1918

Cinderella in the South

Arthur Shearly Cripps

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CINDERELLA IN THE SOUTH

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CINDERELLA IN THE SOUTH

SOUTH AFRICAN TALES

BY

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'LYRA EVANGELISTICA,' ETC.

OXFORD
B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

MCMXVIII

To C. H. CRIPPS

FRIEND AND KINSMAN.

GRACE me these veld spoils rude with name of thine !
Mine's been the luck not thine these long years now
To tread the veld. What other use had'st thou,
Hunter and Horseman, made of chances mine !
Nor horns nor heads have I to give to thee,
Yet spoils of sorts—veld spoils—I bring with me.

A. S. C.

Eukeldoorn, Mashonaland.
October 11th, 1917.

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PROLOGUE

[AFRICA AND HER SISTERS.]

SOME fifteen years now I have been her guest,
For all this land's hers, tho' she does not reign.
She's but a ward, at what late age she'll gain
Her freedom and her kingdom, it were best
To risk no surmise rash. E'en now she's drest
Sometimes in skins. Give her ground-nuts and grain,
Cattle and thatch'd hut, then she'll not complain,
She's happier-hearted than her Sisters blest.

Her Sisters blest! Of them what shall I say?
I like them better when they keep away,
And toil in their own lands, not loll in hers.
They use her ill. She's not so old as they.
She drudges for them. But her youth confers
A charm on her they've lost these many years.

CINDERELLA IN THE SOUTH

THE THING THAT HATH BEEN

'WHAT'S the good of him?' said the bar-tender to me. 'If he could tell us how the Ruins came he might be worth a forty-pound cheque every month, or at least a twenty one. But he can't.'

We were discussing the new appointment of a Government Curator at the Mabgwe Ruins. I approved it, the bar-tender did not. I pleaded that he was a bit exacting, that the Curator had a very cold scent to puzzle out, and that he had tried—plodding about from ruins to ruins, moling and sapping and mining, not to speak of writing to the Rhodesian Press. Afterwards I shouldered my knapsack, sought counsel with my carriers as to ways and means, crossed the river and took the Ruins road. A motor-car hurtled past me when I was within two miles. Its driver had been pointed out to me as a Jo'burg magnate; his passengers I did not know, but I was soon to know them. I was the first to reach the Ruins after all; for their arrival time being one o'clock, and their halting-place a hotel, Civilization demanded that they should lunch there.

I drank from the fair water by the temple's western approach, and sat down to smoke under a tree in the precincts. The big cone of the main tower was just in sight. I had seen the walls before, and was in no analytical mood; synthesis was enough for me. I took in with my delighted eyes a roofless dome worthy to be a temple of some sort, even if it were not, a blue roof that bettered mere human aspiration, débris testifying to earthly incompleteness, a broken column with its *memento mori*—all these were simmering in my vision and my judgment. I half dozed until the voices of the lunchers began to interest me. They were doing the rounds rather hastily, lunch having cut into their time, so short at its very best.

A Church dignitary from our own territory was with them. He introduced himself to me, and he also introduced an engineer. He was a patriotic Rhodesian, that dignitary, and denounced McIver, who had dared to assign to the Ruins a native origin.

'Such nonsense!' he said. 'Believe me, my dear sir, I know the natives, and I know the natives never built these walls. Poor creatures; they want firm handling, don't they? They're always in want of bossing-up. But as for this display of art, they haven't it in them, and they never had.'

The engineer did not seem interested in what was said, or in what I answered. He was a man of few words. He went off to the eastern wall, whither we followed him. I found him poking about there with a stick. The Jo'burg charioteer was soon fussing along, hurrying on tea-time. 'He didn't want to

get a dose of fever this trip,' he said. He had heard about our unhealthy season up north, and the month was now April. He wanted to be back by sunset. So it came to pass that his party went off to tea with but side-glances at the hill-fastness.

'I'm neither a baboon nor a nigger,' said their host, when I proposed that he should go up. After all, it was good-natured of him to motor the dignitary out, I considered. He himself affected no sort of interest in antiquities, and the dignified antiquarian under his care was so wearily keen. I went to tea with them, postponing my reveries to camping time and night. It was not until we were eating guavas at the end of our meal that the engineer came in. Then the Jo'burger told him to hurry up, and went off to cherish his car. As to the engineer, his scanty tea-time was not left in peace. The dignitary lectured him on the true and patriotic theory of Ophir, on Astarte's worship, and Solomon's gold. He answered very little, but he hinted that there were difficulties. His lecturer glowed, and appealed to the Curator, who had just come in, bent and shaken with fever. Unhappily, yet happily for me, he trod on one of the curator's archæological corns and involved himself in an apology. Before he was out of the wood I had asked the engineer a question or two.

'No time to talk now,' he said, 'too much cackle. Come and see me in the town. Or, if I miss you there, I may see you on the road, mayn't I? I'm due out your way in three days.'

Soon after he was petroled away. I went to camp in a clearing, to sup, to smoke, to read my guide-book. At last the night aged, and the moon rose. My carriers slept. I looked up in the night's starred face and beheld 'Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance' there. But would I ever live to trace them by 'the magic hand of chance,' as Keats called the grace of God? I began again to mumble the lines of my guide-book, and found them rather bare and dry. I looked up at the vast tapering walls. Why was there no script there? After all, that trenchant argument outweighed a many arguments; it scaled up like Brennus's sword, and made for a clear issue. I looked at the sleeping carriers. Did they hold the secret, not in tradition, not in history, but in the fleshy tables of the heart and brain and aspiration of their race? I went to sleep and dreamed of men building, building, building. They were building stone kraals for their sacred trusts of kine, chipping and carving away at their totem hawks and their crocodiles, breaking limbs and necks over a sky-high tower, with stones for their bricks, and no slime to make them mortar. How they sang over their work, and how it grew! Talk of Troy's walls; if only Kaffirs would start building a Troy, or a Palace of Art, or a Spiritual City, how the work would go forward to the music of them! I could hear all the parts in their melodies—the checking and countering and refrains and responses of them. But, before I woke, the parts were merged in full chorus. With that unison music in my ears I rose

and knelt and rose again hastily. Then I ran round to the eastern wall under the zig-zag patterns. I came only just in time to see the sunrise by so doing.

It was three days after that I caught up Spenser, the Government engineer.

'I have seen buildings in North Africa,' he told me. 'They weren't much like those at Mabgwe. In the north, if they built with stones they built with great slabs. But those granite flakes at Mabgwe were easy for a primitive people to manage —a very primitive people. Very primitive, or why did they build on sand when, six inches deeper, they might have founded on bed-rock? They didn't understand arches, seemingly. They weren't very careful about bond in building, were they? Nor were they very careful to break joint outside, much less inside, so far as I can judge. And the script; where is it? And the graves; where are they? If they were Semites, why didn't they write? If they were Semites, why didn't they bury? . . . But it isn't as easy as it looks, the riddle. There are one or two jagged ends—that conical tower, for instance.'

We camped that evening near a Mission. I admired the oblong iron-roofed church there. It wasn't my style of art, but it seemed to me fair of its kind.

'Quite good,' growled my expert friend, and he said no more at the time. He spoke more freely over a last pipe.

'I'm sorry,' he said, 'not to take more interest

in this sort of thing. Only, after all, it's African-built, and Europeans could do the thing a bit better, couldn't they? This sort of thing seems rather a wrong line of advance. If I hadn't seen Mabgwe so lately I mightn't mind so much.'

They showed us to a hut, a very clean one. 'That's better; that's ever so much better,' he said. On the wall was a rude frieze in Bushman painting style, but white, not red. I enlightened him as to tsenza work, as to how you could use the cool watery roots like crayons.

'Why, that's surely Jezebel looking out of that grain-bin,' he hazarded. 'But what are those?'

'The dogs to eat her,' I answered.

They were horrid little whelps with human heads. I told him about certain night-fears common among natives. 'It was a solid Christian who dared to paint these,' I surmised.

'If you could only get Africans to believe what Christians believed in the thirteenth century you might see signs and wonders yet,' he said.

He has not been our way again since April, but I met him at the Pro-Cathedral Pageant in January. It was organized by a Pageant Master—our mutual friend the dignitary. Therein Asia—King Solomon and Sheba's Queen—were represented. Africa was relegated to her proper Cinderella and Plantation Chorus part. 'Poor creatures!' Spenser said, with a grimace, and winked at me.

'Come, and I will show you a thing,' he said to me afterwards; 'a thing I chanced on in the Christ-

mas holidays. It's ten miles out. I want to inspan at six sharp to-morrow.'

I was guilty of three omissions next day. I cut a clerical meeting; I flouted the True Romance in the shape of the Pageant's second performance; I also missed the bazaar of St. Uriel's Native Church that was held on the Pageant ground. St. Uriel's structure had been put out to European contract; it was a very didactic building, so the Pageant-Master told us. We passed it on our way out to the kopje country.

'About as sensuously lovely as a Pills' advertisement,' was Spenser's comment. 'A good pity and terror purge.'

I sighed indulgently.

'It's very popular, I've heard, among the town boys. It's so very European to native eyes, so extra corrugated and angular.'

We came up at last to that which we sought—a huge ellipse and dome of stones and earth, rising and broadening under our very eyes. It was on a farm among the granite hills, many miles from Rosebery. 'It's only a glorified stone cattle-byre, and an intensified stone Kaffir hut,' Spenser commented. 'It's not even built the old Mabgwe way. These are only blocks of granite; a few of them broken, but not one of them dressed. And there's lots of mud to eke them out.'

'Yet there's hope in the thing. It's not an artistic dead-end like Saint Uriel's.' I pleaded.

One or two Europeans, very unskilled ones I

could see, had planned this bit of work, and taken part in it. They had made themselves at charges for it, though African gifts had not been wanting. They had, so to speak, coaxed their African pack on to try an old scent. Now the moving European spirit was gone home for months to England. Before he went the former rains had ruined some of the work. He had been too ambitious, too scornful of delay. Forewarned by Africans, he had pressed to a midsummer disaster. Now he had left Africans in charge. He had trusted them to go on. One Christian, in particular, he had trusted—his fellow and his master in building. The boy had built at a colonial's cattle-kraal once. His skill had multiplied as he built on at the great church, and now he was a master craftsman. Doggedly he was building up again the rain-ruined bastions. The work was going with a swing, if a slow one. The scent was no longer a cold one. The pack were belling and chiming over it, and they were running with their huntsman out of sight.

'I don't understand this bit of work properly,' Spenser said. 'What's made the dry bones live?'

'Inspiration,' I said reverently. 'Looked at in one way it's Art. Looked at all ways it's Religion. It's the same sort of thing as went on, I suppose, when the faith of sun and moon was a power. Now the faith of Christ is gathering force in the land. The land isn't an Italy, and our twentieth century isn't that old thirteenth century; yet look out for

the signs and wonders you spoke of. Likely enough they're to be expected.'

We went to the Pageant Master's lecture on the Mabgwe Ruins that night, when we had driven back to Rosebery. It was more interesting to me as a subjective study than an objective display of learning

'Poor creatures!' the lecturer said of the natives. 'Don't put them in a false light. Whatever claims they may have to equable treatment, they have no claim to be considered romantic. The ancient romance of this country is the romance of a nobler race—the romance of the Tyrian trader, Tyrian or Sabæan. Allow me but a trifling emendation, and Matthew Arnold's lines will serve to indicate that romance.' Substituting 'Zambesians' for 'Iberians,' he gave us the last lines of 'The Scholar Gipsy.' 'In that era of Tyre's trade,' he concluded, 'I place the golden age of our country—a golden age which under our own Imperial rule begins anew.'

'H'm,' said Spenser. 'That live Mashona building-boy's worth many dead Phœnicians—to me, at any rate. As to defining romance, we'd better agree to differ. "Do well unto thyself, and all men will speak well of thee," ' he went on, with a tang of bitterness. 'Jew-boys and Arabs mopped up trade when they were living, now they jump other men's kudos, being dead.'

'Never mind,' I said. 'Art for Art's sake, aspiration for aspiration's, faith for faith's! "And some

there be which have no memorial; who are perished as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born; and their children after them."'

'Never mind,' it was his turn to say. 'That granite kopje church is rising, and Magbwe Ruins stand—the quick and the dead. These shall both come up for judgment and get justice. Yes, if they have to wait for it till the Supreme Court of All holds session.'

NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD CHAMPION

WE were going on an expedition long before the morning light came. Our ship was an armed steamer—a converted cargo boat. We had reinforced our naval guns' crews and our Indian ship's guard by taking officers and native soldiers (askaris) aboard at a certain bay. We had reinforced our artillery by borrowing a Maxim from the shore. I had a guest on board that night—a cheerful padre. How he seemed to relish his craft, and how able I esteemed him. I was very raw at the work, and he helped me to understand what my defects were both in nature and grace. He had the sort of smile, I thought—the real, right sort—to warm a naval parishioner's heart. He was very keen on the new sort of thrills and experiences that he had sought for himself by coming aboard.

We reclined on camp beds high up on the bridge-deck, but we did not drop asleep when the electric light failed and faded. We asked each other's ages, and discussed parts of England as we had known them in more peaceful days; then we assured

one another that we wanted to rise early. We were to steam off on our sudden raid in the dark. Coffee had been ordered about 5.30; action might be expected to begin not much later than 6 a.m. We speculated as to whether it were true that our ship would have to face an old field gun's fire on the morrow, as well as a Maxim's. I was eloquent as I told how our four-inch gun might be expected to shake the ship. After that, in the dimness we talked shop; we had neither of us possibly had many easy openings for that ravishing employment lately.

Was it right to pray for our own side's success? I was steadfast in my scruples as to praying thus, my new-found friend was inclined to be a little scornful of them. 'Is there a God of the Germans fighting the English tribal God?' I asked rather irreverently, and my friend showed that he was shocked. I apologized. 'Let's leave the Supreme Power out,' I said. 'Let's consider the action of the saints in this war. Are they supposed to be scrapping like the gods in Homer—English Saint George against German Saint Michael—and so on?' But my friend did not seem very keen about either Homer or hagiology. He explained that he was a C.M.S. man, and not a mediævalist. The discussion languished, ere he murmured 'Good night.'

I slept rather fitfully. I was awake long before the ship moved away on her fierce errand. At last, when she had been steaming some while, I stole down in the dark to the bathroom. When I came out of it the grey twilight was beginning. I crept

aft and looked over the bulwark, wondering how far we were away now. The shore Maxim was in place there with plenty of sand bags about it, but the officer in charge of it was still stretched abed. His friend the Intelligence Officer, who had messed with us last night, was snoring on another bed beside him. I stood looking at a dusky island in the moonlight, and began praying a favourite prayer of mine for those times, asking God to let Saint Michael cover our heads in the day of battle. I muttered the prayer very low, but it appeared that somebody heard. A slim figure, seemingly in khaki, that I had not noticed, rose up from a seat on the sand bags.

'Are you praying something about battles?' it asked. I started, and assented clumsily.

'How does one pray about battles nowadays?' the investigator proceeded. He spoke in the friendliest way, and managed to set even me at ease. So I told him what I had prayed for.

'It sounds a fair sort of prayer; better than some I've heard,' he allowed, as he sat down again. 'Some people seem to forget the last lot of the Books in the Bible when they pray nowadays.' I heartily agreed.

'I don't believe for one,' he went on, 'that Saint Michael is passionately interested in wiping out either English or askaris or Germans. It's surely better to pray about him like you prayed. I should think the negative work appeals to him more than the positive, the salvage more than the blotting.'

His voice was clear, and evidently carried. The Maxim's warden grumbled, and began to sit up in bed.

'Possibly,' this disturber of slumber went on quite unconcernedly, 'Saint Michael has a clearer notion as to the real enemy than some clients who invoke him.'

Then the officer in pyjamas accosted me, and the thread of the other's talk was lost. When I moved off to dress he had already left his perch among the sand bags. I climbed the ladder, and had my coffee. Soon after came the scurry to stations. We were coming into the bay in the glory of that morning under hangings of amber and rose and feathery grey. The four-inch gun's crew were in their places. I stood trying to read the Prayer before Action in its very small print. I murmured what I was doing to my cheery colleague, so much more enthusiastic than I was about what seemed to be coming. Then someone came up and spoke to me. It was surely my friend from the sand bags. I could see him properly now. He was surely an officer. He stood up slender and shapely in his khaki, but he was not wearing a single star or a regimental badge of any kind. Had he forgotten these in the hurry of this eager morning? With but a few words, he passed on towards the guns' crews. Soon our four-inch gun was shaking the ship horribly. We were shelling a trench that ran up a hillside, they said. I sat under cover of the bulwark near some kneeling riflemen, far from enjoying myself. Yet no gun roared back

in answer to our own. It seemed to be one-sided enough, this operation of war.

'It's a fearful weapon,' remarked my colleague rather complacently, as he paced towards the gun platform. One prayed for those who were naked to its fearsomeness up on the hill there, and prayed about Saint Michael's intervention to Saint Michael's Commander-in-Chief. The long-drawn moments slurred by us. A bell rang as the ship wound her way in slowly. The mournful cry of him who took the soundings came again and again. Then we stopped dead anew, and our gun's mouth roared and flamed.

'Such a crowd of askaris; the hill's black with them!' So the signalman cried to the doctor, as he sped by on a message. I was interested in watching the gun-layer as he readjusted the dragon-mouth. But what had my friend of the sand-bags to do with the matter? He moved among the gun's crew, and none said him nay; his hands were on the gun after the accredited gunlayer's. We shelled another position, and then another. Afterwards came a lull, and some of us hurried up to breakfast.

There was much talk there of the possible or probable slaughter we had effected. Doubtless the store ship that had followed us and hung behind us had served us well. Those on shore had surely been more disposed to hold to their positions, fearing that she carried troops, and meant to land them. Now she was steaming slowly away. How many did our bag amount to? The Intelligence Officer

was sanguine, so was my colleague, but the gunnery officer was rather pessimistic. 'Two or three of those rounds went just wrong,' he grunted. 'We've struck a bad day.' After that the porridge and the bacon and the eggs were done with; we were soon back at our stations. Once more our gun bombarded. Once more no answer came. Now occurred the cruise of the motor boat; the best adventure of the day so far, as it seemed to me.

The boat was lowered, and the shore Maxim mounted in it. Sand bags were piled up in plenty. A Naval Reserve officer, fair-haired and young-faced, sprang in to join the gun's officer. There was also a British bluejacket ready to go, and there were African soldiers and sailors, as well as the two engine-men, English and Goanese. They were to beat up the river, and hunt down canoes, should any appear.

My heart thrilled as I uttered God-speed to the Maxim warden. I think he was unmarried, but his fellow officer was both husband and father; they might have a fiery time in front. Last my graceful friend, with no stars or badges on his khaki, slipped into the boat. He seemed to come and go as he liked, and none refused his services. The boat hummed away from us, past some rocks, and round a headland into the unseen. Then our ship travelled on slowly, before she stopped and fired again. She shot away many rounds that time. I was sick and weary of the firing as I sat on the deck by the doctor's cabin. My colleague was much more alert

and cheerful. He had secured a shell-case by the naval commander's bounty. 'They make such splendid trophies,' he told me. But I did not covet one much. I thought of how such war trophies were in demand for Christmas decoration vases in a church by the lakeside. I also thought of the quite possible horror and havoc of shattered askaris' bodies that those splendid trophies might be supposed to have wrought. How one thought besides of the adventurers in that whizzing motor-boat during that next half-hour. But as it turned out, according to their disappointed report, not a shot was fired at them.

'We let fly with the Maxim at some natives and one European on shore,' the gun-worker shouted, as they drew up at the ship's side. 'We saw some canoes, three of them. Askaris were in them, and urging the paddlers on. Then, of all times, the Maxim took it into its head to jam badly. So we didn't get them.' I happened to catch my friend in khaki's eye as the other lamented. He looked quite cheerful about things, while the other went on, 'We'd have sunk the lot, if it hadn't jammed just then.'

The thought flickered into my mind as to whether anybody was responsible for that singular coincidence. I looked in my friend's face with some sort of an uneasy question. But he only smiled. His face was strangely prepossessing, so entirely fearless, yet not the least truculent. His brown eyes and boy's lips answered my question with the most

engaging of smiles. Those brown eyes assorted piquantly with his very fair hair. He had pushed his white helmet far back on his yellow head. Half an hour later we were in our action stations once more. Our riflemen were firing at individual askaris (were they all askaris, and not unhappy villagers?) who could be descried upon the shore. The signalman, passing by again, snatched a rifle and fired just beside me. One of the Maxims meanwhile was working away grimly, the officer's face was set firm as he steadied his coughing machine. Then it was that I saw my unattached friend step towards him, and take up his stand behind him. Ping! A bullet came just over the gun-director's head. 'That was a near shave,' the warrant officer told me afterwards. 'Someone aimed too high, or he'd have got him that worked the gun.'

Yet it was a mystery to me why the bullet did not get that handsome head behind and above him, the head that I reflected had doubtless helped to draw the fire so high. He who had exposed himself came to me untouched. 'It looked near,' he allowed to me smiling. He stayed by us for the rest of that fell morning. He smiled, and bade me cheer up, when the naval commander went by; had he not twitted me for sitting safe under the bulwark and wincing when the four-inch gun roared? He smiled also a little ironically when my colleague came up, still fondling his trophy and dilating on its splendour. Then he smiled again and again as he moved behind him to and fro on the deck, watching him in

the pitiless firing. He smiled moreover when he moved up to the gun; he was revising the gun-layer's work now and then, so far as I could make out his movements. He smiled afterwards when the Intelligence Officer made such sanguine estimates of the slaughter we had dealt out to forts and trenches. They were talking together, he and his comrade of the Maxim gun, discussing whether the bag was really a big one, the former as glib with the pros as the latter was with the cons. The tall listener smiled rather wistfully as he heard them. After the last round from the six-pounder had been fired, before we went to lunch, he came up and said farewell to me. 'But I shall see you again on board, shan't I?' I asked. 'We shan't put you off at the Bay till nearly sunset, shall we?' 'I may be getting off long before then,' he said, but he did not explain how. My prayer book had fallen on the deck, and he picked it up and gave it to me. 'Mind you keep to your own line,' he said. 'I like that prayer in your prayer book about Saint Michael. Doubtless he's covered not a few people's heads in this day of battle, not all of them on the one side. It's likely enough he has unearthly notions about war, as he's an unearthly being. Perhaps the dragon he makes war on, war to the death, is neither England nor Germany, but just the scrapping between them.'

'What do you mean?' I asked, rather puzzled. Yet he only smiled, he was not very explicit.

'Oh, by the way,' he said. 'They tell me you've promised to build a mission church to Saint Michael

if you get back to the south safe and sound.' I wondered afterwards who they were that had told him.

'Yes, I said, 'and if I don't, the building of it's endowed in my will.'

'Why not take the shell-cases,' he said, 'if they offer you some? You needn't use them in your church as altar-vases. They'd make a splendid trophy under Saint Michael's feet, a gleaming, sleek-barrelled serpent of slaughter, just the sort of dragon for him to tread, and delight in treading. Good-bye.'

He was gone amongst the sailors, just as the steward called me up to the cold soup. I saw no more of him on the voyage, nor have I seen him since that September day. The one or two I asked about him seemed not to know whom I meant. I have often wondered who he was since then, and have framed a theory. Perhaps you can guess what it is without my needing to write it down.

FUEL OF FIRE

I WAS lucky to get a lift. We had risen before the moon took to her bed, and the sun had left his. We were driving through green woodlands when the light grew clear around us. A little while ago their graceful trees had been ruddy or bronze doubtless. Now it was the turn of the hill-trees on the great kopje that we passed within a mile, to grow bronzed and to redden. For the month of November had only just come in. We outspanned in a valley where the new green of the grass had come already. No doubt a month ago it had looked very black and fire-scathed. Now the showers had brought kind healing and amendment. We made our morning Memorial together (being all of us Christians—bound on some sort of a Christian pilgrimage), and after that we breakfasted and smoked at ease while the mules grazed close by, and the driver boiled his pot, and fed it with meal, and stirred and ladled out, and ate in the fulness of time. My heart was very thankful. How much better and kindlier one's lot seemed now, fallen as it was once again in this fair ground of a country at peace in War-

time. This countryside pleased me ever so much better than British East or German East—this Mashonaland. There to north I remembered without enthusiasm the tropical passions of the elements, I remembered rather miserably some of the things that a state of war had meant.

After breakfast, there was no hurry about our inspanning. But when we had once got off we were soon up level with the farmhouse on the hill's shoulder. We halted for friendship's sake, and waited for the cups of coffee that we were assured would be soon ready. Our host was Dutch-looking, but seemed British; I thought rather narrowly British in his sympathies. He discussed the War keenly and thoughtfully with my companion. He had two brothers in German East, I knew, and he was soon asking me about them. But our paths up that way had not converged. I could only tell him by hearsay about the main advance, wherein they had been sharing, and I had not. As I told, a dark handsome, gentle-voiced woman brought our coffee out. Soon a shy little girl put her head round the corner of the stoep, and withdrew it again. I jumped down to greet her. Then she agreed to come and shake hands with us both. Her father coloured up, and smiled as he told me of a great scheme. A lady in town had offered to board this child. So kind, wasn't it? She was of sturdy English make (her father's father was an Essex man, I had been told). Her hair and eyes were very dark; she looked ever so capable.

'Yes, very kind,' I murmured, but I was reflecting that the lady's kindness might not be so very ill-rewarded. The child might prove useful and cost little. She might give the sort of help that is apt to be useful and costly in a country like ours. 'Yes,' said the father smiling, 'and she may get to the day school that way, the lady says. We couldn't have nearly afforded to send her into town otherwise. But now she's got her chance of a regular school.' 'Oh, really,' said my friend. His kind ugly face looked none too pleasant as he said it, I remember noticing that.

Then he went to his mules to buckle up a strap somewhere. I was surprised to hear him cursing something under his breath. It was not his manner, I thought, to curse straps or mules. We said good-bye—a very cordial one—and then drove down towards the main road. It winds through a vlei towards the town. We had got almost to the big water-course so banked up in thirsty sand, when he told me what he was cursing. He repeated his words deliberately: 'Damn it, damn it to hell,' he said. I protested faintly till he made it clear to me what he was damning, then I recklessly endorsed his damnation. For he was not cursing Heaven or humanity; he was cursing that blessed Anglo-Dutch, or rather Dutch-English, institution of South Africa, the colour-bar. He had been told by one of the managers that should the father apply for admission to school on behalf of the child we had seen, he would be certainly refused. The father was really

much too poor to send her away, he told me. 'They're ever so honest and hard-worked. They've put up a great fight on mealie meal against bad seasons. They've pinched hard for the child's poor little outfit. He's got into debt for it. He's a Britisher, and has got two brothers fighting. Very dubious, dark children have been admitted already, as presumably Dutch. Dutch and colonials rule the roost here. And to leave Christianity alone, where does British Imperialism come in? It's risking spoiling a life, and the life of such a decent kid.'

Thereat he certainly condemned guiltily, as he should not have condemned, Dutchmen and colonials —their churches, their social order, and their sanctimony. 'Thank God I was at plebeian Oxford,' he said, 'and was free to mix with coloured men. This is far more select, this dorp academy, with its elect Principal and its supermen-managers.' We nearly had a row about his language.

We came over a rolling down towards the commonage. 'They've kept free from fires here,' I said. 'Yes,' he said, 'but I'm doubtful if their vigilance pays, if their game's worth the candle, I mean if such absence of illumination is worth all their watching about.' 'It saves waste of life,' I said, 'animal and vegetable, if you can only keep the fires away.' I appealed to the wisdom of our laws as well as to the argument of mercy which appealed to me. 'And you get that sort of thing,' he said, pointing to the thick brown tufts of unappetising feed. 'That's been going more than a

year, hasn't it? "Oh for a wind and a fire," say I.' We passed over the commonage, which showed very black with recent fires. 'It looks rather knocked out,' I said. 'Yet not without hope,' he answered.

We were driving back about the same time next fore-noon. A great fire was rushing wind-driven over that rolling upland. 'At last,' he said. I sighed. A mile further on we came into the smiling green vlei. 'This was black a while back,' he said. 'Doesn't the fire help a bit after all? Who wants that mouldy stuffy old feed—isn't it parabolic of that fusty Dutch-Anglo dorp and its prejudices? What are they meant for, and it? "Fuel of fire," say I.' I smiled indulgently. Since we had got into town things had happened. We had had our memorial services for the Dead that last night, and this same morning. It was the week of All Hallows and All Souls—a time that often tempts me to home-sickness. One is apt to think of hazy, yellow-leaved, dreamy times in old England just about then—not to speak of old familiar faces. That night of the first Service was very starry, and the morning of the second Service was brilliantly clear, the rain seemed to be very far away for the time being. People had come at night rather well. Not to speak of one of the school managers having died quite recently, news of one of our police's death out scouting had leaked through from German East. I preached Paradise to that attentive congregation in the iron-roofed church that natives had been so discouraged from attending. I was glad one

straggled into the back seats I had battled for, just to demonstrate one's principle of barring out the colour-bar. It was all very soul-soothing, thought I, that Memorial Evensong—the stars outside, and the golden evening brightening in the west of the hymn, and the lesson about white robes and palms,—presumably of victory or harvest-homing. My friend waited for me outside under the lamp. 'Very fine,' he said in his grimmest way, 'the Anglican view of hopeful souls turned promiscuously into a sort of orchard and rose-garden with plenty of light to gild them, and rest to wrap them.' I smiled. 'True enough in its way,' I said. 'There's another side doubtless, yet the preaching of that doesn't appeal to me particularly. I don't want to work on people's apprehensions. But don't let me stand in your light. You're a lay reader with a bishop's licence. You can preach and welcome to-morrow morning.' 'Trust me not to refuse,' he said. 'I don't want to play up to apprehensions exactly. I want to state what seem to me to be relentless laws of cause and effect, and to show the only way with any sort of hope in Christ that I happen by faith to see.' So he had preached that morning. He preached quite simply on the trying of every man's work, on the burning of flimsy work, on the saving of the workman, yet so as by fire. There was a small but select gathering in the Church of Saint Tertullian; two of the school managers even were there. Surely I had baited the trap, I thought guiltily as I looked upon them, by my over-amiabilities of the night before.

Yet that side was true enough, the side I had preached. And was not this side also true in its way? The preacher seemed at first to be referring to my own obsession with the words 'resist not evil,' my following of Tolstoy in my own evangel. He was warm in his commendation. 'And yet,' he said, 'let us remember a just God's resistance to evil. He resists and judges righteously, where we may neither resist nor judge. If we agree not to resist evil violently for Jesus' sake, yet ought we not to warn people of their God's unrelenting resistance? While we would not obscure the fear of our just God by the fear of us unjust men, let us remember our just God!' He spoke of judgment and of purgation, of what seemed to be indicated hereafter by the stupidity and cruelty of people's prejudices in South Africa. He painted quite luridly the purgation he anticipated as likely for such as would dare to wreck a child's education, and possibly her life for a colour-scruple. He glowed and kindled. There was no mistaking his drift. He painted the fires of purgation. He painted, too, their presumable fuel, much as I believe old preachers limned the flames of hell and their denizens. 'And it may lengthen out into hell! Who knows?' he kept interjecting. 'Who knows but that that prejudiced spirit you play with may be a damned spirit after all, fuel for the fire that is not quenched, food for the worm that does not die?'

I could not have preached happily on his lines, but for all that I acknowledged that the thing might well

be of God—this bizarre surprise at his preaching that was glassed in at least two of his listeners' eyes.

Did that sermon do any good? Let me anticipate! The child came into town as a half-time servant. Somebody's letter got handed up to the Administrator, and he made a request to the managers. The child was clearly European by predominance of race. They spent five hours of their precious time in discussion. The officials wanted to oblige the Administrator, and they had their way at last. But whether the child once admitted will have much of a time, I am inclined to doubt, should she pass into the Paradise of so select an academy. I heard an ominous story of the Dutch minister last week, how he had threatened a hiding to any child of his that spoke to this forlorn little girl, who seems hard up for playmates. I heard yesterday that one of my Church magnates had asked that the child should not come up to play with his own. Yet the Fire of God has been preached, and I am willing to allow that the thing may have wanted doing rather badly in my amiable parish. Doesn't any real true Christian Peace Doctrine mean spiritual fire and sword? Doesn't it mean burning and fuel of fire as set against the confused noise and garments rolled in blood of earthly campaigns? Doesn't any real true Christian Imperialism mean the sword of the Spirit and the fire of the Gospel against South African Racialism? Perfect love casteth out fear, but what has Racialism to do with such a perfect love as will banish the fear of God?

After all, can any reasonable and lively Christian Faith avail to find any evangelically reasonable destination short of hell for South African Racialists dying in their Racialism save such place of purgation as my friend indicated? Yes, of course, God's prerogative of mercy in Jesus is limitless, but are these Racialists so merciful to little coloured children that they should obtain mercy without judgment from Jesus' judgment?

And if the purgative fire seem so inevitable, why not warn its prospective fuel?

Granted the Love of Jesus (Who was certainly what South Africans would call a Jew Boy, Who was possibly so dark that any dorp school would have hummed over His admission, Who enrolled Himself in that House of David—one of Whose ancestresses was the Hamitic Rahab apparently, Who took Ham's curse as well as Japheth's); granted that that Love is the one and only supreme motive for Christian Reform, yet for all that, facts are facts, and it may be kind to tell people into what fires the fires of Racialism threaten to merge themselves. On the whole, I am glad that our lay reader preached on that bright morning that overgloomed sermon, preaching from my own soothing pulpit to my startled congregation. They did not seem to know what to make of it. But the preacher himself seemed quite unrepentant about it. He was talking to me about it that morning when we drove home again, he to his farm and I with him, to walk on to my mission. We outspanned in a very green

valley, I remember, and sat long over roast monkey-nuts that his driver benignantly provided.

'The Lord put a word into my mouth,' my friend said quite firmly and simply. 'Was there not the cause—the cause of a child's career? Didn't our Saviour speak plainly as to the ugly analogy of the man drowned like a dog with a stone round his neck in the deep of the sea? Weren't His children in question when Jesus spoke; wasn't there a Christian child in question when I preached?'

I thought he made out something of a case for his position as a preacher of fiery doom. We were sitting on a beautiful green carpet. The Earth there had come through her bad time. Away on the hillside a black forbidding patch testified to the unpleasantness of the remedial stage. Away in the distance was a beautiful tree-shaded granite hill with much show of brown foliage and purplish under-spaces. Just beside that hill the flames came driving (through the old last year's feed, I suppose). His eyes followed mine the way of the flames. 'Hurray!' he said heartily. 'Now we shan't be so very long surely after all. Don't you see the green grass on its way? It was a snug corner, verily, for the old dry stuff. Look, how the flames leap up in the thick of it! Not very juicy browse nor tasty feed, but fine fuel for the fire; good for that, anyway. It was a snug corner, but at last the time was ripe when the fire came driving straight for it—the fire with the wind behind. '"Which things are a parable,"' he said, his ugly sunburnt face twitching

curiously, his eyes quite handsome, nay, even splendid with honest scorn. He was shaking his fist towards the prim little dorp that we had left behind over the ridges. 'No doubt but ye are the people,' he said, 'ye that have made the freedom of England and the franchise of Jesus of no effect by your tradition—your sacrosanct tradition. What's the good of the frowsy old stuff? It must be some good; what is it? It isn't very good pasture for sheep or horses, not to speak of dairy cattle, but it's noble food for fire, don't you think?

'There it lies-up so snug and sheltered and screened —the old dead survival—hidden in the prim little corrugated iron-roofed houses, and the narrow gum-tree avenues, and the whitewashed Dutch tabernacle where they sing "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" (would you believe it?) But the time will come, it mayn't come in my day or in yours, but the time will come sure enough, when the Fire will trek dead straight for this old dead-ripe stuff—the Fire wth the Wind behind. Then God have mercy on them whose work it was! For their work shall be burnt, aren't we sure of that? But as to they themselves being the sort to be saved so as by fire can we be so very sanguine? Meanwhile——'

The way he so humbly appealed to me for my opinion on that moot point, did much to conciliate me. He had not carried me with him all the while. He seemed to me a bit out of date, too like an ante-Christian prophet. Yet how my heart went out to him as he ended up so very abruptly with his 'mean-

while.' His voice broke queerly, and his eyes shone. 'Meanwhile—they may manage to give a child or two a rough passage. They've got pluck enough for that, the blighters, haven't they?' He turned away from me with a sort of a sob. 'The time'll come sure enough, but it's their time now, and they know it,' he said. 'God pity her!'

'LA BELLE DAME'

'INHABITING this country you inhabit the Middle Ages—you dwell in the wild Marchlands without the pale of Christendom. Here a man may take to the forest roads in the old spirit of errantry. How darkly the shadow of witchcraft falls upon the path; we might be in Lapland or Thessaly! What strange satyr voices the drums have of nights! I suppose it is the reading about such things long ago that gives me this sense of having been here before, of having come back to this country!'

His eyes glistened as he sat over his wine, and smoked Transvaal tobacco in a calabash pipe. He looked much more as he used to look twenty years back, I thought. I had deemed him aged almost out of recognition when first we sat down to dinner. He had come up to Mashonaland with some learned association on a holiday trip. His name was Gerald Browne; he had lectured on English literature these many years in an ancient northern university.

With him came his wife, a very plain and quiet lady, and also an undergraduate pupil named Drayton.

I was asked to meet them, and to stay in the same house with them by a certain minor potentate

of Rosebery, who had had rooms near Browne's and mine in years gone by. It was Saturday night, and I had just come in from the veld, while Browne's party had reached Rosebery by the morning train. Dinner had gone rather quietly, and our host had looked bored, I thought. Then, when the ladies had left us, Browne had kindled up, and we all three had a glorious hour, voicing the praises of Africa in a sort of three-man descant or glee. Meanwhile the fourth man, Drayton, a dark, plump and smiling youth, listened to us with a charming air of respectful attention. Transvaal tobacco was good, and the talk was good, though I say it who should not. Drayton's silence was also good, a very complimentary silence with a distinct character, as it seemed to me. On Sunday after lunch this youth came for a walk with me, while the Brownes and our host reclined.

'Mr. Browne's got a sort of call to the Simple Life,' he suddenly blurted out with a grin. 'It's even money on his selling up at Oxford and coming out here for good. What's going to happen to Mrs. Browne, I wonder?'

I laughed, as I thought he expected me to do.

'He seems rather smitten,' I admitted. 'He certainly raved a bit last night; but, then, so many people do that when they first come out.'

Drayton looked at me as if he might have said much more. But I changed the subject; it never occurred to me then that it might be a thrilling one. I went home later on and sat on the stoep and talked

to my host. Browne had very little to say. He went off for a sunset walk, and never came to church at night. We sat up in the moonlight waiting for him afterwards. He came in at last and joined us on the stoep, but he was very silent. He would not have any supper. He smoked away furiously till bed-time.

I arranged a riding trip for all three visitors next morning. They were to off-saddle under some high kopjes about ten miles from town; they were to have a picnic and an amazing view. I could not go myself, as I had an appointment to keep. But I sent two Mashona boys to be their retinue; one of them was Johannes, my own right hand at home. I solemnly entrusted the strangers and their steeds to his keeping.

When I came in about sunset that Monday evening they had not returned. But before the daylight failed, three of them were back—Mrs. Browne, Drayton, and the under-boy. Where were Browne and Johannes? Mrs. Browne seemed to be a little uneasy, but she affected to make light of what had happened. She said that her husband had wanted to see the country beyond, so he had gone on with the boy. He was sure to be back to-morrow, as he had taken so little food with him. Drayton said nothing at the time, but after dinner, when we were smoking on the stoep, he began to quote to me:

'I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faëry's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.'

'What do you mean to insinuate?' I said.

'Oh, I don't mean anything libellous. Browne hasn't gone off with a comely Mashona. But, for all that, I believe he's taken Africa much too seriously. She has a grim fascination for me, but she doesn't stop at that with him. She grips him, and orders him to come along.'

'Tell me about to-day,' I said.

'Browne acknowledged a little to me three days ago,' Drayton said. 'He told me that this huge Tamburlaine (or rather Zenocrate) of a country was giving him too heady a welcome. He said she was still in the Middle Ages, and not only there, but more than half outside the pale of Christendom, such as it was then. So she had strange forces at work in her, and used incantations to allure, in prodigal variety. He talked about Lapland, and some footling researches he had made into the magic of the north. He also told me a horrible tale or two of the South that he had found in the Bodleian. One was a real curdler, I can tell you. Jerry Browne's own moustache seemed to turn up like a German's as he imparted it to me. You know he's romantic enough in his way, though he does lead such a repressed life. You should see him at home.'

'But do tell me why he's gone off so suddenly,' said I, with some impatience.

'I can't tell you very much,' said Drayton. 'We rode out, and Jerry seemed tremendously cheerful—quite sportive. Anyone who'd only known him in

Park Crescent would have been much surprised to watch him and listen to the things he said. Mrs. Browne seemed a bit puzzled, I thought, at last. Then we came to the kopjes where there was a consummate view. You could see a long way to the north across a hugely wide plain. Browne climbed up on the highest rock with me—a sort of flat slab, whereon you might immolate a hecatomb. He seemed more exhilarated than ever just then. Soon he slipped away down the rocks and left me smoking my pipe on high. About five minutes after I observed him making tracks across the northern plain. He was cantering his dappled mule for all it was worth; he was carrying nothing so far as I could see.

'I made haste down. I found that boy you said we could trust. I gave him two or three picnic rugs and what was left of our food to carry. I asked him to follow the rideaway, to stick to him, and to bring him back as soon as ever he could. Then I went to Mrs. Browne. She was sitting behind some bushes crying. She said Browne had said such a curious good-bye to her. He had spoken of riding on to see more of the country—he had said he would be back in the morning. She had tried to dissuade him, but he seemed hardly to listen. She could scarcely believe that he had really gone without blankets or food. I reassured her, telling her that I had sent the boy, and that you had said the boy was a good 'un. But if she thinks, or you think, that the old man will come back to-morrow, I don't.'

Tuesday passed anxiously both for Mrs. Browne and for me. Drayton was anxious in the wrong way, unless I misjudged him. I seemed to read triumph in his face as the hours went by and brought no Browne.

I grew haggard when evening drew on. What was I to do? But about sunset tidings came. A native, who had travelled into town from the north, brought me a pencilled note from Johannes: 'My father, I ask you to come to us. Let your horse make haste. The white man will not turn. He has finished his food. He goes to the hills, he says. I think that he is mad. Pray for us! Johannes.'

I went to Mrs. Browne at once. I remember I found her sitting under a flaming hibiscus bush. She looked very pale and washed-out against it. I told her that her husband wanted to extend his tour. She burst into tears, and said she could not understand it. Then I told her that I meant going after him in the morning to try to hasten his return. She brightened up at that, and fell to planning what I should take with me. What comforts could she send Gerald in the comfortless desert without overloading me? I showed Johannes' note to Drayton after dinner. He whistled, and, to his credit, looked grave.

'I'm to go after him to-morrow,' I said. 'I've thought over it, and I think you may as well come too. You may be useful, as knowing his ways.'

He nodded. 'Rather bad about his running out of skoff, isn't it?' he asked. 'I wonder if he's out

of baccy and just breaking his heart.' His plump face was pitiful.

'Don't you fret,' I answered. 'It only means he's run out of our food. They'll surely buy monkey-nuts or sweet-potatoes or rice in the kraals. He's probably developed a passion for native food by now, also for native snuff. He'll be able to buy some of that, surely.'

'Just so,' said Drayton. He began to quote again in a sort of droning chant as if he were a chorus recording the onsweep of a tragedy:

> 'I set her on my pacing steed,
> And nothing else saw all day long,
> For sidelong would she lean, and sing
> A faëry's song.
>
> 'She found me roots of relish sweet,
> And honey wild, and manna-dew,
> And sure in language strange she said—
> "I love thee true."'

In the morning we got a flying start after all, though Drayton was in bed when I came back from church. We went away at eight, and soon found, to our joy, that we were really well mounted. It was joy, too, to remember what a stubborn mule Browne had for pacing steed. He had not got away far, we assured ourselves. But we did not catch him that night.

We asked at kraals as we went along, and struck a hot scent about three in the afternoon. A white man had passed that morning—a white man riding a dappled mule, with a boy carrying blankets behind him. Straightway we gave our ponies an off-saddle.

Afterwards we rode on hard in what we deemed to be the right direction till darkness fell. We sought shelter at a village then. There was no village gossip, alas! about the passing of a white man that day! They were good to us, though, those villagers, and gave us beans and monkey-nuts for supper and mealies for our ponies. After we had finished eating we spread out the rush-mat they had lent us and lay down to smoke and meditate and surmise as to our passionate pilgrim. They had given us a hut that was old and grimy with fires. Its floor teemed with life.

Therefore we changed our resting-place and went out to camp under a rocky eminence. There with a bedrock of austere granite we slept in peace. At glimmer of dawn we were saddling up. We rode to another kraal, but the folk there had no news for us.

We were close on the hills now at last. We came to a low river at the foot of them. We chose a land-locked pool that seemed to be immune from crocodiles, for a plunge. Next I girded myself for Sacrifice, and he served me. Then we made a fire and cooked a huge breakfast in the hungry morning air. Drayton grew quite lyrical as to the charm of the country before the meal was over.

'Browne's not far wrong about her,' he said; 'but there's reason in all things.'

That whole day we heard no news and found no spoor or sign. The hill-country gave us stiff climbing and rocky paths to ride. Kraals and clusters of

gardens—places where we might hope to hear tidings—how few they were in that hill-country! We camped disconsolately at last in a forlorn garden among grey boulders where stumps of trees were burning. We found no trouble in building up a good night fire of half-burnt logs. We gave our ponies their nosebags and ate our own bread and bully rather silently. Then we surmised with some weariness and gloom over our pipes. At last we slept under the many eyes of the heavens.

About first cock-crow, when a chill struck through my blanket, I opened my eyes and looked towards the fire. Someone was sitting beside it watching me. Now that he saw me stirring he greeted me.

It was Johannes. 'I saw your fire but just now,' he said. 'Our fire is up there beyond great rocks. The white man has been very sick. I think he will come home now.'

I sprang to my feet and roused Drayton. He would not get up for a long time. I suspect he combined breakfast and lunch fairly often at Oxford. But I roused him mercilessly. I told him the news.

He argued in desperate fashion at first. 'How far's the sick bed,' he asked.

'Not more than a mile or so,' said I.

'Need we go till morning?' said he.

'Shame!' said I.

At last he sprang up.

As we clambered among the boulders, piloted by Johannes, he droned away at his chorus part:

'She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, sad eyes
With kisses four.

'And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.'

We found Browne in a nook among the rocks. A fire was burning beside him. He seemed to be sleeping.

'He looks as if he'd been sick,' I said. 'We'd better let him sleep on!'

'Yes; let's go to bed ourselves,' said Drayton, yawning.

So we lay down on opposite sides of the fire. Such a red and splendid fire that cold cock-crow time!

Browne kept giving sharp little moans in his sleep, just as a dog will do of nights.

'He's started a nightmare,' said I. 'I wish we could help him to better dreams. I'd like to see what he sees just now.'

Drayton began to drone from his side of the fire:

'I saw pale kings and princes, too;
Pale warriors—death-pale were they all.
They cried, "La Belle Dame sans Merci"
Hath thee in thrall.

'I saw their starved lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here
On the cold hill's side.'

I asked a question: 'What will Browne like for breakfast, Drayton?'

'If he's come back to his civilised tastes, you'd better open that tin of sausages,' he said. 'You've got some squish, too, haven't you? Don't give him that bush-tea of yours!'

I was up long before Drayton. I had secured Browne's confidences before the sun had been risen an hour. 'I've had a sort of miserable ague,' he said. 'A cold and hot fever has been plaguing me. Some part of this last night has been savagely horrible. But I've sweated pounds of my weight away, and my fever's gone. Strange, isn't it?'

'Quite ordinary in this part of Africa,' I said, sharply and minimisingly. I handed him a shirt, and he doffed his drenched one. He did not tell me any more just then. His eyes watched me in a dazed, miserable way. I asked him to excuse me, and went off with Johannes to my service. When I came back his eyes were clearer, they had less of their look of wan-hope.

'Sinister country, this Africa,' he said. 'I was infatuated with her yesterday. To-day I can't understand just what the attraction was. Her desolate moors seemed to make me drunk. See how she's served me! I never felt quite so sick as I've done most of this last day and night. Just before I woke it seemed to me I saw them in my dreams—tens and twenties of her victims; men she's charmed and led on and on, and demoralised, ruined, killed and buried, and helped down-hill the

way of the bottomless pit. I am better now; but I'm shaken. How thankful I'll be if only I get out of her, and can only stop thinking about her after that.'

I listened with grave attention. Then I gave him some bread and sausages, and he ate away ravenously. How ever many cups of tea did he drink afterwards?'

The above was all the avowal that Browne made to me. I do not think that he said nearly as much to Drayton as he did to me. Drayton plied me with questions that night, and I told him too much, to my regret.

Months afterwards a copy of an undergraduate paper, containing a fantasia on the events that I have recorded, reached me. It comprised much African colouring and some little humour. I wonder if it reached Browne or Mrs. Browne?

We got Browne home in little over a day. He hurried on, oftentimes when we wanted to rest. He seemed as anxious to emerge from the African desert as he had been to explore the deeps of it. He looked rakish and wretched as he bumped about upon his mule. His face was livid, and his black beard, that he used to cut so formally, desperately out of trim. His eyes were strangely bloodshot.

We reached home safely with our prize by noon on Saturday. Browne, as I have said, was all for getting on fast, and when we once started, his stubborn mount went well. It was won to emulation by the willingness of our ponies, I imagine.

Mrs. Browne was delighted at her Gerald's return. Yet I think it must have taken some months to restore her confidence in his sanity. She had had a sore shock. Drayton and I, indeed, were both discreet in our brief narratives of what had really happened. But I was heedless enough to forget Johannes. I did not caution him in time. So Mrs. Browne gathered rather a bizarre account from him while we were at church on Sunday evening. It is to her credit that, despite her thrift, she gave the boy a whole gold sovereign.

The three travellers left by the slow down-train on the Monday morning. I went to the station with them. I saw Drayton into a smoking-carriage, and climbed in and sat with him. There was still ten minutes' grace allowed us.

'Where's Browne, and where's Mrs. Browne?' I asked.

'Along there, ever so far!' he said; 'with Professor Ayres and the Misses Ayres, and all sorts of good company. But, hullo! Look there!'

Browne was coming up the platform towards the bookstall, looking forlorn and sad.

'Ah! what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering?'

murmured Drayton. 'It's a bad job for me, Jerry's getting off-colour like this. How's he going to train men for Firsts next June, when he's gone in himself?'

'Oh, he'll pick up as soon as he gets out of Africa, never fear,' I reassured him.

Browne loitered up to the stall and amassed two month-old English magazines. Then he stood by the stall, looking on to the distances near and far behind it. Our feverish contact had not spoilt much of the landscape there as yet. Beyond a few railway sheds showed some bushes, as it were, of wild cherry-blossom, flaunting a true white under the sky's true blue. Spring colours dressed the woodland behind them—red and bronze, and also the two famous colours of Faëryland. Behind that, again, the view was spread out widely diverse, certain blue hills standing up very delicately. Meanwhile in the near foreground some Kaffir herds helped the picture not a little. They were driving their flock between the white-blossomed bushes.

Browne stood a long while and watched that landscape. I would have given something to have read his face all the while, but his back was turned to us.

At last he began to pace up and down by the bookstall. Then he stood to gaze again, scouring, as it seemed, the far distance with eyes straining their utmost. Our eyes followed his.

Did not some ironstone kopjes rise up dimly to the north there?

Assuredly Browne saw those blue peaks and ridges, and remembered them.

'Do you remember them?' I asked Drayton.

'Don't I just?' he said.

He began again in his chanting chorus tone: he

was reading and transposing from a pocket copy of Theocritus—

'They all call thee a "gipsy," gracious Africa, and "lean" and "sunburnt," 'tis only I that call thee "honey-pale." Yea, and the violet is swart, and swart the lettered hyacinth, but yet these flowers are chosen the first in garlands. . . . Ah, gracious Africa, thy feet are fashioned like carven ivory, thy voice is drowsy sweet, and thy ways, I cannot tell of them.'

The engine whistled. Browne roused himself to my intense relief, and climbed into the train.

'Good-bye,' I called to him as they steamed away.

'Au Revoir,' he called back to me.

THE SCENTED TOWN

(A Tripper's Tale)

IT is now more than two years since I was invalided out of my country parish one bitter March, and sent on a southern voyage. I had ten weeks to recruit in, and I passed by the Mediterranean to the eastern coast of Africa. It was hard to tear myself away from Zanzibar, but at last I went on southward and struck up into the wilder country of the central tableland. I meant to take the rail for Cape Town when my time should be up.

It happened in Easter week that I camped out disconsolately, and rose anxiously, having lost my way overnight. I had spent Easter Day in a cathedral, or pro-cathedral, town, and was now on my way to a certain mission. I had hoped to make it that last night—the third night of the journey—but had somehow missed it in the dark after a big effort. There seemed to be no native village near, and no passers-by. My carriers were strangers to that neighbourhood, and I was afraid of going far past the house in benighted wanderings, so I bent my resolution and lay down. I rose just before the sun did. It was April and the dews were very heavy.

From a rocky hill above me the baboons were barking. Just below us was a fair stream with a rich grove of native trees on the further bank. Some native gardens showed on the slope above. The white path wound through them, then away among boulders, some of them very big ones. While I watched the stream I saw a white body of mist mounting up. Just at that moment the sun showed. As I looked on the sacred sight I saw somebody coming down the path. It was the man whose mission station I had been looking for. He was coming through the long grass in a hurry. Soon he splashed through the drift. After that he caught sight of me, and rushed up to our camp, glowing. It was Leonard Reeve. He looked much the same as he did that day in London three years before—dark, pale, slight, earnest. I had been to his send-off and gone down to Victoria Docks with him. I had written to tell him I was most likely coming his way after Easter. He seemed ever so glad to see me.

'But where were you off to?' I said.

'It's only a mile on that I'm going,' he answered. 'There's a little chapel on that hill over there with some native villages near by. I want to have an Easter service there.'

'Let me come,' said I. 'You can be back to breakfast here, can't you, when we've done?'

He said he could. Even as he nodded I felt a little anxious when I remembered that we had no meat of any sort left. I took Jack, my head carrier,

aside and asked him to do what he could while we were gone. Couldn't he buy some eggs for salt, or do something useful in the way of foraging? He said three words in kitchen Kaffir that sounded hopeful.

Then I went on with my chill, damp little friend. One of the coldest ways surely of taking a bath is to tramp through the long grass (it is very long in that country) when it is drenched with dew or rain. However it is all right if you are sturdy and in good heart, and keep going a stirring pace, and never sit down till you are dry again. My companion did not seem very buoyant, though he made no complaint and trudged on without flagging. We had a glorious service in a quaint church of wattles and earth and grass on a hill-top. One way it looked over a great spread of village gardens—I think there were at least three villages in sight. The other way it looked on some well-wooded uplands that the eastern sun lighted tenderly. There were only a few people in church at the end of the rite, though a great crowd was there at the outset, and the 'Kyrie' and first two hymns raised the hill echoes.

There was no sermon. When the unbaptised were gone the tiny church, that had seemed so thronged and stifling, grew to be roomy and cool.

That was to me a very beautiful rendering of the Liturgy. Yet I only understood a word here and there. I could follow the action of the Divine Pageant throughout, and I would not have had the

mystery and aloofness of the words one whit lessened.

After it was over Reeve took me across to the native teacher's house, where we found a very shy wife and a very composed baby to greet us. Meanwhile the husband bustled about and gave us tea. I liked his laugh and his boyish face, as well as his Biblical English. He did not stint the tea in his blue pot. Soon we were on our way back to my camp.

Jack had got a real good fire now in the shelter of the rocks, and a hearty smell of fish frying reassured me as we drew near.

Reeve, who had seemed a little tired and washed out as we came away from the church, now brightened up marvellously.

'I declare,' he said, 'it's just like old times. You know the Tooting Road, where I used to work? It's just like the fried-fish shop there, next door to the Surrey Arms. If we'd only got the fog and the trams and a few of the old people here how fine it'd be!'

We had found a subject that interested us both and lasted most of the breakfast-time. His enthusiasm struck me as a little too emphatic. I remarked that I thought he was well out of the Tooting Road and out under blue sky on an African moorland.

'Look up there!' I said. 'That makes the Tooting Road seem rather monstrous when one comes to think of it.' I pointed to the many cattle

and sheep and goats coming down to the stream at a swinging pace through the gleaming woodland.

Two little boys were mounted on bulls; two or three others came rushing behind. There was a barking of dogs and an ecstasy of shouting.

'Oh, it's all very well,' he said, and his eyes flashed a little scornfully.

Afterwards he took me to his home. His church stood out nobly as we came up the path towards it. Within it was beautifully kept, but I confess I was disappointed. It was all very neat, but it suggested the skill of the church-furnishing firm too strongly. I sighed a little as he showed me four enormous brazen vases of a too familiar type. I longed for the two or three little red and black earthen vases that I had seen on his teacher's altar; but I kept my longing to myself.

He was a marvellous man for method—Leonard Reeve. He seemed to me to organise classes with real talent—anybody who came to the Mission at all habitually was pigeon-holed as 'Inquirer,' 'Hearer,' 'Catechumen,' 'Under a cloud,' or something else, and dealt with accordingly. His work, as I watched it day by day, and evening by evening—in church and school and villages and Mission farm seemed to me well-considered and painstaking. On the other hand he seemed to me not so happy, and not so very well.

The mail came in on the Monday.

I was to start the following Thursday for the railroad on my way to my home again. We gloated

over the letters and papers that evening—it was really a superb mail. The native boy with the bag (I remember he was lanky and handsome and wore a rose-and-blue zephyr) came up just as we stood in the avenue leading to the house. We were smoking our pipes and arguing. The sun was almost down.

What were we arguing about? Oh, he was arguing rather recklessly about the glories of town-work. I retorted with few words, but strong ones, in favour of work out in the country. Once I pressed him rather inquisitively and mischievously as to his present work on the veld. 'How can you hold such views and do it?' I asked him point-blank. Thereat the fine side of the man showed. His face flushed and his lips quivered. 'It's my job,' he said, 'and I'm not going to talk against it. I was arguing about country-work in the abstract over there in England.' Then it was that the boy came in sight with the letters. Reeve looked up and watched him with real pleasure and gratitude. He said something to him in the native language that seemed to amuse the boy very much. I had thought his manners towards his flock very courteous, but cold. I noticed a new tenderness now and from this night forward.

I could read him like a book, this town-lover—so I thought. He had said too much to me, he had avowed to me his want of affection for his work in so many words, and now he was on the watch against himself, and burning to render reparation to a very quick conscience.

He had a big mail, but he was not communicative about it. Indeed we had not much time for our letters just then. We had Evensong soon after sunset, then there was a class for catechumens that I attended. I could not understand much, but it was good to watch how they listened, all but the vigorous mail-boy, who nodded at whiles unless I am mistaken. Afterwards we had a meal. It was by mutual agreement that we read our letters over our bread and tea and cheese. I read one of my letters with some indignation. It was a letter from my schoolmaster, who was not very encouraging on the subject of my *locum tenens'* industry.

'I thought I had got a first-rate man in Cochrane,' I said aloud.

'Cochrane of Peckham Downs?' asked Reeve, looking up and eyeing me. 'What about him? Yes, I should say he was in his way quite first-rate.'

'I'm glad to hear it, but I wish he would find country work more congenial. My correspondent says he's quite got the hump about our village.'

Leonard smiled. 'Some villages do tend to give people like Cochrane and me the hump,' he said. 'But of course yours is different.' 'Of course it is. Come and see it some day.' His mouth twitched. 'If I get home-leave in two years' time,' he said, 'I don't want to spend it in the country, not any of it, thank you all the same. I like the town much too well.'

'The smell of the shop you named attracts you just like thyme does me.'

'Yes,' he said, with a rather wry smile and a very real sigh.

Then we went on reading till bed-time. In the morning Lorenzo, his house-boy, knocked me up just as the sun was rising. 'The father is very sick,' he said. So he was—very bad indeed with fever, at least so it seemed to me. But I am not used to nursing that malady. I think his temperature was 103 that day, which may seem a modest figure to a pioneer, but struck a chance visitor as none too reassuring. However, I kept my anxieties to myself, and looked after him quietly. He said there was no need to worry about a doctor. That night he seemed to be delirious, and talking at large. I made up my mind I would send for the doctor in the morning if his symptoms should last. But they did not. He appeared to be quiet and sensible at sunrise, and his temperature was a normal one. The morning after that, again, he seemed so well that I left him with a fairish conscience on my return journey for England. I want to tell you about that anxious night. He gave himself away then. I don't think he remembered much of what he had said next morning. It seemed sad to me—his self-revelation. He said he did not know what in the world to do, he felt so ill and anxious. He was a Cockney born, and he had loved his South London work. He really wanted to tackle the job in front of him here. But the romance was there behind him in that English city—the unique sense of being in the right place—the great adventure—the gleam.

Oh! why had he caught the fever? Not this fever, but the malaria of Imperialism, and felt drawn to go so very far afield. He didn't abuse the veld, the camping-out, the foot-slogging, the primitive people. He was a very chivalrous person even in his delirium.

But he spoke ecstatically of the streets, the tram-roads, the lights of the town, the smartness of his flock, the delights of their up-to-date humour.

The tragedy thickened. He told me of her who had promised to marry him by Eastertide next year. Cecilia was her name.

She was a Londoner, and shared his views. 'Whatever will she think of this place?' he asked. My eyes wandered to the iron roof, to the floor-boarded walls, to the candle in a bottle that fought the draught so bravely. He told me about a letter of hers he had got by this mail. She had been working as a governess these last few months at a country rectory in the Berkshire moors. She found the village, and the neighbourhood, and the life there in general very flat indeed. They bored her; yet she was keen, he said, on 'the work'—'the work' as she had known it when she worked for him in London. 'Whatever will she think of this place?' he repeated. I looked at the floor, freshly treated with cow-dung, and thought again for an answer, but I could think of no very suitable one.

'I'll give you her letter to read,' he said, in a burst of confidence. 'That puts it far more plainly

than I can. My head's so bad.' He looked worried, and I thought I had better leave him.

'No,' he said; 'do read to me a bit before you go.'

'What shall I read?'

He looked at me meditatively. 'You'll find something to the point in there,' he said. He reached up to the little candle-box bookcase over his head, and showed me a little crimson book. It was an anthology. I should think it might be commendably put on the 'Index Expurgatorius' of up-country missionaries.

It was called 'The Cheerful City,' and dwelt on the delights of civilisation and urbanity. Doubtless it may serve a useful purpose, thought I, in reconciling Londoners to their wen; but, here, what does it spell for my delirious Cockney save only desiderium?

I read him two or three selections obediently, but without enthusiasm. Were they from Herrick and Charles Lamb? I rather think they were.

Afterwards he asked me for a few verses of the Gospel. I cheered up.

'What would you like?'

'Oh, that story at the end of St. John. I've often thought of it since I was so cold and wet; and got to your camp-fire. "The fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread," that's it.'

I read with a will, but rather sadly.

'That's it,' he said. 'It seems to bring back the fog, and going to early Service past that coffee-

stall, and the smell of that shop next to the Surrey Arms.'

I thought of his homely comparison after I had left him for the night. It moved me strangely. I read the letter he had lent me—the letter of Cecilia, who found the Berkshire moors so banal. Yes, she promised to prove a very undesirable help-meet on the veld, so far as I could judge. I thought over things generally that night, and I made up my mind to make a Quixotic offer in the morning. I would offer to take on Leonard's work. Let him go home and be happy in his scented town, with his intolerantly urban (or suburban) Cecilia. He was splendid stuff. He might do much, surely, in that quaint atmosphere of light and locomotion and fragrance that his sense of romance demanded. Here Cecilia would surely be either impossible or a very great nuisance. While, even without Cecilia, Leonard did not seem well suited in his sphere, and I judged that he would soon be rotten with fever and wouldn't last.

As for me, I liked country life much, and roughing it a little. I had no particular fear of fever. I compared my physique with Leonard's not without complacency. I thought of the other side, too: the east country—that village of all villages, those villagers of all villagers.

But that night I was full of over-seas fervour. I remembered phrases that had rung out finely at meetings—Outpost Duty, the Church in Greater Britain, The White Man's Burden, In Darkest

Africa, etc., etc. When I fell asleep there seemed to be a symphony in my ears—sounding brass and tinkling cymbals enough and to spare, but flute-voices of honest pity and sympathy as well.

In the morning I took Leonard's place in his church. We had the English Liturgy again. The thatched dome, with much tinier windows than the windows at home, but much more sun to fill them, seemed a sort of parable to me that morning. After I had finished the rite, I stayed on in the church, and spread out two letters before the Lord, so to speak. One was my schoolmaster's, the other was that one from Cecilia.

It took me half an hour to feel fairly sure of my answer. But I felt very sure then—just as sure as I had been the night before—but the answer was different.

I thought of my own fold and flock as I read my own friend's letter. How little the *locum tenens* seemed to see what I saw in them! I read Cecilia's letter, and compared her view of the importance of a country cure with my own. After all, I thought, the latter tended to be an exceptional view in our megalomaniac days. On the other hand, the *locum tenens'* view might be rather a normal one, and so might Cecilia's be. Cecilia's scorn, it was, that materially helped the answer to come as clearly as it did. The thought of a Cecilia reigning in that east-country vicarage seemed no more right than pleasant. It sounds a callous thing to say, but I left my lonely and convalescent friend with something

of a sigh of relief, and no real misgiving. I felt troubled about his future certainly, but I saw clearly that I was not meant to take his place. I hoped to find the man who was meant to take it, however.

And, by God's help, I believe that I really did find him before many months were over.

A cousin of mine—Richard East—had been persuaded by a certain bishop to accept an urban charge.

I fancy the said bishop had been reared in a rather strait school of enthusiasts, who regarded work in slums as ideally the best sphere for clerics of activity. So he had routed my cousin out of his west-country village, and brought him to a big town—my cousin, who was an outdoor man from his youth. Curiously enough, at Cape Town, there was a letter waiting for me from him. Wouldn't I tell him something about the 'great spaces washed with sun'? The midland town in general seemed not to have gained his affections, though he loved his people one by one. 'I want to clear out,' he wrote, 'for the parish's sake more than for my own, if only I can find the right place to clear to. I'm not a townsman, and I think by now the bishop understands my small-mindedness. I haven't the breadth of a good modern citizen. I want to go to some Little Peddlington—an African village might suit me. No, directly the right man turns up, I don't doubt the bishop will want to put him here in my room. Do you know of anyone likely?'

I did know of someone.

I did not write back; I got on my boat and started off for home. I went down to the east country and set free the *locum tenens*. The village had a bridal look for my eyes; the red-thorn tree was just coming out, the roses would not be long now. I was in time to be at our yearly May games after all. Next day I went to the Midland town and saw my cousin; also, I saw his charge. I tried to look at it with Leonard Reeve's eyes, recalling to my remembrance that delirious night of his. Yes, though it was not South London, it had a drab look on a dull June day. There was a Warwick Arms, if no Surrey Arms. There was a shop with the authentic fragrance only two or three doors off. I knew that bishop, and I found him in, and in a listening mood, on the following day. He wanted to hear about Africa. I described missions and missionaries to him. Then I told him at some length about Leonard Reeve.

'Yes, you have drawn the man convincingly,' he said. 'You didn't invent those touches. I think he's a man after my own heart. I don't understand you people that bury yourselves in little rose-covered, immoral, earthy country villages. But I think I do understand the man that you have described.' I went straight to the point, and spoke of my cousin's parish. He agreed that my cousin was a disappointment. 'He's got the same peddling way of looking at things as you,' he said. 'I thought he'd flourish after transplantation, but I admit he doesn't seem to. Yes, I should think a

desert and a barbarous people might suit him. I don't deny that he has vision, but his sense of perspective seems to be rather ridiculous.' I tried to arrange matters there and then after that, but his lordship became politic, and seemed a little afraid that he had said too much to me.

However, the business was on the way to be settled before I parted from him. It has been settled quite a long while now. My cousin, Richard East, now tramps the Kaffir paths and ministers in the hill chapel and in that seven-domed church at the mission station. I do not think that there is any Cecilia in his case, nor that there is likely to be one. He personifies the abstract too passionately to need the love of women.

Africa is personified to him—the Cinderella of the continents, the drudge with a destiny worthy of her charms and her good-temper. He is writing a monograph on the Song of Solomon, he tells me. He follows certain scholars in his conjecture that the Shulamite was given back to a humble shepherd by Solomon, when she had conquered the latter by the power of her impassioned chastity. But he has his own theory as well—that the true lovers were both of African blood, that she came from the Ophir-land south of the Zambesi, and thither returned in peace at last from the foam of perilous seas. Perhaps his argument is slender; but it is good for him to believe in it himself, I think, for surely it helps his work among those that he deems her descendants.

He works on out there, personifying and idealising. I think he is as much in love with his country parish as I am with mine in England. May we both, in our placid and unfashionable ways, dream our dreams and see our visions! Meanwhile Leonard Reeve reigns in that midland town, and is treasured by the bishop—who was not deceived when he expected a kindred spirit. He and Cecilia have chosen a date in this next November for their deferred marriage.

Their choice of month seems to me characteristic. I do not think they will be disappointed if the day is a little urban in its murkiness.

It is good for a man to be in love with his charge, is it not? Next time some fanatic of West-End work, or East-End work, or foreign mission work gets hold of you and talks excellent sense about discipline, and offering yourself to your bishop, and packing up your kit at a week's notice—remember this story of mine!

Is it not well to import something of the precise devotion of Holy Matrimony into the general self-oblation of Holy Orders?

It is good to think that three of us friends have the very same sort of feeling—Leonard Reeve for the crowds and the fogs and the odours; my cousin for the rock-sown plains and the little circles of thatched huts; I for the cornlands and the elm-shaded ridges and the cottage people.

Yes, to Leonard anything grimy is just as romantic as green fields to me, or brown veld to my cousin.

Do you know, I was asked to preach Leonard's Institution sermon last Whit Monday, and I dared to preach it? Cecilia, who was stately but really pleasant-looking, sat beneath me in the front pew. Leonard, in his stall, looked oppressed with the weight of the ceremony.

But his eyes lighted up, I saw, as I gave out my text. It was from the end of St. John's Gospel. I preached very shortly. I drew for that poor and earnest-looking congregation the picture of a dripping missionary as I had seen him. I told of him going about his business at dawn, cheered by the Easter Feast in front at the chapel on the hill. I passed up to it by the cheery camp-fire. I did not forget the smell of breakfast cooking, with its reminder of home afterwards.

Then I spoke of the charm of the town work that Leonard had been called to take up once again. I tried to paint it as he dreamed of it—the crowds, the classes, the fog, the scent of the streets. Then I went higher—to the Easter scene, the shore in the morning, the vision of the altar that dawns on a true man's work however deep the night of his failure may have been, wheresoever in all the world he is working.

Leonard looked gratefully at me as I came down the pulpit steps.

While we hurried along from the Service on our way to the station (Reeve was coming to see me off), I quoted some words to him. We were just passing that fish-shop. 'Awake, O north wind, and come,

thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden.' His eyes kindled. 'Yes, old man,' he said; 'I've come into my garden. How I used to dream of this sort of reek out in Africa!'

I felt a gross materialist as I hurried home to my roses and red-thorn, leaving him to that visionary garden and those mystical spices.

THE PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

I

'WHEN you have set Thought free for one particular end you cannot bind her again as you will.' Such is the purport of a certain historian's dictum, and I have proved the truth of what he says. Edgar used to go to the Place of Pilgrimage long ago in his holidays, but I used not to go with him. I did not sympathise with his veneration overmuch in those times of long ago. But I respected the desire for hero-worship, and helped him thither each year that he wanted to visit his shrine. He used to come up for his long holidays every year from the colony. I had known his father rather well, and he had not any settled home. His mother was dead, as well as his father. No one now that knew him need know what she was like, for he took after his father almost unmitigatedly. His father was blonde and aggressively Saxon in appearance. His mother had been Dutch, semi-Dutch, of the coloured Dutch type, as I very well knew. She came from the Western province, and died when he was but

a year old, to be followed by his father some ten years later, just when he had come back to South Africa from England. Then I, acting on my own responsibility, sent him to school in the Eastern Province. No one seemed to bother, even if they had any inkling of his mother's parentage: he looked to be so completely his father's son.

It was in Edgar's schooldays that the Place of Pilgrimage was inaugurated, and that a big star of hope swam into his ken. I had told him about Oxford before, but there had then seemed no sort of path open for him to go up thither. Now, in the midst of his schooldays, there opened out to him a path that he thought he might climb. It was then in the next long holiday time that he took his path, a curious and grateful pilgrim, to the Matopos, to explore the shrine and to give thanks before it.

He dreamed of being a Rhodes scholar years before it came off—that Rhodes scholarship of his. It came in the fulness of time—a thing of many struggles and prayers, of star-led hopes and paths steep with uphill climbing.

Then at last it was that I agreed to go with him on his yearly pilgrimage, in September, the month of his sailing for home. May used to be a Canterbury month in England, the hawthorn month that pricked men in their courages and sent them out on the Kentish road. September had been Edgar's pilgrimage month every year—a spring month in our southern country. The masasa leaves were taking many tints then in Mashonaland. Speaking

generally, the dominant note of our woodland world was rose-colour as we tramped together to the station. Matabeleland by contrast seemed rather drab and drouthy, yet she was showing signs of spring. One great rock stood up very beautiful in a pink lichen garment. It was hard by the path that led to the last hill-climb, ere you reached the burial-place. We camped out close beside it, two Mashona boys who had come to seek their fortunes in Bulawayo, and Edgar and I. When the morning light came I was up. When the sun rose I had all but finished my service. There, on his own ground, so to speak, it seemed easier to pray for the Patron with a sanguine heart, and to give thanks for him with a clear conscience. Over our breakfast we sat on and talked, and looked about us. Edgar seemed to me to be growing in discernment. Once he had seemed so provocatively cock-sure about his mighty patron. To pray for him as we had prayed that morning in the language of a race he had contemned might have sounded to him in years past mere clerical impertinence. Now he seemed to suffer me rather gladly. But he said little. We had scant time to spare just then; there were so many miles to go to the railway. He was to leave for Oxford that very night. While the carriers were cooking their breakfast he came with me to the grave and knelt at the head, looking northwards. I said nothing aloud, nor did he. The rocks bulked dark in the bright air, the hills wore mystic colours, the sun shone passionately in a setting of tender blue. Words seemed a presumption

just then, too much of a time or nation or age that passes. That which may or may not take shape in words remained—the untied power of silent prayer. That morning among the many-coloured hills I looked to sight the faith that can remove such as these. And I prayed there quietly, in prayer that seemed to need no words, for Edgar. I asked for him that he might see those visions without which people are apt to perish.

II

He did not write much, and he did not come for five years. When he came he was not at first communicative. He seemed to take more interest than he used to do in the Mission, I noticed. He had always been a hero among the Mashona boys: that was no new thing. And I was thankful indeed to see that he had not lost his old artless art of making friends with them. So many things might have conspired to rob him of it. He stayed but a month in all at the Mission, and he said little all that time, but his eyes were full of thought as I talked to him—passing on to him hopes, disappointments, joys of battle unabating and enhanced. He was a good listener. I did not try to force the pace with him. But for all that I was eager to know his mind. And it seemed a long while waiting and waiting, thinking he might be going to speak day after day. Then at last the time did come for him to speak, but it was after he had left the Mission.

History repeated itself, and we camped in the old place once more. The camp-fire shone out, and the moon rose broad and golden over the grave of pilgrimage. There he lay with his feet to the north on the height above us—the founder and name-giver of our State. It was strange how his patronage seemed to dominate us. We said our evensong rather northwards than eastwards; we scanned the northern horizon as though seeking a sign. The wind blew that way as we paced to and fro afterwards, and our thoughts went the way of the wind.

At last I broke the silence. We were resting on a ledge of rock then, smoking, staring away northwards among the moonlit kopjes. There he sat beside me, fair-haired and tall, strong and rejoicing in his strength, always courteous but strangely dumb. He was going to-morrow. Would he go without a revealing word?

> 'So many worlds, so much to do,
> So little done, such things to be.'

I paused doubtfully.

He turned to me, and his eyes sparkled as they looked into mine. 'Listen,' he said. Then he told me his heart. Little I knew what it was. I trembled for my crusade, yet not without hope. I had preached to him little, but I had prayed for him much. Now I learned that his heart was as my heart, his desire as my heart's desire, yet, like wine to water, like sunlight to moonlight. I sat at his feet, so to speak, and listened on and on.

III

The next morning broke very brightly, yet there were clouds enough on high to mystify its clear shining. There had been a thunder-shower on the day before yesterday: our former rains had sent on an advance-guard. We had finished our service before the day grew hot, in the prime and cool of the morning. The place had been kept very sacred all that service-time. No hoot of a motor-car had scared the sleep of those lonely hills. Afterwards it was different. People came out in crowds from Bulawayo. There was a special excursion from the Transvaal, I believe, that arrived on that day of all days. We had breakfasted by our camp-fire. Then we came up the hill to the shrine once more, while the boys were clearing up. 'Listen,' said Edgar. A stout Bulawayo bourgeois was holding forth on the crankiness of Cecil Rhodes in choosing to lie so lonely. 'He might have considered the town and trade of Bulawayo' seemed to be the burthen of his song. A pioneer shut him up rather roughly. 'He knew best,' he said. 'Where would your town and trade be if he hadn't cleared the path?' Edgar went up to the old fellow, ruddy, stalwart, more or less spirituous, indomitably good-humoured. 'Tell me about it please, sir—the burial; you were here for it, weren't you?' The old fellow complied with great goodwill.

Bareheaded we stood looking north while he told us of the great camping-out, with the many twink-

ling fires, by the dam some miles away, on the eve of the entombment. He told, too, of the concourse of Matabele at the place itself next day, and of the auspicious climbing of the yoked cattle as they drew the body. 'They never turned. They went straight up,' he said. 'You can see the track-way up the rock now. It meant luck surely, and we took it so, both black and white of us.'

Then he told us of him who lay there, in words of rugged tenderness—the hero of the old era who brought on the new era so fast; he who had tasted the old and knew the old was better, testifying the same by his choice of a burying-place.

We were grateful, indeed, to that guide. A few yards in front of us two beaked Afro-Hebrews were arguing as to what the hero's leavings had been.

'What did he die worth?' was to one of them a subject of earnest enquiry. A few yards in front of them again, as we passed, some bar-loungers foregathered. 'He stood no nonsense about niggers,' one was saying as we went by him. Edgar nudged me. 'We all have our different views of him,' he said, 'haven't we? He gave us views and visions. Thank God that he distrusted himself, and sent us straight to learn where he learned, haply to learn what he missed learning from Oxford, his Mistress of Vision, so far to the west and the north.'

'You see, it's this way,' he said, when the place had grown quiet again in the drowsy noonday. They had gone off then, the Joburgers, three waggonettes and a motor-car crowded with them. 'We

must keep the road open to the north, mustn't we? —the way his feet lie, the way that goes beyond his vision into bigger visions.'

'I'll try and do something,' I said humbly. 'There are plenty who want to travel far, or think they do.' I glanced at the three Mashonas by the fire. One was teaching the other two. They were spelling out Saint John's Gospel together. 'Is he one of the most adventurous?' Edgar asked. 'He's very willing,' I muttered. 'You ask him whether he'd like to go to school down south.'

The boy's face lighted up when Edgar asked him. It was a rounded, soft-featured Mashona face with large bright eyes. The lips were not so very thick; the nostrils were cut like an Arab's.

'Tell him I'll pay for him and for another who wants to go,' Edgar said. 'He's probably got a particular friend. What about Atiwagoni?' 'He might be keen to go,' I said, 'and he's quicker than most of them.'

We began to smoke a last pipe silently. The time was drawing near to strike our camp. We must start for Bulawayo at once if we would catch Edgar's midnight train easily.

I reached for my wallet, and brought out an Oxford anthology.

I turned over the pages and began to read rather sadly—

> Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
> To laugh as he sits by the river,
> Making a poet out of a man:

> The true gods sigh for the cost and the pain—
> For the reed which grows nevermore again
> As a reed with the reeds in the river.

'There's that point of view to consider,' I said. 'I'm fond of Arcadia and Arcadians, and there's loss entailed if you send Arcadians on the way of Athens.' Edgar sighed. 'I know what you mean,' said he; 'and I feel it as you do. But Arcadia's got Lacedæmon at her throat, a southern state not much troubled with scruples, neither very philosophic nor very literary. The way has been opened by him we wot of to Oxford, to the Athens of the north. It was opéned, as men thought, for the benefit of young Lacedæmonians. The man that was hand-in-glove with Africanders, with our Lacedæmonians of the south, did that. He imperilled Lacedæmonian stability by opening the way to northern stars and their influences—to Shelley, Burke, and Mill, and to all manner of people dangerous to the back-veld views of Lacedæmon. He opened the way to Tolstoy's rediscovery of the Christian Law, amongst other northern treasures, didn't he? And I, with the Arcadian taint in my veins, saw the way open and went northwards. Now it has come to pass that I remember my own people as Moses did, and use the wisdom of Oxford as he used the wisdom of Egypt, to help one's own people towards a promised land. They want leaders, don't they? Is there not a cause? Is it healthy for Lacedæmon to go on as she does in Arcadia,—setting aside Arcadia's own happiness?' 'I'll be back

again next year,' Edgar said, 'to compare notes and report progress, should all fall well. If I forget thee, O my Darien-peak, let my right hand forget her cunning!' We knelt long at the grave with the feet of its sleeper laid true north; then we said 'Good-bye' to it. 'Bless him,' Edgar said to me as we turned away. 'He opened a wider way than he knew perchance; God prosper the Great North Road, the Road to Oxford rather than to Cairo!'

THE LEPER WINDOWS

ITS Cathedral was rising at last in a small South African capital. For many years a pro-Cathedral of corrugated iron had sufficed. Now the first stage of a noble design in ruddy sandstone was all but completed.

The new Bishop who had been called to sit in its Cape-oak throne was complacent of its charms. Chancel and Lady-chapel were provided; transepts and tower might be expected in due course of time. The Bishop was long and lean and dark-haired, very closely shaven. He came from Oxford, yet he was wise enough to obtrude that fact but seldom on South Africa. He watched and listened intently and said strangely little; nevertheless, when he did speak, he seemed to have no lack of things to say. His speech to the Cathedral Building Committee after a three months' silence was not without its interest. He spoke well of both design and execution.

He turned to the shyer subject of the raising of the funds. How had they attained to such wealth as their secretary announced? Mainly by means of three fancy fairs and a café chantant. Alas! that it should be so. Yet he did not propose to hold in-

quests. Let the dead bury their dead! Let them, however, set their hearts as the nether millstone against the adding of transept or tower save only by alms made to God. He went on to ask with whose memory the Lady-chapel was to be associated. Was it not the fact that they had associated the chapel of Christ's Mother with the memory of a visionary statesman? There seemed to be want of consideration for the great dead shown in their popular decision, inasmuch as he had not seen his way to accept her Son. Was it not something of a felony to have stolen the dead man's name—a felony that had assisted their funds very lavishly? But, likely enough, the Committee had had some noble thought in mind when they gave to the dead such reckless honour. The last touches were now being given to the nave. He wished to make a personal request of his own. He understood that coloured persons and natives were not to be encouraged to frequent this mother of churches. Their status within was, to say the least, precarious and hard to reconcile with due respect for the second chapter of Saint James. He asked to put in at his own expense five windows after the likeness of leper windows in England—windows that coloured persons and natives might use freely and without reproach. By this means some at least of them from without the walls might be made free of the vision of the services within.

The irony of the speech escaped its hearers for the most part. After the usual type of debate on such

a subject as viewed in South African Church circles, the request was granted.

Now it happened that Mr. Conyers Smythe, the most prosperous man in the whole community, was not present at that Committee meeting. He was a Master of Arts of a South African University, and a real scholar, not a mere qualifier. He was, moreover, both sufficently educated to understand the irony of a critical friend, and habitually inclined to resent it. He spoke fierily to certain of his intimates when the Bishop's speech was reported to him. He went to see him himself next day in the evening time.

His host came and sat with him on the stoep, lighted the lamp to show him a new book of his, and gave him coffee and a cigar. The hour was about half-past seven, and the week was Christmas week. There was a new moon of very dim silver in the West looking through the rose trellis upon them, and masses of inflammatory cloud were heaped about her. The host looked at the guest meditatively as he lighted his pipe.

The guest was fair-haired and well-featured, as well as magnificently built; but his deep colour was not exactly the hue of health. His eyes had been glowing when he had first come on the scene, prepared to open battle. But when his host masterfully gained an armistice they became dull and rather worn eyes, that seemed not to be seeing good days somehow.

Their possessor only grew eager by flashes now

and again as the Bishop showed him a second new book—one that they both deemed highly delectable—turning the passages and discussing various phases of its general subject—the cults of the Greek States.

They had come together, these two, in a very tiny and remote city—each an enthusiast as to this same by-path of erudition.

It was not until he had shown his guest the road on to a large extent of commonage—commonage of mutual delight—that the Bishop led the way to a spot therein convenient for the desired engagement. He began to discuss the relations of Xanthos, the fair god, and Melanthos, the dark god, in Hellenic society.

'That's the trouble here,' he said. 'I hope you won't draw the line even at my leper windows. They may at least ease the isolation of our two cults here. I find established—so to speak—in this Christian city the cult of Xanthos, tribal god of the fair-skins at the Cathedral, or for the present the Pro-Cathedral. Also I find the cult of Melanthos multiplying itself at the tin temple of Saint Simon the Cyrenian.'

Mr. Smythe's cheeks became more deeply empurpled and his eyes danced.

'You must know,' went on the Bishop, 'I don't believe in tribal gods at this time of day. I believe in Someone bigger. So it was that leper windows, modelled on those of the Middle Ages, seemed to me possible easements. There, at least, Lazarus may feel at home and join in worship, as his fore-

runners in the Middle Ages did, at their own wall-slits. Thus at least one step will be taken towards the supersession of Xanthos. As to the cult of Melanthos, I hope to help to infuse more of the joy of the Universal into it, so help me God!!! Yes, let me hear your objections.'

Mr. Smythe began quite conclusively. Yet there was more moderation and more argument in his rather indistinct beginning than in the flowing harangue that followed, when his voice cleared and his periods found their stride. The speech fell from level to level. Ere the end it fell to the level of that sort of invective against natives one hears so often where mean whites forgather—a not very dizzy level, believe me!

Finally, Mr. Smythe vowed to give no penny for the future to Church purposes, and never to darken the doors of the new Cathedral, should the concession of those leper windows be confirmed. He would agree to forfeit a thousand pounds should he break his word, he said. Thereupon they closed the subject. The host tried to lead back to the cults of the Greek States, but the guest was now too rapt and breathless to follow to much purpose. Soon, by mutual consent, they ended the interview, not without private friendliness, but with civic war at heart.

This was in Christmas week, and things went much as might have been expected during the months that followed. The concession had been granted by the Committee, and the concessionnaire

thought it his duty to be grateful for that small mercy and to act upon it. The malcontent repeated his vow, and it rang throughout the village-city. A good many of the natives who worshipped at the tin temple managed to hear of it, and laughed to one another; they would watch for the darkening of the doors.

The Cathedral was to be dedicated to Saint Mark as a saint who was martyred in Africa, but lacked a cathedral in the south.

His day was chosen for the hallowing. On the eve some pomp of Procession, Recession, and Anthems had been prepared, and the Bishop was to preach. He had been away much of these last months—to north, south, east and west. So custom had not staled his variety of appeal to the outer circle of citizens or villagers. They, as well as the devotees, thronged the nave. At the leper windows there were knots of dark participants in the service.

The windows gave a few the chance of sight, but they were only five in number, and it would seem that many had to be content with very scanty views. It is questionable whether a number of the smaller folk—nurse-boys, kitchen boys and telegraph messengers—got any sort of a glance ere the pageantry was over.

The night was very clear; the autumn wind was somewhat bitter.

The hymn after the Blessing had been reached—'Brief life is here our portion'—and the banners streamed down the central aisle in glory. The leper windows grew very starry with observation.

One boy who had come late had no chance of a view now. He was the Bishop's coachman, a lanky Bechuana, and he stood humming the hymn's air with his back to a window—a window near the western door. Suddenly he started. Somebody was striding up to the porch. Surely there was no mistaking Mr. Conyers Smythe's fine shoulders in that figure nor the jaunty carriage of his massive head. Now he drew near, and the light of the porch-lamp fell upon him.

The coachman caught the arm of his stable-boy, who was standing next to him—a rather Jewish-looking Mashona.

'Look! look!' he cried.

They both watched the churchgoer as he passed up the steps. Then he was gone from their view.

In the afternoon of the next day, when the triumphal services of Dedication were over, the Bishop was being driven to a farmhouse not very far distant. It was not till his mule-cart had almost reached home again that his driver ventured to question him. He had seemed rather preoccupied that driver all the dusty journey. Now he asked a question that was being wildly debated in native circles that very afternoon. '"My lord," has Mr. Smythe paid all the thousand pounds yet?'

The Bishop started and stared; then he laughed. 'What do you know of Mr. Smythe's thousand pounds?' he asked. Then he answered, 'No, Jack; why should he?'

Why indeed? So Mombe, the ox-man—to give

him his native name—was trying to evade his obligations, was he? Almost bursting with importance, Jack told his master what Jim and he had seen last night. The Bishop listened carefully, and asked two or three questions. Then he told Jack that he might want him and his stable-boy later on that evening. He felt sure that the story was no mere wilful fiction. When they were home he wrote a letter to Smythe asking him if he could come over and smoke after dinner. Then he went off to his sunset Evensong.

Conyers Smythe came about an hour afterwards. The Bishop and he had had but two bookish evenings together since that rather bizarre one in Christmas week. They met cordially enough on this April night.

Smythe was looking far from well. He had been worried about his wife's health—she was away in England. The last news of it had been rather disquieting. Smythe was glad enough of sympathy; he was in no truculent mood.

They smoked by the fire in the Bishop's study as the night was cold. The Bishop had some new books to show and points to debate.

The two began with Greek pagan cults, but passed on to Christian hagiology, and discussed the legend of St. Mark with a fair measure of agreement. Then, when the coffee had come in, and they had become friends at ease and amity, the Bishop told Smythe the boys' tale.

Smythe grew curiously white and seemed angry.

Then he laughed. 'Let's have 'em in and hear their yarn!' he said.

So Jack and Jim were sent for, and, after some slight delay, appeared. They were well washed and in their Sunday clothes. They were disposed to be deferential enough, but withal very confident, both of them. They cast somewhat awed glances at Smythe in his armchair, but they told their tale clearly on the whole, in fair Biblical English, Jack first, slowly, and Jim, at a great pace, after his superior. Smythe appeared to be busily consulting a reference while Jim was ending. There was a pause. Then the guest looked up from his book and stated his alibi: 'I was in my stable, sitting up with a sick horse,' he said. 'I came away long after the church service was over—when the poor beast died with frothing at the nose. You can ask my stable-boy.'

Jack bowed his head respectfully. 'Your stable-boy, Mutenu, has told me so this evening,' he said. 'But, O master, why should we lie? Is it not known that people have been seen in two places at one time?'

Smythe frowned. He was not anxious to discuss hypotheses with natives. Then the Bishop told the boys that he had heard enough. Let them think that although they had spoken truth, they had been mistaken.

'How do you explain it?' said the Bishop rather eagerly when they had gone out.

'O,' said Smythe with a rather bitter smile, 'sup-

posing it not to be a native lie—natives have been known to lie, my lord—it's the sort of story one reads about in the Middle Ages—the sort of legend likely to linger. He was seen going into a church on a certain ill-starred night—'

The Bishop gave a start and interrupted him. 'Do you know what yesterday evening was? Why, it was Saint Mark's Eve.'

Smythe smiled a queer livid smile. 'Yes, I thought of that all along, since the boy mentioned the porch,' he said. 'I've just been looking up the old belief in that new book of yours. I was seen going in, therefore I must look to go out in these next twelve months.

> A year, a month, a week, a natural day
> That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
> O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!
> The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
> The devil will come, and Faustus will be damn'd.

The Bishop smiled at the quotation, but looked anxiously at his guest. Was he really taking his subliminal self's choice of date to heart? He proceeded to recount his own unfaith in thirteen's black magic, also in the traditional properties of salt and broken mirrors. He gave instances of disproof in his own unended career.

But Smythe, though he laughed with him, seemed rather restrained and silent; the last hour of that evening appeared to hang fire somehow. Towards the end of it, Smythe talked of his wife. 'She is at her old home,' he said, and mentioned a village very near to Oxford.

'I know,' said his host, looking into the wood-fire. He was watching the Cherwell swirl through a narrow archway. He was conscious of heavenly blue in the white limbo ceiling above him, and the cushions of his chair had a grassy feel.

'She's gone home,' said Smythe, 'and she's not well, and I've not been well.'

'You look as if you want rest and change,' said the Bishop uneasily.

'I think of going a trip to the old country,' said Smythe. 'I was born out here, and haven't ever seen it. I'd like to see it once.'

'O, do go,' said his host. 'It *is* worth going far. Yes, all that long way.'

Not many minutes after they said good-night.

But the Bishop did not go to bed at once after his guest had gone. He reached for his Keats, and read, 'The Eve of Saint Mark'; then he reflected.

'Strange are the uses of leper windows,' he thought. 'How I should like to know what I may know this time next year, if only I didn't know I'd better not know it now! Well, be it a sign or a mock sign, God see him through wth it!'

. . . . . .

Conyers Smythe started home by the next mail boat save one. The same boat carried a letter in the Bishop's handwriting to a pastoral divine in Oxford.

'He's a sick sheep, anyhow,' said the writer, 'and I've a presentiment that he mayn't last out a year.'

As it befell, Conyers Smythe died rather suddenly

in England before November was over. People remarked on the dreadfulness of the event. But Mrs. Smythe bore the shock bravely, as if she had been well prepared to bear it. It seemed that she had known the truth about his heart-disease in May, almost as soon as he was told it by the London doctor. Smythe had grown to be intimate in those last months with two or three English scholars—one was an expert in tribal cults, and the other was that pastoral divine. It was one or other of these Oxford friends of his who sent on his last letter to the Bishop in December after he had gone away. Among other messages, the letter brought this one:—

'There was something in that Saint Mark's Eve business I suppose. But I had had my warnings before of an event that is likely enough to occur this very week. I am glad indeed that I came home and saw things from other sides before the end. Perhaps those crowded-out Kaffirs by your leper windows hurried me up with their intelligence. I am grateful to them for that. Otherwise I might have delayed, and never started on the home voyage.

'You must make some allowance for my old point of view, as I was born into it. But now I want to give both Transepts to the Glory of God on condition that coloured folk and natives shall have them to themselves undisturbed. Forgive my narrow-mindedness, but I'd rather have it so than have all races mixed up together, and perhaps they'd

rather have it so themselves! No, I really don't think I'm dying in the creed of the tribal god Xanthos, but in the faith of Someone bigger. I can trust you to befriend me at some altar of His. . . . I wish I could afford the Tower.'

'Alms!' said the Bishop. 'Thank God they'll not be built now by bazaars or fancy fairs or even by cafés-chantants. Poor base-born little churches out here, that one so often hears of, aren't they only too likely to grow up into the temples of the tribal god?'

Thus the Transepts were destined to be of purer lineage than Chancel or Nave or Lady-chapel. Only the Leper Windows are their equals in descent as yet among their fellow-buildings. But there is good hope of an honourable birth for the yet unborn Tower.

THE BURNT OFFERING

A Sequel to 'The Leper Windows'

['The Headman made it generally known that he expected all the men, both Christian and heathen, to subscribe to the funds. One man refused to give anything, and was taken before the Magistrate in consequence.'—Extract from a South African Church paper, December 22, 1910.]

THE transepts had been built and blessed, the five leper windows were no longer over-crowded. Xanthos and Melanthos, gods of the fair and the swart skins, had in a measure met together, and in a sense kissed each other. Much remained to be achieved in the matter of mutual good understanding, and much more again in the supersession of these tribal deities by a Greater.

On the other hand, something had been done to teach the devotees of Xanthos toleration and a spirit of alms. The Bishop now turned his attention towards Melanthos more particularly—what could he do to ennoble the aims and methods of his clients?

He had made a journey to England and back not long before the blessing of the transepts. He regretted leaving his flock at the time. Yet certain observations he had made just ere he started gave him much food for thought on the voyage. And when he was home in the old country he was glad

to find time and occasion to observe afresh, supplementing Africa by Europe, intuitions by research. The Rev. Charles Topready, a keen missionary, had asked him to visit him the week before he went homewards. It was the season when that countryside threshed out its millet-grain in a revel of rhythmic labour. The Bishop delighted in some of those airs that the sticks beat time to. He was greedy of fantastic interpretations as he wrote their vowelled refrains down in a note-book.

'We may have a Harvest Thankgiving in church, may we not, this coming Sunday?' he said.

Now Harvest Thanksgivings were as red rags to Topready. 'Why should we bind upon Africa a burden that irks England?' he groaned. 'Surely it is a mercy that we can start afresh on the veld with no tradition of a Feast of Pumpkins.'

The Bishop smiled and smoked and argued by the hour. His point was that festivals of the soil were serviceable for sons of the soil. That agricultural festivals were serviceable for husbandmen, pastoral feasts for shepherds and goat-herds, hunting commemorations like that of Saint Hubert, for those who hunted. His knowledge of Greece and Rome, pagan and Christian, of mediæval England and modern Brittany helped him with many apt illustrations. Topready stuck out his chin and kept bravely to his two points—the danger of materialism and the menace to the spiritual cults and festas of Holy Church as by law established in the England of to-day.

'All right,' said the Bishop, 'let us have no Harvest Thanksgiving for the tillage of African earth. That is to say not this year. But keep an open mind.' Topready promised dubiously.

That struggle and waiving of victory had put the Bishop on his mettle. He had thought out the subject to some purpose before they met again.

Here are some pages from his English diary:

Sept. 21.—Preached at a Thanksgiving in Essex. 'Happy harvest fields,' quiet tints in the Vicarage garden. A sun that seemed to make better use of a short day than an African sun would of a long one. What a festival Topready might have just about this time if he only liked.—The masasas tinted with copper, crimson; mauve, and pink, and other leaves showing faëry green and gold.

Saint Matthew's Day.—The festival of the foolery of riches when Spring is everywhere and the sun is shining.

Oct. (date illegible). Preached at the blessing of the boats in a small Sussex harbour—the herring season just beginning. What glorious girls' names some of the boats had that we prayed for—'Diana Elizabeth,' for instance, might have sailed out of the 'Faërie Queene.'

Nov. 1 (*All Saints'*). Went to church at Saint Paul's in a side chapel.

Nov. 2 (*All Souls'*).—Went to pray in a cemetery chapel.

Both were misty mornings, but the sun each day came out before we had done, and broke through

the dingy windows in a carnage of colour. How fine a side of death, November, the month of the dead, presents here. Damp and fog and fall of the leaf doubtless—the sorriness of the bad business of decay and punishment—but on the other hand what bravery of sunlight at times, and what colours for the sun to shine upon. In Africa it's so different. There the month is a spring month. The gay side of death as a release from Africa's plentiful curses and bondages is happily prominent. All Saints' Day —our May Day—our Feast of Flora and the Rosa Mystica! What a day for converts suckled in animism! Let us commemorate the African Saints with garlands of spring flowers as well as with palms in their hands. Have written to Topready to suggest a May-Day Festival—with African drums to dance to, if no English May-pole to plait.

Jan. 21 (St. Agnes' Day).—Went to a down church, where they had a sort of special service. Lambing-time among the South Downs just coming on. The sacrifice pleaded with one main request in view—the blessing on the flocks. If they had only brought some lambs in! I hope to live to see some pied African lambs and kids in church yet.

June 21.—Went to Stonehenge on the longest day. Would have camped out there on the eve if the policeman would have let me. Took observations as to Flame-Stone. Compared notes with those I took at Zimbabwe this time last year on my way to Topready's.

June 24 (Saint John).—Yes, in African Mission

Stations we should have St. John's Fires or fires corresponding to them about Christmas time.

Then in Mashonaland, summer is at height. Yes, the other Saint John's Day, or its Eve, would do. Let us give thanks for the Light of the World and the Sun of Righteousness symbolised by things seen and enjoyed. What did Saint Patrick do about the sacred fire? He kept it going, didn't he? Let us light our bonfires with a good will this coming Christmastide—we who live by sun-time so often.

. . . . . .

Back from England came the Bishop full of the lore of early missions. He had enriched his zeal for broad-basing the people's worship on their own everyday earth, and for enlightening things opaque with effulgences invisible. He saw his way more clearly to further what he had at heart. Topready had had many letters, and they had had their effect. But he had not capitulated yet. He capitulated at a price, as we shall see.

. . . . . .

'Church ready by Christmas,' wrote Topready, 'please come and consecrate.' 'Expect me the day after,' telegraphed the Bishop. He thought about a bonfire as he rode along on that Saint Stephen's Day. 'The kopje above the Mission!' he reflected. 'A magnificent place for a beacon-fire.'

To his delight the new church crowned the very kopje he had been thinking of. There it stood on the sky-line, its gold of fresh thatch crowned a huge

pole building, and was itself crowned by a white cross.

'How fine!' said the Bishop to himself, 'but there's no room up there for a bonfire as well, alas!'

Topready did not look over-cheerful when his leader greeted him with congratulations on the building of the church.

'It's all very well, or rather it might have been ever so much better,' he said, as they went in.

In the evening there was much time to talk. They sat on the stony rise above the house with a wide valley view. The starlight was brilliant above them —eager, perfervid, passionate. They were on the rocks smoking, the Bishop between Topready and Manners, who was not a parson, but a policeman.

'It's like this,' said Topready. 'Holy Innocents' is the first church that has been built since I came here. It was built on a system.'

He explained roughly how it worked. The native teacher used his personal and official majesty for what it was worth. The people on the Mission ground were asked for poles, grass, work, &c. 'These were given,' said Topready, 'or at least "given" is the word that I understand my predecessor would have chosen. The headman proclaimed that his will coincided with the will of the native teacher. They wanted a church built that would compare favourably with churches erected under the auspices of other native teachers and other headmen.

'The contributions came in plentifully, sylvan or grassy. People who never come to church, heath-

ens who do not seem much overjoyed with the Gospel, gave just as handsomely as Church officers. No one was paid. The church is cheap and big, and the headman and native teacher are both unhealthily contented.'

'Well, what's the matter?' said Manners; 'it's the way we do these little things in Africa. White men don't build churches from base to spire on ideal principles exactly, do they, Bishop?'

'At least we haven't had a café chantant lately,' the Bishop said.

'Well, don't you be too sure one isn't going on in some outlying parish while we sit here. As it happens, I know of one advertised for next month.'

'Be sure of your facts,' said the Bishop.

'Anyhow, before you came, plenty of the society lash used to be applied to get church-building doles out of Europeans. Moreover, if you look into it, generally you'll find things at Missions much as you find them here. These gloriously "given" Mission churches on Mission lands that the home magazine ecstasises over are not given so very freely, to say the least of it. They are put up by a sort of social pressure immensely effective,' Topready broke in.

'They say most of the churches this side of the river are built the one way—and I don't like the one way. Archdeacon Maynard used to advocate the one way, and impress it on his missionaries black and white. It was he who started the church-rate and debarred defaulters from Easter Communion. I've stopped that, and I want to stop the one way.'

The Bishop groaned. 'Archdeacon Maynard's a vice-president of the Free and Open Churchmen in England. I heard him speak eloquently, if a little floridly, on the right of the poor to the House of God.'

Manners chuckled. 'England's some way off,' he said.

Topready spoke from his heart. 'I don't like it. I told the people that the proper way was for Christians and philo-Christians to build accordingly as they could spare money and time. But they said that they were too few. I answered "Then let them wait in the old church awhile." They said they wanted a new church this year, and that the heathen should be called to help the faithful as in other places. They said they ought to have a kraal levy as other places did—it saved a great deal of trouble. They thought me mad, I think. Azariah, the teacher, practically told me so.'

The Bishop lit his pipe again.

'We'll think about it,' he said. 'The consecration is fixed for the day after to-morrow, is it not? It was to be christened Holy Innocents' Church on Childermas Day, was it not? Will you have it consecrated on the Eve instead, Saint John's Night? Time—Sunset.'

Topready started. 'Rather late, is it not?' he asked.

It was a great concourse that lined the hillside on the morrow when the sun was going down. The Bishop had spoken that morning in the old plain

church of how he wished them to observe certain days of prayer and thanksgiving.

He asked them to keep a festival of flocks on Saint Agnes' Day.

He asked them to keep a festival of herds on Saint Luke's Day.

He asked them to keep the feasts of Loaf-Mass in August and Wood-Mass in September as feasts of Harvest and Forestry.

He asked them to keep a thanksgiving for summer after Christmas on the night of Saint John, if they and their priest thought good.

He spoke of how the heathen had worshipped the sun in the grey northern lands. Then Christians better taught had thanked Christ, the Light of the World, for the glory of the sun, and lighted their joy-fires to a better purpose.

Doubtless, some in this land long ago, not only at Zimbabwe, but on many hills and high places, had honoured the strong sun of the South. He asked them as Christians to be glad for that same sun's blessings at Christmas time. It seemed to him good for those who wished it (he gave no law) for those to light their bonfires to-night and to thank God not only for the summer, but for the Sun of righteousness. He himself had a mind to light a fire on that Saint John's Night to the glory of God.

Topready looked thoughtful after church. 'If I adopt your calendar loyally as far as may be, do you see your way to help me against the system?'

he asked of a sudden. His grey-blue eyes were full of fight.

The Bishop nodded. He talked with him quietly a little while.

'The pact is made, then?' said Topready. 'No, I don't think we have sold our convictions, either of us. I don't feel penitent about my side of the bargain.'

'I feel it's a holy alliance,' said the Bishop, and his face glowed. 'People will keep this night, and remember what was done on it, may be, long after we are forgotten.'

That sunset a mighty crowd was there among the rocks. Much dead wood had been brought. Fathers, mothers, and children—in costumes that ranged from skins to European fashions—shouldered or headed their faggots. A grim thought obsessed the Bishop as he watched them. These people, so quiet and yielding as to the selling of sacrament, and levying of church vote—how easily they might be swayed to more sinister reminiscences of the Middle Ages! If he and Topready and Azariah and the headman enjoined it, what would save certain aged heathen neighbours from an *auto-da-fé* for alleged witchcraft one of these nights? Were not some of those old scenes at the stake much like this scene before him? Did not country people come together much as these, with dark impassive faces and bundles of firewood? Did not they listen and listen so, until the time came to pile faggots to the glory of God?

He stood on a rock and looked down on the faces. Topready stood close beneath him looking cheerful, the native teacher was near looking dubious, next to him stood the headman with his white beard, looking amused. Around them the crowd poised and posed itself among the rocks with innate grace and imposing silence. Even the babies in the goat-skins were quiet.

The Bishop spoke of alms-giving. He said he did not like their plan of raising a house for Christ. Let people who loved Christ build churches if they wished to, but let them build churches according to their power to give! Let them not seek the labour or money of others, careless how it came! Rather let them worship in the old and the small, than build a new and great church anyhow! He, their Bishop, wished to buy their new church from them, paying back those who had helped to build, giving to each his due. He asked them, would they sell this church to him, to do with it as seemed to him good? If, when they built, they had made, as it were, a false start, let them start again, and this time so run that they might obtain the Promises of Christ. Would they sell their church to him?

He waited for an answer.

There was a hush. The eyes that watched him seemed almost overwhelming in their vigilance.

His eyes went wistfully off to the sky in front of him. What beaches of gold and weed-tangles of rose-colour those were to the north-west—the way of England.

Suddenly the silence was broken.

Azariah spoke out bravely. He had heard the words of his herdman, and he knew that he had gone astray, even like a lost bull. As for this thatched cattle-byre that they had built, let him who asked for it have it! Was it not his own?

One after another spoke. Their speeches all had the same import—let the church be handed over to him that asked.

A roar of acclamation—worth many speeches—went up from the hill-side. Then the Bishop asked those who carried faggots to follow him to the consecration. His shepherd's staff went before him. An earthen vessel smoked with incense in front of that again. He followed up the steep path in his shining robes. Behind him came blazing grass torches, and behind them again wood-carriers. When they reached the hill's crown there was some delay in the gathering dusk. They were stacking the wood for the sacrifice. At last Topready turned to his chief with a happy face. All was prepared. The Bishop's voice rang out in one sonorous prayer of oblation. Then someone handed him a grass torch and he kindled the thatch above the altar. The church—that mis-begotten innocent—flamed up toward heaven—amber and grey and crimson under the stars.

EIGHT-EIGHT IN LAVENDER

ANDREW VINE came out to Africa this year as a pilgrim, and was disappointed. He did not go about his pilgrimage in the right way to my thinking. For to begin with, on his own confession, he put himself in the hands of a born organiser, who was making up a party of fellow-travellers. Of course they were provided with first-class tickets for the boat, and enjoyed for sixteen days and more, in a same and narrow scene, an amplitude of the luxuries they were used to, and tired of. Then, dogged by a diet befitting that state to which it had pleased Providence to call them, they rode the Great North Road for some days in a northern express. Vine said that the Victoria Falls were all right, but that their surroundings were, many of them, perversely wrong. It was so very stale, the hotel business, with the moonlight river excursions and the Livingstone trips,—far too much sleeked and smoothed by foresight, and tamed by taking of thought. If one had only travelled up with pack-donkeys, provisioned with leathery meat and leathery damper! For Vine had known better times in Africa. He had known pioneer adventures in his headstrong youth—but had fallen out of his Column after three crowded months. Tempted of

fever, he had made a great refusal. And now in this year, twenty-four years after, the sense of having seen better days at a tithe of the expense, oppressed him.

However, the tickets had been taken, and the splendidly null organisation of their party had him in its grip. He went back from the Falls to Bulawayo, and was whisked out to Khami. Only an hour was allowed him to see the river. At the grave of the Matopos, he was allowed two hours. There a brooding Presence grappled with the languors of his pilgrimage. The demoniac discontent of that savage scene made great play with him, during the two hours he was there, but two hours are not a very long time. Soon they were scorching back again with an interval for tea at a well (or ill) appointed hotel. Vine was disposed to give up the dreary pilgrimage-game that very night, he told me. But the born organiser, coming to him after dinner, persuaded him to play it out. He offered to release him after the next lap—the lap of Great Zimbabwe. When that was once finished to time, he proposed that the party should have a breather, a short spell of civilised life at Salisbury, should it so seem good to them. Vine could be spared for the space of that interlude. Afterwards he would doubtless take boat with them for a cruise up the East Coast. He would be sufficiently reinvigorated to rough it out with them rigorously to the end. The East Coast route might not entail quite so many hardships. Vine sighed, but he was

a man of his word. He went to Zimbabwe without a murmur. He had longed for seventy-five miles of the dusty Umvuma post-cart, but alas, the day was the third of the new month! The railway extension to Victoria had been opened on the first. The organiser rubbed his hands as he told them the glad news: 'We can have a dining-car and sleeping berths now to within sixteen miles odd of the ruins. We shan't need to fare so ruggedly after all. A lunch at the "Apes and Peacocks" Hotel is about the worst of it. But we can take out a Fortnum and Mason's hamper in the road-car that meets us.'

So they went to the ruins. Vine, who, as a pioneer had seen the 'Temple's' torso shaggy in bush and long grass, hardly knew it again. It had been shaven and shorn rather ruthlessly. Some of the ruins, he noted ungratefully, were numbered to correspond with a catalogue. There was, moreover, the glamorous sheen of a wire fence about the whole place.

A curator participated as guide by special arrangement. A local celebrity accompanied him; he stood for the faith of Ophir, and smote the Egyptologist adversary not once nor twice alone. He confessed to the ladies of the party his conviction—that the theory of an African origin was too inconceivably squalid. He stood for the gorgeous East, he said, as against Kaffirdom. He would not insult the culture that they brought with them by bothering them with detailed arguments.

Meanwhile another local celebrity was employed

in bossing up some restoration work. Primitive walls were receiving trained modern attention, and medical attendance, regardless of expense.

Vine came to me at Umvuma when the Zimbabwe visitation was over and done. He was seeing his party off by the Salisbury train when he caught sight of me on the platform. That night he smoked and slept by an ox-waggon. Bread was to hand in rather frugal measure, but there was great plenty of monkey-nuts. There was also bush-tea, and Vine brought much tobacco. We smoked till long after the moon set, and that was near midnight. He told me of disappointments that had come to him through his pilgrimage being over well-appointed.

'After all,' I said, 'you might try again next year.'

'But a year's a lot at my age. I was forty-five last month, and I don't mean coming out again.

'So little done, so much to do,
So many worlds, such things to be.'

'Where shall we go to this week?' he went on. 'I've got a week off from the Cook's combination. You'll give me the one week, won't you Shall we go to Dhlo-Dhlo or Nanatali or Sinoia Caves? It's the curse of our Cook's tour that it's mopped up the sacred places I did want to see in a decent way—the Grave, and the Temple, and the Falls.'

'Yours is the very snobbery of pilgrimage,' I told him sternly. 'There are surely shrines on the veld that have never yet got into a Chartered Com-

pany's guide-book.' I told him of a modest set of ruins out our way. I couldn't well come with him in any direction, north, south, or east or west, as he seemed to think I could. I might get in five days between Sunday and Sunday, if he chose our own neighbourhood. He seemed glad enough to agree.

We cut food down and loads, and we started. We camped within the precincts of the shrine, hard by a place where a fire-fused chalice had been dug out. Ours was a fair camping-ground. A ring of kopjes about it wore the sun's colours. To the east a spruit was in sight, overhung in that autumn month by the mists of morning. Within those precincts we dreamed some temple-dreams on two golden afternoons, and slept temple-sleep on two very shiny nights.

'My reformed pilgrimage has justified itself,' Vine told me on the morning that we left, when we were making for my station.

'Wait a bit,' I said. 'We are arriving if all falls well, this very night at another shrine. We have not done with our Pilgrims' Way.'

That night we came to the farm-house where the Kents farmed and missionised. I had expected Vine to like it and them, but I had not guessed how much attracted he would be. The Kents were not up-to-date, and they dressed as some people dressed in England twenty-five years before—in the period of their leaving home.

So Mrs. Kent wore on that night a chocolate-

brown Liberty costume of a Burne Jones pattern. Miss Kent was only twenty-two, and wore rose-colour, but the design of her dress was her mother's own. Kent wore an eighties collar with old-oak plaid and a red tie, I did not like his taste.

Vine sat and watched them with a reverential sort of gaze. He asked Kent when they were going home, thoughtfully. But Kent told him that they did not think of going home again, only up the coast to Zanzibar, or down to Inhambane, when they wanted change and holiday. 'That's splendid,' said Vine emphatically. 'Don't go home. It's not what it used to be. I feel sure you would not like it.'

After supper we had music, and Kent kept on singing, at Vine's particular request. I did not take much notice of what he was singing till Vine came and spoke to me. Then I saw how excited he was, and I listened with attention.

'Do you remember that?' he said. 'It was the song that Oriel man used to sing.' Then I recognised 'Our Last Waltz,' and afterwards 'In Sweet September.' I remembered both as the songs of a man whose wedding we both had attended,—in the very year that we went down.

We shared a hut behind the mission homestead, and shared much converse before we slept.

'It's purple and gold,' Vine said. 'I came out to find a beastly ruin—'

'And you find the Victorian Sixth Decade mummified,' I said.

'Don't sneer!'

'Well, pressed in lavender,' I amended.

For early did'st thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.

'That describes Kent's Hegira, doesn't it? He's stopped where we two were, when we went down, in ever so many ways.'

'Hurray!' cried Vine, tossing his boot up, 'I came out to find a beastly ruin, and I've found my lost youth, nothing more nor less! Bless you!'

But his ecstasy was to culminate on the following morning. Kent had mounted him on one of his two mules, and piloted him on the other—to see some Bush paintings three miles away.

I grew a little uneasy, they were so long gone, for I knew well what a lot of country lay between us and my own mission station. I was due there by sunrise or soon after, on the morrow. Mrs. Kent was strumming away on the piano—old dance tunes that I remembered—barrel-organ melodies of now remote days, days when a bi-weekly shave sufficed me. I stood in the doorway and beat time. Whenever were we going to get started at this rate? At last the mules came cantering up the waggon-road.

'Get a move on,' I shouted to Vine as he pulled up before the door. But just at that moment Mrs. Kent began on 'The Reign of the Roses.' Vine, who had kicked a foot out of its stirrup, did not

dismount. He sat drinking in the dance-measure. Louder and louder she played the air, and, humming it over, he drove his foot home. Shaking up the reins, he cantered his mule round and round the sun-dial in front of the door. Round and round he went, still humming, while those wiry and sun-burnt wrists pounded away at the dance-music.

'How long is this going on?' I pleaded. I began to see the humour of the thing when I watched our carriers. They were gaping as at a new kind of circus. At last Mrs. Kent gave over, not very soon, however; the melody was evidently a favourite of hers.

'Is there not a cause?' pleaded Vine, when he had dismounted lingeringly, and was facing my reproaches for his wanton delay. He muttered something about a merry-go-round. Afterwards he explained, when we were making up for lost time along the big vlei.

'It was that night when we got to Goring,' he reminded me, 'when we went down to Henley in that double-sculler at the end of our first summer term—1888, the first week in July. There was a village fair on that night, and we rode round on the horses, ever so many pennyworths. That was the tune I remembered best of all the tunes that the steam-organ played. Don't you remember?' And strange to say, I did.

He played the game with the organiser, rapt though he was by his memory of the steam-organ, I will say that much for him. He took the trouble

to go all the way up to Salisbury, and to beg him to have him excused. And he was successful. I don't quite know what excuse he gave. It was scarcely likely to be so crude as the excuse I guessed at, 'I want to marry a wife, and therefore I cannot go.' He unbosomed himself to me engagingly when he came back from Salisbury. He appealed to my compassionate sympathy.

'Just fancy! Forty-five and no real home!' he said, 'And here I've come on pilgrimage, and found just what I've unconsciously craved—youth and beauty up-to-date, not this date but the date of my own unforgotten youth—1888 in lavender, so to speak.'

I wished him luck in his wooing of Miss Kent. If Mrs. Kent had been a widow, I should have thought her much more suitable. He gave the bridle-reins a shake, and rode away on an old salted horse he had bought, walking had grown much too slow for him.

He won Joan Kent, and fixed it up with her late-Victorian parents to their mutual content.

The wedding date is chosen already—it is June 20th—a day hallowed enough, having twice been Jubilee Day. I think Vine would have preferred May 24th as having been Victoria Day. But Joan objected to her wedding taking place in Our Lady's May month.

DIVINATION

I HAVE a friend who lives some miles away, among fantastic rocks and crimson-flowered Kaffir trees. I was over at his homestead one day in Christmas week last year and found that he was absent. He was sleeping at a trading-station to east, the boys said, and would not be back for a day or so. But he had left word with them to give me supper should I come. So I had time to notice a change.

Three or four very cool and fresh water-colours adorned his walls. They were pinned up there under a trophy of harness. Under each oblong of paper was a title in old English characters. One was named 'Sundown,' another 'Sun-up'—these both showed the homestead not as it was now in mid-summer, but as I remembered it in late winter or early spring, with some of the trees in full flower.

The other picture showed a charming group of children variously coloured among the rocks. I feasted my eyes on it for quite a long while, noting its detail, which bewildered me. Surely no such scene had been witnessed lately in all South Africa. Yet I knew the rocks of the scene; they were close by, and the children were painted some of them

with familiar-looking faces. The title underneath was 'Innocents.'

I did not see my friend for a week or so after that, and when I did I did not think at first to ask about the pictures. However, he began to tell the story of them himself. He was talking about men on the road, a class with which he had a large acquaintance, having lodged many of them. 'I had one here last week,' he said, 'a white man in clean white ducks. He stopped two nights, and went outside painting most of the days. He gave me three pictures. He could paint, couldn't he? I couldn't catch his name, and he said he wasn't sure where he was going to stop next. But he went up the Rosebery Road, and seemed to know his way about. He hadn't got a bag, and he travelled very light—just a blanket or so and a loaf of bread and a cup. I shouldn't think he'd come to much harm, would he?' I shook my head. 'He could paint, couldn't he?' he said, glancing up at the pictures. I nodded. 'That's a fancy picture,' I said; 'that of the children—a pretty fancy. I wonder what it means.' My friend Dick meditated. 'I don't see much wrong in the painting anyhow,' he said.

The picture was indeed a pretty fancy—there were children white and black in it, and lambs and kids. The white children were mixed up with the black curiously. One little sturdy Mashona carried a white child in his arms. A white boy with fair hair, aged nine or ten, carried a Mashona baby in a goat's skin strapped to his back. The light of dawn

was in the picture—a cool summer dawn. Between the rocks and the red-sprayed trees of our country was, as it were, a lawn, close-bit by much feeding into a fair copy of an English lawn. I looked hard at the picture.

'Those two Mashonas are like the children that were burnt in a kraal this way,' I said pointing. 'I tried to dress their burns but they both died.' Dick looked up as I pointed, but he said nothing. He eschews dwelling on painful subjects very often, I notice. 'Don't you think that they are like?' I asked.

'Kaffir children favour one another,' Dick said sagely. He stood watching the picture on the faded wall in silence. Then we dropped the subject. But the mystery of it remained for me.

A week or two after, that mystery multiplied. Dick was expecting visitors, and he asked me over to meet them. The male visitor was an official I used to know of old; he was to bring his sister with him this time, and the sister I did not know. She was a charming person; one who had been in the country a long time ago and left it, but had come back again now to be married and to make a home in Rosebery. She had reached the homestead about mid-day, the same day that I came over in the late afternoon.

After tea and before dinner we walked down to the cattle-kraal, all four of us. Then, when Dick and her brother were ahead she began to question me about that water-colour on the wall. I told her

what Dick had told me. 'He told me that himself,' she said, 'but I didn't understand.'

'I thought I knew two of the children,' I said, 'but Kaffir children seem much alike to our English eyes, don't they? They seemed to me to resemble two quite little children I used to come and see. They were badly burnt near here.'

She started.

'Did they get better?' she asked. I shook my head. She started again. 'Listen,' she said. 'Two children to whom I used to be nursery-governess were murdered in the "Rebellion" on a farm close to this very place. They were staying with their mother's elder sister. Please do try and tell me this. Why are these portraits, life-like portraits, of those two children in this picture?'

I stared at her rather stupidly. Then Dick came to us—we were close up to the cattle-kraal—and called us to come and see his young stock, and talked to us about them.

'I don't think I'll tell the children's mother,' she said to me. I was then saying good-night to her in the bright moonlight outside the homestead door some hours afterwards. 'They live in the colony now, she and her husband. Telling her might reopen deep wounds. It wouldn't do any good at all probably, would it?'

'That depends,' I said, 'on the mother's point of view. You're sure about the likeness?' She gave a sort of sob.

'Trust me for that,' she said. 'I was very fond of them—of Claude and Polly.'

This last dry season, by the ordering of God, that mother came our way herself. She was on a pilgrimage of her own. Dick sent over a messenger hot-haste to tell me that a lady was at his place and had asked for me. She wanted me to spare the morning to-morrow if I possibly could. She would have me come on an expedition with her and talk over something that she had in her mind to do. Couldn't I sleep at Dick's homestead that night?

I could. I came over about nine o'clock I suppose, walking in a fresh south-easter with a half-moon to light me. Dick was smoking outside in the yard when I came.

'The lady's tired,' he told me. 'She's turned in already. She's got a lad with her. He's inside. Come in and have some supper.'

The stranger rose up as I came in, and I greeted him. He was a tall, fair boy, whose face I seemed to know. He told me that he had driven his mother down, as I sat over my supper. I glanced up at the wall curiously before I had finished. The picture was not there.

'I thought it was better out of the way,' Dick said when his guest had gone to bed. 'I didn't know how she might take it. It's the mother of those poor little Scotch children come to see the place. Wants to put up a gravestone or monument or something, poor lady!'

Then I knew where I had seen the stranger boy's

face. It was the image of his dead brother's face in the picture, the white piccaninny that carried the Mashona baby. I whistled softly.

'Who painted that picture?' I said. 'I know all you told me. But did that chap ever come down the road again? I never asked you.'

'No,' said Dick, 'I don't know to this day any more about him.'

I sat silent.

'She wants you to go over to the place with her to-morrow,' Dick said. 'You know the place, don't you? It's only about three miles away up the old waggon road; you've been there, haven't you?'

'Yes,' I said. 'There's a wooden cross where they're buried—or should be. I had it renewed two years ago. Didn't I ever tell you about it? Haven't you been there yourself lately?'

'No,' said Dick. 'I don't fancy the place somehow. But I was asking about it only this afternoon. The boys tell me there are some trees there still; white men's trees.'

'Yes,' I said, 'yellow peach-stocks and one gum-tree—you get it against the skyline looking up from the spruit. The old pole and daub house dropped to pieces long ago. I do hope that cross is standing all right still. I blame myself for not having seen about it this last year or two.'

The cross had fallen down and the place looked generally forlorn when we reached it next day. I was troubled about my companion. She was fair and tall and quiet. When she did talk on the way

she talked about commonplace subjects. But when she saw the forsaken place and the displaced cross the veil fell. She clutched her son's arm hard, and I left them together. I went off with the Mashona boy and the mules out of the way. I had no inspiration at the moment what to say or what to do. I did not come back for half an hour.

She told me on the drive back that she wanted to provide somewhat of a memorial. 'It's been left too long,' she said. 'But you can understand how sore I was before and how I shrank from coming.'

She told me that one great grief of hers was that she had no good likeness of her children as they were at that dreadful time. I was embarrassed and silent. 'What can I do to help you?' I was thinking over and over again, 'Shall I show the picture? Yes, right or wrong, I must.'

I didn't know how to begin to tell her about it. I prayed for words. Then I began in curt crisp sentences to tell her. 'You may not like it. You must not be disappointed,' I said. 'Why?' she asked. But I did not try to explain. I would let the picture plead its own point of view. When we were back I asked Dick for it, and I knocked at her room door and gave it to her.

Then I went out and watched a team ploughing, till Dick called me in.

At lunch the guests were very quiet and subdued, but seemed quite cheerful. Afterwards, before I started for home, she came and talked to me alone.

'Is this the scene of the picture?' she asked me,

as she led me across the yard. 'This grass plot between these rocks and those trees?'

'Yes, it's just here apparently,' I said. 'You see that great tree there. One can hardly mistake it.'

'I remember the spot long ago,' she said. 'I came down to my sister's to leave the children with her for a country holiday just before that time. We were staying at that place we went to this morning; they called it Happy Valley, and we drove over to this place where there was a store. It was only a month or two before the time—May Day I think. I remember my children playing hide-and-seek here with the piccaninnies; yes, playing other games too.' Her lips quivered, but she went on quite steadily.

'Those piccaninnies in that picture—do you know any of their faces?'

'Yes,' I said, 'I knew two that were burnt, and did not get better; two I used to come and see. And Dick says he recognises two or three little chaps that have died since he came here to live after the "Rebellion" was over.'

'And how do you explain it?' she asked gently, 'this vision of dead children—so charmingly coloured, so colour-blind from a South African point of view?'

I thought before I spoke.

'It is, I believe, a real Vision,' I said. 'The one who painted it, whoever he was, saw more than we most of us see. Possibly he was the seventh son

of a seventh son. Very apparently he had a pure heart. The picture was painted on Innocents' Day. I have verified the date. You see he has called it "Innocents." It was painted in the children's old playing-place. He saw them in their new life with the beauty of things South African like a good dream about them, and the stupidity of things South African passed from them like a bad one.'

She did not speak for quite a long time. I feared I had hurt her somehow. But at last she spoke and reassured me.

'Yes, I think you understand how the picture came to be and what it means. I used to be dreadfully bitter about the Mashonas. I try not to be now. Couldn't you build on my account a little school or a little church in that forlorn place? There are some villages near by, aren't there? Couldn't you call it for me the Mission of the Innocents? I'd like to ask my host if he'll give you the picture for the church should you build it for me. In my house I should be shy about hanging it. I am afraid people might scoff at it behind my back in their South African way, and I couldn't bear that easily. I know in my heart of hearts it's true—that Picture—as true as it's beautiful. They're all happy now, likely enough—happy together. They were not likely to have been happy in the same ways had they grown up in South Africa.'

JULIAN

I.—THE SOP

JULIAN BORNE was going to leave the Mission that had been his home for three years. He was a spruce-looking person with quite pleasantly coloured red hair and a turned-up moustache. A Bishop had commended him, and a Canon Superintendent had delighted to honour him. His immediate superior, a weather-beaten Missionary, had, however, partially dissented from the chorus of approval. He had discriminated. He credited Julian with fine gifts of organization, but he submitted that he had proved himself lacking in qualities of heart far too often. His discrimination had been received coldly by the Canon Superintendent, and liberally discounted on the scores of dulness, crankiness, want of vision, yes jealousy. Now at last something had happened to disturb the Canon Superintendent in his optimism, in his forecast of Julian's brilliant usefulness to the Mission.

Julian had suddenly decided to leave his work. He had the offer of a congenial berth and a rising salary in the Cathedral city. He put the thing very kindly to the Canon Superintendent. He would help the Mission of course, wouldn't he just, when he should climb into the seats of the mighty? He would be a volunteer henceforward—the Cause

could count upon him—with a sound commercial position for his jumping-off ground. Yet the fact remained that he was leaving his work, having loved this present world.

It was the day of farewell to the surroundings of the last three years. Julian was to ride into town that afternoon.

He went to lunch with Dick Hunter, the weather-beaten one, and talked to him as he imagined he wanted to be talked to. He had always liked his host's Bohemian ways very well, he was only impatient of his preoccupation with native postulants. There was his usual fly-swarm of them, that day as other days, about his threshold, and lunch was late, as usual. At last they began. Julian had the first two courses to himself for the most part, while his host was busy once again outside. Then came a third course. 'I had this for you,' said the host rather pathetically, as he settled down to his bread and cheese. 'It seemed the right thing for the farewell banquet of a Mission. It's the food of the country.'

Sure enough under the cover was a platter of brown millet with a savoury side dish of beans for relish. Julian flushed up. 'No thanks, I've never tried millet pap yet, and I don't mean to,' he said.

His host smiled, 'As you will,' said he. 'You won't mind my having some, will you?' He helped himself sparingly, then he called the Mashona boy to take the dishes away. Julian the callous felt a shade remorseful.

'Here, let me try what it's like,' he said. His host took a piece of the millet-food on a fork, and dipped it in the side dish. He gave the result to Julian on a plate. 'For old sake's sake,' he murmured. Julian nibbled away rather delicately. 'It's not so awful,' he said.

He was riding into Rosebery that afternoon when the incident recurred to him.

He had a great grip of his subjects—whatever they were—so long as they were payable propositions, to use his own phrase.

The textual study of the Bible had been accounted such a proposition until recently. Bible-words they were now that buzzed in his ears.

'He it is to whom I shall give the sop when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop . . .'

The sop, the dipping, yes, he remembered now. He had read the words in Church two or three evenings ago.

'He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.' He started. 'And after the sop, Satan entered.' He shuddered.

He wished that incident at lunch-time had never occurred. Of course it was pure chance, but still it was bizarre.

Was it pure chance? 'I'm not so sure,' reflected Julian. 'I wish Hunter'd mind his own business.'

That farewell banquet at the Mount Pleasant Mission had left an ill taste behind.

II.—THE SYMBOL OF THE SPURNED

Some five years after, Julian Borne came up to Rosebery by the early train. He awoke at dawn and threw up the window. He was travelling in a sleeping compartment *de luxe*. He had appearances to keep up now.

The sun had tilted up a golden arc and the withered landscape took a lavish glory.

Julian's eyes fell on some shabby thatched roofs that the blaze was brightening. 'Mount Pleasant Mission!' he said to himself, 'and to think I wasted three good years of my life there. Three bob a day with rations and no drinks. Good Lord!' He filled his pipe as the poverty-stricken homestead passed out of sight. 'Yet it wasn't all waste,' he went on. 'I got to know the country and its questions. I got to know how to manage men.' He laughed a little to himself complacently. 'No, I couldn't manage Hunter. They told me last week he was nearly dead with blackwater. I wonder if he's dead by now. Not one head of cattle to bless himself with, I'll bet, and no banking account ever opened in his name. He was quite unmanageable.'

'Ah! But I managed some of them. What about the Canon Superintendent?' A white-haired vision, creasy-chinned and rosy, passed before his eyes. 'Toad!' he muttered and kicked the foot-warmer. 'Even so,' he growled, 'Butter for the clergy, palm-

oil for the laity, big stick for the incorruptible!' His face grew hard as he thought over some contemplated applications. His face was little changed in five years save for the wrinkles about the eyes.

The train drew up at the platform. Julian found a good many acquaintances as he passed along it. But he was not disposed to make himself too cheap. Some got a wintry nod, others a summer smile. One high official who represented big interests got two minutes' talk and a drink. Then Julian jumped into his mule-cart, and drove away. He reflected with satisfaction on the quantity and quality of the greetings that morning. Meanwhile his Cape-boy coachman whipped up the mules and took him along the main street in style.

Julian had not been in Rosebery for six months now. He had made great strides in those months—the most momentous of his life. From being a coming man he had reached the summit of arrival. He had arrived without a doubt. His company's shares had risen super-excellently. He had made a big coup at the end of last year. The fulness of time had now brought to him the prospect of another. As he whirled on into Suburbia, he fell to considering relative prosperities. He set names to the houses he was passing. No, he wouldn't change with any one of their owners. Not one stood better just now. Not one was more the man of the moment. He could give points and a beating to how many!

He drove through a gate and up a drive. He was

at home again. His house had been enlarged and re-decorated since he was last there. It looked solidly prosperous. Its second floor shouted 'money' in a country where most houses could boast no first floor. Its critics might have called its colours harrowing and its architecture the reverse of inspired, but Julian cared not a jot for that sort of up-in-the-air criticism. He sat down to breakfast with a thankful heart, and made himself quite amiable to Tommy Bates.

Tommy Bates was five years older than Julian, and had acted as his Secretary these two years past. He had small eyes set in a rather big pasty face. His goatee beard was trim, but scarcely pleasing.

Julian got through his letters at breakfast and after breakfast with Tommy's help. Amongst the letters was one from Mount Pleasant Mission enclosing a card. 'Hunter's mad,' said Julian crossly. He tore up the envelope viciously, but he did not tear up the card it contained. He placed that in his pocket-book carefully. Tommy looked at him in interrogation, but Julian was not communicative.

After they had discussed a business letter or two, and had a drink together, Julian started for the Club. He made himself agreeable to one or two, and got a deal of pleasure out of snubbing another. Then he gathered some important news from a business acquaintance. It was great news. He wanted time to think over it. He sent off two or three wires to labour agents and one to a Native Commissioner.

He must have boys at any cost, and quickly, to develop certain properties. He

> '. . . turned an easy wheel
> That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.'

Then he interviewed an agent in an office, and did some very delicate work indeed in the drafting of a prospectus. He had earned a drink by then. His brain interested him—he was inclined to self-analysis of a sort—its chiaroscuro of limelight effects and faint nuances indicated rather than expressed. It was good to be alive to-day, and to pull as many strings as he was pulling.

He did not stop at one drink; over the second, the expert made a proposition to him. It dazzled him, but he would not give an answer just then. To-morrow morning would do.

After that he lunched at the Club with Sir Charles Guestling who was just back from England, and had brought a younger brother out with him to see the country. It would have been a pleasanter lunch without that brother, Julian thought at the time. The brother said nothing offensive, indeed he hardly opened his mouth, but his eyes embarrassed Julian strangely. He had curious blue-grey eyes that contrasted with his black hair, and he would fix Julian with these eyes just as he and Sir Charles were deep in shares and options and the scarcity of labour. Perhaps it was that Julian was overwrought with anxieties of success. The eyes seemed to him clairvoyant, he imagined that they saw more than they ought to see, when they looked him over, as he

made some highly technical statement. It was extraordinary that a conventional man about town like Sir Charles should have such a brother.

After lunch Julian relaxed.

He gave himself the indulgence of a call on Mrs. Puce.

He had put her husband on to a good thing or two a year ago now. They had been great friends, he and the wife.

To-day he was a little anxious as to how she would receive him. Things had altered since they last met. He had got engaged—a business-like engagement.

But she was very gracious in her welcome. Moreover she was more decorous this afternoon than he remembered her a few months back. He told her about his contemplated coup.

'I'll consult planchette for you,' said she. 'Yes, and I'll let you know to-night.'

She was a pretty woman with rather too high a colour. But she grew pale enough now.

'I forgot, though, it's against my principles,' she said. 'I've given up lots of things. I'm much more particular.' Something roused Julian. He spoke masterfully.

'Just this once,' he said, 'Let me know to-night. I may know of something gilt-edged that I won't keep to myself if I hear to-night without fail. No, I won't be refused. I want proof of good-will.'

It was a sunny afternoon, with none of that south-east wind which is the bane of our winter. Julian

told his coachman to drive him up to his new farm. The homestead was about five miles out of town in the Mount Pleasant direction.

Julian drew out the draft of the prospectus, and began to work hard at its revision. They had stopped at the house ere he thrust pencil and paper into his pocket. He stepped out of El Dorado—let himself down, not without a jar, on to more humdrum earth.

The farm-house was an iron shanty newly hammered together. The bailiff—a full-bearded Colonial stood in the front doorway. Julian gave him a perfunctory handshake. He talked farming business to him quickly. He was tired, and eager to be through with it.

They were almost through with it in half an hour. They smoked their pipes and had coffee on the stoep together.

'About that Mission Church,' said the Bailiff, 'You know the notice is just up that you gave them last year. The boy that used to teach there is gone, and the kraal's moving. The building still stands empty. They don't use it now.'

Julian frowned.

'Let's have a look at it,' he said. 'We can drive round that way when Bob's inspanned. Meanwhile let's have a drink.'

The Church was very small—wattle and daub. It had done three years' service.

'No value,' pronounced Julian. He was rather

angry with such a mere shed for wasting his valuable time.

'That grass wants burning,' he muttered. 'If you set a light to it and the Church catches, I shouldn't think there'll be any harm done.'

'Right,' said the bailiff. Julian stepped inside the building.

'Nothing left,' he said. 'Nothing but this box. You'd better keep it. They can have it if they send for it.'

'What's inside?'

There were some red and black candlesticks and vases packed away in the box—works of art in their way, but that way was not Julian's.

'Cheap and nasty,' was his comment. 'Ah! What's that?'

'It was on the Communion Table,' said the bailiff.

Julian took up a clay cross and regarded it curiously.

'A cross with a snake on it!' he exclaimed.

'One of the boys said it meant the Brazen Serpent,' said the bailiff.

'Holy Moses!' laughed Julian. 'Well I'm going to jump this, it's quite a curiosity. You may give the boy five bob from me if he asks what we've done with it.'

'Right,' said the bailiff, and went off with the box to the cart.

Julian looked at the twisted symbol with an intent fascination. '"As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness,"' he murmured to himself, '"Even

so shall the Son of Man be lifted up." How well I remember preaching outside a kraal, on a boulder under a flowering kaffir tree, on that very text. I liked preaching that day more than I did most days. It wasn't half bad. That's Christ all over—that reptile—that Worm and no man! The Worm that I tread on with impunity—that's Christ! I expect Hunter might say it would be better for me if the Worm would turn and bite—better for my eternal interests. Perhaps the Worm will, one of these fine days. It's a rather clammy notion! The notion would be rather a nuisance, if I believed in the Worm.'

III.—THIS NIGHT

As he drove along the veld twenty minutes after, Julian looked back at the burning Church. 'What would the Canon Superintendent say?' he muttered with a grin. A fantastic shape started up from the grass in front of him. The mules shied at it, and broke into a gallop. 'Pull up!' he shouted. At last the mules were pulled up. He sprang out and walked back along the road. The figure stood stock-still by the road-side, as if waiting to greet him.

When he came near, it came towards him, the figure of an old native with a ragged grey beard, all hunched up in a blanket.

'Tom,' called Julian to him in his shrill voice, 'You've got to come down to town to-night. No,

you swine, to-morrow won't do. To-night before sunset, or there'll be trouble. You know what I want you to do, what you did last Christmas.' The drive back to town was uneventful.

Julian sat on his stoep half an hour before dinner, smoking and pondering. He was anxious about that plunge he meant to make to-morrow. His philosophy of life, so largely commercial, found room for a cult or two of superstition. He had consulted Mrs. Puce's oracle time and time again. He had had recourse to his boy Jim's father, Tom Nyoka, twice before. He had got him to use for him a rude and illegal form of divination. He had been helped by it before, at least so he opined. He might be helped again. He sat looking at the sun dropping smoothly in a cloudless sky. As he watched, Jim came out to him to tell him that his father was in the kitchen. 'I'll come directly, Jim,' he said.

The piccanin was sent off to get water, the kitchen door was safely locked. The throwing of the bones began, while Julian watched with understanding eyes. His hard grip of his subjects, generally, extended to this remote ritual.

To-night the answer seemed to be inconclusive, but as they sought the answer, a clear sign appeared —as it were by the way, and unsought. Julian was watching haggardly. He snarled a question at Jim. His cook-boy's big round eyes showed very big and very round just now. He was watching with painful intentness.

'Yes,' he answered his master, 'Yes, sir, it is so.'

Julian whistled and turned away moodily, with his hands in his pockets, staring into space.

The old man—the diviner—was talking at large as he gathered the fingers of wood with their rude traceries together. Julian paid little heed to his words and gesticulations when he awoke from his day-dream.

'Give him some skoff and a bit of meat, Jim,' he said. 'Tell him I'll give him ten bob when I've got change.'

The old man was clamouring to him to make up his money to a sovereign, but Julian paid no heed to what he said. He swung out of the hut and off to wash for dinner, still brooding moodily.

At dinner, Tommy Bates found Julian the reverse of good company. He did not keep his gloom to himself, and he snapped at any excuse for snapping. Tommy left as the sweets came in, with an excuse about meeting some friends at 8.30.

'Don't be late,' said Julian peremptorily. 'I want you here at eleven sharp. I want to see about to-morrow's letters before I go to bed.'

At 8.30 a pink note came in with the coffee. Mrs. Puce had sent it down. It contained but a few lines:—

> Dear Julian,
>
> I'm so sorry, but I couldn't make head nor tail of the answer. What I was told clearly was that you were likely to be in some trouble to-night about midnight. I don't know what

sort of trouble, but somebody who lives at the back of your house may have something to do with it. Do take care of yourself. I trust you to do that for my sake. I think you are sensible enough to do it, now you are forewarned. Come up to-morrow to breakfast and reassure me,

Yours, in ever so much of a shudder,

CELIA.

Julian turned rather green as he read.

'I don't like it,' he growled, 'Two signs, and independent ones. The one sign—death. I saw it myself when the bones were thrown. The other sign—danger. And Celia hasn't the sort of conscience that would let her invent it. I don't know what to set about doing. But I must do something or other.' He began to reflect. He started from the unsubstantial grounds of twofold superstition, and tried to be practical in his own defence.

'About midnight,' he thought, 'Well, I can trust Jim. And I can't trust the other two boys that inhabit my back kitchen. Piet has some of his own to get back for what I did last Christmas, and the other boy I simply don't know. He was only sent to me to-day. I'll tell Jim to go over to the location and take the other two with him, and look after them for all of to-night. Tommy should be back by eleven. We two ought to be able to look after ourselves. Likely enough it's all moonshine—this back-of-the-house business.' He pitied himself for his anxieties, and took an extra drink to dispel

them. He went to the kitchen. Jim and the new piccanin were just discussing the movements of somebody as he arrived.

'When was it?' asked Jim.

'Just when the sun set,' the piccanin answered.

'Where?' asked Jim.

Then Julian cut them short, heedless of what they were saying.

'Lock up at once, and go over to the location. Mind, Jim, you must look after the other two and see they don't come back here. I don't want any boys on the place to-night. D'you hear?' Julian proceeded to enlarge on the bigness of reward or punishment in certain eventualities.

Julian went to his study, and put on his slippers. He called Jim to light the wood-fire before he left. The night seemed a bitter one, or was it that he had taken a chill? He took up a local paper when Jim was gone. 'It's been a busy day,' he reflected, as he straightened it out. 'Fancy my not looking at a paper of any sort till this time of night.'

He searched the columns impatiently.

'No news to speak of,' he thought. But then he cried out as his eye caught an out-of-the-way corner. 'Why, Hunter's dead!' The news seemed to take his breath like a body-blow. 'A good man!' he said to himself. 'The man who gave me the sop when he had dipped it. The best of that Church gang! A man who called me an apostate straight out more than once! The man who sent me that weird card this morning! Yes and he sent me a

quaint souvenir, a sort of 'Memento Mori,' once before, last Christmas, just when my boom came off. I haven't forgotten the words yet. 'I will say to my soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." And God said unto him, '"Thou fool, this night. . . "'

'This night,' he muttered. 'I wish this night were well over.'

IV.—VICISTI GALILÆE!

Julian was in a strange fit of tension when he heard Tommy Bates' steps coming up the garden path. They were very uncertain steps.

Julian threw open his study door as the secretary reeled into the hall. He had longed for company this last grey craven hour or two, and *this* was all the company he was to enjoy for to-night at least!

Humming and lurching and stinking of whisky as Tommy was, there was not much comfort to be sought from him.

Julian swore at him sonorously—then he hustled him off to bed. Soon he was snoring. Julian had somehow shuffled away his fear in his coercion of Tommy.

'I'll get my blankets and pillow out of my room, and lie down in Tommy's. I feel I can sleep now,' he thought.

He went into his room heedlessly in the dark and trod on something or somebody, just as he was striking a match.

It was the big black snake that lived in the ant-hill at the back of the house—whose movements Jim and the piccanin had been discussing. The snake dealt with Julian.

Julian staggered about looking for crystals and a lancet. They were locked up safely and perhaps Jim, or perhaps Tommy had the key.

Tommy would not wake to any purpose. Just as Julian was shaking him, the clock in the study—a clock Julian had won in his sprinting days—chimed twelve very melodiously. Everything seemed to be locked up. Had Jim the key of the spirit cupboard or Tommy? Julian was growing drowsy in his struggles against the current of fortune. Hadn't he better give in, and let himself be carried down? Almost before he knew it, he was lying on the sofa in his study where the lamp with the red shade was burning so cosily. Likely enough his eye caught a quaint ornament on his study table at the juncture—the figure of the Serpent on the Cross.

It may be too, that some sort of startled respect came to him for the Worm that had turned at last, not vindictively, but in the interests of the Commonweal.

Probability points to this one fact at least, that Julian fumbled for something in his pocket-book ere he resigned himself finally to the growing torpor.

A card was found on the study floor when morning came; they found the pocket-book itself on the couch beside him.

The card was the one that had come at his last

breakfast-time from Dick Hunter, the card that he had reserved rather indignantly for future consideration.

On the one side of it was a colour-process reproduction, very good of its kind—Christ in Glory—the *Rex Tremendæ Majestatis* and also the *Fons Pietatis* of the *Dies Iræ*— with tears in His Eyes and thorns on His Brows as He judged just judgement. On the other side were four lines from Browning, faithfully transcribed save for the change of a name. They were written in the shaking writing of a sick man, in Hunter's round, unformed hand:—

> 'For the main criminal I have no hope
> Except in such a suddenness of fate
> . . . . . .
> So may the truth be by one blow flashed out.
> And Julian see one instant and be saved.'

There is no question as to the suddenness of the stroke of fate that ended Julian's career in South Africa. There is an open question as to the illuminative force of that blow, and we must wait for the answer.

THE DOUBLE CABIN

WE had been close to a certain line of fire together, and yet we had not seen much fighting. That is to say, we were taking part in a campaign together that was for the time being an affair of patrols near a certain border—an affair that flashed into fire now and then as between man and man. As between sun and man the firing was fairly continuous for eight hours of most days. Were we not within a hundred miles or so of the equator? In that climatic struggle (so much the more constant of the two for us Northerners) I on my non-combatant job came off lightly, he, as a combatant, suffered. He was down with malaria time and time again. He had it on him that night when he put me up at his place—a night when the old year was almost out. He was then inhabiting a border outpost—a clean little camp tucked away behind a native village. It was none too airy, I thought, with its heavy curtains of cactus hedging. He seemed a little better that next morning, when I said prayers, and afterwards rehearsed a certain Rite. He stayed to the end of my ministrations. After breakfast I started again on my journey, a round that took me far from the centre of our small world. When I touched that centre again I heard his news, which was not so very reassuring. He had gone down

with blackwater, and been carried into a small hospital. There, having almost gone out, he had rallied enough to be put on board a ship crossing the lake. So he came to a greater hospital. It was thither that I followed him up. He had had another crisis, I found, but he was better again by the time I got to him. Then he improved a little, and seemed to be convalescing. Then malaria chose to interfere with the running of her sister fever's course. This seemed extraordinarily meddlesome, and made things hazardous still, though they were as well as one expected, when the time of my going on leave came.

How glad I was to get off! My Good-byes were hurried when once the brown envelope had come. I saw him on the hospital stoep (baraza, did they call it in that alien part of Africa?) just as I was rushing down to the station. He had lost his blue colour, but still looked rather flickery.

'If you go to Bulawayo, you'll remember, won't you?' he said. 'You've got the plan?'

He had given me an elaborate little drawing of two streets that converged. His bungalow stood upon an island betwixt their confluence and the shading that he had marked waste ground. The pink paper was in my breast pocket, but, knowing my way with papers, I had already learned those streets' names.

'All right,' I said. 'But I'm not likely to go that way. And the time's so short. I'll try though.'

His face lit, and his eyes gleamed. 'Do try,' he said.

'Don't build on it,' I entreated him. 'I'll try to write to her anyway.'

Then he looked downcast indeed; he had fallen from such a confident height. But he said 'Good-bye' like a real friend.

I forgot him almost completely for the next four days or so. There were excitements, seeing somebody at headquarters, wiring business wires, writing friendly letters against time, steering a forlorn small native and a more forlorn small dog, who were sharing my fortunes, down to the coast. At last I was there, and discussing shipping news with new-found keenness. My prospects of getting off with speed looked black for a bit; then came the flash of a fresh idea. As there was no ship for the African port I knew, why not book for the unknown? There were transports returning to a port beyond, I had heard. True, the cost of railway travelling thence was hard to forecast, resources were of a modest sort, and there were three of us to find fares for.

Yet ways and means began to show their forms out of the mist soon. I chose to sail almost at once by the untried road, and I wrote to friends, telling them how I had chosen. I wrote to my friend in hospital, among others. I was going the Bulawayo way after all, and I might do what he wanted quite unbelievably easily. Who would have thought it when we parted? I scribbled down the

great news against time. (I had an importunate proof to correct before sailing; proofs are apt to take hours, I find, and my sailing hour was near.) He might be expected to have my scribble handed to him on the hospital stoep about three days after. So I calculated. I flattered myself that I knew the ins and outs of our despatches and mail deliveries, also that I had allowed in my calculation for censorial delay. It was pleasant to think how pleased he might be expected to be. I well-wished him with a prayer. Then I started down the glaring white road for the wharf. I had dismissed him from my mind, I regret to say, for another three days or more.

I travelled down from that east coast fighting-base on a transport that had brought up mules and horses. She had naturally enough, shipped a goodly crew of flies with them. The mules and horses had gone their ways, but the flies had by no means all gone with them. Now with no quadrupeds to be their prime care, those that remained were apt to obtrude themselves upon us. I deprecated at heart the ruthless warfare that marine authority waged upon them. But for all that I found my afternoon slumbers often distracted by the survivors. On the first and second afternoons of that voyage I awoke not long after I dropped off. I awoke, and thought about nothing in particular. On the third afternoon my waking thoughts took a very definite shape.

I was in a cabin or stateroom that two officers

had shared going up—doubtless of the veterinary profession. Now on this return journey I had the place to myself. I lay in my bunk with my boots off, and observed the empty couch beside me.

It was my friend that I thought of—my friend as I had taken leave of him, reclining on the hospital stoep, straining with eager eyes at mine. It was his breathless voice that I remembered. It was saying over and over, 'You will go and see her, won't you? I'll be with you in spirit in this your trek for her and home.'

Surely he was on that couch in the cabin now beside me, and surely he was saying the same thing over and over again, just as regularly and restlessly as if he were yonder electric fan curvetting with the same sort of panting iteration.

And yet, don't mistake me, I don't pretend to have seen anything or heard anything extraordinary in the ordinary way of seeing or hearing. Only I was dead sure that he was there with the same old entreaty. Afterwards I lighted a pipe, went above, talked to the skipper's wife, read, investigated my boy's and also my dog's welfare rather perfunctorily, settled down to saying an evening Office, made an end more or less of that, just as night came on, and then again took time to think over things. I remembered that he would have possibly got my letter, the letter which announced my sailing in this ship of the Archangel Line, just about the very time that he had seemed so near me. It was natural enough, then, that his eager mind

should have embarked with me on the 'Saint Raphael.' He knew now that I was going home, contrary to previous expectation, by the very way he had desired, the way to see his wife and tell her his news.

That night, when I said my prayers, I took but a corner of that couch for my elbows. I gave him room, so to speak, with odd scrupulous courtesy, just as if he were lying there in the body. For I knew he was there, there by his own subtle means of transport. That night the wind rose, and for the next three days about, we were on the downgrade as regards weather. Our captain opined that there had been a hurricane of sorts to south-east, out Madagascar way. We were in the troughs of a mighty swell that grew in might till the third morn of its reign was over. In the mad tilting of my cabin floor, and the scuffling of my cabin accessories, that last morning, the unseen and unheard presence that I was now growing used to, reclined unperturbed. Elsewhere I would forget it lightly enough, as soon as ever I left the cabin,—at the saloon table, where plate and cup fretted themselves up and down against the table frames, in the skipper's basket lounge chair wherein I read contrasted romances, East End and Zulu, on the deck where I groped from hold-by to hold-by, longing to change grey sky and green sea-trenches for sunshine and blue levels of sea and sky. The weather calmed and brightened, but the presence was unaffected. It remained to my perception eager

and sanguine, no less, no more, than it had seemed at first.

At last the Bluff loomed to south-east. Soon a game of pitch-and-toss preluded our access to harbour. At last we transhipped, all three of us, boy and dog and I, to a steam-launch, and were soon ashore. No, I won't say four of us. The presence did not make itself felt as taking a share in that scramble of ours. I was rather surprised at missing its company, when I found time to think about it. I was standing at ease in the Base Office then. Soon I was on my way back again to the station where I had left my convoy. The boy was mounting guard over dog and gear. Yes, everything seemed all right. I turned towards the ticket office. As I waited for our tickets I evolved a sort of *rationale* of my consciousness of that presence. He who had accompanied me was very weak, distinctly convalescent. He could but make himself felt clinically, so to speak. When at length I was aboard the train I had opportunity to test my surmises. There were six sleeping berths in the Jo'burg second class compartment (there was no third class, worse luck, on that train) wherein I found myself. On one side slept the dark Theosophist who was to lend me 'The Star of the East' next morning. Under him slept the Norwegian recruit bound for Potchefstroom. Under him again a fresh-coloured, wizened little Colonist. On my side slept an Africander recruit for Potchefstroom (God love him! I hope he was better than his looks

and conversation). I was bedded over him. Above me on the sixth sleeping ledge was only a certain amount of luggage. So we had arranged, and so my eyes assured me. But I became firmly conscious that the presence was reclining there.

Next night I was able to travel on third class from Johannesburg without missing my train's connection. I had the carriage to myself (not without misgivings, for the guard had cleared a native out, and other compartments seemed likely to be rather crowded). I lay down somewhat prayerlessly. The last light seemed to have not long faded on the white mine-banks. I woke in the chill of the dawn. The train was nearing Mafeking. The presence I had been too tired to think much about last night, was assuredly there on the other side of the carriage. Yet there was only my bag to be seen on the seat, my bag that I had set there to search for a towel.

The next night we drew near to Bulawayo. I had a Jew for travelling companion then. He was to get off about midnight at Francistown. I dropped off to sleep somehow. I don't know exactly how the trick was done, I was so excited at nearing my own country. When I awoke the Jew was gone, and the seat opposite me was empty, empty save for the presence which reclined there. I gave it a share of my attention amongst other persons and matters. I was far too full of plans and anticipations now to sleep. Yet I fought for sleep that next hour or two. Then, as the cocks had crowed undoubtedly, I lighted a pipe. Afterwards I stole

out in the faint light to shave. When I returned, I was confronted by an old acquaintance—a detective. He wanted information about me, naturally enough, as it was war-time. He sat himself down on the seat whereon the presence was. I had squirmed when he shook hands with me so heartily (I had twisted my hand, slipping on a warship's deck). I was disposed to squirm once again. When he sat down rudely on that seat which I knew to be occupied, I forgot myself at once, and drew him to a seat beside me. 'Can't you see what's there?' I said hastily. Of course he could not see, and thought me a little mad. Then, when I explained that the seat had been kept, he looked suspicious, If only he had enjoyed the same perceptiveness as myself, what pages he might have filled in that expensive-looking note book. I chuckled to myself as I thought of *his* description—*his*, who had crossed the Rhodesian border with me at Plumtree on such special service. What would that note book make of him? The note book's master looked at me hard. Doubtless I aroused certain unnecessary alarums and excursions in the imagination of a useful and already overworked official. But I had given him nothing tangible in the way of incrimination. He looked at me as one who much desired to keep me under observation, but he said 'Goodbye!'

The house answered the pink paper's description. It was on the verge of some waste ground. But I had expected a more prosperous-looking place.

It had a long row of white palings that lacked repainting. The house itself looked rather poverty-stricken. I had hurried over my breakfast at the station, then I had asked my way, and found it. I knocked once and again. That wife, whom I had never seen before, came slowly to the door. He had shown me her portrait more than once, and I remembered it. It certainly had not flattered her. She was dressed in black. Her face would have been fresh under her bright hair, but the eyes were drawn, and the lips quivered that spoke to me, quivered in a pitiful fashion. I told her how I came from her husband. I embarked on a longish rigmarole as to the luck that brought me her way after all, against expectations. She listened without saying a word. Then I told her about him, and she listened patiently. 'I seem to have felt him with me on my way,' I said. 'He was so keen that I should bring you his love,' I said. Then she burst out crying. 'It is all very interesting,' she sobbed. 'But I have got later news than yours.'

I shuddered. 'Was there a relapse, then?' I said.

'I suppose there must have been,' she murmured, steadying herself. 'He came to me just at sunrise,' she said, 'this sunrise, this very morning. I saw him so plainly coming into the room just after I had opened my eyes. He always said he was sure he would be able to come, by God's mercy, if it should come to that—.' Her voice shook, and I knew what 'that' meant.

No doubt they had loved one another very dearly,

no doubt he had been able, so strong was his affection, to follow my journey towards her, while he was still in life. Then, at the moment of the great change, he had doubtless gathered strength to come to her and manifest himself. Such things have surely happened before, and are likely to happen again whilst our lives linger in the midst of death, and love is love.

'It is just on church-time,' she said, 'all but eight o'clock. I was getting ready to go when you knocked. You won't mind my going now, will you? You won't mind my saying Good-bye?'

So we said 'Good-bye' outside the church door, our ways went so far together. Then I went off by the station road; my train was to go on in another hour or so.

When I got into an empty carriage I was conscious of some sense of forlornness. I had lost my travelling companion. Yet I was glad somehow to think that the strain of his interest in my journey was at an end. I gave thanks for that new rest of his.

As for her—I am glad to remember where it was that she parted from me so graciously. That church was a poor, corrugated iron structure, but I looked in and saw a gladsome light burning before its altar. Her eyes were on that light, I think, as she knelt down. Truly a sanctuary of God seemed the place of places to leave her in. They were so desperately fond of one another, and he was so devoted to his religion, as well as to her. If in

God's sanctuary the Psalmist found most satisfaction as to his own riddle of the ungodly's vitality, I feel sure she found some comfortable answer to her own contrasted problem—the mortality of one so dear to her and to his Lord.

INTELLIGENCE

I WAS staying with an Intelligence Officer on a certain island. Our people had but just succeeded in occupying it with a force of occupation. It was a very green and richly tropical island with the faults of its qualities, I should say. Most of its German tenants were prisoners now, a few had escaped in canoes. Their sergeant of askaris, a stout fellow, had passed the word of 'no surrender.' But for all that very few native soldiers seemed to be in the bush now. Most seemed to have surrendered, or to have transformed themselves into civilians.

I had reached my host's lodging just before sundown on Saturday night. We dined simply, as far as courses went, but our conversation came easily and took many turns. There seemed to be something in the air that night. There were three of us at the table, my host and Hunter and I. Hunter was a naval man who had walked up with me, and was staying the night. He was very fresh and pleasant to look at; he seemed old for his years,

which were few; he had a range of interests as well as powers of expression. Did he seem just a little conscious of his tender age? Was he not a bit too anxious to profess disillusion? Yes, he was cynical about Belgians, also about France, also about the Foreign Office. I suffered him thus far with a certain guilty gladness. But the Intelligence Officer demurred grimly. He was a patriot and a fighting man. They had switched a maxim on to him years before, but he was still going hardily, albeit he limped. He had fought in an irregular white corps in the present campaign; he had raised an irregular black corps; our adversaries were said to have priced his head. He had charming manners; he had befriended me nobly not once nor twice. He was a man surely of extraordinary dash and resource. I had no sort of reason to doubt the great stories I had heard of him,—of his coolness under fire and in tight places. I had seen every reason to believe them. For all that, my affection for him was mixed with another feeling. He was very tall. His face wore a sort of perennial fever-flush. He was very dark. His eyes were fine and fierce, too; he wore a strange he-goat-tuft on his chin. I found myself chuckling privately that evening over a bizarre fancy of mine. I had remembered a certain mediæval print of a famous character. Yes, there certainly was a likeness.

We discussed Intelligence Work—a branch of War Service as to which I am apt to be prejudiced. To my indefensible delight, Hunter excelled himself at

giving my own views voice over the pudding. Never did I hear an indictment more sweeping. He spoke of the reading of people's letters, the bluffing of unhappy natives. He hinted darkly at dark methods of persuasion. He hammered in the debasing futility of the whole spy system, our own and the other side's. He ended with schoolboy personalities about people he had met, some of our host's own agents. His remarks about them were unworthy of the eloquence that had gone before. Our host took it all in very kindly part. He was a man of deeds rather than of words.

'I never thought I'd come so low as I did to-day,' he admitted. 'You heard of the German who got away with his wife and kids in canoes. I was turning over one of the kids' money-boxes. Just five rupees or so in it. But I'll try to get it back to the youngster. I never thought to come quite so low.'

I tackled him about a horrid practice he had admitted having recourse to. 'Torture, or torture-witchcraft possibly! It seems a hopeful way of eliciting true intelligence, not to speak of playing the game in any sort of British sense.' He hung his head penitently. He pleaded that this expedient had saved an execution only the other day. There had been none after all. Had there been, as had looked likely at one time, an innocent man would have died.

'Oh, why not be without reproach as well as without fear?' I pleaded.

'How am I to get truth from them? It's a usage of their own.' He was pleading back.

'Not that way.' I was inflexible in my scorn and horror, for I knew that I was right.

By this time we had about finished dinner. Soon we were outside—Hunter in a deck-chair, I on a box, my host on a looted camp-stool. We smoked on under the stars.

We spoke of looting. The naval man scintillated about the conduct of the army at a raid on a neighbouring town. I was with him most of the way.

'So they cleared away with their swags for fear of enemy reinforcements. And they had a report printed that the natives had looted the place. That put the lid on it,' he said. But then came purgatory for me. The Native Question cropped up. Our host was away just then, conferring about chits that his spies had brought in. Hunter fairly coruscated with cynicism, when it came to the Native Question. He had expressed very different views upon it the last time that I had met him (the day before at lunch-time). Now he expressed himself cured of any sneaking wish to treat natives with kindness rather than kiboko. His boy, to whom he had granted leave of absence, had not come back to his day, and the whole fabric of Native sympathies, so far as he was concerned, had crashed to the ground. Henceforth he would know how to treat natives, the way to have no trouble with them. Any other way was not worth while. I objected, but my objections were as little rocks over which his periods broke in foam.

They enhanced the effect. Our host came back and laughed a little, till he saw how little I was enjoying it. Then he rotted the orator on his lordly oblivion of one fact. Were there not limits to his experience of Africa? He himself avowed his sympathies with the African. If he had a hobby, it was natives. He wanted to win their trust for a great many reasons. It was worth while having it. He told a certain story and the talk diverged. It was quite sympathetic talk, from my point of view thenceforward, up till bed-time. We slept in that big room within, all three of us. I had brought next to no kit, and I had noted with some awe my naval friend's scorn of the ill-provided in the course of the evening. He had described how a Belgian he had shared a room with, lacked certain accessories of civilization. So I was in the mood now to feel my own deficiency. But the censor was not so very observant, and he seemed sleepy. Soon he was sleeping.

My host and I exchanged a few undertones. To-morrow was Whitsunday. I wanted to have Service very early. 'That'll be all right,' he said. Soon he put our hurricane lamp out, but I was not to win sleep for quite a long while. In the early morning, moreover, something happened. Some red-ant skirmishers were about, and I had a hot time in my bed on the floor. I might well have felt more grateful than I did feel. Yes, had I only known what battalions would have engaged me, had they decided to attack before dawn! At dawn I was to see for myself what were the numbers of their host. Mean-

while, their scouts gave me trouble, if only a moderate amount. A cock crowed close by. Then another and another. The dawn was not so very far then surely. The thunder that had boomed when I first awoke, boomed louder. A rushing mighty wind seized upon the shanty where we slept,—a very airy shanty. The fact that the Day that came was Pentecost, recurred to me. Then the storm broke in fury. The rain smashed down, and the lightning forked and flickered. The roar and tumult raged and swelled and thudded overhead. My host awakened.

'It's near,' he said. 'Too near for me,' I murmured, as I ducked involuntarily when a perfervid flash came.

'Look at the Navy!' he said. I looked.

The cynic slept like a child. His face was very calm and intensely optimistic. 'He told me he had slept through big guns' fire on his ship,' I said admiringly. 'He has great powers.'

A curious lingering flash came. It played round the sleeper's head. A huge peal seemed to come almost with it, the last huge peal ere that brief passionate storm withdrew.

Then the sleeper began to talk.

He talked too well—too well for me to mix his actual phrases up with this secular story.

The Intelligence man began to laugh. The thing struck him as funny. But suddenly I caught familiar words, and I put my finger on my lips. My host's black eyes looked into mine, and I saw, as I had

never seen before, how much there was in them. First they kindled, and then they grew soft, and he turned his head away. The sleeper had been repeating the end of the fifth chapter of S. Matthew—the bit about the God (whose sons we Christians are) that makes His sun to shine, and His rain to fall so impartially.

He said the words very clearly, as articulately as if he were a child saying repetition. What made our host's eyes melt so curiously was what came after.

The sleeper said a sort of child's prayer about sun and rain, and just and unjust, and good and evil, praying quite simply to God to bless everybody and to do the best for them—English and Germans, black men and white.

'Yes, and my boy,' he said, as if that petition furnished a sort of limit to the mercy he invoked. 'And the mtoto, he added a minute after.

'What's his name?' he asked innocently. He had forgotten the name of his boy's apprentice, and his forgetfulness was on his mind.

The strain was a bit too much for us when it came to that question.

We laughed rather hysterically. Then we pulled ourselves together, but we had not disturbed him. He spoke no more save for two or three detached words—proper names I think. But he breathed long breaths peacefully.

The dawn was quite near on its way now. A dove

called from the wood to its mate. Surely it desired to tell it that morning came.

'We've got some fresh Intelligence,' my host said gravely.

'Pentecostal Illumination, rather,' I said.

'Did you happen to remember what the Day was?'

He nodded. 'We'd better not sit up talking,' he told me. 'It might seem to spoil it somehow. We'd better try to get a little sleep. Come over here out of the ants.'

So we shifted my mattress.

After our Pentecostal Service, and our breakfast, we compared notes, we two alone.

Once more Hunter had talked a lot at table. It was somehow a little hard completely to identify the Hunter of breakfast time with the Hunter of cock-crow. 'Our friend was rather angelical, only *rather*,' my host said.

'He was cynical about your cynical business,' I said. He laughed. 'Have you forgotten what he said about missionaries?' he asked.

I smiled ruefully. 'It certainly wasn't up to his level,' I said, 'his cock-crow level.'

'I've got a theory,' said my chin-tufted friend (I have made up my mind to recall Don Quixote in future when I think of him rather than that mediæval print). 'The subliminal self of the Navy was revealed by that Pentecostal flash. Pentecost was in the air. We saw the real lieutenant in his sleeping sub-consciousness. It's a pity the real self

isn't top-dog in ordinary life; it's under-dog for the present, worse luck! '

' But in sleep he's a child still, and a good child at that,' I said.

' Yes, or he couldn't have responded to that Pentecostal suggestion. You or I wouldn't have responded; anyhow, not so readily.'

He sighed. ' It's a wicked world,' he said smiling, ' and we learn many tricks of our respective trades.'

' Speak for yourself and your own trade,' I said sternly. Then I begged him to give up that unmentionable way of obtaining intelligence.

' Let's try to live up to the cock-crow level,' I said. ' We two have seen what we have seen, and heard what we have heard. We have received unexpected Intelligence. We have got some hints as to self and soul, truth and falsehood.'

' Yes, I'll allow that,' he admitted.

A CREDIT BALANCE

THE siding was on such soil as recalled South Devon; flanking the name-board there were a few pepper-trees with dry, fern-like foliage, and bunches of red berries just then, the month being March. Alfred Horne drew up before that name-board in scorching sunshine, wiped his face, and looked at his watch. Was he in time?

He had heard nothing of the train yet, and it was not to be seen approaching. His watch told him that it had been due for ten minutes now. Surely it could not have gone! No, there it was. Its whistle sounded, and soon it came winding through the sparse woodlands. He gave a sigh of relief, and squatted down to wait for it. Soon it drew up at Pepper-tree Siding.

He climbed on to a third-class carriage, which carried natives and coloured people, also one European in lonely majesty. This last stood smoking a cigarette in an amber or mock-amber mouthpiece. He was a boy not long out of his teens, a boy with a dazzling complexion—if, indeed, he were not a girl in a boy's grey suit. He introduced himself, as he ushered his fellow-traveller into a compartment. 'I'm the only one here,' he said. 'I've been alone

since Mafeking. I'm George Donald, and I'm just out from Derry.' Horne accepted the cigarette that was offered him. Then he wiped his face again—a dark, fiercely-burnt face. He was a man over forty; he looked more than his age, or as if he had had very hard times. 'Going far?' he asked. 'Not much further now,' the boy said cheerfully. 'My station's fifty miles beyond Gwelo. I'm about sick of it. I travelled second class on the boat. But they never sent any money for expenses, so I've had to pig it on this train.' Horne smiled. 'Ever been out before?' he asked. Donald shook his head. Then he indulged in many confidences. 'I'm going to be partner in a trading concern,' he said. 'Soldana's is the name of the place.' He went on to describe the voyage out, with free criticisms of the food and of fellow-passengers. They had had a concert or two on board, and he had recited at the second-class concert last week. 'What did you recite?' Horne asked him. 'Oh, I gave them "Sir Galahad." I had to grind it up, with lots more of Tennyson, for an exam. You know it?' Horne nodded. His lips moved. 'How ever does it go?' he said a moment after. 'I only remember tags of lines here and there—"And star-like mingles with the stars." That's authentic, isn't it?' The boy repeated the stanza whence those words came. 'Would you like any more?' he asked. Horne grinned. 'May as well have it through, if it's all the same to you,' he said. So the boy began at the beginning, and continued, and

made an end, Horne watching him all the while. His eyes had satire in them as he watched, but they had also admiration. Two or three hours after, they drew up at another siding, and Horne got together his belongings. He handed them to a Bechuana boy who stood waiting for them outside on the step. Then he settled himself down again, for the engine was waiting to take water. He wrote a few words on a half-sheet and handed it to Donald. 'That's my address,' he said. 'Do write or look me up at my store, if I can be of any use at any time.' The reciter of 'Sir Galahad' shook his hand warmly, promising that he would do so. Then Horne scrambled out into the noontide heat. Soon the slow train woke up again, and lumbered on.

It was much more than three years after when Donald came to Horne's store. He looked fagged and weary as he came up the waggon-road, having done his thirty miles that day. He had a knapsack on his back, but that was not heavy. Horne was sitting on a case under his verandah. The sun had just set, and he had closed the store for the day, just before the traveller showed in sight. Now that he drew near, he knew him at once. 'Hullo! I've often thought about you,' was his greeting. 'But what have you been doing with yourself?' The boy's face—he looked boyish still, though no longer girlish—was worn. He was very pale, and had blue marks under his eyes. 'I've had a hell of a time,' he muttered. 'Well, come and have some skoff,' Horne said. 'After that you can tell me about it

all.' The boy ate but languidly, though he emptied cup after cup. He said hardly anything; he looked down on his luck. The zest was gone out of his talk, as the rose-pink out of his cheeks, since they last met.

Horne tried to say something cheerful. 'Do you know, if you'd come this day week I don't think you'd have found me here. I've sold this store. I'm meaning to go home, and to settle down there.'

The boy congratulated him rather listlessly. Then he spoke with a sparkle of his old keenness. 'I wish I were going home,' he said.

'Why don't you?'

'I haven't a shilling,' the boy said; 'only minus shillings, only debts.' Horne tried to say something pleasant about luck turning, but it came out flatly.

After supper the boy told a story, but he did not seem to tell it candidly by any manner of means. The partnership he had gone to had been dissolved a year ago. He had been trading, backed up by a Jew, this last cold weather. He had had horrible luck; his store had been burnt down in August. It was November now. He had been knocking about in a certain town for a month or two. Then he had taken to the road. Some people had been kind to him as he came along; others hadn't.

'What do you owe?' Horne asked him abruptly.

'Oh, a pound or two,' he answered, colouring.

'It's more than that, isn't it?' Horne said gently.

The boy denied its being more than that.

Then all of a sudden he owned up. 'One Jew—

they were partners—said it was twenty-five; the other said he'd take fifteen. It wasn't really more than fifteen, honour bright.'

'So you owe him fifteen,' Horne said. 'Do you mean to pay him?'

'Not unless I'm forced,' the boy said savagely. He spoke in quite an open way now. 'I'd rather pay him out than pay him back, the ——.' Horne changed the subject.

Just before they went to bed he recalled their brief journey together so long ago now. He reached a newish Tennyson down from his candle-box bookshelf. 'Do you mind saying that piece over again—that piece you said in the train?' Horne spoke shyly.

The boy flushed up before he answered. 'I've forgotten it,' he said.

'Well, read it, then, won't you, please? I've got it here.' The boy started to read the lines. He read rather badly that night, so Horne thought to himself. He stuck in one place. 'Here, you'd better go on,' he said hoarsely. So Horne finished the poem to the last line of it:—

Until I find the Holy Grail.

'Do you know?' he said, when he had ended, 'I owe you a debt. You've got a big balance to draw on so far as I'm concerned. I bucked up a bit, beginning from that day when we met in the train. I'd been thinking of giving up whisky, and other things, before that day. But you gave me what I

wanted—a start. "Now or never," I said, having seen you coming out so fresh as you did—yes, and heard you recite. I won't describe you as you were then; you may or may not remember what you were like. That bit in the poem about riding in lonely places through the dark caught my fancy. I used to think of you who had gone away in the train northwards. I thought of you trading on the Mashonaland veld, and passing unscathed and unafraid over it by night and day—you that had nothing to be ashamed of. Thinking so helped to buck me up. I've done better since that train journey than I ever did before out here. Now I'm doing quite well, else it wouldn't be likely I'd be thinking of going home, as I am.'

The boy looked up at him wretchedly. 'It all went wrong nearly from the first,' he said, 'so far as I was concerned.'

'Yet all the while you helped me,' Horne said. 'So I owe you a debt, and I mean to pay my debts, whatever you mean to do about yours. Come on, now. Take this bed. I'm sleeping in the store.'

Thus it came about that in the morning Horne, having slept upon his resolve, brought out some money. He stacked it on the table impressively. 'I'm glad I slept upon it,' he said. 'I thought last night that I'd give you the money to go home this year. I'd made up my mind almost to go next year instead of this.'

The boy's eyes lighted up. Gratitude looked out of them. Then they changed. It seemed that

gloomy Fear had taken Gratitude's place at the double window. Donald stammered a bit; then he spoke out. 'I'd like to lie to you, like I did last night; but I can't somehow. No, I'm going to tell you utter truth. I'd like you to give me the money well enough in one way. But if you did I know what I'd do. You don't know how gone-in I am. If I ever got as far as Capetown I'd drink out what was left there, or I'd blow it some way. But I'd never get so far as Capetown; I'll be honest with you. Yet thanks all the same. You meant kindly.'

'That's all right,' Horne said kindly enough. 'Thanks for being straight. I thought over that first plan of mine last night. I wasn't long in chucking it for a second.' The boy listened languidly. 'I was going second,' Horne went on; 'I was going second if I'd gone alone. Now let's both go together! Supposing I square the Jew for you—probably you understated his account a bit (I've allowed for that)—I may have enough for two thirds and something to spare. You won't mind my going too, and my keeping the bag, will you?'

'Mind?' the other said. 'I shouldn't think I'd mind, seeing it's a one-and-only sort of chance. But I don't see why you should give it me.'

'It's only paying you something on account,' Horne said. 'Remember, there'll be a credit balance still after the journey's over, but you'll give me a little time to pay off that, won't you?'

So they went together in the following week by a slow train, the same sort of slow train as had

carried them of old—one that stopped at Pepper-tree Siding.

'I'd like to refund you,' the boy said while they waited there. He was beginnng to get a little of his own back by then, Horne thought; Horne was beginning to suffer him as an inseparable much more gladly. 'I've written some things that might sell,' Donald murmured; 'things I wrote when I was travelling in lonely places among the hills, or in the bush-veld, or by the river that held me up for three days.'

'What sort of things? "Sir Galahad" sort of things?' Horne asked with a twinkle.

The boy shuddered. 'No, just the other sort of things,' he answered. 'Not seeing everything right because one feels right, but seeing everything devilish because one feels devilish.'

'Hadn't you better, perhaps, burn the lot?' Horne said. 'Don't talk about a refund to me. Why, man, I tell you I owe you quite a lot. Make yourself easy; you've a big credit balance to draw on.'

MAN'S AIRY NOTIONS

IT is quaint how a catch of a song or a phrase of a lyric will haunt one along the lonely miles of a walk, up hill and down dale of one's pilgrimage. Hood found a phrase of a lyric dogging him down the first stages of his home-road last year. He thought little of the circumstance at the time, but afterwards he remembered it, and wondered why the thing had befallen so. The lines of the phrase had by that time gained meaning for him, more meaning than he had suspected to be in them, when he said them over to himself:

> 'In a wife's lap, as in a grave,
> Man's airy notions mix with earth.'*

He remembered saying them over and over to himself along one long, sandy, thirsty stretch. Then again, when he sat down by the drift in huge content waiting for his kettle to boil; then again on a certain melodramatic night as he paddled in the rain —a night he is not likely to forget.

He had been a missionary in South-Eastern Africa for ten or fifteen years, I forget which, and his leave

* From 'The Splendid Spur,' by Q.

that came every five years was once more due. He started for the railhead, some forty odd miles from his home, going by way of the post-town, and calling there for his share of the last mail.

Yes, it was all right. Nothing near at hand in Africa, or far overseas in England, barred his home-road as far as he could learn. On the other hand, at least two Southern letters bade him go back and prosper, and a new welcome had come forward to him from the North in a writing that he remembered. It was posted in an Upper River village not many miles from Oxford, and it was a bidding to a meeting of Oxford contemporaries arranged for the coming July. They had met on about that same day (the birthday of the host) five years before.

Hood remembered that day of meeting, as he sat by the drift, reading his letter, and waiting for the kettle to boil. He remembered walking out from the city of the spires, and the way the house looked as he came to it by a path through water-meadows. What gardens and green shades and coolness of comfort, he remembered, and linked with that time and that place. He dreamed a dream with the smell of new-turned hay in it, then awoke to find himself repeating that mellifluous tag of his about man's airy notions. The kettle had boiled.

The letter of invitation was written in high spirits. It was sanguine as to the completeness of their numbers when they should meet. All but one was likely to be there if only Hood would come—all but

one who had fallen out of the ranks. Hood was, somehow, I think, more overcast by the thought of the one exception, than rejoiced by the prospect of such a noble muster. Yet, as he strode along the road, pondering the letter, his longing for England seemed to grow amazingly. His stride lengthened as his satisfaction deepened. Twenty miles gave him little trouble that March forenoon and afternoon. He crossed the wide river in a crazily perilous ferry-boat, forded a narrow one, and supped with great content on his bread and cheese.

Meanwhile his carriers fell heartily to hungry men's rations of bully beef and millet-meal. The rains had been heavy those two or three days in that last week, as the rivers testified. Now the clouds were closing up again, and the carriers shook their heads. Their road was a lonely one. A kraal was some six miles ahead, the railhead inn was almost nine. When they had gone on for about a mile of their road, the rain began to come down heavily, just as the night began. On and on they splashed through the pools and currents of the waggon-way. Then the rain slackened. A red, elusive light shone ahead in the dip of a hollow. It seemed a wandering fire to Hood's eyes as the road twisted suddenly. But no—it was a humdrum waggon-fire of logs. They clustered round it, chilly and dripping, his carriers and he. A voice called out to them from the folds of a buck-sail above. A Mashona boy was crouching in shelter there. He told them that his master was asleep on

the waggon. Hood tried a greeting to this master, but it gained no answer. He began to take counsel with his comrades, as they squatted by the fire. 'Wouldn't it be fine to sleep under the waggon? Who wanted to tramp through a black night with perhaps a pouring roof of sky above, and certainly a soaked mud floor beneath?'

The carriers and he agreed to risk the storm (threatening even now in the distance). Night-prayers were said by that gladsome fire. Still, the larger of the two muffled shapes above made no sign. Afterwards Hood's bed was made by the stretching out of a strip of sailcloth. A blanket was laid over it, and a knapsack crowned it as a pillow. Hood began to settle himself in with huge content, a pipe between his teeth. One carrier wriggled himself up beside him. The two others laid themselves at his feet. By this time the thunder was rolling up relentlessly, and the flashes shone green and sinister. The storm was not long in breaking over them. The rain swished in from the west—the way of Hood's right side. He wrapped his head in his five-shilling blanket; its cotton-waste was not very waterproof. He had a few more draws at his pipe in the dark. Pools were filling under him. He put his pipe down. He made haste for the frontiers of sleep. He must have got some way in that direction, for he soon found himself in his bath on the threshold of a dream. Of course, he should have hardened his heart hygienically. He should have risen and stridden on with his retainers the miles

that remained. But he had his vein of weakness and sloth; he took the fury of that night lying down.

At whiles he was across the drift of Lethe in the darkness, but never for long together. Once he woke uneasily with a start and saw a flash. The crash followed as in one beat, and the rain was like the rain in *King Lear*. He was broadly awake now. Two carriers were nestling near him. He felt fearfully for his pipe, and almost mourned for it as washed away. He found it, and turned over with a happy sigh. 'Man's airy notions!' 'as in a grave,' 'mix with earth'—he hummed himself to sleep with that brave sing-song.

The dawn had come ere he had roused himself again. It was good to find that the rain was over and the night gone, and that the fire was blazing. His carriers were chafing their hands and feet. His sleeping host bulked still as a moulded shape in the buck-sail. Had he moved at all since last night? The big black-and-white and red-and-white oxen were tethered still. Would their wardens ever wake up and see them fed? The carriers tied up his packs, and moved forward with a swing. Still there was no sign from the buck-sail, boy and master alike were still within, though the sun had climbed over the hills. Hood shrugged his shoulders, and moved off down the west road. He left that little mystery, as he had left bigger riddles in Africa, utterly unsolved.

Soon they dried themselves at a hospitable hut-

fire in a village. It was Lady Day. Hood noted the seasonable blue-and-white of his blanket as he hung it on a rafter. He made the morning Offering behind that vaporous screen. Then they ate their food, and drugged themselves belatedly with quinine against those perils of the night.

Hood for one felt cheerily defiant, if somewhat stiff from long bathing. 'This is life,' he thought as the sun came out, and they strode mile after mile down the valley. Afterwards came the shining drift, and the last climb up to the Station.

When Hood reached Capetown, he found a letter awaiting him. His chosen travelling companion—an explorer—was delayed up-country. Hood was sorry to get that letter. Then the possibilities of a lonely journey struck him. He revived the remembrances of long-room life as an under-schoolboy. He took an open berth for a three weeks' voyage. Whereas, in the English public school he had gone to, Gentiles had been many and Jews the exception, the balance was now redressed.

It was a good time on the whole that he had on this voyage, but he was glad indeed to be out of the boat and in England once more, his own South-country England! The spring and early summer were kind to Hood, then July came and brought the gathering in Berkshire. All the old forgatherers of five years ago were there, all but that one they had left behind in Africa. He had gone to sleep there, three long years ago in the past.

'How I do miss Hunter!' confided the explorer

to Hood. 'They seem to have aged a lot, some of the others,' he explained forlornly.

Hood stared at him as he steered their boat down the river. He reflected.

'I think you're right,' he said. 'But you haven't aged a bit. Nor have I. Nor has our host so very much. That's how the dividing line comes in. The others are all married, much married, and like their little comforts.'

'You're right there,' said the explorer, disconsolately. 'A bread-and-cheese lunch in a bar parlour and a twenty-mile walk didn't suit Warner. He usedn't to be like that. If only he'd kept out in Africa after the war.'

'Warner's better than somebody we both know,' grumbled Hood. 'Having a car of his own hasn't made him any younger.'

'Never mind,' the explorer said, 'there's two of us out in Africa yet, and not likely to marry. There used to be three, usedn't there?'

'I do wish we had one to spare,' said Hood. 'It'd be rather a tragedy for the other one if one of us two deserted. But you'll try not, won't you, and I'll try too.'

While they stayed with their bachelor host, friends of his, married and single alike, were very kind to them. The rector, who had only come last year, asked them to make themselves at home in his garden. It had a blaze of civilisation in its front borders, now, but at the back of the house it was rather wild and very shady. The rector's youngest

sister, Perpetua, kept house for him, a girl whose English colouring took a pretty and subdued form; Hood and the explorer were much interested in her romance. The curate, Warner said, was her continual worshipper. He was a keen sort of curate that.

She had been kind to him till quite recently. Now she was uninterested, or seemed so.

The Good-bye of the reunion came round, but the explorer and Hood went not with the others. The married guests went off to their home comforts, but these two stayed on for at least a week more. They became fast friends with both Perpetua and the curate, but they found it best for social joy not to mix them.

Perpetua shared a sailing expedition with the strangers. Therein they explored much of the Evenlode, the hay-harvest breeze favouring them. Another day she went with them a-foot to the Hinkseys. Certain moot points of poetic identification were hardly settled by that trip, so another followed. They came home by Cumner both days.

'She would do for Africa,' confided the explorer to Hood one night. The village band had been playing, and they had thought no scorn of it. The 'groups under the dreaming garden trees, and the full moon, and the white evening-star' had been memorable that evening.

'She might do for Africa,' said Hood doubtfully, 'but I wouldn't let her go and spoil her complexion.'

'If you were the curate?' asked the explorer with a smile.

'What's he to do with it?' said Hood impatiently. 'Didn't he almost promise he'd sail with me in two months' time? I want him for work.'

'That's too bad,' said the explorer; 'cut that labour-agent business. Let him stay at home and marry Perpetua. There's a family living waiting for him across the river. Won't they be happy just?'

'I don't know,' said Hood, thinking fast.

Next morning the explorer had a touch of fever. The village doctor dropped in as an anxious friend. He mustered up his courage to prescribe two grains of quinine. His patient smiled, and promised to take them with additions. Then he went to sleep, and left Hood to escort Perpetua to Bab-lock-hythe. She was adventurous that afternoon. 'She has outgrown the curate,' Hood thought. The explorer's words recurred to him: 'She might do for Africa.' 'Not if I know it,' he answered them in his own mind.

His interest in her grew that day, and the next day, when the explorer was convalescent. The day after that he said 'Good-bye,' and escorted the convalescent to Oxford.

'Good luck!' said the explorer as they parted near the Martyrs' Memorial, each bound for his own college. 'Let's stick to our own way of life, we two. Don't let's get middle-aged just yet, like Warner and Davies. And, mind, drop that agency

rot, and leave the curate to Perpetua. They're just the age—she twenty, he twenty-five. You, who're forty-one, have pity!'

That evening Hood smoked his pipe in a college garden. One who had taught him years ago was there. Hood was fairly candid as to his real thoughts when he talked to him. He was telling the tale of that rainy night, as the summer twilight darkened, 'I'm just forty,' he said. 'It seems as if I could hold my own a bit with younger men, D.G.!'

His friend looked at him thoughtfully. 'It's fictitious youth, he said. 'Supposing you were to try marrying and settling down. Supposing you were to try deserting your perennially youthful bride—the Great Adventure, or the High Romance, or the New Jerusalem, or whatsoever you call her. Supposing you settle down with an earthly bride—say, a sweet-and-twenty one! Supposing you had to toe the line of four-meals-a-day in a country vicarage. You would know your age then.'

Hood looked uninterested and aloof. But he recurred to the subject again later on, and he asked whether a certain living in the near neighbourhood had been filled.

'No,' said his friend; do you want it?'

Hood flushed up. 'It's the sort of place I'd like to settle down in,' he said, 'if I were coming home. But why should I come?'

His friend made no answer at once. The same sort of wistful look came into his eyes that Hood had noticed in the explorer's eyes that afternoon.

'Why should you not?' he said at last. 'Yet I for one would like you not to renounce the perpetually juvenile lady. I'm not in a hurry to see the last of your glad, perennial youth.'

That night Hood lay in his friend's spare room, looking out over the Gardens. He was reading in bed a college list. It had pencil notes of the deaths or careers of some contemporaries. Rousing himself from his researches, he sprang up and put the book away. He leaned down to the window-shelf. What was that book with the stained red cover! He remembered a romance that had come out in his college days of twenty years ago, a book by one who had had his own rooms before him. He took it back to bed with him, and turned over the pages. At last he found the lyric he sought. One of its verses held the tag he had remembered so often, but had forgotten, and wanted that evening, wanted to confirm his own halting decision:

> 'In a wife's lap, as in a grave,
> Man's airy notions mix with earth.'

He put down the book and switched off the electric light. He lay a long while in the moonlight, thinking himself far away to earthen walls and guttering candles. He thought of the chill penury of lack of blankets that he had known in winter. Also of the sun's summer glare on white waggon-roads and Kaffir paths. What wonder that wayfarers' eyes amass many wrinkles around them? Yet how young one had kept after all; and at what speed one would age here with electric light and

sheets and a stately dinner to tempt one! 'Man's airy notions.' Yes, he had got some very airy notions still, whereof the earth was not worthy. Getting old didn't matter, of course, so much; but he wanted to stick to doing his own work (his Lord's work) in his own way. He didn't want to leave like-minded friends in the lurch either. Nor did he see his way to hug the shore at home with Perpetua, while the curate braved the 'foam of perilous seas.' Would he ever have the heart to watch her fresh face spoiling in Africa? Could he bear to see it wizened and withered in the Tropic of Capricorn? No!

He was soon asleep.

His first waking knowledge was of his friend's asking him the question, 'Are you going to apply for that living?' He had his 'No!' ready from that last night.

'I'm glad,' his friend said. '"Fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!" I'd like you to take my advice and be happy—yes, and useful as well as youthful.'

'All right,' smiled Hood from his pillow. 'I mean sailing next month.'

He went to his home in Kent that same day, and rejoiced in the Weald. His sister and he made a pilgrimage to Canterbury before the month was over, from Sevenoaks by way of the Downs.

'This was where Marlowe went to school,' she reminded him. 'I think he might have been almost as great as Shakespeare, don't you?'

'I don't know,' Hood answered. 'He was a different sort. I can't imagine him settled down in middle age at Canterbury like Shakespeare at Stratford. "His raptures were all air and fire." His airy notions refused to mix with earth somehow.'

The conversation was not very important, but it showed the continuing trend of Hood's purpose. He hardened his heart and went to the Upper River no more ere his sailing from Southampton, nor did he press the curate to sail with him. The latter wrote him a very dubious letter. He would make no promises about work in Africa now. Hood gathered that Perpetua was relenting.

The explorer sailed with him, to his joy, instead of the curate. They went up from Capetown in continuing amity together. At last they parted far upcountry. Hood went on his lonely way, not without some retrospects and some doubts as to his decision.

At a roadside station a well-tried comrade came to greet him. This friend had married last year, and his wife was donkey-riding and foot-faring with him. They were but just back from many miles in very wild country. Seven carriers were with them.

'Heavy loads!' said Hood, shaking his head. 'So you carry chairs and a table into the Veld?'

'Home comforts,' growled his fellow-missionary. 'Why not be comfortable? And why, too, didn't you bring a wife back? Some one said—'

Hood smiled, and the missionary's wife smiled back at him. 'He's better as he is, dear,' said she to her grunting husband. 'He's a foot-slogging

free-lance. We're the household heavy cavalry. He's different.'

'Wait and see if he remains so,' rejoined her husband solemnly. Then the train screamed and went off.

Soon Hood was landing at his own rail-head and receiving the greetings of many brown people. They seemed glad to see him as he straggled back so forlornly to them up the platform, and out of the station. His holiday was done.

But he was soon forlorn no longer. They had so many delights and anxieties to share with him—his travelling comrades. Soon they were striding away far up the remembered road together. They were through the drift. How low it was now in this droughty time. Then they wound along the valley. Hood peered curiously among the ruddy-leaved bushes as they came round the shoulder of a hill. Was the silent teamster still outspanned there? No. he was not there to make them welcome, or to sleep away the tyranny of their presence. He had fled their 'greetings, fled their speech and smiles.' Never mind. If the road was lonely, Spring was in the land. How the trees and the bushes glowed! 'Surely no man ever in a land of exile found more of a warmth of welcome home!' he thought to himself.

It was on Christmas Day (last Christmas Day) that, Hood tells me, a momentous letter came to hand. It was from Berkshire, and he did not read it till the time came for him to turn towards his veld-home. He had held Christmas services in various places.

He was now looking forward to a rest and to supper-time. He was sitting outside a wayside school as he read that letter. Some Mashona children had brought him clay figures as Christmas presents. They graced the grey rock beside him—one big figure and a little figure or two in clay skirts, also a quaint version of a perambulator. They showed up rather drably against the glory of Western sun and blue sky.

The letter announced Perpetua's plighted troth. It was from the curate. He added that they were both looking forward to settling down shortly in the family living. They might be married in April or in June. Hood smiled and lit his pipe resignedly.

'So *his* airy notions of Africa are mixed with earth,' he thought, 'honest Berkshire earth, hurst sand, or down chalk, I suppose. No, I'm forgetting. That rectory's across the river—in Bucks or Oxon, I forget which. Anyhow the earth's got the better of the air, and it's arranged that Africa's not to see him.' His eyes fell upon the clay family grouped beside him. 'It's good Perpetua's having a home and a family in prospect,' he thought. 'One understands that there's a good deal to be said for such things when Christmas comes round, at any rate.'

Some words came into his head, words of his favourite poet weren't they? 'I hope I shall never marry; the roaring wind is my wife, and the stars through the window-panes are my children: the mighty abstract idea of beauty I have in all things

stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness.' He looked at those clay grotesques rather tenderly. He was thinking of a story in a life of St. Francis he had read only yesterday, how he had made him figures of snow and called them in irony his wife and children and servants. 'Here is thy wife, these are thy sons and daughters, the other two are thy servant and thy handmaid; and for all these thou art bound to provide. But if the care of so many trouble thee, be thou careful to serve one Lord alone.'

He said over to himself those unforgotten words, sadly rather than scornfully this time:

> 'In a wife's lap, as in a grave,
> Man's airy notions mix with earth.'

He shouldered his knapsack. Then he commended the clay figures to their donors; he asked them if they would mind looking after them. He was very grateful; he would have them kept in the school to remind him of things—that earthy little family of his own.

Then airily and fierily he splashed away down the path for home. Through the marshland he went, and down towards the stream. He forded the waggon-torn drift eagerly, climbed up out of it, and strode away beyond.

How young and fresh he felt as he went away again on his campaign with earth and water! How air and fire subdued their sister elements to themselves!

PISGAH

WE had been going sixteen days on the home course to England, and I had come to know him fairly well. He was a seaman who had sailed the self-same mailboat for some years past. I remembered him on a brighter trip in summer-time when I was a good deal younger and took the languors of the voyage less slumbrously. Now it was winter-time on the home-side of the Line, and I was sailing under a cloud of news grave and stern. So I was rather prone to see most things as much alike in a sort of dream of neutral colours. My seafaring friend had helped me in the sultry nights further south, had shown me a sleeping place high up among the ropes, had called me in the grey dawn, or warned me when lightnings flashed and it seemed that a downpour threatened. Afterwards we had passed Madeira, a cheering vista with its white walls and red roofs and purple bougainvillea, and settled down into wintry weather and storm-vexed seas. Now the last night up the Channel had come, and the weather was calmer. We had seen the scowling Ushant coast in the sun and shower of an icy mid-day. So we were looking for a light to show very soon now—an English

light, a Dorset light—and the pulse of our chill quickened to racing rhythm. 'How many voyages have you made before this one?' I asked my friend as we leant over a rail together. He mentioned an astonishing number. 'You must know a lot about the things that I want to know' I said, 'the going to and fro of people, their starting out and their coming back again. Doesn't it all seem pretty stale to you by now?' 'No,' he said; 'it's my living, and besides that it interests me watching the game. It's an interesting bit of the game that I see, don't you think, sir, coming to the fringes of two Promised Lands, and not tackling the job of settling down in either? I've got interests, though, in both of them.' He was silent, and we both filled our pipes again. This friend of mine interested me: his reading tastes had surprised me: he borrowed Mr. Masefield's works and Miss Olive Schreiner's, but I had not often found him communicative till that last night before reaching home. 'I'm better where I am earning a sure living,' he went on. 'I've got a boy put to school at Southampton; no, not mine—I'm not married. But he's staying at school a long while. I don't particularly want him to go out to South Africa, speaking for myself. His father didn't do particularly well there as people reckon, but yet I don't know. He enjoyed his life in his own way, I think. I saw enough of him to understand that, and the boy seems bound to go back there: bound or tied's the very word. He was born up the country, and car-

ried on a Kaffir woman's back in her goatskin, and knew more Kaffir than English, and wore veldschoon when he came back on the boat with me.' 'When was that?' I asked. 'When his father, Walter Holmes, came aboard seven years ago come this next March. That was the second time his father travelled with me. He came on before, fifteen years earlier, when first he travelled to Africa, and I remembered him well enough. I was on the old boat. I've only served on the two boats all my time.' 'What did he go out to do?' I asked. 'Oh! he went up to join the pioneers at Kimberley. A counter-jumper he'd been, and he'd got his head all stuffed full. It was 1890, one of Rhodes' big years, the year they went north. It would have done you good to hear him talk. He was so keen, and his eyes glowed. Just like the water glows near the keel in the tropics.' 'That must have been a time,' I said; 'I've only read about it. It was before I saw the country.' The sailor grinned and spat. 'I reckon there hadn't been better days for young fellows to live in,' he said, 'not since Queen Elizabeth's reign. It came just between the two Jubilees —the time. Kimberley and Rhodesia and the native wars and the Raid, and the big war looming on ahead for by and by. I reckon it was something like it was in Drake's and Hawkins' and Sir Walter's days.' That was a new view to me. But it sounded likely enough to hear him bring it out, who believed in it so evidently. 'It was all Ophir and El Dorado,' he went on; 'I used to hear lots of it

from people to and fro. I'd see them going out to Africa and all the excitement after the lagging times along the coast, when they came with the dawn into Table Bay. I'd see them coming back, too,—greedy enough to see Portland Light then, like that stout party over there.' He pointed to a paunchy miner who was flinging his leather cap up. 'He's seen it,' he said; 'yes, look there! One! Two! Three! Four!'

My own eyes glowed and my heart hopped up and down. Yonder was a verity of England once more after years of absence. People came along to our corner of the deck and questioned and stared and laughed to one another. 'But I want to hear the end of that story,' I said, and I enticed him away with me past the wheel-house to a place far out of the talk and the tramping up and down. 'How used the people to come back, did you say?' I asked him. 'Oh! some had done fairly well,' he said, 'and some were broken, but it was good to see how slow they found the boat go, getting back again, and how they hung on the lights.' 'Yet they didn't stay long in England some of them?' I hazarded. 'No,' he said; 'I'd see some coming back, and hear of lots more. The same thing over again it would seem when we came into Table Bay, only they were a bit older.' 'But some didn't come home to England, did they?' I wanted him to tell me. 'No,' he said; 'you're right there no doubt. This friend of mine named Holmes took a long time coming. But I heard from him sometimes

when he was up country. He found the business of settling Canaan rough, I gathered. I think I'm glad I heard about it from a distance. It mightn't have suited me.' 'And he got married up there, did you say?' 'Yes, his girl came out on this ship when he'd been out seven years or so. He used to write to me sometimes, and he arranged about the boat she came by. She was full of the farm she was going to; he had written about it. She seemed to think that it was a regular Kentish homestead. She wrote afterwards and thanked me for looking after her on the voyage, and said she had found two huts on a kopje when she got there. All their cattle died when her boy was about six years old. Then she died. Holmes had a lot of trouble that year. So he sold up and came on board the year after. Waited for my boat, worse luck, and contracted enteric in Cape Town. I thought we should lose him off Cape Verde. But it wasn't a clammy night the night we passed—the wind blew fresh—and we got him by. How he longed for home, for settling down in Kent. Rhodesia was all very well when one was young, he had said. She hadn't treated him so very well, but she had taught him to value things at home. I thought we might land him home after all, when we were a whole day or so past Cape Verde. But that night a change came and he was gone. We dropped him over at sunrise, only four or five hours after, so as not to cast a gloom over the passengers, you understand.' 'And you took on his child?' I asked. 'Yes, and wanted

him to settle down in the south country. No, not Africa—Kent I mean. I thought I'd settle down with him in the better of my two countries. For it is the better. I who've looked down at both, like Moses on the mountain, have found out that much. But it doesn't look a bit now as if he'll believe in my advice.' 'And if he goes out, you'll follow him?' I questioned. He smiled. 'I think I'll be simple enough for it,' he said; 'I seem to want to renew my youth. I somehow used to be sorry I missed my chance to follow his father up. Now that generation's about gone—the generation of King Solomon's Mines. It doesn't seem like putting myself forward so much if the boy himself asks me to come up with him, does it, sir?' 'And you want to go.' 'Well if you look over Moses' Moabitish mountain long enough, at a promised land, so to speak, you may get a hankering to go in,' he said. 'It's not a better country. It's not a heavenly; I don't make any mistake about that. But it's a country that people have thought big things about, if they have carried them out badly. I seem to have seen something of the right and the wrong of it all—these nights coming north to Southampton Water or south into Table Bay.' 'And what's the conclusion of the whole matter?' I said. We were almost alone on the deck now. (There was just one lonely, lanky passenger strolling up and down. I guessed that the rest were in bed, or going to bed or having a last drink below. We went down the deck together and took our stand

behind that forsaken watcher of the shore-light. He stood at gaze, pulling deeply from his pipe and drinking in the four-a-time flashes with owlish contentment.) 'Oh! the conclusion's what Solomon said right enough,' he muttered. 'Fear and keep, and keep and fear. Perhaps he'd been out and visited the men on his mines up-country.' He paused. I seemed to hear the jingling of bar-glasses in a back-veld canteen as he did so. The thud of drums, too, from Kaffir villages seemed to bear down on us. The Channel breeze came to me as it were heavily laden with the sounding challenges of the South. 'I suppose,' I said, 'it makes a big difference when one loses the northern star. Those southern skies painted with unnumbered sparks are all very well, but one lacks the pole-star of honour one steered by in England.' 'Yes,' he said, 'It's there I reckon the Southern Cross comes in, and people going south make a mistake not to notice it. When one's out of sight of the old compass-point of English opinion one feels the want of believing, if one's to make any sort of a show. It's a bad look-out if, when one lives under the Southern Cross, one can't understand it. Fear God and keep His Commandments. Do you think God would have put that cluster of stars to south if the South did not need it most?'

A LION IN THE WAY*

I SAW the lion with my own eyes, his shaggy head haloed by the rising moon. The Mashona who was with me had far sharper eyes than mine. He saw a dark scar across its brow. He would know that lion again, he told me. It was not a gun-shot wound it carried. Surely it was the caress of a brother lion.

The trader's road led down from the half-deserted kraal to the drift. It forked into two wagon ways with a huge rock to part them. There on the rock stood the lion—expectant. That may not be a heraldic term, but it is a true description of him as I saw him. We watched him from the height above for what seemed a longish time.

Then in haste I stole back to the desolate kraal that I might find Trooper No. 2. Had he not the chance of his life now to shoot a lion? I found

* This tale may seem obscure, I suppose, if read in modern English. It may be interpreted in the light of two ideas :

(1) The African idea about leanthropy or transmutation of man into lion, an idea likely to linger on, I should think.

(2) An idea prevalent as it seems in our Europe of old—' . . . the idea that when a witch in animal form is wounded, say by a blow or a shot, the natural wound will appear on the human body when the witch returns to her own person.'

But I have topsy-turvied (2) in my tale.—A.S.C.

him in the kraal, angry with himself and swearing at his Black Watch boy who suffered him silently. While he swore at him I gave him some idea of what I was thinking, as to his need of humility. Had I not seen him run ten minutes before? All this took time. When at last his flow of words dried up and he came with me, we were too late. The lion was no longer against the sky-line. He had taken cover in the bush below. We heard him there once or twice, but we saw him no more. This is how these things came about.

I had travelled into that forlorn country the day before, looking for Carrot. He had been a pioneer and a reputed hero, not so many years gone past. Now he was an Ishmael, receding and receding before the tide of civilization. Like the eagle in Byron's lines on Kirke White, he might blame himself, or at any rate credit himself, for the turn things had taken. He had winged the shaft that was draining his life, or at least his livelihood. He had helped to bring on a native war that had expedited matters. He had helped to wind it up in a very few months.

So now the abomination of civilization, as he deemed it, was set up in high places of the land. It was increasingly hard for him to be a law to himself anywhere within the land's limits. He had retired further and further yet again into the fastnesses of the hill-country. Yet civilization had a graceless way of looking him up.

He was just by the Portuguese border when I

visited him. I knew him of old, and I wanted him to let his eldest son come to school. He had told me a year ago to ask again.

I went through a frowning gorge of rocks to the part-deserted kraal, and found him sitting at his beer with three native courtiers. He was a tall West-countryman, with a ragged dark beard. His khaki was badly stained, and his hair was poking through his hat. He spoke the tongue of this southern country most volubly. He also reinforced it with ne'er-do-well words from Europe that did her no particular credit. Just as I came up a quarrel was in full swing. A free fight followed. Carrot broke a black earthen pot over the head of one of those three. Out came his swarthy wife that he had paid many cattle for, with his baby in a goat-skin at her back; also his other children, aged about eight, six, five, and four.

There was much confused crying and protesting. But Carrot dominated the scene in the end. The courtiers retired crying 'Shame!' and under protest. The most truculent of them was bleeding freely from his broken head. I followed him to their hamlet far down among the rocks and bandaged him. I camped outside the Carrot homestead that night and the next day, and learned something of the family's way of life.

Carrot was shooting big buck—sable and roan—without a licence, I gathered. He was trading cattle for most of the venison that he amassed. He had by now a goodly herd feeding in a green vlei near

the border. By and by he would sell them, he thought, and set himself up in a wayside public-house. That was to say, if an ungrateful Government could be squared somehow. He chuckled at my protests. He had many tales in the speech of North Devon to tell me.

Many of them concerned the police, and were not altogether unkindly, though disparaging. To Carrot, who could both ride and find his way about the veld, the police seemed often deficient as path-finders and horsemen. The story he told about the five European members of a police camp delighed me. One had got lost. He who went out to look for him had got lost also. There was an epidemic or something of the sort just then among the native police, who, as a rule, piloted the troopers about and did nurses' work at need. One after another of the remaining three Europeans was engulfed in this exhaustive search. Then a grass fire effaced the empty police camp. Carrot ended with a speculation as to whether they were still looking for one another or whether they had begun to miss their camp yet.

He was good in a feudal way, I gathered—a severely feudal way—to his retainers. He threw pots but seldom. His eldest child he seemed to worship in some sort of pagan fashion of his own.

The boy might have sat for a child Dionysos with his leopard-skin, and his arm of golden copper thrown about his father's pot of beer; black and big that pot should be painted.

No, his father wouldn't let him come away with me; at least, not this year. He graciously hesitated twice or thrice. But he ended with the same proposal each time—a drink and a postponement of decision. I wanted neither. I would not go on wasting my days on postponements, and I meant to start with dawn on the second morning. But at sunset the night before there had been a surprise.

Just as the sun went down a strange native appeared in hot haste and told a tale.

Two ma-Johnnies were coming down the wagon road with five or six native police and camp-followers. The Government was looking up Carrot once again. He had had two pots of beer that afternoon, or most of them, and was not quite himself, otherwise he might have gone his way at his ease.

But as it was, a ghastly row woke the echoes, what with the children crying, and the father singing and swearing, and the mother scolding, as they tied up their bundles. Carrot kept untying his in good humour, and searching for patent medicines and a safety razor that could not be found. Then after he had started he came back at least twice to give me a parting word. Meanwhile the western glow began to be rivalled by an eastern glow. The moon was brimming over the horizon. The Philistines of civilization were almost riding into the kraal before Carrot had really gone. My Adullamite friend was slow indeed with his farewells. Would he ever be through with them? 'Good-bye!' he

said. He was enjoying the emergency hugely now that he was sobered. 'You'd better walk down the road and meet 'em. Do remind 'em not to lose their mules this time. No, I won't worry you to see me off. They might ask questions. You must honour and obey the King and those who are set in authority. But you won't want to give me away exactly. So good-bye till next time!'

A hundred yards from Carrot's dwelling I met Troopers 1 and 2—Trooper No. 1 dusty and dishevelled and livid with fever—a lanky, dark man; Trooper No. 2 trim and ruddy. The former could hardly sit his mule as he trotted up to me. 'Have you seen Carrot?' he asked in a sort of groan. I said 'Good evening,' and passed on. Promptly he gasped to two native police to bring me along, and went his way forward to explore the ruinous kraal. He felt doubtful whether I was or was not Carrot, he told me afterwards. He went for the three Carrot huts at once and began to search them. There were no finds there. Then he questioned me sharply. Two of his black watch knew me by sight, and I was soon set free to go my ways. Then he gave clear decisive orders to No. 2 to ride for all he was worth to the drift. 'The river's the border,' he said; 'it's his old game to dodge across it. If he's taken his kids with him he can't cross anywhere. It's a big river, and there's only the one drift so far as I know. Go for the drift, man, and we'll have him yet!'

So Trooper No. 2, with the glory-thirst upon him,

bustled off with one black boy and four black men in red and blue.

After he was safely out of the way Trooper No. 1 fainted. It had been hard for him to keep going so long as he had. I spread a blanket for him and made him a pillow. He was not long in coming round. Meanwhile the great moon had climbed a little. The light of the sunset was losing its brilliance as hers grew splendid.

The sound of two shots came sharply to us. A minute or so after No. 2's mule was galloping wildly past us through rocks and ruins. A native trooper rushed for it, but missed its bridle. Soon after that Trooper No. 2 galloped up on his feet. I should judge from the pace he showed that he was a real sprinter. I had noted him before as a trim little man and ruddy, and a sort of personification of self-respect. Now he was blue and demoralised.

'Have you caught my mule?' he panted anxiously.

'Have you stopped our man?' Trooper No. 1 asked him coldly, his face set very hard.

'There's a lion in the way,' gasped Trooper No. 2, quoting Scripture, whether he knew it or not. 'I got off my mule, I fired two shots. Then my mule bolted.'

'And you bolted,' said No. 1 with a sneer. He took no further notice of him, but called the Black Watch corporal and gave him his orders. 'Take three men,' he said. 'Get to the drift. Run for

your lives. Leave the path and go through the bush if there's really a lion.' The four Black Watch were off almost as soon as he had spoken.

Trooper No. 2 began to explain matters at length to his senior. But the latter did not suffer him at all gladly. Then it was that I started down the drift road, asking No. 2's boy if he would show me the place where they had seen the lion. I asked him if he thought it was wounded. He answered me disdainfully. He showed me how Trooper No. 2 shot—the panic way—the way to heaven.

Then we came in sight of the lion standing, haloed by the disc of the moon. As I have told you, I tried to give No. 2 a chance to wipe out his stain. I went back to fetch him; he was taking things hardly, doubtless, and I ought to try and do him a good turn. He came, but the lion did not stand still to await him. Why was I so glad he escaped? I don't think it was only because I was afraid. Yet glad I was. So we gave him up, and tramped back to the kraal.

Soon after we were back one of the pursuers returned. He had seen Carrot splash through the drift. He took his time and went at it leisurely, I gathered, with his piccanin astride upon his shoulders. On the other side a crowd of natives had received him in triumph. They jeered at the police and shook their spears and knobkerries. Carrot was safely across the border and among his friends.

'It's a lost trip,' said No. 1, and looked No. 2 up and down, as we sat by the camp fire. No. 2 looked

injured and ashamed at one and the same time. He was not a hero on principle, I should think, and he had not risen to this occasion. Some people seem to hold that Britishers are heroes on principle all along our frontiers, and rise to all occasions. I can testify that this is not the truth, for I know my own deficiencies. As to No. 2, there is some sort of mitigating explanation of his conduct to be yet recounted. But no, even when I have allowed for this, I am not disposed to write him down heroically efficient or journalistically British—not on that night at least. Just as a Colenso now and then slips into our big campaigns, so the monotony of our frontier triumphs gets diversified, I fear, and not so very seldom. No. 2. is by no means the only man of the diversifying type I seem to have met. I refuse to admire No. 2 as he was that night, though I would excuse him.

For the hero of that night, let us look away from him. What a splendid night it was in the late autumn—in the very end of May! Stars seemed to fall in profusion. But the steady ranks that were left showed no thinning to my dazzled eyes. I had much time to watch them, I remember.

Ours was a gloomy camp among the ruins under the stars. One trooper was convalescent and irritable as well as disappointed. The other was shaken and sulky with little to say. There were great pauses in the talk. I thought how I congratulated Carrot, the cheerful and irresponsible, on his escape. Assuredly his would-be captors would have seemed

to him dull dogs. Of course he would have thoroughly deserved ordinary boredom. But theirs was like a London fog. So it fell about that I had much time to give heed to the Black Watch as they chattered over their fire hard by. One was telling tales of lions, tales where the terror was glamorous and ghostly. A hint of a surmise floated to me. It recalled a type of mediæval tale that had once entranced me. But I said nothing to those young white men beside me whose frowning faces were a study, and a pitiful one. I was intensely sorry for them both. I just smoked my pipe, and made ready to go to bed betimes. I was soon asleep, to dream of holy water and silver bullets and to wake and rise as the cock was crowing (for the second cock-crow I suppose) away down the hillside; I said an added prayer of eager devotion, feeling myself to be a postulant in great need of its answer. I made for the rock of vantage. I found the lion's spoor in the growing light, and followed it slowly and timorously into the bush and beyond. There had been a shower yesterday about noon, and it was easy enough to follow it. It led down and then up again. I guessed it might be leading me to Carrot's huts and the troopers once more. But, no, it dipped far down to that other group of huts wedged amongst the rocks, where Carrot's boon comrades lived, where I had bandaged the hurt head, where I had heard but just now the cock crowing. Two huts I could see to be empty. It did not lead to either of these. It led straight to the other wherein the embers of a fire shone red. There was no lion

within. I looked for the spoor of the lion's exit. There was none.

The retainer who had had his head broken by Carrot lay curled in his blanket by the fire. He was sleeping an exhausted man's sleep. It was hard work waking him. At last he sat up,—a squat patriarch with grizzled bushy beard and shrewd watchful eyes. He was huddled in a queer parti-coloured blanket—purple and brown and orange and grey. I tried to testify to him with zeal against blackness of witchcraft. I told him with zest of the Light. He looked blank enough. Afterwards I spoke of Carrot's escape. His eyes underwent a change as I watched. The Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, showed in them, as it seemed to me. He was genuinely glad that his baas was out of the wood. So clear an affection for the man whose mark he was wearing touched me. I half emptied my tobacco bag into his hand ere I said Good-bye in the roaring south-easter, under the saffron streamered dawn.

I surmised that Carrot owed his escape largely to a real hero ready to face fire at need, whom we white men had not recognised.

A new feeling of pity for Trooper No. 2 took me. Haply he had miscalculated things as he pursued his unsanctified way. Haply he a modern, had been handicapped from his lack of equipment, lack of such discarded kit as I had dreamed about. Quite conceivably he had wrestled last night, not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers unknown.

AS TREES WALKING

IT was in the spring of last year that I started for a holiday journey towards some ruins about a hundred miles away. I had suffered much in the cold weather from fever and broken rest, so I longed to renew my strength before the heats of summer should be fully come.

I started on a bright and calm September morning by the main southward track, hoping to reach a friend's Mission Station on the eve of the third day.

I reached it then, but I had provoked my enemies by walking in the chilly hours, and walking to weariness. I was feverish and spent ere I reached Greenwood's Mission House.

It stood under a towering granite kopje—some ten miles only from the ruins. I had never entered it before. When I last visited Greenwood, quite two years ago, he had been working on a town station. He was a dark, lean, rather ascetic-looking person, not very talkative. I remembered the days when I had fought shy of him; we had seemed to disagree on so many subjects, and he had seemed to resent disagreement so intensely. But he had written me two or three most friendly letters of late, and that night, when I came to his door so

sick and sorry, he seemed to be kindness itself. I soon revived by his fireside, ate my supper, and smoked and talked with him to my great content. We were speaking about roughing it, and told many camp-fire and roadside tales. As I told and listened, I seemed to be my old self of a year ago once more, tough and dogged, and rather sinfully contemptuous of mosquitoes and malaria. Yet I had but a poor night after all, and the yawning and shuddering chills came on with vigour at Church in the early morning. I went back to my blankets after an aguish breakfast, and Greenwood dosed me and told me to go to sleep. He spoke with authority, and I obeyed. I did not wake up till the early afternoon. I seemed to have lost much weight in those last steaming hours, and also, to my joy, the fever.

'I hope I'll sleep well to-night and get an early start to-morrow after all,' I said to Greenwood. He looked at me rather intently with his resolute grey eyes.

'The fever is gone for the time,' he said, 'but I don't like the look of your eyes at all. If I were you, I'd change your room to-night and sleep in the Hospital.'

'Where's that?' I asked.

'Oh, not very far; half a mile at most. It's Saint Lucy's little hospice on the hill there across the valley.'

Afterwards, when I went out and sat on the sunny stoep with him, he showed me the place. I could see a grove of trees standing up on a near ridge

and two or three thatched buildings in among them; yes, and a white cross surmounting one of these.

'It looks lonely over there,' I pleaded.

'Oh, I'll come with you,' he said. 'I want to tell you the story of the place before we blow our candle out; it may help the cure.' So when sundown was near, he and three of his native retainers started with me for the Hospice of Saint Lucy, carrying goodly packs every one. I was rather dubious about that expedition.

'I hope it's warm there,' grumbled I to myself. 'If Greenwood's as strong as a horse, I am not so just now. I wish he'd camp at home in peace.'

However, I tried to look interested as they made ready for us to go and delighted, as we started away.

Just as we went across the narrow valley the sun went down behind St. Lucy's hill, and bells or gongs answered one another from either side.

'So you have a bell up there at the Hospital,' I said.

'There's more than you expect to see at the Hospital,' said Greenwood mysteriously.

So there was. It wasn't a Hospital at all in our wonted modern sense, but a rather ornate round Church. Outside, it was plain enough, but within it gave me a sense of studied charm and even costliness. No drug-covered or dispenser's table was admitted within its doors, though both were to be found in one of its neighbour buildings. The main building housed aids to recovery, but they were of

another type. Over the Altar was a life-sized picture of Saint Lucy, golden-haired and blue grey-eyed, with great splendour of shapeliness and stature, and real English apple-blossom cheeks. She came along a rocky path through an African forest; she was smiling, and had a far-shining lantern in her hand. You could single out the trees in the forest,—there was the crimson-flowered tree yet leafless, and the wild fig-tree in full leaf and cluster, and the wild orange-tree; the wild acacias and the cactus trees were growing among the stones above. Far off in the distance, at the back of the picture, there were dim cliffs and pale sands and waves breaking in the bright star-light.

The time was meant to be cock-crow. At least it seemed so, for a red cock was perched on a tree-bole in the foreground of the picture, crowing with a will. In the sky were many stars. The quarter over the sea whence the Saint came was of excelling brightness. There the morning star hung in a haze of glory.

The Altar itself was of granite slabs and masses. Before it burnt a purple-glass lamp, hung by chains of native smithy-work, rather incongruously heavy, I thought. But who was I to cavil at this jewel of a shrine in our wilderness?

'Where are we to sleep?' I asked.

'Here, before the Altar,' said Greenwood solemnly.

Even as he spoke his house-boy came in with hushed feet. and began to spread out our rush mats

and many-coloured blankets. Then we went into the dispensary hut, and had our supper and many pipes together, while the native boys chatted and chewed roasted monkey-nuts in the hut beside us. I felt very hungry and happy and healthy generally that night, and we sat at our table long, and then smoked far into the hours of darkness. But, though he told me many tales, Greenwood would not tell me the tale of the place, however much I begged him to do so. That was kept for the Shrine itself. That was not as other tales.

We kept up a good fire, for the night was a cold one.

The talk turned on pilgrimages at last; we spoke of many Shrines, of old-time ones and of others in the heyday of their youth still. Greenwood talked well on that subject. Was the aura of his own Saint in the air of that dispensary? He talked with a passionate faith about more than one Shrine, that left me almost breathless.

Then we argued about the Pilgrims' Way in Kent, as to where it was that most pilgrims forded the Medway, and about certain homely Kentish legends.

Suddenly he rose and went to the door. He looked out on the mighty vista of sable earth and spangled sky.

'The moon is just going down and you ought to be sleeping,' he said. 'And remember there is my tale still to tell.'

So we went to the Church. We had one candle between us there. Moreover, the purple lamp was

burning, its quaint cup of wire-gauze averted doom from many self-immolant flies. We knelt beneath it, and he said the Prayers of the Shrine, then our own prayers followed—then he began to tell:—

'I was coming back from England twenty months ago and I chose to come by the East Coast. It is a beautiful way to come. I saw Zanzibar, where there are many hopes and memories. I slept two nights far out of the city there, in a grove of palm trees. Then the boat came back from the mainland and I went aboard again.

'We started for a four days' voyage or so, to Beira. *She* came aboard at Zanzibar, I think. Some one told me this, when I asked about her afterwards. But I was never really conscious of her presence till the second night of our voyaging. Then we met at a Concert in the Third Class, that I had strolled down the deck to patronize. To my shame I was travelling second, while she was in the crowded family of the third. I went and spoke to her.

'A child had had a bad fall from some steps, and she was mothering him. It was a lovely and pleasant thing to see how she did it.

'He should wake up without much pain,' she said, with a smile, at last. She handed the boy to his own admiring mother. Then she turned to me, for I had been asking after him.

'She began to talk about our common work. "I want to climb on a new boat at Chinde, and go the way of the Lakes," she said.

'Are you going to teach?' I asked.

'"I hope I may teach at whiles," she said, "But I am sent first of all to heal."

'She told me about her hopes for her work.

'"They tell me I have healing hands," she said. "I have a seed-grain of faith, I think, and that is the secret of them."

'I saw her only for a few moments. I will try to tell you or rather to show you what she looked like, when I have ended my story. She enlightened me not a little. I saw how lame a thing my own journey was—my leisurely dawdling back to my work. This girl came as it were on wings, with power in her heart and will, that would take no denial but God's. Her few words as we walked up and down the well-deck were words that burnt and shone in the cold dark. I am talking about things as I saw them just then. As a matter of fact, I believe it was a blazing night with a moon at the full, and stars dropping over one another. I remember that I slept on deck afterwards. I had a sort of Midsummer South African Christmas picnic feeling (up till cock-crow, when the fever that had dogged me that month came again). It was really a consummate night. But as she talked, she made it seem cold and dark, her words were so radiantly kind.

'I think we talked about Saint Vincent of Paris mostly, and of men that had carried in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus; and of the imitation

of Jesus in India and Africa. Then she said "Good night!" and was gone.

'Next day that return of fever blurred my new visions of the Light. Yet I was to see her again. An hour before we came off Chinde, she asked leave to come up on to our second-class deck and to bid me "Good-bye."

'I was lying in a deck-chair, my hat tilted over my eyes, under the morning sun. She was suddenly beside me and speaking to me. She gave me a watchword out of that confident ending of Saint Mark, to which, some people, who have their misgivings, attach so little credit. It was this, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Then she prayed for me, lifting up her healing hands. And she held out to me a tiny flask that I might anneal myself, "For that is your own office," she said.

'My head had defied sleep, but now sleep came apace. It seemed to me it came breathing about me with the light gusts of wind. I slept, nor did I know when she said "Good-bye."

'When I awoke the sun was westering. Some passengers had trans-shipped for Chinde four hours or more ago, a man told me. She was gone, and I was well. No, not well in one way, but mending. That is all or almost all of my tale.'

He had told it reverently. Towards the end of the telling, he himself seemed to wander as he told.

'What was she like?' I asked after a silence.

'She was much like that picture of Saint Lucy,' he said.

'I found a man in the third class, who had taken a really fine photo of her, not a little snapshot. I had helped him with a sketch of the voyage he was writing for some magazine, and he was pleased enough to print me another copy. I sent it home that month. A friend painted me that panel. I suggested that the name of the Saint should be Lucy, it was on Saint Lucy's day she had said "Good-bye." The picture came a day or two before this Midsummer. He has done wondrously well, I think, if you remember that he never saw her.'

'How do you know that he never saw her?' I asked.

'Yes, you may well say that,' he said. 'I sometimes think that he had seen her, even as I. He has painted something of her light and spirit. Look how she threads that forest by night!' He held the candle near, then he pulled it away.

'Forgive me! How can you see her duly by this light? You must have a real session before her in the morning.'

I awoke early, but not too early, as it seemed to me. Dawn was growing very bright, and spring seemed to be in the air that came from the doorway. I sprang up and looked out. Light that was already almost flame kindled the east. The leaves of the grove about me had their spring colours on. There was quite enough illumination to show how brilliant

and tender they were—ruddy and green and mauve, and bronze that was almost gold. Day was coming fast and so was Spring. I turned within and lit the candles on the Altar. The purple lamp was burning low. I knelt down, and saw Dawn and Spring, aye, and Summer too, in that picture. Eastern light was streaming from that lantern Saint Lucy held. It was of coral and silver set with pearls. Eastern light was in her happy face. You could see even in that cock-crow dusk in the forest, how the fig-tree and all the trees were stirring for Spring and Summer. I took note now that Saint Lucy's wreath was of orchard leaves and blossoms. I lifted up my thanksgiving there and then, as the first sunbeams shone about me, for the rest and the light that I had found, found at last for good as I hope in sultry and weary Africa.

Soon we were kneeling at the morning Sacrifice, then we went out and broke our fast in the sunshine, sitting on rocks by the wood fire. How hungry I was in that hill's pure air!

When he had done, Greenwood showed me some of the workings of the Shrine. A young mother, filleted and stately, brought her baby to him. Almost naked but roped with beads, the boy hung in the pied sheep-skin at her back. Greenwood folded a handkerchief that he had brought from the Altar about his dusky head. It was of faded blue and silver. Then he said prayers to the Father and to Christ, and again to both of them, for the prayers of Saint Lucy and that other.

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'It is not good to drug children so young, is it?' He asked the question as though defending himself.

'I think this may soothe him better than a powder.'

He told me how he had found that kerchief wrapped about his own head on a certain sunny day when he lay sick aboard ship. 'It was hers,' he said, 'handkerchiefs and aprons are Bible remedies.'

Other pilgrims or patients came to him after that mother with her child. He persuaded three or four of them to carry letters to the doctor in the town. But he prayed for these too, and signed them with oil from the Shrine lamp, ere he trusted them to his friend's salves or surgery. By and by came three young men with a boy. He was stricken and mad, they said. He had come home from work in a distant town last month. Now he would stay speechless for hours. He would wander far by day, and brood over the fire by night.

'Let him stay if he will,' Greenwood said. 'Let him wait in peace here, and eat and sleep his fill, if he so desires. If he shall sleep in the Holy Place a few nights, who can say what wonder Christ may do?'

The boy seemed to be an old friend of his, and stayed quietly by him. His companions started off joyously down the hill, one of them playing on the marimba. 'This is Merrie England come again,' said I. 'Did not an unburnt Lollard upbraid the bagpipe din or other music of pilgrims long ago? Wasn't that "lewd losel" told by the Kentish Arch-

bishop how useful such music might be—say if a pilgrim struck his toe on a stone?'

'There are many pilgrims at this Shrine,' said Greenwood smiling. 'I am glad about it. I think she would be glad if she knew.'

'Where is she?' I asked. 'Doesn't she know?'

'I have tried hard to track her,' he said. 'Not a trace have I found. I have asked our missions, I have asked the White Fathers. I have asked Africans and Scots and Dutch and Portuguese. But she has gone on her way out of sight.'

'She has done some work here,' I said.

'Yes,' he said, 'Angel or Saint, Faith Healer or Revenante from Paradise, she has worked wonders here. Do you know, there is a simple native cure I have ever so much faith in? It comes from the root of a tree. Have not some men and women the same sort of virtue in their wills and hands that trees have in their roots? I seem to see men and women—such as Father John of Kronstadt and this my Saint Lucy of the Ship—even as trees walking. The outstanding virtue of my patroness was surely in her blossom, and in the fruit that blossom can yet bring forth. "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood" I found her. I sat down under her shadow for those moments of time. And now, and all my days of grace, will her fruit be sweet to my taste.'

THE BLACK DEATH

THIS is a story of a voyage home. The boat was one of the finest on the line and we were not overcrowded. We had wonderful weather that trip, brilliant sunshine relieved by a fresh little breeze that kept its place, doing its duty without taking too much upon itself, or making itself obnoxious. In the third-class we were quiet on the whole, and what is called well-behaved, though neither with millennial serenity nor millennial sobriety.

A red-cheeked gentleman took a red-cheeked married lady and her child under his vigilant protection. Two or three Rhodesians and Joburgers enriched the bar with faithful fondness. Cards and sweeps on the run of the boat and the selling of sweep-tickets—these all stimulated the circulation of savings. Hues of language vied with hues of sunset not seldom of an eventide.

Life was not so very thrilling on that voyage, the treading of 'border-land dim 'twixt vice and virtue' is apt to be rather a dull business.

There was no such incident as that which stirred us on another voyage—the taking of a carving knife to the purser by a drunkard. On the other hand there was no unusual battle-noise of spiritual combat

such as may have quickened the pulses of one or two of the boats the year of the English Mission.

We were middling, and dull at that, on the "Sluys Castle," till we reached Madeira. Then the description I have given of our voyage ceases to apply. The two or three days after that were exciting enough to one or two passengers at any rate.

James Carraway had come down from Kimberley, he told me. He was a spare, slight man, with a red moustache. He sought me occasionally of an eventide, and confided to me views of life in general, and of some of his fellow-passengers in particular. I remember one night especially, when the Southern Cross was in full view and the water about the keel splotched with phosphorescence. Carraway had a big grievance that night. He commented acridly on a coloured woman that I had espied on board. She was not very easily visible herself, but one or two faintly coloured children played often about the deck, and she herself might now and then be seen nursing a baby. I had seen her on a bench sometimes when I had gone to the library to change a book. I had seen her more rarely in the sunshine on deck, nursing the aforesaid baby.

'One man's brought a Kaffir wife on board,' growled Carraway.

I said, 'I thought she might be a nurse.'

'No, she's his wife,' contended Carraway. 'It's cheek of him bringing her on board with the third-class passengers.'

I said, 'Which is her husband?'

'He's been pointed out to me,' he said. 'The other white men seem rather to avoid him. I don't know what your opinion on this point may be,' he said. 'I consider that a man who marries a Kaffir sinks to her status.'

I said nothing. He did not like my silence much, I gathered. He was not so very cordial afterwards. He was a man with many grievances—Carraway.

When we were drawing close to Madeira, two nights before, on the Sunday—Carraway touched the subject again.

The parson had preached incidentally on the advisability of being white—white all round. I thought he played to his gallery a bit, in what he said.

'An excellent sermon,' said Carraway. 'Did you hear how he got at that josser with the Kaffir wife? That parson's a white man.'

I said nothing.

'What God hath divided let no man unite,' said Carraway, improving the occasion. 'I don't uphold Kaffirs. The white man must always be top dog,' etc., etc.

Carraway grew greasily fluent on rather well-worn lines. I smoked my pipe and made no comment. By-and-bye he tired of his monologue.

He gave me no further confidences till the night after we left Madeira.

Then he came to me suddenly about eleven o'clock as I stood on the well-deck, smoking a pipe before turning in.

'Come and have a walk,' he said, in a breathless sort of way.

We climbed some steps and paced the upper deck towards the wheel-house. There were few electric lights burning now. After a turn or two he drew up under one of them, and looked round to see whether anyone listened.

'Don't give me away for God's sake,' he said. He held up a hand towards the light pathetically. 'It's showing,' he said. 'God knows why. God knows what I've done to bring it.'

I said nothing, but looked at him and considered him carefully. He certainly did not seem to be drunk.

Then I examined the hand he gave me.

'I don't see anything particular,' I said. 'What's wrong?'

'Good Lord! The nails.'

But the nails looked to me pink and healthy.

'Tell me,' I said, 'What you think's wrong.'

Yet he could not tell me that night. He tried to tell me. He was just like a little boy in most awful trepidation, trying to confess some big transgression. He gasped and spluttered, but he never got it out that night. I couldn't make head nor tail of what he said. After he was gone to bed it is true I put two and two together and guessed something. But I was fairly puzzled at the time.

'You're a bit upset to-night,' I said. 'You're not quite yourself, it's the sea I suppose, or something. Come to bed and get a good night.' His teeth

chattered as he came down the ladder. I got him down to his cabin.

'Thanks!' he said. "Good night! I may come all right in the morning. Anyhow I'll have a bath and try.'

He said it so naïvely that I could not help laughing.

'Yes, have a sea-water-bath, a jolly good idea,' I said. 'You'll have to be up early. There's only one and there's a run on it before breakfast. Good-night!'

I saw him again in the morning outside the bath-room. He came out in his pink-and-white pyjamas; the pink was aggressive and fought with the tint of his moustache. He looked very blue and wretched.

'Well,' I asked, 'Have you slept it off whatever it was?'

'No,' he said, 'let me tell you about it.' He began to gasp and splutter.

Just then another postulant came up, making for the bath-room door.

'Afterwards!' I said, 'After breakfast.' And I vanished into the bath-room. It was probably Carraway, I thought, that had left a little collection of soaps in that bath-room. He had brought a bucket of fresh water with him apparently to give them a fair trial. There was yellow soap, a pumice stone, and carbolic soap, and scented soap. 'I'll keep them for him,' I thought. 'Somebody may jump them if I leave them here. I wonder why in the world he's so distrait.' I had my suspicions as to the reason, and I laughed softly to myself.

After breakfast he invited me back to the bathroom; there was no run on it then.

'It's quiet,' he said. Then after many gasps and splutters he enlightened me. His nails were turning colour, he told me.

'Anyone would think I had Kaffir blood in me,' he said.

Also his skin was giving him grave cause for solicitude. I did not resist the temptation to take him rather seriously. I administered philosophic consolation. I reminded him of Dumas and other serviceable coloured people. I rather enjoyed his misery; poetic justice seemed to me to need some satisfaction. He, the negrophobe, who was so ultra-keen on drawing the line was now enjoying imaginative experiences on the far side of it.

'It seems then,' I remarked, 'That you are now a person of colour.'

He nearly fainted. He did not swear. He seemed to have lost all his old truculence. He began to whimper like a child.

'After all, I never shared your prejudices.' I said. 'Cheer up, old man, I won't drop you like a hot potato even if you have a touch of the tar brush.'

He cried as if his heart would break. I saw I had gone too far. It was like dancing on a trodden worm.

'Carraway,' I said, 'It's a pure delusion. Your nails are all right, and so's your skin. You're dreaming, man. You've got nerves or indigestion,

or something. It's something inside you that's wrong. There's nothing outside for anyone to see.'

His eyes gleamed. He shook my hand feebly. Then he held up his own hand to the light.

'It's there,' he said wearily, after a while. 'You want to be kind, but you can't make black white. That's what I've always said. It's the Will of God, and there's nothing to gain by fighting it. Black will be black, and white will be white till crack of doom.'

I told him sternly that I was going to fetch the doctor to him. He sprang at me and gripped my arm.

'I trusted you,' he said. 'I needn't have told you. You promised.'

So I had like a simpleton.

'Only give me two days,' he said, 'then I'll go to the doctor myself, if nothing works in all that time.'

So I said I would respect my promise loyally for those two days.

'I only told *you*,' he said, 'because my head was splitting with keeping it in. It's awful to me. I thought you were a negrophil and wouldn't think so much of it as other fellows. But for God's sake don't give me away to them. There's lots of things to try yet. By the way, ask that parson to pray for one afflicted and distressed in mind, body, and estate.'

He did try many sorts of things, poor fellow. He was in and out of that bath-room a good share of both days. He also tried drugs and patent medicines. I saw his cabin littered with them. He would

sneak into meals those two days when people had almost finished, and gobble his food furtively.

I caught him once or twice smoking his pipe in the bath-room or the bath-room passage. He would not venture amid the crowd on deck. Only when many of the passengers were in bed would he come up with me, and take my arm and walk up and down. That was on the Wednesday night.

Wednesday night came, then Thursday morning. Thursday forenoon was long, and Thursday afternoon longer.

At last the sun was low, and I began to count the hours to the time when I might consult the doctor.

I secured an interview with Carraway in the bath-room soon after sunset.

'Any better?' I asked for about the twentieth time.

He shook his head dejectedly.

'All right. We must go to the doctor to-morrow morning. But, O Carraway, do go to him to-night. don't be afraid. It's only imagination. Do go.'

'I'll see,' he said in a dazed, dreary sort of way, 'I'll see, but I want to play the last card I have in my hand before I go. It's a trump card perhaps.'

'On my honour,' I said, 'You're tormenting yourself for nothing. You're as white as ever you were.'

Then I said 'Good-night.' I stopped for a moment outside the door, and heard him begin splashing and scrubbing. The thing was getting on my own nerves.

I went off up on deck, and smoked hard, then

I read, and wrote letters, and smoked again, and went to bed very late. I had steered clear of the bath-room and all Carraway's haunts so far as I could. Yes, and I had gone over to the second class, and I had asked the parson to do as he wanted. I had asked him the day before. Now I asked him over again.

The steward handed me a letter when he brought me my coffee in the morning. I opened it and read:—

> DEAR SIR,—Perhaps my negrophoby is wrong. Anyhow, it's real to me. I had and have it, and see no way to get rid of it properly here on earth. Now God has touched me, me the negrophobe, and coloured me. And to me the thing seems very hard to bear. Therefore I am trying the sea to-night.
>
> 'In the bath-room there never seemed to be enough water. I want to try a bath with plenty of water. But I am afraid it may be with me as it would have been with Macbeth or Lady Macbeth. Those red hands of murder could not be washed white by the ocean, they could only "the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red." What if I cannot be decolorized by any sea? What if my flesh only pollutes the sea, when I plunge, and makes all black? God help me!!! You are a negrophil and don't half understand.
>
> 'Yours truly,
>
> 'J. CARRAWAY.'

I questioned the steward. He had found the letter in my place at table.

Sure enough there was a third-class passenger missing. I suppose Carraway had slipped off quietly in the moonlight to try his desperate experiment. It was a cruel business—his monomania.

If I had broken my promise and called the doctor earlier, could he have been cured? Or would he have lingered in an asylum—shuddering over the fictitious glooming of his nails and skin, shaking in a long ague of negrophoby.

Anyhow, I'm sorry I didn't do more for him, didn't walk him round the deck the last night at least, and try my best to cheer him. Yes, I blame myself badly for not doing that.

May God who allowed his delusion pardon that last manœuvre of his! I do not think Carraway had any clear wish to take his own life.

I can imagine the scene so convincingly—Carraway pausing, hesitating, then plunging into the moon-blanched water from the dizzy height above, eager to find which the multitudinous seas would do—would they change his imagined colour, or would they suddenly darken, matching in their tints his own discoloration?

AN OLD-WORLD SCRUPLE

'IF you come back, which Heaven ordain, you'll be all the more use to the priesthood,' the Superintendent of Missions said. 'Go and serve with our fearless and faithful, approach as an acolyte the altar of freedom. Supposing you don't see your way to go, I would remind you of a certain passage about "Curse ye Meroz!" I need not insult your knowledge of the Scriptures by finishing my quotation.'

Osborne listened respectfully, but his eyes were looking far away, with dreams of the veld in them.

The Superintendent's preaching of a sort of Christian Jehad appealed to him infinitesimally.

There was a silence. He knocked his pipe out, and offered the Superintendent a sundowner.

'I'm glad to have had your opinion,' he said. 'I take it you don't want me just now as a candidate for ordination?'

The Superintendent flushed and hesitated.

'You mustn't put it like that,' he said almost irritably. 'The decision rests with you, of course. Of course we want men now and want them badly. Yet I wouldn't press my recruiting needs just now. It doesn't seem to me the right time to do so. Afterwards ——'

He gulped and spluttered as the big words rushed so fast to his lips.

He was enlarging on the big days for God's priesthood, when the war, please God, should be over. Big days, that is to say, if the only sort of fit and proper issue should be reached, as doubtless it would be before long.

'You mean a complete knock-out for the other side?' his hearer interpolated crudely.

'I mean a supreme vindication of our holy cause,' amended the Superintendent with conviction.

Then they changed the subject.

Afterwards, when they smoked late on the lamp-lit stoep, conversation was apt to flag a little. The layman's eyes would grow abstracted in the intervals of his ceremonious hospitality. The Superintendent watched his face intently once or twice. The man was a mystery to him. He had an uneasy sense that he had not taken his measure, and had been responsible for some sort of a misfit more than once in conversation. Why was he not more like ordinary people? Probably because he had lived a lonely life on the veld much too long. The Superintendent was conscious of a profound distrust of the untamed veld, its influence and its inhabitants. Yet his natural kindliness, reinforced assuredly by his grace of orders and Christian sense of duty, strove quite heroically against that distrust.

David Osborne walked over to see me next week, but he did not find me at home; I was camping with a native teacher's waggon some twenty miles away.

He slept at my place, and came on after me. A thirty miles' tramp or so it meant to overtake me, but he did not shrink from it. He wanted to think out things, and he liked foot-slogging on a big scale as a stimulus to thought. I was on a high ledge above the windings of the Sawi River when he found me—a ledge with a great view of the Wedza hills. The sun was going down then, and their blue was just dying into purple. I got him some tea, and he drank and ate like a veldsman—one who had broken his journey but little since he broke his morning fast. He told me the Superintendent's point of view, which I have already chronicled. 'It provides a certain amount of excuse,' Osborne said, 'for what I want to do. That's about all I can say for it.'

'Then you want to go?' I asked.

'I want a change,' he said, 'and adventures and all that. As to any war's being a holy war, that's Greek to me.' I smiled. I understood what he meant.

I had only just come back from a limited experience of war as a non-combatant. 'Why don't you say outright what you think?' he pressed me. 'The Superintendent does do that apparently, I'll say that much for him. Isn't Saint Telemachus still your bright particular star of Christian sainthood in war-time? And isn't Tolstoy still in your eyes a sort of forlorn hope—the most hopeful of modern war-time philosophers? Or have you changed all that?'

I looked him straight in the eyes, considering.

'I have changed,' I said. He looked at me hope-

fully. He hadn't seen me since I had come back from the war. 'So the holy war's all right?' he asked. 'And the acolyte to the altar of freedom and all that sort of thing? I attach some importance to your opinion, remember, so don't say more than you mean. Having seen war, which do you plump for? Tolstoy, Saint Telemachus, or the Superintendent? Speak now, and kiss the Book on it.'

I would have liked to laugh, but I did not dare. He was in such desperate earnest. I answered: 'I have changed for the worse from the Superintendent's point of view. I am not the same as I was. I am more so.'

He went to the war. But he went with a share of Reuben's curse upon him. He wrote to me quite frankly from his East African camps about the things that appealed to him, and the other things. His experience seemed to bear out my own, for the most part. He considered that some deplorable things had been done on both sides, and also some very fine things. But as to the efficacy of the machine guns he ministered to, in promoting the Kingdom of God, he was under no illusions. He was possibly disposed to exaggerate things, *e.g.*, the vitiating influence of war upon life about one. He was certainly disposed, I think, to exaggerate his own coarsening, as a not very reputable campaign proceeded. He harped somewhat morbidly on one particular strain in his letters. How much better, he surmised, it would be for Christianity and civilization if he and others like him should never return to

resume their places in Christian society! Some verses that he sent me when he was under orders to join a rather hazardous expedition, have, I believe, a certain sincerity in their ruggedness. They are not very cheerful, are they?

They have a note attached to them. N.B.—We had Church parade this morning, and the lesson was about Nebuchadnezzar's going into retreat.

LYCANTHROPY.

They drove him forth as beast and not as man
Till seven times had pass'd. At last he came
Back to his Babylon, but not the same.
Nay! For he now had learn'd of Lips on high,
Herded with cattle, 'neath a dewy sky,
How patience cannot fail where passion can.

But we, war's wehr-wolves, we than wolves more fain
(Grace-harden'd, deaf to Gospel, blind to Rood),
Fain to seek night-long horrors of the wood
Where the blood-trail is red, the blood-scent hot,—
Shall we return in time? God, were it not
Best for Thy world we should not come again?

But he was to come again, for all his reluctance and shrinking from a return. He was to come through that campaign all right, and back to our part of Africa that he loved so dearly.

'We shall have him back, I hope, before the end of this month,' the Superintendent of Missions told me. 'The Bishop seems willing to ordain him before Christmas. He's not likely to need a long diaconate, is he? Our Bishop agrees with me that he's had just the kind of training for his priesthood that was most to be desired.' I nodded dubiously.

We were sitting in the Superintendent's well-ordered study, which he preferred to call his office. Its big window took a discreet peep at the veld, but it was not the untamed veld, only Rosebery Commonage. I searched in my pockets, and after uneasy gropings, unearthed a crumpled letter begrimed and tobacco-dusty. 'This doesn't look much like his coming up for ordination,' I said. I read an extract: 'Please give that Chinde boy in the College at Cape Town a message from me. I was glad to hear from you how well he was doing. I always liked that boy extraordinarily, and I think I had a sort of glimmer of his pastoral destiny quite early, soon after he came our way as a straying sheep. Now, from what you say, he bids fair to be a quite respectable candidate for the native ministry. Will you please offer him two or three more years at the College to enable him to qualify, should that be his own wish. I am quite prepared to be at charges for him. It's a happy augury that his baptismal name happens to be Solomon, even as it was rather a tragic one that mine happened to be David. I don't see my way to building up God's House on the old farm now, either literally or metaphorically, in the way a priest should.

I look on your boy at Cape Town as a likely substitute. Vicariously I hope to offer by his hands, since mine are now too stained to offer to my own satisfaction. I'll do David's part, please God, and help him to build up the House, in both senses, the house I might have built with my own hands, had they been otherwise occupied than they have been these last months. I am quite resigned now. It is all for the best, doubtless.'

'What does he mean?' The Superintendent's rather assured face grew quite indeterminate and puzzled.

'What he says, probably,' I hazarded. 'He's got a scruple—an old-world scruple.'

I picked up the Superintendent's khaki-covered Bible, and turned over hastily the red, blue, and white edges.

'Here's the passage,' I said. 'Listen to what his namesake, the other David, said: "But God said unto me, 'Thou shalt not build an house for My Name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.'"'

'Oh, that text!' said the Superintendent not very reverentially. 'I don't think that it's particularly relevant.'

'Isn't it what *he* thinks that matters?' I asked. 'No, make your mind up to it. When he followed your own advice and went off to the war, he decided. He decided to remain a layman to the end of his earthly days. Some of us have got our scruples. His took shape that way.'

'I don't see why,' said the Superintendent rather piteously. He was genuinely disappointed. I liked him for the unconscious tribute he was paying to him whom we discussed.

'Be consoled,' I said with a twinkle. 'His farm promises to be a real lay centre of Christian influence. May we not rest assured of that? Trust him to encourage native industries and native ideas; Trust him to believe in the veld. Trust him to read to his veld-dwellers the Sermon on the Mount; trust him to live it rather. Trust him to deprecate, by example, as well as precept, excessive care for food and raiment. Our missions are apt to be rather over-ecclesiastical, aren't they? Far too much of an urban and Europeanized type, don't you think? Be consoled, his lay settlement may be trusted to teach us a lot. God grant that his native priest-designate he has chosen to be his Solomon, may soon come along! Be consoled!'

The Superintendent looked slightly aghast. 'I don't see where the consolation comes in,' he groaned.

FOR HIS COUNTRY'S GOOD

PERCY BENSON opened his eyes and looked around him. He was lying in a tiny grass-hut. How did he get there? He thought for a while slowly; his head was very hot and heavy.

Of course! This must be one of the hoppers' houses, and he had got back into Kent or East Sussex somehow. Where had he been lately? Not in Kent, or even in England. He could remember only a confused medley of travelling by land and water, and a huge home-sickness. Never mind, all's well that ends well. Here he was back in Kent surely, and in a hoppers' house. What time of year was it? That rather puzzled him. For was not that a mass of cherry-blossom not twenty yards from the tiny doorway? Why should they put up a hoppers' house before September? Why in the world should they put it up when cherries were in flower?

Never mind, he was in Kent; he would sleep ever so much better now for knowing that. He put the cup of water that he found beside him to his lips. Then he closed his eyes and slept anew. When he woke again, hours after, a big man in flannel shirt and wide-brimmed grey hat was standing by a wood-fire outside the doorway. It seemed to be just

growing dark. The man was cooking something in a pan over the fire. As he turned, Benson knew his face. This was his old school and City friend—John Haslar. He had not seen him for years—he could not remember how many.

'Hullo, Jack!' he said.

'Hullo!' said John with a start. 'That's much better. You've slept well this last time! How do you feel now?'

'Oh, better, much better,' said Benson. 'But I've had it badly. Influenza, isn't it?'

John looked at him with a question in his eyes, but did not answer. 'I think you'll do now,' he said. 'You must take some nourishment and your medicine, and then try to sleep again. I'm your man for a talk in the morning, if only you get a good night. I didn't come eighty miles to see you for nothing, I can tell you.'

Benson felt weak and weary, and did as he was told. Just as he closed his eyes he said, 'I'm glad to be back in Kent—ever so glad.' He sighed a little sigh of relief. 'I can't think where I've been all this time. I am really back again, am I not?' He did not wait for an answer, but fell asleep.

He woke up once in the night, and saw John sitting by the fire and smoking his pipe.

'This is a hoppers' house, isn't it?' he began.

John turned round and looked at him with interest and pity. 'It looks very much like it,' he said.

Benson gave a contented sigh, and turned over on his side again.

When he awoke in the morning his strength was really beginning to come again. He was hungry for breakfast. He caught sight of a dark, tall form by the fire on waking. But a minute or two after it was gone, and John was back again.

'Ready for breakfast?' he asked.

Benson was soon at his porridge, and debating as to whether he should finish with eggs or chops.

'You'd better have what you really care for,' said John, and stepped outside and gave a call.

'Who's that gypsy-looking fellow?' asked Benson.

'Oh, he helps me,' said John. 'He's all right.' He went out of the hut and received a dish from somebody as he spoke.

It was after breakfast that Benson made a request. 'I believe I know where I am,' he said. 'Though I'm not quite sure, because my head's still dizzy. I believe I'm back again in High Wood, just near Hawkenbury, not two miles from my old home. What do you think?'

'I don't think I know that country,' said John, looking uncomfortable. 'And I'm sure I've never been here before.'

'I remember,' Percy Benson said, 'there used to be a little grocer's shop down in Hawkenbury Street, where they sold mixed biscuits, with lots of pink and white and yellow sugar, and glass-stoppered ginger-beer. I haven't forgotten the taste, though it's years ago. Do you think you could go down there, or send somebody, and get me a bottle

of ginger-beer and a pound of biscuits. They're just what I'd fancy.'

John looked doubtful. 'I know a place that isn't so very far off, where they keep groceries,' he said. 'But I don't know whether they keep ginger-beer in glass-stoppered bottles, or if they keep that particular sort of biscuits. However, we'll try.'

Benson slept a good deal that day. He talked between whiles rather feverishly about the place, and how glad he was to be back there again. John said very little, but that seemed not to matter. Benson was glad enough to ramble on and on. He did not appear to take much notice whether you answered his questions or not. He was ecstatic rather than curious.

The biscuits came and were a fair success.

'Not quite so good as they used to be, but very good,' said Benson. 'I like these sugar ones immensely; the ones with the pink sugar are the pick.' But the ginger-beer was not of the time-honoured brand. It was drinkable enough, but it had a cork tied, instead of a long cool mouth with a glass stopper.

'I must walk down and do some shopping for myself to-morrow,' Benson said. 'What a summer we're having. Did you ever see such blue sky as we've had yesterday and to-day?'

Next morning he was much better, and could get up and walk about a little. John looked uncomfortable at times, as they sat over their breakfast by the fire under the great trees. He was trying to

make up his mind to tell his friend where he was, and to recall what had happened to him. He could see that, now the fever-mists were melting, he was likely to be remembering for himself before long. But how could he break things to him easily without giving him a dire shock in his worn-out state?

Then to him pondering, the crisis came of itself.

Suddenly out of the woodland stepped a party of natives with monkey-nuts, sweet potatoes, and other wares, very cheery and smiling.

Benson started and his eyes grew troubled. 'Is this Africa?' he said. 'Then I'm not home after all—not home after all.'

'You're in Africa,' said John. 'You came up here about three months ago, so they told me.'

'I remember,' said Benson. 'There was some money trouble in the City—some bad trouble. Then I had to leave my little place in Kent near Sevenoaks, just as I was getting it to rights.' He looked miserable as he thought over things, this sallow little City man.

Meanwhile John traded some monkey-nuts and sweet potatoes for salt, and sent the traffickers away.

Afterwards Benson began to talk out of the bitterness of his soul, and John lit his pipe and listened gravely. He talked about his little estate near Sevenoaks, the cottages and the farm, the Elizabethan manor-house, the school and church, the timber and the planting of the new trees. 'I was just getting the place into shape,' he said. And

then he nearly broke down and cried as he told about the trouble in the City, and how a family council had been called, and he had agreed to go to this country for his country's good, and to keep away. 'Oh this farm, as they call it,' he said—'these thousands of acres of grass and rocks with a tin shanty to die of fever in! How wretched I've been here! But we aren't on the farm still, are we? This seems a bit better. It regularly took me in, this place. I did really think I was in Kent again.'

John knocked out his pipe solemnly, and was just going to try and say something comforting.

But Benson began again. 'And how did you get here—you, the only friend I've got in this wretched country?'

John told him that he had come down to see him, when he did, without knowing how ill he was. He had had a letter from him, at his store up in Rosebery last month, and for old sakes' sake he had driven down when he had a chance to come away. When he reached the farm he had found Benson lying at his homestead unconscious from fever. The natives who were waiting on him seemed to think him in danger. They said he had been sick for days. John had gone to bed early that night of his coming to the farm—a glorious moonlit night. But long before dawn he had been roused by a Kaffir boy with the news that Benson had risen and rushed out. They tracked his wanderings to that beautiful stretch of woodland, and managed to house him in a garden-hut of grass, close by a clearing among the

trees. Either John or his native boy kept watch over him day and night then. But when he awoke with that happy fancy of being at home, John kept away the native boy, and put away, as far as he could, all the distinctive signs of Africa. That dream of being at home might be a real help in tiding his friend over a very wretched time.

There he camped under the two great trees with the wild white-flowered bush—so like an English cherry-tree—in full September bloom about him, and wondered what the issue of that comfortable delusion of Benson's would be. It could not be expected to last anyhow, now that he was coming back to sense and strength.

Benson writhed as John finished his story. He went on with the tale of his own black loneliness and grey home-sickness. The glory of Kent and the charm of High Wood seemed to be gone like the shadows of a dream already. What good had they done him after all?

John felt miserable as he heard him out. 'Look here!' he said, 'I've been doing well at the store, and I've got a good many cattle that I'd like to run on this farm, if we can come to terms; and I'll try and drive down every month or other month, and stay with you for a bit and see how they're getting on.'

Percy Benson's face grew bright again at that saying. He was very weak, and prone to sudden ups and downs.

'Oh, do promise you'll come every month,' he

said. 'Weeks are so long, and the one mail-day a week comes always terribly slowly. Do promise.'

John promised faithfully.

Next day they went back to the homestead, a dull little iron building on a rather feverish site. 'If I were you,' said John, 'I'd build where you have been lying sick. I don't like the look of this other place at all.'

'Yes, I shall build in High Wood; I want to call it so now. It's a magical place, I think: I shall always feel something is home-like when I'm there.'

Life was growing brighter to him. His fever-fancy had opened his eyes a little to the charm of the new country—it was, at least, here and there, not unlike the old country.

'I think I shall fancy this place more now,' he said to John on the morning they parted. 'But, oh, if you could only have seen that little place of mine five miles from Sevenoaks!'

'Look here!' said John. 'You've got a bigger estate here than ever you had there, and you can find the same sort of interests in it. Study your Kaffir tenants, and help them with ideas about stock and ploughing and church and school. Your neighbours don't. Well, more simpletons and arrant wasters, they! Believe me, you'll find the new life much more like the old life in Kent, if *you* do. Then study tree-planting, and look after this grand old native timber. Expect me next month, on the 23rd.'

He went away and left Benson lonely. But the

real blackness of his loneliness was gone. The planning of the new homestead would keep him busy for a long while now. Was not healing virtue exuding from that soil, which the happy dreams of his recovery had consecrated? His fever had given him a new point of view, or rather given him back his old Kentish point of view—delight in God's own country sights and scenes, care for his tenants, and hope.

LE ROI EST MORT

THE railway had almost crept up to Alexandra then—the seventy-three miles of its sandy pilgrimage were all but complete. In three months or so it would be open to those who could afford their penny a mile—no, but I am forgetting, on the privileged group to which it belongs no European may travel third-class.

I did not welcome that railway with any warmth. The district that it tapped had seemed to me a camping-ground of refuge, as civilization pressed on. That district was a haven for the Kaffir-trader, a haven for the transport-rider, a haven too for the foot-slogging missionary, like myself. We have our faults, all three doubtless, and deserve the spurning of civilization's iron feet, when our time comes, doubtless. On the other hand our displacement is a matter for some sympathy, it is likely to hurt like other displacements. Also we are prone to note that the admirable iron feet of our displacer are not unmixed with baser clay.

I came to Shumba Siding last Eastertide, on my way to Alexandra. Charles Miller was there in charge of the line, and he offered me a thirty-one mile ride in to within two miles of town if I would

only wait for a construction train. I declined in my stupid sentimentality. For one thing I hate breaking up a plan of combined foot-travel; it seems to me hard on one's native fellow-travellers, on whom one is apt to call for big efforts. To ride on ahead, and leave them struggling alone with the sandy monster of a road for any long distance, seems vile desertion, and I was by no means sure that the invitation to board the train included them. Moreover, this might be my last journey in, on the old road, under the old order.

So I declined, but I lunched with Charles Miller before I went on. Marvell was there, the Kaffir store-keeper from ten miles away. He had much to tell me of his wonderful good luck. The big firm that were putting up the new Store at Alexandra, that rail-head terminus designate, had asked him to manage it.

He could marry now on his prospects. He had wanted to see me, and had waylaid me on my road. The bride was due by coach to-morrow. He hoped to get a Special Licence when once she had arrived. Would I marry them on Monday?

We had a good lunch with healths afterwards, but they let me drink them in tea. Miller proposed the health of the bridegroom, to whom the railway, or ever it came, had brought luck. Might his luck last while the rails lasted, and grow heavier when they should be replaced by heavier metals! Might he never make less in a year than that railway had cost per mile! 'Three thousand five hundred will

take some making,' Marvell sighed to me. He acknowledged the toast and proposed the Railway's prosperity. He grew rather florid to my thinking, about the benefit to the District—how Kaffir gardens were to be displaced by up-to-date farming, how tourists were to pour in athirst to explore its ruins. He discoursed of the blessedness of ranching, and of chrome and asbestos syndicates. He said that we were in at the death alike of malaria, of black-water, and horse-sickness. Then I spoke up for the other side. I asked them to remember the old Era in silence, and if they must drink, to drink to the transport-road and the transport-riders, and to all pioneers, and old hands going and gone, to the big native district and its dependencies, so rich in cattle and so rich in grain, to God's Eden of a country, and the people that He Himself had chosen to set there to dress it, and to keep it before our coming. My toast fell rather flat, I noticed. They both looked rather bored.

Soon I pressed on, with fifteen miles or so to cover before our camping-place would be reached.

I had gone some ten miles before the construction train passed me, and my carriers pressed through bushes and long grass for a nearer view of it.

With three or four white men on the engine, a Black Watch or two and a few other natives on the trucks, it snorted along through the woodland. As the night deepened and the moon rose, we came close to the last coach-stable, and were soon encamped.

The old Basuto near by gave me a drink of fairish water, but water was far away, I was told. My boys straggled away wearily, and came back at last, having seemingly missed the dipping-place. They had brought something between a liquid and a solid. Boiled, it was no doubt wholesome enough, but its taste was not such as to tempt to excess.

That night I dreamed, with a tag of Marvell's speech buzzing in my head (I had garrisoned it with quinine before I slept). That tag rang out in boastful refrain like the natives' curfew-bell of Alexandra, a bell not always very punctually rung. 'We are in at the death of malaria, of black-water, and of horse-sickness.'

So clanged the bell, the bell in the market tower, the tower of the dismantled pioneer fort. And it seemed to me that I saw Malaria—a lean yellow ague-shaken shape with a Cape-boy sort of face, steal away out of the town past the new Railway Station, and across the river. He went, like a frightened Kaffir dog with a jackal-like yelp, far away into the Veld. I am not sure whether he did not become canine on the way, at least cynocephalous. I followed him. I went far in that following, over country that I remember as very difficult, there were so many stumps of trees about. Moreover, it had abundance of black-jacks to stud one's socks with. 'He is going through dry places seeking rest,' I thought. 'Soon he will return.' And sure enough we were to return by-and by. And a jackal pack of seven, that I was somehow expecting to

come, came with us. We saw the lights of Alexandra soon, but the people had gone to bed, it seemed. There was no one about anywhere. Then the leading jackal fed foul and lapped long at a great black drain. Afterwards he howled under a window of the Hospital, and leaped through it, straddling his legs. Then I awoke.

I married Marvell on the following Monday, and partook of his wedding-lunch. He made a far more florescent speech than that earlier one, it compared with it as the nuptial champagne with Miller's bottled beer.

'The old Pioneer is now dead,' he told us, 'as dead as the Dodo or the Great Auk. No longer need we take Quinine to be "our grim chamberlain to usher us and draw" . . .' (here his memory of Hood failed him). 'No more need we shiver in our Kaffir blankets at Kaffir Stores fifty miles from the dead-ends of rail-less post-towns. "Le roi est mort." Malaria is dead or dying so far as Alexandra is concerned. We Alexandrians are now becoming wholesome Englishmen in a wholesome White Man's country. Long live the railway, and may it perforate the Alexandra District!' 'Amen,' said the best-man fervently. But I said nothing.

I admired Marvell. It was just like him to press a guinea on me for my Mission, though I told him there was no fee of any kind, and that I was ever so glad to be there. The remembrance of my dream stung me. I said something for conscience sake. 'Civilization has its perils,' I said dully, 'immature

civilization. The period between no-drains and the up-to-date drainage system wants some living through.' 'That's all right,' Marvell declared. 'I'll watch it. I didn't go through Bloemfontein in the War for nothing.'

'Le roi est mort: vive le roi!' Alack! If Malaria slackened hold, enteric tightened its clutch. People were found to say that the latter state of Alexandra was worse than the former. Marvell and Rose Marvell both got enteric. But, thank God, the uneasy misgivings engendered by that eight-devil dream of mine about Alexandra were not justified! They both won through. They are going back to England for a change next month (the hay-making month at home), they tell me.

'God made the country, and man made the town, and the devil made the little railway-swollen, transitional, Alexandra-sort-of-town.' So Marvell wrote to me by last mail. He is not so keen now on the transition stage of civilization for his wife's residence. He is thinking of a pioneer place in Northern Rhodesia, either that or London. If the perils of the old regime in Alexandra are minished, the perils of the new regime appear to have a knack of growing.

THE RIDING OF THE RED HORSE

I

ISAKA rubbed his eyes, but he did not unroll himself yet out of his blankets. He was lying in the darkness with a round of white walls dimly seen about him. Through a hole in the grass roof, a star met his fixed gaze. The cocks had but just crowed the second time, and the light was but just winning way in the east. The night was holding out steadily so far.

Was it he, Isaka, who had awakened, or some other? He was not very clear. Strange alike looked the happiness behind, and the hope before him. He was not sure of himself in that twilight of his senses. It seemed scarcely believable—his title to either gift of heaven—to memory or to expectation.

Surely but slowly his brain cleared, his doubt grew faint as that star was growing, his outlook bright as the one pane in the wall, looking east. He sprang up with one of the best wills in the world; he was far too happy to be drowsy any longer.

Soon he was washing himself, and dressing him-

self in white, with real zest. Last night had been a joy-night indeed, and the morning promised brilliantly. It was doubtless he himself who had both reached and enjoyed the night's happenings, he also who now stood firm on the threshold of the morning, having reached that also. Isaka, who had been Kadona, was a native of an African village with a far glimpse on fair days of Kilimanjaro. Being born where he was, and dwelling where he did, he belonged to a certain Central European Power. Certain manifestations of that Power had made him uneasy from his goat-herding boyhood onwards.

He had walked warily, and kept an unscored back, but he gathered that fellow subjects were not always so fortunate. At last the claims on his attendance of a Government School had become importunate. Suddenly he took his fate into his hands, bade his family farewell (was not his mother dead these two years?), and made for a track through the forest. Since he must go to school, he would choose his own schoolmaster, and he chose one that he knew. This teacher, as it happened, stood for another European Power further west. He was fast ageing now, he could remember the days before Europe divided up with such appetite so much of Africa. He had been travelling on some teaching errand, and had fallen sick and lain nearly a whole month at Kadona's village. Kadona had brought him many gifts—milk and ground-nuts and honey. The sick man for his part had not been thankless. As for gifts, he had given a knife and salt and soap

and matches, but he had also shown fellow-feeling, which meant much more. Their friendship, signed and sealed outwardly by what they gave, was underlaid by affection of a promising sort. So Kadona went to this teacher's mission, as to a city of refuge, travelling through a bush country, and sleeping in huts of a strange speaking tribe two or three nights of his way. He came to his host as man and friend, and his trust was not abused. Afterwards his host, known better, revealed new uses, he could doctor a little, he could teach more than a little, he also held keys of certain joys and wonders.

By and by Kadona was illuminated to some extent by his friend. He was allowed to exchange his name when the approved fullness of time was come, on a day of benevolent mysteries. Henceforth he was Isaka. He had changed his name six months before the eventful morning I have chronicled—changed it at the season he had come to reckon the years by—the good time of Christmas.

Now this last night had been a brilliant one in the church that he had learned to care for. There had been much glow of candles and splendour of psalms and anthem. He had been taught to make himself ready with light, so to speak, in view of the greatest illumination on earth—the Sacred Banquet of the morning. The words of the anthem had rung in his ears like a trumpet in the night, they had peopled and painted his dream. 'And I saw and behold a white horse: . . . and He went

forth conquering and to conquer.' This morning was the Banquet morning. It was no marvel that Kadona had been wonder-stricken at his awaking. The sense of moving in a vision was hard to escape from, it seemed to him. He moved towards the church like a man in a dream, and his feet felt for the steps. Was it he who had been herding goats but a few years ago, who had seen what he had seen on nights and at dances, who had felt so naked and helpless before a harsh Government not so very long ago? It did seem that it was he, and he was very grateful. He stole into the church soft-footed, and glided towards the blazing altar. Then he waited, trying to remember what it was best to remember at such an hour. Had he repentance, faith, gratitude, and love? He had so much of the last two surely as to make some amends for defects of the others, or at least he thought so. Yes, there was no mistaking his thanks, he thought to himself. He remembered his night's dream afterwards when the bell rang, and the Rider on the White Horse drew so near. Then he lifted up his heart that he might meet Him on His way, tried to open his heart as wide as it would go for the conquering Presence to ride into it.

II.

The scene was a mission station once more, but a different sort of interest appeared to be para-

mount in this busy station, other than plain Evangelism. This was a Lutheran Mission, used now in time of war as a collecting centre for the rice of the countryside. The foreboding of Isaka's teacher had come but too true. When Isaka had been telling him (on the day after the great day) his dream of the White Horse and his Rider, he had read to him the story of other horses and other riders out of Saint John's Vision. And his face had grown troubled as he added, 'We have proved what the riding of the black horse means here in this mission of ours. Do you remember years ago how the rains were short here, and how the people went hungry afterwards? And now there are clouds in the sky—clouds not of rain. Will the Red Horse be ridden, as some prophesy? I seem to see him with the bit in his teeth spurred by his rider our way. Pray, Isaka, I beseech you, that the Red Horse and his rider be turned in their road.' And he told Isaka something of what he meant, also something of what that riding might mean to them all. And he would have Isaka pray, and his schoolmates pray also. And they prayed, but for all that this mad rider came galloping, the rider of whom Saint John wrote, 'And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: . . .'

It was nearly a year now since that morning Isaka remembered so well, when the White Horse was ridden his way. Once again when awaked,

Isaka, Kadona, was not sure if he was dreaming, but this time the main reason for doubt was that things seemed too bad rather than too good to be true, things that had come or were coming, upon the earth. Nearly a year ago now the news of the riding of the Red Horse had come. Europe was in a horrible temper, and Africans must do as usually, not what they wanted to do, but what Europe bade. Isaka's English teacher must leave his school or his liberty, he must either run away or stay fast in the Government's hands—a Government that was fighting England. He chose to remain, hoping to help Isaka and others, but he had very little power on earth left to him. For a little while he was allowed to stay in his old home, and the school began to be broken up only little by little. Then the pace quickened; some were drafted off as porters, some as soldiers, some were allowed to stay and cultivate for the Government. Its local officials' tempers had apparently not improved with its troubles. None on this alien mission within its borders were liable to be accounted trustworthy, all were liable to suspicion. Yet Isaka worked on happily for a while. When his teacher was moved to a place of internment he was allowed to keep one body servant. He invited Isaka to come, and Isaka came right willingly. He might have been passed by, and the choice lain among others, but his teacher asked him as the first choice of all, if he would come with him? Was it likely that he would refuse?

Then suspicion fell upon Isaka in a day of rebuke and blasphemy. Probably he was to blame, probably he said more than he should have said, probably he did not recognize how well off he was. Anyhow the blow fell, and he was to be envied no longer, as he had been.

He was beaten rather mercilessly, and taken to be a Government porter in a district far away. The tears came into his teacher's eyes when he bade Isaka farewell; his own captivity was wearisome, he was beginning to feel his age now; also this boy had been as a son to him.

It was all like an evil dream, this war, so fecund of death and parting among friends, this riding of the Red Horse that had haunted Isaka's visions of the night. The light was just coming when he awaked from them at the German Mission Station. He was loth and slow to unroll himself from his one torn blanket and to step out of it. But someone kicked him angrily, and then needs must. He had come on these last days ever so many miles, and carried a full load. He struggled up stiffly, and crept to the little fire that two of his fellows were heaping and lighting while they chattered together. They were tribesmen of a district far from his own. One was telling a story of how their white masters with native soldiers had raided a village. The other, whose village it was, full-stopped the story with grunts or deprecations. There had been some throats cut. Folk had been bidden to lie down, so the teller said; they had

lain down as for the lash, but they had been paid in cold steel. Isaka listened dazedly. The end of his Christian era seemed to have come as suddenly and unexplainedly as the end of his Pagan era. His teacher had preached 'love,' 'love,' 'love,' with Pauline iteration, and not a little self-repetition. His teacher had taught that war was an unclean thing haunting the heathen world, and lurking in the blackness of Pagan villages. His teacher had deprecated violence; it was his rule never to strike, nor ever to rule by such fear as cast out love.

Now——. An askari (a native soldier) came up to the three, and he was storming furiously. He laid on his lash right and left. Isaka did not escape. They were to carry their loads at once, it was said, by forced marches to a rice mill at the lakeside. In another five minutes the big train of porters took the road, and spread itself like a serpent up the trackway. Isaka was the twentieth or the twenty-first in their advance. I do not think that his illness which was to show itself in a day or two, was really manifest on that day. Yet he went very heavily. Such maladies were certainly upon him as a poet has diagnosed, 'blank misgivings of a Creature moving about in worlds half realized.' The ridings of Red and White Horses had so fast succeeded one another in Isaka's circle, and had brought such different worlds and atmospheres in their respective wakes!

III

Three days after, they were at the rice mill, and a July day was breaking. Isaka lay and listened to the lapping of the lake water—lapping of the water in the greatest of African lakes. He was lying beside a creek that was papyrus-fringed with curtains of feathery green. A cloud of lake flies hung dark in the distance. The soft lake haze redeemed landscape and waterscape now from overclarity of outline—the besetting blemish, as some might think, of its mid-day. Isaka was really ill that morning. He could hardly stir hand or foot. An askari came and looked at him, and said something to his German officer. The latter came and laid his hand not unkindly on his brow, found what the heat of his body was, and gave him some drug out of their scanty store. The great war with their fellow Christians was pinching them sorely in the matter of medicines—these sturdy patriots of Central Europe. They were keeping their flag flying in a feverish land where febrifuges meant much indeed. Isaka was let lie, and he brooded over his dream—the old dream that had come back so intrusively last night into such alien surroundings. For he in the province of the red-mounted rider had dreamed that He on the White Horse came as an invader, the light of daybreak in His looks, the faith of conquest in His eyes.

Now, a friend happened upon Isaka that morn-

ing, one who had been reared upon the self-same mission-crowned hill whither Isaka's homesick mood harked back. How they spoke of old days together, and warmed their chilled hearts again! Surely Isaka's dream had heralded a measure of restored joy for him that morning, if nothing better and more lasting. He spoke of his dream, and of how it came first as the prelude of that Banquet, and of how his heart had danced on that Banquet morning, and the sun had danced in his sight at the sunrise. His friend was allowed to stay by him, for the transport officer was kindly, and they talked on and on. Isaka knew now that they thought his sickness a great one. Suddenly came a wild stir among porters and native soldiers. One of the English lake ships had shown round the point to northward, and was heading fast for the bay. The one German hurried down among the transport crowd, bidding them make haste and take cover. His friend left Isaka. He was one of the few soldiers who were to line the trench in a banana grove ready to dispute a landing. But Isaka was bestowed in some long grass; there was little time to carry him far. The ship rang and slowed down, then she crept like a lean black panther into the place that suited her spring. Soon she rang again, and stopped dead. There was a ghastly pause of stillness. Crash! Her twelve-pounder spoke. Crash! and crash! again, five times over. The rice mill showed a gaping wound by now. Then two boats were lowered, the Indian Ship's Guard

and the British officers crowded into them, and the African sailors pulled for the shore. Isaka crawled to a hummock, and peered out to see what was happening. The shell fire had made him pant and shake, his lips were full of prayers remembered and half-remembered. The boats came nearer, they were almost up to the log-built pier now. Had they been left alone till they had come further, there might have been hope for the ambush of a great bag, while the Indians were bunched together on the landing place. But those in the banana grove trench were eager, they would not hold their fire. The rifles cracked, the bullets thrashed up the water, men crouched down in the drifting boats with oars and rifles waving rather helplessly. It looked as though they were likely to pay toll, wide though the shots had gone as yet. Then the oarsmen pulled themselves together, and rowed back for the ship's protection. There was not even an oar or a boat hit after all.

Isaka stared eagerly at the fight. He showed himself. A minute after the ship's shrapnel burst near him, putting death's fear upon his weakness. Someone had said that the ambush was in the grass rather than in the banana grove, the ambush that was screened so well. Was there just will and time left to invoke the Rider on the White Horse of that unforgotten and abiding vision? I think there was. Then the shrapnel burst over Isaka. He was blotted, as his fellow Christians of the ship and her guns might have expressed it. The

twelve-pounder (or was it the four-inch?) crashed again and again. The Maxim coughed and spat in a paroxysm. The Rider on the Red Horse rode on relentlessly.

THREE—AND AFRICA

WE all three went a common way with rather a bad grace, and Africa in a measure dominated our movements, or at least our proposed destinations. I think she tightened her grip on all our three affections by that journey, she made us more of her slaves—she has ever a hankering after the slave-trade, has she not? In her shrewdness she gained a grip on us by very diverse expedients. Me the restless, so feverishly tired of her, she exercised in fresh fields. One result was, that I found out in those trial-grounds ever so many reasons why flight from Africa would be unthinkable for me. While as to him, my friend, whose doom of exile from her she had herself done much to bring about, I am sure that she dazzled him on that his road to the railway (his *Via Dolorosa*,) making assurance much more sure that he must leave his heart with her. As to her, my other friend, who had taken Africa so complacently and so very much for granted, Africa made revelations to her at each stage of a journey that was rousing in itself, for it brought her away from her western station to a very different countryside. And if these revelations were not prone to stimulate affection, I am quite mistaken. I could make out a strong case

against Africa, on the grounds of that journey, as capricious, inconsiderate, and so on. Yet before I have done, I want to indicate pleas of extenuation.

We were going with a donkey-waggon, he and I, the waggon wherein she, my other friend, was riding. He had been in the Civil Service, and suffered much from fever; yet he was leaving the Service for other reasons as well as that particular one. He was travelling cross-country to his exit station, prolonging thus his pangs of farewell; he was making himself useful by escorting her on her desolate road. Moreover, I was making myself courteous by adding my own escort. I was under no delusion as to my being useful.

The donkeys were none too fat; they looked as if they had not been used well, and were far on in life. With their driver I differed as to beating them, but I will allow that they were dear to him on the whole, and that he made progress in by no means easy places. Indeed the road had been against us for many days before the day on which I left the waggon; and I as waggon conductor was to blame for the choice of it. I should have yielded myself patiently to go the mighty round that the main roads went. I had come almost due east at a venture, and when I had lost my first stake by being disappointed of the by-road I sought, I went on gambler-fashion. I had seen already how the waggon stuck in a big river's sand-bed. How many times we had dug out, how the whip and the driver's voice had plied, how we had filled up the ruts with sods and grass-tufts, striving

to gain purchase for the wheels! And yet I was obstinately sanguine when I heard a tale of an ancient trading road. It would be wondrously direct, if one could win through by it. So along it, by my own decision, we went. That first night that we turned off by it, we stuck long in the waning light, trying to pull through a *nek* in the hills. It was grievously cumbered with boulders, and we were long in trying. Yet at last the driver rallied his team, and we slept on the right side of the pass, clear of the granite, ready for an early inspan next day. Then on the morrow we but crawled along, till at last we stuck fast in a spruit's spongy floor. That time we were not to pull out before we slept. Darkness drew in on the struggles of the dead-beat donkeys. We outspanned and went on with the struggle soon after sunrise, putting shoulders to wheels in wild earnest. At last we were through, but we had been delayed far into another day. That noon and afternoon the disused road travelled through bush-veld. It had been ridden over so little in the last few years, that there was much wood-cutting now to be done.

Our *voorlooper* was no scraggy piccanin, he was brawny and bearded, an expert Mashona woodman. Now the woods bowed beneath his sturdy stroke. But his labours took time. One shrank in shame from the reckoning of miles covered on those days. Sunday came to our rescue, and we lay encamped in the granite-country, very grateful for our rest. On the Monday, its results showed. We trekked gal-

lantly for hours and hours, we pulled out of a swamp at the first attempt; we even essayed a dreaded ford before we outspanned. But we did not win our stake. Not till we had knocked under, and outspanned once more did we struggle through. The lady of the waggon waded barefoot to lighten it, she even helped to coax a wheel up the further bank. At last we were saved from relapse. But that night our travellers' joy flickered and faded. We stuck grimly at a crossing; stuck at a mean little stream; there we found odds against us, both rocks and also deep mire. So we camped, leaving our waggon jammed in the stream's bed.

Now I would tell you about that night and the next morning. We got the lady's mattress out of the waggon. She could not well sleep on it, where it was. There were many midges and mosquitoes about then, for March was the time of the year; so we made her bed on some high ground, close but not too close to our camp-fire. After supper we sat about the fire long, the branch-heaped blaze was comfortable after our chilly paddling. The wisdom or folly that we puffed and inhaled and toasted and sucked and munched over the fire is the making of my story. It is its best excuse for a yawning lack of plot.

Delia Moore, lady mission-worker, roasted monkey-nuts for us. When they were at last ready, we all three munched at them. But meanwhile Richard Anson and I smoked Shangaan tobacco, and Miss Moore ate sweets out of a screw-topped bottle.

Anson spoke about the charms of Mashonaland. He had been quartered in many parts of her those last ten years; his admiration had been consistent, it had also stood the test of her feverish dealings with him. He said that she was the only country worth inhabiting in a cursed world, that she was God's own country. Then I fanned his flame with my own home-sick talk. The wind was blowing chillily north-westward that night—on the other side of our ant-hill shelter. A kindred wind was blowing just as stedfastly in my own soul. I had had my contrarieties lately, both of hard times and pastoral reverses; but, and that seemed to matter more, I was beginning to feel my age, its untimely growth as my work grew. Had I not done my share by now? I painted scenes in south-eastern England for my private view frequently now, scenes in cool greens and sober blues and restful grey—scenes of weald and down-land, of hop-garden and country rectory. Over this last my fancy played and kindled ruddily in tiles and roses.

When I found words for these scenes they proved so many battlefields, for Dick gave battle to my panegyrics impartially, as I filed them up before him. He seemed to be very hard hit that night, savagely bludgeoned by his doom of banishment. He said that he hoped to come back someday. Anyhow, he said, would I try to remember that he had chosen his burial-place—a place where two rivers commingled some two hundred miles north of where we were camping? I promisd to try. It seemed to

me a pity that we could not interchange health and abiding-places—he so ague-wrung, so plainly doomed to go, yet withal so keen to stay. I, on the other hand, full of home lust, England-amorous, yet so robust, so lacking in any decent excuse to give over my job and go in that green old age of mine. Then, at last, Delia Moore chimed or rather clashed in, when she had roasted her monkey-nuts and found a dish for them. She said that we were both wrong, we were both so clearly called to do just what we were doing, he to go his way, and I to stay on. But, contended she, her own move was a more than doubtful one; she had been made into a rolling stone, against her own judgment, by church despotism; the odds were against her gathering moss to any reasonable extent. 'O,' she appealed to me, 'look after my west-country work, whatever else you do. My going east bids you in honour to stay.' I allowed her plea with a nod. It was not till some while afterwards that I propounded Africa's apology, as I had guessed it. Dick had been talking, rather bitterly as well as floridly, about sighting the cold Northern Star and losing the Southern Cross. I lay back and gloated over the starry picture overhead through a criss-cross picture-mount of ragged grass. I left the confutation of the scoffer to Miss Moore. There was an edge on many of her remarks that night, and I could trust her to deal with him. But what she said I have forgotten. Only I remember that he gave her best at last. Then, and not till then, I broke silence, submitting sub-

jects for inquiry. 'Are not countries and sub-continents like men born under stars What star was South Africa herself born under? Not the Lyre surely, her poetry is comparatively so negligible. Not the Plough, nor yet Aquarius, for she is not blest with overmuch irrigation, nor brilliant at agriculture. Neither was it the Northern Star surely; constancy does not easily beset her. No, it was the Southern Cross. Take the cross as a symbol inclusive of more than Christian symbolism. Take it as a symbol signifying *peine forte et dure*. Is it not peculiarly characteristic of Africa to deal with us as she is doing? Does she not truly follow her star in banishing you, and shifting you, and detaining me'?

'That's all very well,' said Dick truculently, 'but I want to know what WE are going to do. Are we going to take it lying down?'

I sniffed. 'I suppose we had better,' I said. 'And if we want a decent handbook of procedure—I am told that the *Imitatio Christi* is excellent.'

'Promise me you'll not leave the Station, so help you, at least not till I come back.' Miss Moore plunged for a particular shallow just when I was floating in gay generalities.

'Let me have till to-morrow,' I asked. Then I spoke in Africa's defence, setting out her case as well as I could. 'She's emphatically a feminine continent,' I said. 'I learned only the other day from a modern novelist that a woman's possibly at the height of her power with a man, just when her

contact with him is but one of hope and memory. Surely that is true enough of some women and some men. Isn't Africa one of such women, and Dick one of such men? She knows her own business, and sends him to a distance, bidding him consecrate "a night of memories and sighs" to her. It's a doom that tends to bitterness on his part now. But trust him by and by to taste the bitter-sweet of it. It's the same sort of thing that I wrote raw verses about after I left Oxford behind: "Not until you go from her will she come to you"—you know the sort of thing.'

Dick grunted. Miss Moore complimented me on my preaching. My lucidities, I feared, were missing fire.

A donkey saved the situation, one of the two that were not harnessed up for the night, there being no trek-gear for them. With a grassy mouth he was chewing at Miss Moore's pillow-slip. After many and shrill cries, it was rescued, but not before it had taken stains of a deep green colour. After such a misfortune had been properly keened for, we sat down by the fire again.

'Go on,' Dick said. 'Let's have your peroration.'

'Well, as to Miss Moore—Africa has shaken her up by shifting her, and by giving her a lesson in local values, just as the donkey has done about linen or calico, I forget which.'

That started the keening again.

'O,' said the mourner, 'my poor pillow-slip! But I'd give it by the dozen to get back just to the one place—the same old Mission. You will promise to stop there till I come back, at any rate?'

Worn out by continual dropping-fire, I promised, starry Heaven being my helper. 'Let's go to bed after that,' I pleaded. 'I've soared in an airy disquisition and I've come to earth in a gross sort of pledge.'

'No, you're to go on,' Dick told me.

'What about yourself?'

'O, I'm led out on a string. I'm given trotting exercise by Africa within her own confines. I'm kept hanging about on her veld, while she delays my donkeys. Meanwhile she shows me out-of-the-way holes and corners where there's nobody to do the work she wants done. She appeals to my shame and pity, she has made a study of weak spots of mine. Has she not method? I meant to leave the waggon last week, but I'm lucky if I get off to-morrow. What with bad roads, spongy crossings, and indifferent donkeys, she's landed me in a pledge to-night—a pledge to keep me hanging on. I'm in honour bound now to try to turn her night into day, just like a cock in one of her kraals. While all the time I want to be flitting North like one of her swallows this month of all months in the year.'

In the morning I renewed my pledge at a rock's altar—a rock that lichen had stained bright orange. I professed resignation, as did the other two beside

me. Then after breakfast, we shook hands. I gave Dick a motto about Africa:

> She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
> For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

I gave Delia a prayer to say for her westward return. 'Turn our captivity . . . as the rivers in the south.' Then I knelt by the grey flat stone and prayed audibly, 'Give me a blessing; for Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water.'

Soon I was striding away. There was little time to reach home by the hour when home wanted me. Pity and shame, pity pointing east and west, while shame spurns and aspires—these two beams seem to make up my own Cyrenian's burden—the burden of the Southern Cross for me. On the other hand, regret and adoration seem to supply the same office for Dick, if I may judge by his letters. As for Miss Moore, by far the most deserving of us three admittedly, doubtless her faith is firmly rooted wherever she is, and her sympathy spreads east or west, whichever way her duty calls her. Nevertheless she would be still glad should the Voice call and the Wind blow westward again, at least that is my own conviction. In our several ways we three are devoted to Africa: one way or another the Southern Cross is the constellation ascendant in each of our three careers.

OUR LADY OF THE LAKE

WE had been dining on the bridge of H.M.S. Kampala the captain, the two ship's officers, the gunnery lieutenant and he who writes this story. We had come in as it grew dark that August evening, and anchored some few miles out from the German's great place. For that great place a big gun, rumoured or real, commanded respect.

I suppose our main object on that patrol trip of ours was the stopping of rice-running, the preservation of our lake blockade. We had had some firing a few days ago at presumptive stores, also at a dhow and lighter dimly descried (they were in the papyrus-fringed labyrinth of a boat-passage). But of late we had been lying up for the most part off a lonely island. Perhaps they would think we were out of the way, perhaps not. We should see what we should see.' I suppose that the gunnery lieutenant was almost as sanguine of adventure as I was of humdrum peace in this after-dinner hour on the darkened bridge. Adventure, or at least what seemed to be its promising prelude arrived quite suddenly.

There was a sudden announcement to our captain about a light being seen, a brief one-sided discussion, the whistle—blowing for 'Stations,' the rattle

of arms as the Indian ship's-guard fell in. These all affected me with strange twinges of futile protest. Surely there was a time for all things, and this was the time for coffee and tobacco, not for disconcerting risks and detestable noises. I wanted never to hear our four-inch gun again by day. The idea of its shaking the peace of night to bits was preposterous. Yet a light was reported ahead, a moving light on the lake itself. 'You haven't much time, Craig,' I heard the lieutenant cry to our captain. The engine-room bells rang ominously, there was much puffing and spouting, then we were off. I stole into a safe sort of corner, as corners went, by the doctor's cabin. I edged out of the way of the Indian riflemen who were sorting themselves, making ready for action. We were running along somewhither. I didn't know much about our bearings, but I had misgivings as to whether that big gun of the Germans was not getting nearer. 'I've been thinking it may be a lure to draw us on,' hazarded the Eurasian doctor by and by. That was just what I'd been thinking. I was glad when the tension ceased suddenly, not so many minutes after it had started. The light had vanished; we were out of the hunt somehow it seemed; our captain meant to wait till morning, then possibly he would show us a thing. Meanwhile there were some hours to morning. We had had no night-firing after all. Nor did there seem to be much prospect of any. One might as well go to bed in the dark without delay.

Morning came and we hunted around, but drew blank. Then we started away to look for a supposed dhow in likely covers of creeks or inlets, but we drew these blank also. What was the vanished light? That of the resurrected German steam-tug? Possibly. Possibly it was not that of a dhow after all. Anyhow it was gone out of our ken. 'There's dirty work in there of night, Craig,' the gunnery-lieutenant had said with a stern eye on that German harbour. He spoke as a partisan. Was it such very dirty work if they did run a little food across to feed their own people? Anyhow their dirty work, whatever it was, had seemingly baffled our immaculate patrol under our white ensign, for that time at any rate.

I don't think there is anything strange about this story as it stands up to this point, do you? There may have been a dhow ahead of us that night in August, and it may have been its light that our watchman spied. Also it may have put out its light all of a sudden, and so we may have lost it in the darkness. That simple explanation sounds probable enough, doesn't it, when you come to think of it?

Nevertheless in the following week, a more romantic explanation was tendered to me—it concerned a gramophone.

'That was the last tune before the light was seen,' a bluejacket told me solemnly. 'It's a good tune, you perhaps know it, sir,—"Ave Maris Stella"'? We had fraternised over recollections of Hastings, that was his birth-place. I told him how I had been

into his church there, which was not mine, Saint Mary's, Star of the Sea. I recalled the blue-circled chancel and its glittering stars with admiration. Now he was confidential about what had happened a few nights before. He seemed to regard the putting-on of that particular gramophone record at that particular moment as significant. I was sympathetic, but I only grasped his point vaguely. 'You mean—' I said. 'I mean that She may have meant it,' he said rather confusedly. 'She may have meant us luck. If we'd only gone in straight where Her light showed, we might have found our luck.' 'You mean we might have captured Muanza, I suppose,' I said rather sceptically. 'Well, we might have killed a lot of Germans, sir, and done a lot of good. But our captain's too cautious altogether.'

'It's possible,' I said. 'She may have meant to give us the tip,' he went on. 'I don't think it's likely, but you may be right,' I said with some detachment. The notion of Our Lady illuminating the lake that she might give us the tip to kill Germans was not so very convincing. I'm afraid I choked off the surmiser a bit with my Tolstoyite incredulity. He drew in his horns there and then; he confided none of his views to me again on similar subjects. He was to die at sea a year or so after. They had got him on to a ship from an island hospital, but he never reached the South African port they had shipped him for. I am glad now to think of his faith in Our Lady, Our Lady good at need.

It was before he went down to the coast, that we advanced and took a great island renowned for its rice commerce. Then the day came only a month or so after that our troops marched into Muanza. The main body of its German defenders had steamed away down that land-locked sound of theirs a little while before. We had not stormed the place from the lake after all, we had arrived by a back-door road among the kopjes. Yet there we were at last. It seemed curious to be in the place that I had peered at apprehensively on patrol. How mysterious its lights and its harbour had looked from a darkened bridge or a deck of old. Now I went to and fro in the glaring Boma square, climbed the road among the rocks to the Fort Hospital with the tower and its dummy guns, patrolled the palm-tree promenade where no band played, but lake-water provided placid music much more to my taste than that of drums and brass.

It was in the church above the bay, the church of the White Fathers, that I came upon my sequel, or at least what looks like the earthly sequel of my story. Afterwards, of course, I may hear much more. The White Father I had gone to see, took me into the church one morning and showed me Our Lady's altar. Over it was an altar-piece of familiar design—I think it represented Our Lady of Good Counsel, but I am not sure. In front votive candles blazed, in very creditable profusion for those hard times surely. A silver star with about two-inch points caught my eye. There were other stars hung

there too, much less conspicuous ones. There were also two or three little models of dhows or boats set on a ledge before that altar. I pointed to the silver star, and my guide answered my mute question: 'A gift to Our Lady, Star of this lake and these lake-shores,' he said. 'It was one night in August of last year that it happened, the miracle or whatever you wish to call it.' 'Did Our Lady appear on the lake?' I asked keenly, for memories began to stir in me. 'No, not quite that,' said the White Father. He had a brown beard, and a very white face, and he spoke clear-cut English. 'There was a light seen over the water.' Then it was that the surmise about the gramophone recurred to me. 'Do you really think,' I asked, 'that there was a light to be seen? If so, what was there strange about it?' 'Well, it was a miracle of sorts,' he said. 'I didn't believe about it at first, for I didn't see reason for it. They said it was a light given to lure the English within range. That was the talk of some of our Catholics in the town, but it wasn't good talk. I argued against it.' He paused. Then I told him, smilingly, the story of the gramophone. 'It's a parallel story,' I said. 'Our Lady was indeed divided against herself that night in her clients' estimation.' 'It shows the absurdity of war between Catholics,' he murmured. 'Yes, of war between so-called Christian nations,' I agreed. In an impulse I shook his hand. 'But there *was* a light,' I said: 'I saw it.' 'So did I,' he said. 'Was it the light of a dhow?' I wondered. 'No,' he said,

surprisingly, 'the dhow was on the other side of your ship.' He pointed to the votive star. 'That star commemorates this sight of a light, or rather of a star,' he said. 'I veritably believe that the star light was Our Lady of the Lake's work. Yet she did not in the least mean to show the English where to land and slaughter us, nor on the other hand to lure them on to a fiery doom. Our Lady wants the salvage of men's lives not their destruction. Guess what happened that night.'

I was puzzled. I took the star into my hand and looked it over. It only had 'Muanza' graved upon it, 'Muanza' and the date of that August evening. No, I gave it up. So he told me his version of events. 'There was a dhow beating round the corner of an island. The Goanese skipper had no idea that you were there. It was a near thing. He was lucky, wasn't he, that the alarm of the light seen by your watch came just then? He was running almost straight for your war-ship. But you started off on a course that took you far out of his way, started off on a light's chase or rather a star's chase. He is a very pious man, that Goanese skipper; he was here for two Masses this morning. He has a great devotion to Our Lady, as I believe, and he knows how to pray. He vowed a silver star to Our Lady—Our Lady of the Lake, if she would but bring him through with his ship safe. He made a fair voyage after all. But he thanked the star that led you off from him for it, say rather Her who kindled that star. He is a man of prayer, the sort of prayer

that invites miracles.' I was very silent. I knelt before the statue a little. Then I said 'Good-bye.' When I had said it I looked at two of the stars (that were not silver) curiously. Were they not Belgian officers' stars, and were they not likely to have a tragical history? 'Ask the silver star-man, please,' I said, 'to pray for God's miracle of peace. It does seem to me as if his prayers might do a lot of good. I'd give Our Lady of the Lake a whole Southern-Crossful of stars should peace come before the year's out.'

Did he forget to ask that star-man for his prayers?

EPILOGUE

[Africa and her Godmother.]

WITH shoes of crystal peace and glee
Christmas his clients proves:
They're misfits for those masters pale
And their white lady-loves;
But O they fit black boys and girls
Who clean their knives and stoves!

I slipt from out the white men's church,
The northern chants rang cold,
And with the preacher's war-time words
My heart it would not hold,
Gay hymns and I alike had grown
In exile grave and old.

I said 'I'll wander from the town
This cheerless Christmas Day.'
A church stood up beside my road,
And I turn'd in to pray.
Buff-brick its walls were, and its roof
Of ridg'd unlovely grey.

I enter'd in, and joy was there—
The Mass had just begun.
They filled the place from screen to door—
The children of the sun.
Meseem'd that southern sun was glass'd
In eyes of ev'ryone.

The server-men had lawn and lace
And crimson pageantry,
And boys were in their best, and girls
Wore kerchiefs bright to see.
Meseem'd those bare brown feet were shod
With crystal peace and glee.

The incense-smoke it skein'd and spir'd,
The vowell'd hymns rang clear,
A shrill bell rung by a brown hand
Said Christ was very near.
Meseem'd a sun-tann'd Angel stoopt
And caroll'd in mine ear,—

'Bless God for this our Christmas Ball
About our Christmas Board!
Our Church—that faëry Godmother—
Her child hath not ignor'd,
And Africa, with heart in sky,
Is dancing to the Lord.

The Old World's and the New World's drudge—
Whom few would praise before—
Now from the kitchen hath been claim'd,
The stable and the store,—
Christ claims her heart to dance with his—
Where Europe's danced of yore.'

With shoes of crystal peace and glee
Christmas his clients proves:
They're misfits for those masters pale
And their white lady-loves;
But O they fit black boys and girls
Who clean their knives and stoves!