which turned the chrysalis into a butterfly saint?"

Christina described in her best way the scene in the graveyard.

"That, after all, proves nothing," said Racer, with decision. "Your hero was worked to a pitch of emotion by your influence over him. You admit that you urged him strongly to take your sugges-

tion. He desired greatly to please you, as you know quite well. Under the hypnotic power which you exercised, unconsciously, he persuaded himself that he had experienced a great change. Then you confirmed the delusion, if I may so call it, by requiring him to live up to the hypothesis."

"How is it that he continues to live the altered life when he is out of my reach?" she asked.

"How do you know that? You have only his own statement, made doubtless to please you," he answered.

"You have never seen him, professor, or you would not doubt the truth of what I tell you," she continued.

"Then why are you taking any more trouble?" he put in promptly. The girl looked down and blushed.

"My mother came from that far away region. I want to send a message through Bokrie to that distant home. There is a thread stretching over land and sea which draws me to the country."

"You don't mean to tell me that you are going to discover it all alone, or, worse still, accompanied by that wild fellow?" exclaimed Racer, aghast at his own question.

"I would sacrifice myself if I thought that I could accomplish it," she replied, lifting her face, which had cleared from the momentary shame.

"I never heard so mad a project in all my life," muttered the professor, and then he raised his voice. "Do listen to me, Miss Ruefold; I have lived longer than you have, and that counts for something. There is only one rule of life—common sense: to do the best possible with things which our present senses can grasp. Science, art, literature, commerce, handicrafts—all these may be weighed and measured. The process and results are known. The imagination is a most unsafe guide; it is as lawless as a marsh-light, and will land you in a quagmire."

XVIII.

The over-seeing heaven is sad with the fading color of the evening, but brightens, at the last, with the smile of the afterglow, for it discovers the secret of a new day.

WHEN she had lived for a week at Union Vineyard Christina found that the past two years receded, and that her varied experience became condensed to a mere episode. Certainly there were fresh batches of children in the schoolhouse, and a new missionary and his wife had joined the station; but otherwise matters proceeded in the order which she had known from childhood. Marcus Ruefold conducted the business part of the work much in his brother's method, and Christina received a painful shock when she entered the room hastily and saw the figure bending over her father's desk in the well-known attitude. Bokrie was not a favorite in the house; for Mrs. Ruefold objected to those rough habits which civilization had not corrected, and Christianity had overlooked.

Marcus expressed a doubt whether Bokrie would live to return from his journey; but he contributed with Christina to the cost of the expedition. The first part of the distance would be by water, in a

canoe with native servants, and the fatigue would be little. Afterward a path must be struck through a belt of forest of unknown breadth. Beyond that all was mystery, and Bokrie would have to depend upon his instinct, or to rake the ashes of his memory for a few facts. Marcus doubted whether threat or promise of reward would overcome the fears of the porters required for the forest march. He picked out the best known men from the neighboring villages, and gave them a liberal contract for the work, with a large sum in view if they did not desert their leader.

Bokrie discarded his European clothes and adopted the dress of a local chief, with an additional blanket to make up for the loss of the accustomed covering. It took him several days to get a familiar acquaintance with his new gear, but it gave him a dignity in appearance, for in his European clothes he had been always more or less grotesque. He came to the mission house on the evening before he started. He would be off with the first light on the following day. He looked formidable with the weapons in his belt, and his lofty figure towered yet higher with the plumes in his head-dress. Christina could hardly trust herself to speak; but she gave him encouragement in a few broken sentences, and repeated the Lord's Prayer with him. Then there was a gap of silence, and she thought he

would leave her without finding a word; but at last he spoke.

"Miss Ruefold—Christina, I am going at your bidding, and because the Voice has called me to it. If I never reach the land—if you get certain news of my failure—will you take up the mission? You remember the Virgin Mother to whom I knelt as to yourself. You were angry with me then; but it was true after all. God works through virgin souls to save us. He has worked through you for my good. You may save my race if you will only go to them. No harm can happen to you; neither man nor gun will be required to protect you; the angels will gather about you. Will you promise me?"

The room was very quiet; she could hear the clock chipping off the seconds of earthly life. The lamp on the table threw a vast shadow of Bokrie against the wall. It seemed as if Death himself stood awaiting for him in the background. The plain room became a solemn place, and she realized the meaning of the oath by which she pledged herself as she said faintly, "I promise you."

"I want you to confirm your promise to me," he said, leaning forward. They were far beyond earthly passion; she understood his meaning; the confirmation was sacramental; she kissed his cheek. Then he passed out of her sight forever.

When Mrs. Ruefold was told at breakfast that

Bokrie had actually gone, she said that she thought it was quite as well, for the sake of the new converts.

"What do you mean by that remark?" demanded her husband.

"He hardly ever came to the church services," said Mrs. Ruefold.

"I know that," replied Marcus; "but you must make some allowance for the man's experience. He did not find his God in one of our Ebenezers."

"It is a bad example to the others," his wife retorted. "If everyone is to worship under his own green tree, what is to become of the collection?"

Many weeks passed before they had any news of Bokrie. It first came in a report from the Catholic mission, that the party which had gone forth were delayed by the serious illness of their leader. In the next account it was stated that he had recovered and moved on; afterward, that Bokrie with two companions had entered the forest. Then followed a blank month. Finally, several members of the expedition straggled in with the vague rumor of a disaster, and on their heels followed the two faithful companions who had stuck to their master to the end. By them it was stated that Bokrie was shaken by his illness, but he resolved to persevere, although the day's march grew shorter and shorter. At last they met some big men—hunters—who had come into the forest from the other side. These men

were going to attack them, but Bokrie said some words to them in a strange language, and they looked surprised. Then they treated Bokrie gently, and gave him food and shelter. After a few days Bokrie talked to the men with ease, and told his negro friends that he was soon to die because the language of his childhood had come back to him. He gave them a skin with written characters upon it, a rude gold chain, and the English Bible which he carried in his pocket. They were to give these three things into the hands of Miss Ruefold, who would reward them. Presently, he grew so weak that he could not stand, and one morning he begged to be carried out of the hut and to be laid at the foot of a great tree, where, by looking up, he could see the open sky. There, staring for the sunlight, he died, and beneath it he was buried.

The skin was covered with unintelligible marks which suggested a message of some kind. On the white leaf of the Bible was written in English:

"To CHRISTINA RUEFOLD:

"Wear the chain and show the skin. They will get for you the good will of my countrymen. The promise—my last love.

"F. BOKRIE."

The promise which Christina had given was a secret even from Marcus; but when the news of

Bokrie's fate became known, she revealed her intention, and the station was soon ringing with the proposal. Her old friend, Mrs. Tartilt, came to see her in great alarm.

"Dear Christina, I am in fault about this," she began penitently. "It was I who told you about your mother when I was taking you down to the steamer. I was a foolish woman to do so, especially as your poor dear father had left you in the dark."

"I was certain to have heard of it sooner or later," replied Christina. "Don't give yourself any trouble about it."

"I can't help troubling, my dear. You have been educated so well by your poor father, and have got into such nice society. If you had not learned the truth about yourself, you would have passed that creature Bokrie as if he had been a dancing bear. What right had he to cloud your cheerful life?"

"He is dead, you must remember," said Christina softly.

"And so he ought to be; a pretty story we have heard about him. Now that he is out of the way, you can begin life over again, my dear; you are young enough to make a fresh beginning."

"I can't go back to England; I have worn out my welcome there."

"Then stay here, Christina, and teach in the school. It is bad enough here, but worse among

savages. Or, if you must have so very religious a life, turn Catholic and live with the Sisters, as your mother did."

Here Mrs. Rueford added her own stock of argument. "I have not said much to you, Christina," she began, "because I cannot believe that you have seriously resolved to do it. We have lost Zephyr, and I want a daughter to be my right hand. I want a girl to take into my arms and kiss when the heart-ache comes on."

"Dear aunt, you will make the parting more bitter if you talk like that; perhaps I may be spared to come back."

"And your uncle; have you thought how he will miss you? He is resting upon your help in his work far more than he knows. Then your school, the black children—the nice way you have with the girls. It seems to me that you are running away from duty instead of taking up your cross."

"Don't you think it is a heavier cross that I am trying to lift?" asked the girl.

"To speak candidly, I don't think it is. I can quite understand that you find it dull here, but we are not staying here forever. In another year Marcus will have had enough of it, and we shall go home. Or if you must have excitement you can have it immediately. That Mr. Gracebroke has written to your uncle. He means to come and see

you, whether we ask him or not, but it would be much nicer to send him an invitation."

"That is the best settlement of the whole difficulty," contributed Mrs. Tartilt. "Girls are restless until they have someone of their own to care for. Women must bow down to something. Our Lizzie was always following one whim or other until she went back to England and married. You, my dear, turned your Bokrie into a sort of heathenish curate, because you felt, without admitting it even to yourself, that he would never grow into a husband."

Marcus guessed the purpose of Christina before she told him. He suggested to her that a party of explorers might be glad to avail themselves of her co-operation. She stoutly resisted this proposal, and said that she would make her way alone. The introduction of the ordinary trader would be a calamity to the people she wished to serve. The Zulu girl had declared that she would not be separated from her mistress, and Christina had consented to take her. That was all the escort she required, except the porters, who would carry her things, until they met the strangers in the forest. Then she would trust herself entirely to them.

"I will go with you through the whole of the river journey," said Marcus. "If in the course of twelve months no message comes from you, I shall

raise a party, follow in your track, and either deliver you from captivity or avenge your death."

"You think that I am doing right?" asked Christina humbly, when she had got her way.

"My child—for you are as dear to me as a child of my own—I am contented to stand aside, if it is God who has spoken to you."

"Don't you think that I shall succeed?"

"You may call down the Spirit upon this race as you did upon Bokrie," he replied. "But you will not make them the happier for it. It must always be so, I suppose. The reconciliation of the lower nature with the spiritual is only accomplished after a ferment. 'The dragons in their slime' had a cheerful day, and, 'red in tooth and claw,' fought out their quarrels with hardy indifference, and then died like dragons. You may succeed. I cannot say. Some races, as well as some individuals, drop out by the way. They never reach the promised land; their carcasses fall in the wilderness. It is a hard climb which this humanity of ours has to make in order to disencumber itself of the brute."

XIX.

Behind this prism show of earth and air,
Beneath this web of human thought and ways,
Throbs the vast ocean that defies our gaze,
Heaving in solemn darkness ; everywhere
It flings to shore the argosies of prayer ;
Questions, like pallid sea-birds, wheel in maze
Of circling doubt, and ghostly voices raise.
Wait ! there are signs of change ; earth grows more fair,
A subtle charm unfolds in land and sea,
New meanings steal into life's strange unrest,
And common toil with dignity invest,
A sense of something better still to be ;
God's answer to the urgent soul's request,
The cast up sea—wrack of Eternity.

DURING the few days that the barge steamer was running up stream, Christina had time to reflect upon the sacrifice she was about to make. She went through the scenes of the past two years as every revolution of the stern wheel carried her away from them. The full tide of life still beat in her veins, and the world of civilization looked most attractive as she was parting with it, probably forever. The trial of martyrdom must always be tedious waiting in cool blood for the signal to enter the arena. The lion and the leopard look worse when viewed through the chink of the prison door.

They disembarked at the confluence of the two

rivers and rested in the house of a European before starting on their longer voyage by canoe. Christina took advantage of this delay to visit the Catholic mission and to ask questions about her mother's early life. The Sisters were willing enough to tell her all they could remember, and to show her her mother's room, with the crucifix still above the bed, and one or two books with her name on the title page. There had been many additions to the house during the two-and-twenty years, but the strange story had always maintained its interest. Several of the older Sisters had taught Marie, and the Lady Superior—then only a novice—well remembered her. This good woman had a long talk with Christina, and was disturbed at the course which the girl proposed to follow. The news spread through the houses, and Christina found herself raised to the pedestal of a saint. The younger members wanted her to go on: for the love of adventure had not died out of their hearts, but the Lady Superior frowned upon this levity.

"I am grieved, my dear child, that you should undertake the journey. It is a wild enterprise in which you may easily lose your life. I like your enthusiasm, but it needs direction. You want repose—to wait for the will of God to be expressed distinctly. Stay with us for a time; suffer the truest form of faith to exercise its calming influence

upon you. You shall not be pestered with appeals to change the habit of your religion. Your days will be passed pleasantly; you may teach in the school, if you like, or visit the sick with the Sisters. Come to the chapel if you prefer, or stay away if you please. The dear Christ will look down upon your peaceful sleep every night; the chapel bell will wake you every morning. Stay for six months, and then decide for yourself. We had your mother here; we have some claim through her upon you."

It was a tempting invitation; the group of buildings seemed bathed in a cloud of peace. Christina felt as if an angel barred the way, and invited her to repose. But she took out her pocket Bible, and read again the message sent to her by the man lying dead in the forest. She unrolled the parchment letter; she fingered the golden ornament, and then conquered the temptation. Indeed, after this, she was not again troubled with any misgivings.

Marcus had done all that he could for her comfort, but there was of necessity more privation the farther they retreated into the wilderness. The supplies from the villages were uncertain, and a prolonged picnic on tinned food and tea became monotonous. It did not, however, affect Christina's spirits. "This is better than we shall get later on," she would say to Lucy, when anything went wrong with the larder. Marcus, on the other hand, was

growing more uncomfortable. He felt the responsibility heavier as he drew near to the reality of parting with his niece. It was very well to look at it from a distance, through the haze of romance, but who would acquit him of the charge of having sent a delicate girl—his own brother's child—to destruction? The horror of the situation grew upon him as the banks closed in upon the narrowing river, and the loneliness of the scene impressed them. Once they passed a ruined village, wrecked by fire, and abandoned. There were bleached bones lying unburied. He shuddered as he thought of the creatures who might have wrought this havoc, but it was probable that they had crossed the trail of an Arab party on a slave hunt. There was a story which reached them, and disturbed Marcus still more. It was that a white man was following them up the river. He had hired a swift canoe, and had promised the men double wages if they overtook the party in front. At first he thought that it was only a ruse to detain them for the sake of his custom, but the tale was repeated at another village, and this time more circumstantially. It was said that a messenger had been sent forward with a letter for the white lady, and that the pursuer was a young man who was neither a trader nor an official. Marcus hardly believed the story, and thought that Christina would probably treat it with indifference.

To his surprise she accepted it as true, and told Marcus that she thought it might be Vincent Gracebroke.

"He wrote to me, I remember," said Marcus. "He spoke of coming up to Union Vineyard, but I did not take his letter seriously; the shooting is much better on the other coast. What do you say to it?"

"Go on, of course, as fast as we can."

"I don't want to interfere, miss," said Lucy, "but he is a nice young man. I saw him for myself at the railway station in London. Don't you think he might have a chance?"

"It is kinder to him, Lucy, to avoid seeing him. Why, he might be obstinate, and follow us; then his life would be in danger."

The risk of complication through Gracebroke's arrival was the tonic needed to overcome the scruples which Marcus felt. When they reached a clearer space on the bank, which was the landing place, according to the native account, a curious story met them. For weeks past men of an unknown race had been seen in the neighborhood. They were not marauders, but had given the local natives to understand that they had arrived from a far country to receive a white woman who was coming up the river. This account was given before the advent of the voyagers was known. Christina at once declared

that she would throw herself upon their protection, and secure their confidence at the outset.

A day was spent in making the last arrangements, and in writing a few letters. In the afternoon they heard that the stranger who had followed them was only a few miles away, and would arrive that same evening. Christina gave orders to the porters to take up their loads. The last words between Christina and Marcus were spoken. He stood upon the bank for a little while and watched the small band file across the open land, until they were lost to view among the bushes and broken ground. He thought that some dark figures came out of the wood beyond to meet them, but of that he could not be certain. He directed the canoes to be moored to the opposite shore, for he determined to remain near at hand for several days.

An hour later, as the sun was setting, the stranger arrived. Marcus watched him from a distance, and could recognize Gracebroke in his rough dress and sun helmet. Gracebroke put questions to the men right and left, and then climbed the hill and swept the country with his glass. There was nothing to be seen. It was impossible to follow that night, and it would be equally hopeless on the morrow. A mere dash into the forest might endanger the girl's life. He had been wandering from city to city, yet he could not forget Christina. The passion which

had driven him after her blended a spiritual want with an earthly affection, and the double hunger famished him. In her presence he would unsay all his unbelief, and enter any heaven she opened for him. Bokrie was dead; there was no other personal claim upon her. Had he not almost won her when he parted from her at Charing Cross? He had kept up his spirit throughout the long race, and now it was too late. As he stood, silent and dejected, the sun went down, and the darkness, a black veil, slipped suddenly through the fingers of the night. The distant scene was lost, and he felt that Christina had passed from him forever. With her the hope of the Unseen had also gone, and he lifted his face to the sky in a last farewell. As he did so a point of light stole out of the gloom, and through the black mesh of the cloud there floated into sight the liquid splendor of a single star.

THE END.