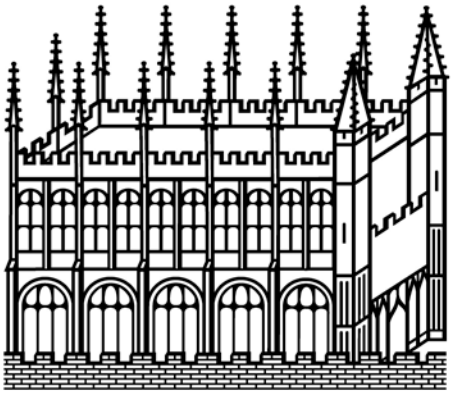

STORIES DREAMS *and* ALLEGORIES

Books by

OLIVE SCHREINER

—

DREAMS

DREAM LIFE AND REAL LIFE

TROOPER PETER HALKET

WOMAN AND LABOUR

THOUGHTS ON SOUTH AFRICA

—

T. Fisher Unwin London

OLIVE SCHREINER

STORIES, DREAMS *and* ALLEGORIES *By* OLIVE SCHREINER

A New Edition
in which is included
THE DAWN OF CIVILISATION
(HER LAST WORDS, IN 1920)

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PREFACE

This book contains all of Olive Schreiner's yet unprinted or uncollected imaginative writings, except at least one novel to appear later, which it is proposed to bring forward. They appear unaltered, except in a few minor respects like punctuation, as I found them among her papers.

The date and place of writing, affixed by herself, will be found in many of these writings. Regarding the others, I am able to add a few notes. "Who Knocks at the Door?" the latest in date, was published in the Fortnightly Review *in November* 1917. *"The Buddhist Priest's Wife" was written at Matjesfontein in* 1891 *and the following year. "By the Banks of a Full River" probably refers to the "great rains" of* 1873, *in which year she travelled by coach from Kimberley to Cape Town, but it seems to have been written much later. "The Wax Doll" and "Master Towser," obviously stories for children, were both written when she was a girl; the latter, no doubt revised, was printed in* 1881 *in the* New College Magazine (*in which also "Dream Life and Real Life" was first printed*), *her brother being at that time Head Master of New College, Eastbourne; "The Wax Doll" is the most carefully written and preserved of*

all these manuscripts, but I cannot recall that she ever mentioned it.

I desire heartily to thank Mr. Havelock Ellis, my wife's friend and my own, for his kind and valuable help in making this selection.

S. C. CRONWRIGHT-SCHREINER.

Cape Town, South Africa,
October 1922.

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DREAMS AND ALLEGORIES—*continued.*

STORIES

Eighteen-ninety-nine

EIGHTEEN-NINETY-NINE

"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened unless it die."

I

IT was a warm night: the stars shone down through the thick soft air of the Northern Transvaal into the dark earth, where a little daub-and-wattle house of two rooms lay among the long, grassy slopes.

A light shone through the small window of the house, though it was past midnight. Presently the upper half of the door opened and then the lower, and the tall figure of a woman stepped out into the darkness. She closed the door behind her and walked towards the back of the house where a large round hut stood; beside it lay a pile of stumps and branches quite visible when once the eyes grew accustomed to the darkness. The woman stooped and broke off twigs till she had her apron full, and then returned slowly, and went into the house.

The room to which she returned was a small, bare room, with brown earthen walls and a mud floor; a naked deal table stood in the centre, and a few dark

wooden chairs, home-made, with seats of undressed leather, stood round the walls. In the corner opposite the door was an open fireplace, and on the earthen hearth stood an iron three-foot, on which stood a large black kettle, under which coals were smouldering, though the night was hot and close. Against the wall on the left side of the room hung a gun-rack with three guns upon it, and below it a large hunting-watch hung from two nails by its silver chain.

In the corner by the fireplace was a little table with a coffee-pot upon it and a dish containing cups and saucers covered with water, and above it were a few shelves with crockery and a large Bible; but the dim light of the tallow candle which burnt on the table, with its wick of twisted rag, hardly made the corners visible. Beside the table sat a young woman, her head resting on her folded arms, the light of the tallow candle falling full on her head of pale flaxen hair, a little tumbled, and drawn behind into a large knot. The arms crossed on the table, from which the cotton sleeves had fallen back, were the full, rounded arms of one very young.

The older woman, who had just entered, walked to the fireplace, and kneeling down before it took from her apron the twigs and sticks she had gathered and heaped them under the kettle till a blaze sprang up which illumined the whole room. Then she rose up and sat down on a chair before the fire, but facing

the table, with her hands crossed on her brown apron.

She was a woman of fifty, spare and broad-shouldered, with black hair, already slightly streaked with grey; from below high, arched eyebrows, and a high forehead, full dark eyes looked keenly, and a sharply cut aquiline nose gave strength to the face; but the mouth below was somewhat sensitive, and not overfull. She crossed and recrossed her knotted hands on her brown apron.

The woman at the table moaned and moved her head from side to side.

"What time is it?" she asked.

The older woman crossed the room to where the hunting-watch hung on the wall.

It showed a quarter-past one, she said, and went back to her seat before the fire, and sat watching the figure beside the table, the firelight bathing her strong upright form and sharp aquiline profile.

Nearly fifty years before her parents had left the Cape Colony, and had set out on the long trek northward, and she, a young child, had been brought with them. She had no remembrance of the colonial home. Her first dim memories were of travelling in an ox-wagon; of dark nights when a fire was lighted in the open air, and people sat round it on the ground, and some faces seemed to stand out more than others in her memory which she thought must be those of

her father and mother and of an old grandmother; she could remember lying awake in the back of the wagon while it was moving on, and the stars were shining down on her; and she had a vague memory of great wide plains with buck on them, which she thought must have been in the Free State. But the first thing which sprang out sharp and clear from the past was a day when she and another child, a little boy cousin of her own age, were playing among the bushes on the bank of a stream; she remembered how, suddenly, as they looked through the bushes, they saw black men leap out, and mount the ox-wagon outspanned under the trees; she remembered how they shouted and dragged people along, and stabbed them; she remembered how the blood gushed, and how they, the two young children among the bushes, lay flat on their stomachs and did not move or breathe, with that strange self-preserving instinct found in the young of animals or men who grow up in the open.

She remembered how black smoke came out at the back of the wagon and then red tongues of flame through the top; and even that some of the branches of the tree under which the wagon stood caught fire. She remembered later, when the black men had gone, and it was dark, that they were very hungry, and crept out to where the wagon had stood, and that they looked about on the ground for any scraps of food they might pick up, and that when they could not

find any they cried. She remembered nothing clearly after that till some men with large beards and large hats rode up on horseback: it might have been next day or the day after. She remembered how they jumped off their horses and took them up in their arms, and how they cried; but that they, the children, did not cry, they only asked for food. She remembered how one man took a bit of thick, cold roaster-cake out of his pocket, and gave it to her, and how nice it tasted. And she remembered that the men took them up before them on their horses, and that one man tied her close to him with a large red handkerchief.

In the years that came she learnt to know that that which she remembered so clearly was the great and terrible day when, at Weenen, and in the country round, hundreds of women and children and youths and old men fell before the Zulus, and the assegais of Dingaan's braves drank blood.

She learnt that on that day all of her house and name, from the grandmother to the baby in arms, fell, and that she only and the boy cousin, who had hidden with her among the bushes, were left of all her kin in that Northern world. She learnt, too, that the man who tied her to him with the red handkerchief took them back to his wagon, and that he and his wife adopted them, and brought them up among their own children.

She remembered, though less clearly than the day of the fire, how a few years later they trekked away from Natal, and went through great mountain ranges, ranges in and near which lay those places the world was to know later as Laings Nek, and Amajuba, and Ingogo; Elands-laagte, Nicholson Nek, and Spion Kop. She remembered how at last after many wanderings they settled down near the Witwaters Rand,[1] where game was plentiful and wild beasts were dangerous, but there were no natives, and they were far from the English rule.

There the two children grew up among the children of those who had adopted them, and were kindly treated by them as though they were their own; it yet was but natural that these two of the same name and blood should grow up with a peculiar tenderness for each other. And so it came to pass that when they were both eighteen years old they asked consent of the old people, who gave it gladly, that they should marry. For a time the young couple lived on in the house with the old, but after three years they gathered together all their few goods and in their wagon, with their guns and ammunition and a few sheep and cattle, they moved away northwards to found their own home.

For a time they travelled here and travelled there,

1 "*Witwaters Rand*"—"White water's ridge," now known as the Rand, where Johannesburg and the great mines are situated.

but at last they settled on a spot where game was plentiful and the soil good, and there among the low undulating slopes, near the bank of a dry sloot, the young man built at last, with his own hands, a little house of two rooms.

On the long slope across the sloot before the house, he ploughed a piece of land and enclosed it, and he built kraals for his stock and so struck root in the land and wandered no more. Those were brave, glad, free days to the young couple. They lived largely on the game which the gun brought down, antelope and wildebeest that wandered even past the doors at night; and now and again a lion was killed: one no farther than the door of the round hut behind the house where the meat and the milk were stored, and two were killed at the kraals. Sometimes, too, traders came with their wagons and in exchange for skins and fine horns sold sugar and coffee and print and tan-cord, and such things as the little household had need of. The lands yielded richly to them, in maize, and pumpkins, and sweet-cane, and melons; and they had nothing to wish for. Then in time three little sons were born to them, who grew as strong and vigorous in the free life of the open veld as the young lions in the long grass and scrub near the river four miles away. Those were joyous, free years for the man and woman, in which disease, and carking care, and anxiety played no part.

Then came a day when their eldest son was ten years old, and the father went out a-hunting with his Kaffir servants: in the evening they brought him home with a wound eight inches long in his side where a lioness had torn him; they brought back her skin also, as he had shot her at last in the hand-to-throat struggle. He lingered for three days and then died. His wife buried him on the low slope to the left of the house; she and her Kaffir servants alone made the grave and put him in it, for there were no white men near. Then she and her sons lived on there; a new root driven deep into the soil and binding them to it through the grave on the hill-side. She hung her husband's large hunting-watch up on the wall, and put three of his guns over it on the rack, and the gun he had in his hand when he met his death she took down and polished up every day; but one gun she always kept loaded at the head of her bed in the inner room. She counted the stock every night and saw that the Kaffirs ploughed the lands, and she saw to the planting and watering of them herself.

Often as the years passed men of the country-side, and even from far off, heard of the young handsome widow who lived alone with her children and saw to her own stock and lands; and they came a-courting. But many of them were afraid to say anything when once they had come, and those who had spoken to her, when once she had answered them, never came again.

About this time too the country-side began to fill in; and people came and settled as near as eight and ten miles away; and as people increased the game began to vanish, and with the game the lions, so that the one her husband killed was almost the last ever seen there. But there was still game enough for food, and when her eldest son was twelve years old, and she gave him his father's smallest gun to go out hunting with, he returned home almost every day with meat enough for the household tied behind his saddle. And as time passed she came also to be known through the country-side as a "wise woman." People came to her to ask advice about their illnesses, or to ask her to dress old wounds that would not heal; and when they questioned her whether she thought the rains would be early, or the game plentiful that year, she was nearly always right. So they called her a "wise woman" because neither she nor they knew any word in that up-country speech of theirs for the thing called "genius." So all things went well till the eldest son was eighteen, and the dark beard was beginning to sprout on his face, and his mother began to think that soon there might be a daughter in the house; for on Saturday evenings, when his work was done, he put on his best clothes and rode off to the next farm eight miles away, where was a young daughter. His mother always saw that he had a freshly ironed shirt waiting for him on his

bed, when he came home from the kraals on Saturday nights, and she made plans as to how they would build on two rooms for the new daughter. At this time he was training young horses to have them ready to sell when the traders came round: he was a fine rider and it was always his work. One afternoon he mounted a young horse before the door and it bucked and threw him. He had often fallen before, but this time his neck was broken. He lay dead with his head two feet from his mother's doorstep. They took up his tall, strong body and the next day the neighbours came from the next farm and they buried him beside his father, on the hill-side, and another root was struck into the soil. Then the three who were left in the little farm-house lived and worked on as before, for a year and more.

Then a small native war broke out, and the young burghers of the district were called out to help. The second son was very young, but he was the best shot in the district, so he went away with the others. Three months after the men came back, but among the few who did not return was her son. On a hot sunny afternoon, walking through a mealie field which they thought was deserted and where the dried yellow stalks stood thick, an assegai thrown from an unseen hand found him, and he fell there. His comrades took him and buried him under a large thorn tree, and scraped the earth smooth over him, that his grave

might not be found by others. So he was not laid on the rise to the left of the house with his kindred, but his mother's heart went often to that thorn tree in the far north. And now again there were only two in the little mud-house; as there had been years before when the young man and wife first settled there. She and her young lad were always together night and day, and did all that they did together, as though they were mother and daughter. He was a fair lad, tall and gentle as his father had been before him, not huge and dark as his two elder brothers; but he seemed to ripen towards manhood early. When he was only sixteen the thick white down was already gathering heavy on his upper lip; his mother watched him narrowly, and had many thoughts in her heart. One evening as they sat twisting wicks for the candles together, she said to him, "You will be eighteen on your next birthday, my son, that was your father's age when he married me." He said, "Yes," and they spoke no more then. But later in the evening when they sat before the door she said to him: "We are very lonely here. I often long to hear the feet of a little child about the house, and to see one with your father's blood in it play before the door as you and your brothers played. Have you ever thought that you are the last of your father's name and blood left here in the north; that if you died there would be none left?" He said he had thought of it. Then

she told him she thought it would be well if he went away, to the part of the country where the people lived who had brought her up : several of the sons and daughters who had grown up with her had now grown up children. He might go down and from among them seek out a young girl whom he liked and who liked him ; and if he found her, bring her back as a wife. The lad thought very well of his mother's plan. And when three months were passed, and the ploughing season was over, he rode away one day, on the best blackhorse they had, his Kaffir boy riding behind him on another, and his mother stood at the gable watching them ride away. For three months she heard nothing of him, for trains were not in those days, and letters came rarely and by chance, and neither he nor she could read or write. One afternoon she stood at the gable end as she always stood when her work was done, looking out along the road that came over the rise, and she saw a large tent-wagon coming along it, and her son walking beside it. She walked to meet it. When she had greeted her son and climbed into the wagon she found there a girl of fifteen with pale flaxen hair and large blue eyes whom he had brought home as his wife. Her father had given her the wagon and oxen as her wedding portion. The older woman's heart wrapt itself about the girl as though she had been the daughter she had dreamed to bear of her own body, and had never borne.

The three lived joyfully at the little house as though they were one person. The young wife had been accustomed to live in a larger house, and down south, where they had things they had not here. She had been to school, and learned to read and write, and she could even talk a little English; but she longed for none of the things which she had had; the little brown house was home enough for her.

After a year a child came, but, whether it were that the mother was too young, it only opened its eyes for an hour on the world and closed them again. The young mother wept bitterly, but her husband folded his arms about her, and the mother comforted both. "You are young, my children, but we shall yet hear the sound of children's voices in the house," she said; and after a little while the young mother was well again and things went on peacefully as before in the little home.

But in the land things were not going on peacefully. That was the time that the flag to escape from which the people had left their old homes in the Colony, and had again left Natal when it followed them there, and had chosen to face the spear of the savage, and the conflict with wild beasts, and death by hunger and thirst in the wilderness rather than live under, had by force and fraud unfurled itself over them again. For the moment a great sullen silence brooded over the land. The people, slow of thought, slow of

speech, determined in action, and unforgetting, sat still and waited. It was like the silence that rests over the land before an up-country thunderstorm breaks.

Then words came, "They have not even given us the free government they promised"—then acts—the people rose. Even in that remote country-side the men began to mount their horses, and with their guns ride away to help. In the little mud-house the young wife wept much when he said that he too was going. But when his mother helped him pack his saddle-bags she helped too; and on the day when the men from the next farm went, he rode away also with his gun by his side.

No direct news of the one they had sent away came to the waiting women at the farm-house; then came fleet reports of the victories of Ingogo and Amajuba. Then came an afternoon after he had been gone two months. They had both been to the gable end to look out at the road, as they did continually amid their work, and they had just come in to drink their afternoon coffee when the Kaffir maid ran in to say she saw someone coming along the road who looked like her master. The women ran out. It was the white horse on which he had ridden away, but they almost doubted if it were he. He rode bending on his saddle, with his chin on his breast and his arm hanging at his side. At first they thought he had

been wounded, but when they had helped him from his horse and brought him into the house they found it was only a deadly fever which was upon him. He had crept home to them by small stages. Hardly had he any spirit left to tell them of Ingogo, Laings Nek, and Amajuba. For fourteen days he grew worse and on the fifteenth day he died. And the two women buried him where the rest of his kin lay on the hill-side.

And so it came to pass that on that warm starlight night the two women were alone in the little mud-house with the stillness of the veld about them; even their Kaffir servants asleep in their huts beyond the kraals; and the very sheep lying silent in the starlight. They two were alone in the little house, but they knew that before morning they would not be alone, they were awaiting the coming of the dead man's child.

The young woman with her head on the table groaned. "If only my husband were here still," she wailed. The old woman rose and stood beside her, passing her hard, work-worn hand gently over her shoulder as if she were a little child. At last she induced her to go and lie down in the inner room. When she had grown quieter and seemed to have fallen into a light sleep the old woman came to the front room again. It was almost two o'clock and the fire had burned low under the large kettle. She scraped the

coals together and went out of the front door to fetch more wood, and closed the door behind her. The night air struck cool and fresh upon her face after the close air of the house, the stars seemed to be growing lighter as the night advanced, they shot down their light as from a million polished steel points. She walked to the back of the house where, beyond the round hut that served as a store-room, the wood-pile lay. She bent down gathering sticks and chips till her apron was full, then slowly she raised herself and stood still. She looked upwards. It was a wonderful night. The white band of the Milky Way crossed the sky overhead, and from every side stars threw down their light, sharp as barbed spears, from the velvety blue-black of the sky. The woman raised her hand to her forehead as if pushing the hair farther off it, and stood motionless, looking up. After a long time she dropped her hand and began walking slowly towards the house. Yet once or twice on the way she paused and stood looking up. When she went into the house the woman in the inner room was again moving and moaning. She laid the sticks down before the fire and went into the next room. She bent down over the bed where the younger woman lay, and put her hand upon her. "My daughter," she said slowly, "be comforted. A wonderful thing has happened to me. As I stood out in the starlight it was as though a voice came down

to me and spoke. The child which will be born of you to-night will be a man-child and he will live to do great things for his land and for his people."

Before morning there was the sound of a little wail in the mud-house: and the child who was to do great things for his land and for his people was born.

II

Six years passed; and all was as it had been at the little house among the slopes. Only a new piece of land had been ploughed up and added to the land before the house, so that the ploughed land now almost reached to the ridge.

The young mother had grown stouter, and lost her pink and white; she had become a working-woman, but she still had the large knot of flaxen hair behind her head and the large wondering eyes. She had many suitors in those six years, but she sent them all away. She said the old woman looked after the farm as well as any man might, and her son would be grown up by and by. The grandmother's hair was a little more streaked with grey, but it was as thick as ever, and her shoulders as upright; only some of her front teeth had fallen out, which made her lips close more softly.

The great change was that wherever the women went there was the flaxen-haired child to walk beside them holding on to their skirts or clasping their hands.

The neighbours said they were ruining the child: they let his hair grow long, like a girl's, because it curled; and they never let him wear velschoens like other children but always shop boots; and his mother sat up at night to iron his pinafores as if the next day were always a Sunday.

But the women cared nothing for what was said; to them he was not as any other child. He asked them strange questions they could not answer, and he never troubled them by wishing to go and play with the little Kaffirs as other children trouble. When neighbours came over and brought their children with them he ran away and hid in the sloot to play by himself till they were gone. No, he was not like other children!

When the women went to lie down on hot days after dinner sometimes, he would say that he did not want to sleep; but he would not run about and make a noise like other children—he would go and sit outside in the shade of the house, on the front door-step, quite still, with his little hands resting on his knees, and stare far away at the ploughed lands on the slope, or the shadows nearer; the women would open the bedroom window, and peep out to look at him as he sat there.

The child loved his mother and followed her about to the milk house, and to the kraals; but he loved his grandmother best.

She told him stories.

When she went to the lands to see how the Kaffirs were ploughing he would run at her side holding her dress; when they had gone a short way he would tug gently at it and say, " Grandmother, tell me things ! "

And long before day broke, when it was yet quite dark, he would often creep from the bed where he slept with his mother into his grandmother's bed in the corner; he would put his arms round her neck and stroke her face till she woke, and then whisper softly, " Tell me stories ! " and she would tell them to him in a low voice not to wake the mother, till the cock crowed and it was time to get up and light the candle and the fire.

But what he liked best of all were the hot, still summer nights, when the women put their chairs before the door because it was too warm to go to sleep; and he would sit on the stoof at his grandmother's feet and lean his head against her knees, and she would tell him on and on of the things he liked to hear; and he would watch the stars as they slowly set along the ridge, or the moonlight, casting bright-edged shadows from the gable as she talked. Often after the mother had got sleepy and gone in to bed the two sat there together.

The stories she told him were always true stories of the things she had seen or of things she had heard. Sometimes they were stories of her own childhood:

of the day when she and his grandfather hid among the bushes, and saw the wagon burnt; sometimes they were of the long trek from Natal to the Transvaal; sometimes of the things which happened to her and his grandfather when first they came to that spot among the ridges, of how there was no house there nor lands, only two bare grassy slopes when they outspanned their wagon there the first night; she told of a lion she once found when she opened the door in the morning, sitting, with paws crossed, upon the threshold, and how the grandfather jumped out of bed and reopened the door two inches, and shot it through the opening; the skin was kept in the round storehouse still, very old and mangy.

Sometimes she told him of the two uncles who were dead, and of his own father, and of all they had been and done. But sometimes she told him of things much farther off: of the old Colony where she had been born, but which she could not remember, and of the things which happened there in the old days. She told him of how the British had taken the Cape over, and of how the English had hanged their men at the "Slachters Nek" for resisting the English Government, and of how the friends and relations had been made to stand round to see them hanged whether they would or no, and of how the scaffold broke down as they were being hanged, and the people looking on cried aloud, "It is the finger of God! They are

saved!" but how the British hanged them up again. She told him of the great trek in which her parents had taken part to escape from under the British flag; of the great battles with Moselikatse; and of the murder of Retief and his men by Dingaan, and of Dingaan's Day. She told him how the British Government followed them into Natal, and of how they trekked north and east to escape from it again; and she told him of the later things, of the fight at Laings Nek, and Ingogo, and Amajuba, where his father had been. Always she told the same story in exactly the same words over and over again, till the child knew them all by heart, and would ask for this and then that.

The story he loved best, and asked for more often than all the others, made his grandmother wonder, because it did not seem to her the story a child would best like; it was not a story of lion-hunting, or wars, or adventures. Continually when she asked what she should tell him, he said, "About the mountains!"

It was the story of how the Boer women in Natal when the English Commissioner came to annex their country, collected to meet him and pointing toward the Drakens Berg Mountains said, "We go across those mountains to freedom or to death!"

More than once, when she was telling him the story, she saw him stretch out his little arm and raise his hand, as though he were speaking.

One evening as he and his mother were coming

home from the milking kraals, and it was getting dark, and he was very tired, having romped about shouting among the young calves and kids all the evening, he held her hand tightly.

"Mother," he said suddenly, "when I am grown up, I am going to Natal."

"Why, my child?" she asked him; "there are none of our family living there now."

He waited a little, then said, very slowly, "I am going to go and try to get our land back!"

His mother started; if there were one thing she was more firmly resolved on in her own mind than any other it was that he should never go to the wars. She began to talk quickly of the old white cow who had kicked the pail over as she was milked, and when she got to the house she did not even mention to the grandmother what had happened; it seemed better to forget.

One night in the rainy season when it was damp and chilly they sat round the large fireplace in the front room.

Outside the rain was pouring in torrents and you could hear the water rushing in the great dry sloot before the door. His grandmother, to amuse him, had sprung some dried mealies in the great black pot and sprinkled them with sugar, and now he sat on the stoof at her feet with a large lump of the sticky sweetmeat in his hand, watching the fire. His grandmother

from above him was watching it also, and his mother in her elbow-chair on the other side of the fire had her eyes half closed and was nodding already with the warmth of the room and her long day's work. The child sat so quiet, the hand with the lump of sweetmeat resting on his knee, that his grandmother thought he had gone to sleep too. Suddenly he said without looking up, " Grandmother ? "

" Yes."

He waited rather a long time, then said slowly, " Grandmother, did God make the English too ? "

She also waited for a while, then she said, " Yes, my child ; He made all things."

They were silent again, and there was no sound but of the rain falling and the fire cracking and the sloot rushing outside. Then he threw his head backwards on to his grandmother's knee and looking up into her face, said, " But, grandmother, why did He make them ? "

Then she too was silent for a long time. " My child," at last she said, " we cannot judge the ways of the Almighty. He does that which seems good in His own eyes."

The child sat up and looked back at the fire. Slowly he tapped his knee with the lump of sweetmeat once or twice ; then he began to munch it ; and soon the mother started wide awake and said it was time for all to go to bed.

The next morning his grandmother sat on the front doorstep cutting beans in an iron basin; he sat beside her on the step pretending to cut too, with a short, broken knife. Presently he left off and rested his hands on his knees, looking away at the hedge beyond, with his small forehead knit tight between the eyes.

"Grandmother," he said suddenly, in a small, almost shrill voice, "do the English want *all* the lands of *all* the people?"

The handle of his grandmother's knife as she cut clinked against the iron side of the basin. "All they can get," she said.

After a while he made a little movement almost like a sigh, and took up his little knife again and went on cutting.

Some time after that, whe an trader came by, his grandmother bought him a spelling-book and a slate and pencils, and his mother began to teach him to read and write. When she had taught him for a year he knew all she did. Sometimes when she was setting him a copy and left a letter out in a word, he would quietly take the pencil when she set it down and put the letter in, not with any idea of correcting her, but simply because it must be there.

Often at night when the child had gone to bed early, tired out with his long day's play, and the two women were left in the front room with the tallow candle

burning on the table between them, then they talked of his future.

Ever since he had been born everything they had earned had been put away in the wagon chest under the grandmother's bed. When the traders with their wagons came round the women bought nothing except a few groceries and clothes for the child; even before they bought a yard of cotton print for a new apron they talked long and solemnly as to whether the old one might not be made to do by repatching; and they mixed much more dry pumpkin and corn with their coffee than before he was born. It was to earn more money that the large new piece of land had been added to the lands before the house.

They were going to have him educated. First he was to be taught all they could at home, then to be sent away to a great school in the old Colony, and then he was to go over the sea to Europe and come back an advocate or a doctor or a parson. The grandmother had made a long journey to the next town, to find out from the minister just how much it would cost to do it all.

In the evenings when they sat talking it over the mother generally inclined to his becoming a parson. She never told the grandmother why, but the real reason was because parsons do not go to the wars. The grandmother generally favoured his becoming an advocate, because he might become a judge. Some-

times they sat discussing these matters till the candle almost burnt out.

"Perhaps, one day," the mother would at last say, "he may yet become President!"

Then the grandmother would slowly refold her hands across her apron and say softly, "Who knows?—who knows?"

Often they would get the box out from under the bed (looking carefully across to the corner to see he was fast asleep) and would count out all the money, though each knew to a farthing how much was there; then they would make it into little heaps, so much for this, so much for that, and then they would count on their fingers how many good seasons it would take to make the rest, and how old he would be.

When he was eight and had learnt all his mother could teach him, they sent him to school every day on an adjoining farm six miles off, where the people had a schoolmaster. Every day he rode over on the great white horse his father went to the wars with; his mother was afraid to let him ride alone at first, but his grandmother said he must learn to do everything alone. At four o'clock when he came back one or other of the women was always looking out to see the little figure on the tall horse coming over the ridge.

When he was eleven they gave him his father's

smallest gun; and one day not long after he came back with his first small buck. His mother had the skin dressed and bound with red, and she laid it as a mat under the table, and even the horns she did not throw away, and saved them in the round house, because it was his first.

When he was fourteen the schoolmaster said he could teach him no more; that he ought to go to some larger school where they taught Latin and other difficult things; they had not yet money enough and he was not quite old enough to go to the old Colony, so they sent him first to the High-veld, where his mother's relations lived and where there were good schools, where they taught the difficult things; he could live with his mother's relations and come back once a year for the holidays.

They were great times when he came.

His mother made him koekies[1] and sasarties[2] and nice things every day; and he used to sit on the stoof at her feet and let her play with his hair like when he was quite small. With his grandmother he talked. He tried to explain to her all he was learning, and he read the English newspapers to her (she could neither read in English nor Dutch), translating them. Most of all she liked his Atlas. They would sometimes sit over it for half an hour in the evening tracing

[1] *Koekies:* little cakes.

[2] *Sasarties:* meat prepared in a certain way.

the different lands and talking of them. On the warm nights he used still to sit outside on the stoof at her feet with his head against her knee, and they used to discuss things that were happening in other lands and in South Africa; and sometimes they sat there quite still together.

It was now he who had the most stories to tell; he had seen Krugersdorp, and Johannesburg, and Pretoria; he knew the world; he was at Krugersdorp when Dr. Jameson made his raid. Sometimes he sat for an hour, telling her of things, and she sat quietly listening.

When he was seventeen, nearly eighteen, there was money enough in the box to pay for his going to the Colony and then to Europe; and he came home to spend a few months with them before he went.

He was very handsome now; not tall, and very slight, but with fair hair that curled close to his head, and white hands like a town's man. All the girls in the country-side were in love with him. They all wished he would come and see them. But he seldom rode from home except to go to the next farm where he had been at school. There lived little Aletta, who was the daughter of the woman his uncle had loved before he went to the Kaffir war and got killed. She was only fifteen years old, but they had always been great friends. She netted him a purse of green silk. He said he would take it with him to Europe, and

would show it her when he came back and was an advocate; and he gave her a book with her name written in it, which she was to show to him.

These were the days when the land was full of talk; it was said the English were landing troops in South Africa, and wanted to have war. Often the neighbours from the nearest farms would come to talk about it (there were more farms now, the country was filling in, and the nearest railway station was only a day's journey off), and they discussed matters. Some said they thought there would be war; others again laughed, and said it would be only Jameson and his white flag again. But the grandmother shook her head, and if they asked her, "Why," she said, "it will not be the war of a week, nor of a month; if it comes it will be the war of years," but she would say nothing more.

Yet sometimes when she and her grandson were walking along together in the lands she would talk.

Once she said: "It is as if a great heavy cloud hung just above my head, as though I wished to press it back with my hands and could not. It will be a great war—a great war. Perhaps the English Government will take the land for a time, but they will not keep it. The gold they have fought for will divide them, till they slay one another over it."

Another day she said: "This land will be a great

land one day with one people from the sea to the north—but we shall not live to see it."

He said to her: "But how can that be when we are all of different races?"

She said: "The land will make us one. Were not our fathers of more than one race?"

Another day, when she and he were sitting by the table after dinner, she pointed to a sheet of exercise paper, on which he had been working out a problem and which was covered with algebraical symbols, and said, "In fifteen years' time the Government of England will not have one piece of land in all South Africa as large as that sheet of paper."

One night when the milking had been late and she and he were walking down together from the kraals in the starlight she said to him: "If this war comes let no man go to it lightly, thinking he will surely return home, nor let him go expecting victory on the next day. It will come at last, but not at first." "Sometimes," she said, "I wake at night and it is as though the whole house were filled with smoke—and I have to get up and go outside to breathe. It is as though I saw my whole land blackened and desolate. But when I look up it is as though a voice cried out to me, 'Have no fear!'"

They were getting his things ready for him to go away after Christmas. His mother was making him shirts and his grandmother was having a kaross of

jackals' skins made that he might take it with him to Europe where it was so cold. But his mother noticed that whenever the grandmother was in the room with him and he was not looking at her, her eyes were always curiously fixed on him as though they were questioning something. The hair was growing white and a little thin over her temples now, but her eyes were as bright as ever, and she could do a day's work with any man.

One day when the youth was at the kraals helping the Kaffir boys to mend a wall, and the mother was kneading bread in the front room, and the grandmother washing up the breakfast things, the son of the Field-Cornet came riding over from his father's farm, which was about twelve miles off. He stopped at the kraal and Jan and he stood talking for some time, then they walked down to the farm-house, the Kaffir boy leading the horse behind them. Jan stopped at the round store, but the Field-Cornet's son went to the front door. The grandmother asked him in, and handed him some coffee, and the mother, her hands still in the dough, asked him how things were going at his father's farm, and if his mother's young turkeys had come out well, and she asked if he had met Jan at the kraals. He answered the questions slowly, and sipped his coffee. Then he put the cup down on the table; and said suddenly in the same measured voice, staring at the wall in

front of him, that war had broken out, and his father had sent him round to call out all fighting burghers.

The mother took her hands out of the dough and stood upright beside the trough as though paralysed. Then she cried in a high, hard voice, unlike her own, "Yes, but Jan cannot go! He is hardly eighteen! He's got to go and be educated in other lands! You can't take the only son of a widow!"

"Aunt," said the young man slowly, "no one will make him go."

The grandmother stood resting the knuckles of both hands on the table, her eyes fixed on the young man. "He shall decide himself," she said.

The mother wiped her hands from the dough and rushed past them and out at the door; the grandmother followed slowly.

They found him in the shade at the back of the house, sitting on a stump; he was cleaning the belt of his new Mauser which lay across his knees.

"Jan," his mother cried, grasping his shoulder, "you are not going away? You can't go! You must stay. You can go by Delagoa Bay if there is fighting on the other side! There is plenty of money!"

He looked softly up into her face with his blue eyes. "We have all to be at the Field Cornet's at nine o'clock to-morrow morning," he said. She wept aloud and argued.

His grandmother turned slowly without speaking,

and went back into the house. When she had given the Field Cornet's son another cup of coffee, and shaken hands with him, she went into the bedroom and opened the box in which her grandson's clothes were kept, to see which things he should take with him. After a time the mother came back too. He had kissed her and talked to her until she too had at last said it was right he should go.

All day they were busy. His mother baked him biscuits to take in his bag, and his grandmother made a belt of two strips of leather; she sewed them together herself and put a few sovereigns between the stitchings. She said some of his comrades might need the money if he did not.

The next morning early he was ready. There were two saddle-bags tied to his saddle and before it was strapped the kaross his grandmother had made; she said it would be useful when he had to sleep on damp ground. When he had greeted them, he rode away towards the rise: and the women stood at the gable of the house to watch him.

When he had gone a little way he turned in his saddle, and they could see he was smiling; he took off his hat and waved it in the air; the early morning sunshine made his hair as yellow as the tassels that hang from the head of ripening mealies. His mother covered her face with the sides of her kappie and wept aloud; but the grandmother shaded her eyes with both her

hands and stood watching him till the figure passed out of sight over the ridge; and when it was gone and the mother returned to the house crying, she still stood watching the line against the sky.

The two women were very quiet during the next days, they worked hard, and seldom spoke. After eight days there came a long letter from him (there was now a post once a week from the station to the Field Cornet's). He said he was well and in very good spirits. He had been to Krugersdorp, and Johannesburg, and Pretoria; all the family living there were well and sent greetings. He had joined a corps that was leaving for the front the next day. He sent also a long message to Aletta, asking them to tell her he was sorry to go away without saying good-bye; and he told his mother how good the biscuits and biltong were she had put into his saddle-bag; and he sent her a piece of "vierkleur" ribbon in the letter, to wear on her breast.

The women talked a great deal for a day or two after this letter came. Eight days after there was a short note from him, written in pencil in the train on his way to the front. He said all was going well, and if he did not write soon they were not to be anxious; he would write as often as he could.

For some days the women discussed that note too.

Then came two weeks without a letter, the two

women became very silent. Every day they sent the Kaffir boy over to the Field Cornet's, even on the days when there was no post, to hear if there was any news.

Many reports were flying about the country-side. Some said that an English armoured train had been taken on the western border; that there had been fighting at Albertina, and in Natal. But nothing seemed quite certain.

Another week passed. . . . Then the two women became very quiet.

The grandmother, when she saw her daughter-in-law left the food untouched on her plate, said there was no need to be anxious; men at the front could not always find paper and pencils to write with and might be far from any post office. Yet night after night she herself would rise from her bed saying she felt the house close, and go and walk up and down outside.

Then one day suddenly all their servants left them except one Kaffir and his wife, whom they had had for years, and the servants from the farms about went also, which was a sign there had been news of much fighting; for the Kaffirs hear things long before the white man knows them.

Three days after, as the women were clearing off the breakfast things, the youngest son of the Field-Cornet, who was only fifteen and had not gone to the

war with the others, rode up. He hitched his horse to the post, and came towards the door. The mother stepped forward to meet him and shook hands in the doorway.

"I suppose you have come for the carrot seed I promised your mother? I was not able to send it, as our servants ran away," she said, as she shook his hand. "There isn't a letter from Jan, is there?" The lad said no, there was no letter from him, and shook hands with the grandmother. He stood by the table instead of sitting down.

The mother turned to the fireplace to get coals to put under the coffee to rewarm it; but the grandmother stood leaning forward with her eyes fixed on him from across the table. He felt uneasily in his breast pocket.

"Is there no news?" the mother said without looking round, as she bent over the fire.

"Yes, there is news, Aunt."

She rose quickly and turned towards him, putting down the brazier on the table. He took a letter out of his breast pocket. "Aunt, my father said I must bring this to you. It came inside one to him and they asked him to send one of us over with it."

The mother took the letter; she held it, examining the address.

"It looks to me like the writing of Sister Annie's Paul," she said. "Perhaps there is news of Jan in

it "—she turned to them with a half-nervous smile— "they were always such friends."

"All is as God wills, Aunt," the young man said, looking down fixedly at the top of his riding-whip.

But the grandmother leaned forward motionless, watching her daughter-in-law as she opened the letter.

She began to read to herself, her lips moving slowly as she deciphered it word by word.

Then a piercing cry rang through the roof of the little mud-farm-house.

"He is dead! My boy is dead!"

She flung the letter on the table and ran out at the front door.

Far out across the quiet ploughed lands and over the veld to where the kraals lay the cry rang. The Kaffir woman who sat outside her hut beyond the kraals nursing her baby heard it and came down with her child across her hip to see what was the matter. At the side of the round house she stood motionless and open-mouthed, watching the woman, who paced up and down behind the house with her apron thrown over her head and her hands folded above it, crying aloud.

In the front room the grandmother, who had not spoken since he came, took up the letter and put it in the lad's hands. "Read," she whispered.

And slowly the lad spelled it out.

"My Dear Aunt,

"I hope this letter finds you well. The Commandant has asked me to write it.

"We had a great fight four days ago, and Jan is dead. The Commandant says I must tell you how it happened. Aunt, there were five of us first in a position on that koppie, but two got killed, and then there were only three of us—Jan, and I, and Uncle Peter's Frikkie. Aunt, the khakies[1] were coming on all round just like locusts, and the bullets were coming just like hail. It was bare on that side of the koppie where we were, but we had plenty of cartridges. We three took up a position where there were some small stones and we fought, Aunt; we had to. One bullet took off the top of my ear, and Jan got two bullets, one through the flesh in the left leg and one through his arm, but he could still fire his gun. Then we three meant to go to the top of the koppie, but a bullet took Jan right through his chest. We knew he couldn't go any farther. The khakies were right at the foot of the koppie just coming up. He told us to lay him down, Aunt. We said we would stay by him, but he said we must go. I put my jacket under his head and Frikkie put his over his feet. We threw his gun far away from him that they might see how it was with him. He said he hadn't much pain,

[1] *Khakies:* soldiers.

Aunt. He was full of blood from his arm, but there wasn't much from his chest, only a little out of the corners of his mouth. He said we must make haste or the khakies would catch us; he said he wasn't afraid to be left there.

"Aunt, when we got to the top, it was all full of khakies like the sea on the other side, all among the koppies and on our koppie too. We were surrounded, Aunt; the last I saw of Frikkie he was sitting on a stone with the blood running down his face, but he got under a rock and hid there; some of our men found him next morning and brought him to camp. Aunt, there was a khakie's horse standing just below where I was, with no one on it. I jumped on and rode. The bullets went this way and the bullets went that, but I rode! Aunt, the khakies were sometimes as near me as that tent-pole, only the Grace of God saved me. It was dark in the night when I got back to where our people were, because I had to go round all the koppies to get away from the khakies.

"Aunt, the next day we went to look for him. We found him where we left him; but he was turned over on to his face; they had taken all his things, his belt and his watch, and the pugaree from his hat, even his boots. The little green silk purse he used to carry we found on the ground by him, but nothing in it. I will send it back to you whenever I get an opportunity.

"Aunt, when we turned him over on his back there were four bayonet stabs in his body. The doctor says it was only the first three while he was alive; the last one was through his heart and killed him at once.

"We gave him Christian burial, Aunt; we took him to the camp.

"The Commandant was there, and all of the family who are with the Commando were there, and they all said they hoped God would comfort you." . . .

The old woman leaned forward and grasped the boy's arm. "Read it over again," she said, "from where they found him." He turned back and re-read slowly. She gazed at the page as though she were reading also. Then, suddenly, she slipped out at the front door.

At the back of the house she found her daughter-in-law still walking up and down, and the Kaffir woman with a red handkerchief bound round her head and the child sitting across her hip, sucking from her long, pendulous breast, looking on.

The old woman walked up to her daughter-in-law and grasped her firmly by the arm.

"He's dead! You know, my boy's dead!" she cried, drawing the apron down with her right hand and disclosing her swollen and bleared face. "Oh, his beautiful hair—Oh, his beautiful hair!"

The old woman held her arm tighter with both hands; the younger opened her half-closed eyes, and looked into the keen, clear eyes fixed on hers, and stood arrested.

The old woman drew her face closer to hers. "You . . . do . . . not . . . know . . . what . . . has . . . happened!" she spoke slowly, her tongue striking her front gum, the jaw moving stiffly, as though partly paralysed. She loosed her left hand and held up the curved work-worn fingers before her daughter-in-law's face. "Was it not told me . . . the night he was born . . . here . . . at this spot . . . that he would do great things . . . great things . . . for his land and his people?" She bent forward till her lips almost touched the other's. "Three . . . bullet . . . wounds . . . and four . . . bayonet . . . stabs!" She raised her left hand high in the air. "Three . . . bullet . . . wounds . . . and four . . . bayonet . . . stabs! . . . Is it given to many to die so for their land and their people!"

The younger woman gazed into her eyes, her own growing larger and larger. She let the old woman lead her by the arm in silence into the house.

The Field-Cornet's son was gone, feeling there was nothing more to be done; and the Kaffir woman went back with her baby to her hut beyond the kraals. All day the house was very silent. The Kaffir woman wondered that no smoke rose from the farm-house

chimney, and that she was not called to churn, or wash the pots. At three o'clock she went down to the house. As she passed the grated window of the round out-house she saw the buckets of milk still standing unsifted[1] on the floor as they had been set down at breakfast time, and under the great soap-pot beside the wood pile the fire had died out. She went round to the front of the house and saw the door and window shutters still closed, as though her mistresses were still sleeping. So she rebuilt the fire under the soap-pot and went back to her hut.

It was four o'clock when the grandmother came out from the dark inner room where she and her daughter-in-law had been lying down; she opened the top of the front door, and lit the fire with twigs, and set the large black kettle over it. When it boiled she made coffee, and poured out two cups and set them on the table with a plate of biscuits, and then called her daughter-in-law from the inner room.

The two women sat down one on each side of the table, with their coffee cups before them, and the biscuits between them, but for a time they said nothing, but sat silent, looking out through the open door at the shadow of the house and the afternoon sunshine beyond it. At last the older woman motioned that the younger should drink her coffee. She took a little, and then folding her arms on the

[1] *Unsifted:* unstrained.

table rested her head on them, and sat motionless as if asleep.

The older woman broke up a biscuit into her own cup, and stirred it round and round; and then, without tasting, sat gazing out into the afternoon's sunshine till it grew cold beside her.

It was five, and the heat was quickly dying; the glorious golden colouring of the later afternoon was creeping over everything when she rose from her chair. She moved to the door and took from behind it two large white calico bags hanging there, and from nails on the wall she took down two large brown cotton kappies. She walked round the table and laid her hand gently on her daughter-in-law's arm. The younger woman raised her head slowly and looked up into her mother-in-law's face; and then, suddenly, she knew that her mother-in-law was an old, old, woman. The little shrivelled face that looked down at her was hardly larger than a child's, the eyelids were half closed and the lips worked at the corners and the bones cut out through the skin in the temples.

"I am going out to sow—the ground will be getting too dry to-morrow; will you come with me?" she said gently.

The younger woman made a movement with her hand, as though she said "What is the use?" and redropped her hand on the table.

"It may go on for long, our burghers must have food," the old woman said gently.

The younger woman looked into her face, then she rose slowly and taking one of the brown kappies from her hand, put it on, and hung one of the bags over her left arm; the old woman did the same and together they passed out of the door. As the older woman stepped down the younger caught her and saved her from falling.

"Take my arm, mother," she said.

But the old woman drew her shoulders up. "I only stumbled a little!" she said quickly. "That step has been always too high"; but before she reached the plank over the sloot the shoulders had drooped again, and the neck fallen forward.

The mould in the lands was black and soft; it lay in long ridges, as it had been ploughed up a week before, but the last night's rain had softened it and made it moist and ready for putting in the seed.

The bags which the women carried on their arms were full of the seed of pumpkins and mealies. They began to walk up the lands, keeping parallel with the low hedge of dried bushes that ran up along the side of the sloot almost up to the top of the ridge. At every few paces they stopped and bent down to press into the earth, now one and then the other kind of seed from their bags. Slowly they walked up and down till they reached the top of the land almost on

the horizon line; and then they turned, and walked down, sowing as they went. When they had reached the bottom of the land before the farm-house it was almost sunset, and their bags were nearly empty; but they turned to go up once more. The light of the setting sun cast long, gaunt shadows from their figures across the ploughed land, over the low hedge and the sloot, into the bare veld beyond; shadows that grew longer and longer as they passed slowly on pressing in the seeds. . . . The seeds! . . . that were to lie in the dank, dark, earth, and rot there, seemingly, to die, till their outer covering had split and fallen from them . . . and then, when the rains had fallen, and the sun had shone, to come up above the earth again, and high in the clear air to lift their feathery plumes and hang out their pointed leaves and silken tassels! To cover the ground with a mantle of green and gold through which sunlight quivered, over which the insects hung by thousands, carrying yellow pollen on their legs and wings and making the air alive with their hum and stir, while grain and fruit ripened surely . . . for the next season's harvest!

When the sun had set, the two women with their empty bags turned and walked silently home in the dark to the farm-house.

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND ONE

Near one of the camps in the Northern Transvaal are the graves of two women. The older one died first, on the twenty-third of the month, from hunger and want; the younger woman tended her with ceaseless care and devotion till the end. A week later when the British Superintendent came round to inspect the tents, she was found lying on her blanket on the mud-floor dead, with the rations of bread and meat she had got four days before untouched on a box beside her. Whether she died of disease, or from inability to eat the food, no one could say. Some who had seen her said she hardly seemed to care to live after the old woman died; they buried them side by side.

There is no stone and no name upon either grave to say who lies there . . . our unknown . . . our unnamed . . . our forgotten dead.

IN THE YEAR NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FOUR

If you look for the little farm-house among the ridges you will not find it there to-day.

The English soldiers burnt it down. You can only see where the farm-house once stood, because the stramonia and weeds grow high and very strong there; and where the ploughed lands were you can only tell,

because the veld never grows quite the same on land that has once been ploughed. Only a brown patch among the long grass on the ridge shows where the kraals and huts once were.

In a country house in the north of England the owner has upon his wall an old flint-lock gun. He takes it down to show his friends. It is a small thing he picked up in the war in South Africa, he says. It must be at least eighty years old and is very valuable. He shows how curiously it is constructed; he says it must have been kept in such perfect repair by continual polishing for the steel shines as if it were silver. He does not tell that he took it from the wall of the little mud house before he burnt it down.

It was the grandfather's gun, which the women had kept polished on the wall.

In a London drawing-room the descendant of a long line of titled forefathers entertains her guests. It is a fair room, and all that money can buy to make life soft and beautiful is there.

On the carpet stands a little dark wooden stoof. When one of her guests notices it, she says it is a small curiosity which her son brought home to her from South Africa when he was out in the war there; and how good it was of him to think of her when he was away in the back country. And when they ask what it is, she says it is a thing Boer women have as a footstool and to keep their feet warm; and she shows

the hole at the side where they put the coals in, and the little holes at the top where the heat comes out.

And the other woman puts her foot out and rests it on the stoof just to try how it feels, and drawls "How f-u-n-n-y!"

It is grandmother's stoof, that the child used to sit on.

The wagon chest was found and broken open just before the thatch caught fire, by three private soldiers, and they divided the money between them; one spent his share in drink, another had his stolen from him, but the third sent his home to England to a girl in the East End of London. With part of it she bought a gold brooch and ear-rings, and the rest she saved to buy a silk wedding-dress when he came home.

A syndicate of Jews in Johannesburg and London have bought the farm. They purchased it from the English Government, because they think to find gold on it. They have purchased it and paid for it . . . but they do not possess it.

Only the men who lie in their quiet graves upon the hill-side, who lived on it, and loved it, possess it; and the piles of stones above them, from among the long waving grasses, keep watch over the land.

The Buddhist Priest's Wife

THE BUDDHIST PRIEST'S WIFE

COVER her up! How still it lies! You can see the outline under the white. You would think she was asleep. Let the sunshine come in; it loved it so. She that had travelled so far, in so many lands, and done so much and seen so much, how she must like rest now! Did she ever love anything absolutely, this woman whom so many men loved, and so many women; who gave so much sympathy and never asked for anything in return! did she ever need a love she could not have? Was she never obliged to unclasp her fingers from anything to which they clung? Was she really so strong as she looked? Did she never wake up in the night crying for that which she could not have? Were thought and travel enough for her? Did she go about for long days with a weight that crushed her to earth? Cover her up! I do not think she would have liked us to look at her. In one way she was alone all her life; she would have liked to be alone now! . . . Life must have been very

beautiful to her, or she would not look so young now. Cover her up! Let us go!

. . . . .

Many years ago in a London room, up long flights of stairs, a fire burnt up in a grate. It showed the marks on the walls where pictures had been taken down, and the little blue flowers in the wall-paper and the blue felt carpet on the floor, and a woman sat by the fire in a chair at one side.

Presently the door opened, and the old woman came in who took care of the entrance hall downstairs.

"Do you not want anything to-night?" she said.

"No, I am only waiting for a visitor; when they have been, I shall go."

"Have you got all your things taken away already?"

"Yes, only these I am leaving."

The old woman went down again, but presently came up with a cup of tea in her hand.

"You must drink that; it's good for one. Nothing helps one like tea when one's been packing all day."

The young woman at the fire did not thank her, but she ran her hand over the old woman's from the wrist to the fingers.

"I'll say good-bye to you when I go out."

The woman poked the fire, put the last coals on, and went.

When she had gone the young one did not drink the tea, but drew her little silver cigarette case from

her pocket and lighted a cigarette. For a while she sat smoking by the fire; then she stood up and walked the room.

When she had paced for a while she sat down again beside the fire. She threw the end of her cigarette away into the fire, and then began to walk again with her hands behind her. Then she went back to her seat and lit another cigarette, and paced again. Presently she sat down, and looked into the fire; she pressed the palms of her hands together, and then sat quietly staring into it.

Then there was a sound of feet on the stairs and someone knocked at the door.

She rose and threw the end into the fire and said without moving, "Come in."

The door opened and a man stood there in evening dress. He had a great-coat on, open in front.

"May I come in? I couldn't get rid of this downstairs; I didn't see where to leave it!" He took his coat off. "How are you? This is a real bird's nest!"

She motioned to a chair.

"I hope you did not mind my asking you to come?"

"Oh no, I am delighted. I only found your note at my club twenty minutes ago."

He sat down on a chair before the fire.

"So you really are going to India? How delightful! But what are you to do there? I think it was

Grey told me six weeks ago you were going, but regarded it as one of those mythical stories which don't deserve credence. Yet I'm sure I don't know! Why, nothing would surprise me."

He looked at her in a half-amused, half-interested way.

"What a long time it is since we met! Six months, eight?"

"Seven," she said.

"I really thought you were trying to avoid me. What have you been doing with yourself all this time?"

"Oh, been busy. Won't you have a cigarette?"

She held out the little case to him.

"Won't you take one yourself? I know you object to smoking with men, but you can make an exception in my case!"

"Thank you." She lit her own and passed him the matches.

"But really what have you been doing with yourself all this time? You've entirely disappeared from civilised life. When I was down at the Grahams' in the spring, they said you were coming down there, and then at the last moment cried off. We were all quite disappointed. What is taking you to India now? Going to preach the doctrine of social and intellectual equality to the Hindu women and incite them to revolt? Marry some old Buddhist Priest, build a little cottage on the top of the Himalayas and live

there, discuss philosophy and meditate? I believe that's what you'd like. I really shouldn't wonder if I heard you'd done it!"

She laughed and took out her cigarette case.

She smoked slowly.

"I've been here a long time, four years, and I want change. I was glad to see how well you succeeded in that election," she said. "You were much interested in it, were you not?"

"Oh, yes. We had a stiff fight. It tells in my favour, you know, though it was not exactly a personal matter. But it was a great worry."

"Don't you think," she said, "you were wrong in sending that letter to the papers? It would have strengthened your position to have remained silent."

"Yes, perhaps so; I think so now, but I did it under advice. However, we've won, so it's all right." He leaned back in the chair.

"Are you pretty fit?"

"Oh, yes; pretty well; bored, you know. One doesn't know what all this working and striving is for sometimes."

"Where are you going for your holiday this year?"

"Oh, Scotland, I suppose; I always do; the old quarters."

"Why don't you go to Norway? It would be more change for you and rest you more. Did you get a book on sport in Norway?"

"Did you send it me? How kind of you! I read it with much interest. I was almost inclined to start off there and then. I suppose it is the kind of *vis inertiæ* that creeps over one as one grows older that sends one back to the old place. A change would be much better."

"There's a list at the end of the book," she said, "of exactly the things one needs to take. I thought it would save trouble; you could just give it to your man, and let him get them all. Have you still got him?"

"Oh, yes. He's as faithful to me as a dog. I think nothing would induce him to leave me. He won't allow me to go out hunting since I sprained my foot last autumn. I have to do it surreptitiously. He thinks I can't keep my seat with a sprained ankle; but he's a very good fellow; takes care of me like a mother." He smoked quietly with the firelight glowing on his black coat. "But what are you going to India for? Do you know anyone there?"

"No," she said. "I think it will be so splendid. I've always been a great deal interested in the East. It's a complex, interesting life."

He turned and looked at her.

"Going to seek for more experience, you'll say, I suppose. I never knew a woman throw herself away as you do; a woman with your brilliant parts and attractions, to let the whole of life slip through your

hands, and make nothing of it. You ought to be the most successful woman in London. Oh, yes; I know what you are going to say: 'You don't care.' That's just it; you don't. You are always going to get experience, going to get everything, and you never do. You are always going to write when you know enough, and you are never satisfied that you do. You ought to be making your two thousand a year, but you don't care. That's just it! Living, burying yourself here with a lot of old frumps. You will never do anything. You could have everything and you let it slip."

"Oh, my life is very full," she said. "There are only two things that are absolute realities, love and knowledge, and you can't escape them."

She had thrown her cigarette end away and was looking into the fire, smiling.

"I've let these rooms to a woman friend of mine." She glanced round the room, smiling. "She doesn't know I'm going to leave these things here for her. She'll like them because they were mine. The world's very beautiful, I think—delicious."

"Oh, yes. But what do you do with it? What do you make of it? You ought to settle down and marry like other women, not go wandering about the world to India and China and Italy, and God knows where. You are simply making a mess of your life. You're always surrounding yourself with all sorts

of extraordinary people. If I hear any man or woman is a great friend of yours, I always say: 'What's the matter? Lost his money? Lost his character? Got an incurable disease?' I believe the only way in which anyone becomes interesting to you is by having some complaint of mind or body. I believe you worship rags. To come and shut yourself up in a place like this away from everybody and everything! It's a mistake; it's idiotic, you know."

"I'm very happy," she said. "You see," she said, leaning forwards towards the fire with her hands on her knees, "what matters is that something should need you. It isn't a question of love. What's the use of being near a thing if other people could serve it as well as you can. If they could serve it better, it's pure selfishness. It's the need of one thing for another that makes the organic bond of union. You love mountains and horses, but they don't need you; so what's the use of saying anything about it! I suppose the most absolutely delicious thing in life is to feel a thing needs you, and to give at the moment it needs. Things that don't need you, you must love from a distance."

"Oh, but a woman like you ought to marry, ought to have children. You go squandering yourself on every old beggar or forlorn female or escaped criminal you meet; it may be very nice for them, but it's a mistake from your point of view."

He touched the ash gently with the tip of his little finger and let it fall.

"I intend to marry. It's a curious thing," he said, resuming his pose with an elbow on one knee and his head bent forward on one side, so that she saw the brown hair with its close curls a little tinged with grey at the sides, "that when a man reaches a certain age he wants to marry. He doesn't fall in love; it's not that he definitely plans anything; but he has a feeling that he ought to have a home and a wife and children. I suppose it is the same kind of feeling that makes a bird build nests at certain times of the year. It's not love; it's something else. When I was a young man I used to despise men for getting married; wondered what they did it for; they had everything to lose and nothing to gain. But when a man gets to be six-and-thirty his feeling changes. It's not love, passion, he wants; it's a home; it's a wife and children. He may have a house and servants; it isn't the same thing. I should have thought a woman would have felt it too."

She was quiet for a minute, holding a cigarette between her fingers; then she said slowly:

"Yes, at times a woman has a curious longing to have a child, especially when she gets near to thirty or over it. It's something distinct from love for any definite person. But it's a thing one has to get over. For a woman, marriage is much more serious than for

a man. She might pass her life without meeting a man whom she could possibly love, and, if she met him, it might not be right or possible. Marriage has become very complex now it has become so largely intellectual. Won't you have another ? "

She held out the case to him. " You can light it from mine." She bent forward for him to light it.

" You are a man who ought to marry. You've no absorbing mental work with which the woman would interfere ; it would complete you." She sat back, smoking serenely.

" Yes," he said, " but life is too busy ; I never find time to look for one, and I haven't a fancy for the pink-and-white prettiness so common and that some men like so. I need something else. If I am to have a wife I shall have to go to America to look for one."

" Yes, an American would suit you best."

" Yes," he said, " I don't want a woman to look after ; she must be self-sustaining and she mustn't bore you. You know what I mean. Life is too full of cares to have a helpless child added to them."

" Yes," she said, standing up and leaning with her elbow against the fireplace. " The kind of woman you want would be young and strong ; she need not be excessively beautiful, but she must be at-

tractive; she must have energy, but not too strongly marked an individuality; she must be largely neutral; she need not give you too passionate or too deep a devotion, but she must second you in a thoroughly rational manner. She must have the same aims and tastes that you have. No woman has the right to marry a man if she has to bend herself out of shape for him. She might wish to, but she could never be to him with all her passionate endeavour what the other woman could be to him without trying. Character will dominate over all and will come out at last."

She looked down into the fire.

"When you marry you mustn't marry a woman who flatters you too much. It is always a sign of falseness somewhere. If a woman absolutely loves you as herself, she will criticise and understand you as herself. Two people who are to live through life together must be able to look into each other's eyes and speak the truth. That helps one through life. You would find many such women in America," she said: "women who would help you to succeed, who would not drag you down."

"Yes, that's my idea. But how am I to obtain the ideal woman?"

"Go and look for her. Go to America instead of Scotland this year. It is perfectly right. A man has a right to look for what he needs. With a woman it

is different. That's one of the radical differences between men and women."

She looked downwards into the fire.

"It's a law of her nature and of sex relationship. There's nothing arbitrary or conventional about it any more than there is in her having to bear her child while the male does not. Intellectually we may both be alike. I suppose if fifty men and fifty women had to solve a mathematical problem, they would all do it in the same way; the more abstract and intellectual, the more alike we are. The nearer you approach to the personal and sexual, the more different we are. If I were to represent men's and women's natures," she said, "by a diagram, I would take two circular discs; the right side of each I should paint bright red; then I would shade the red away till in a spot on the left edge it became blue in the one and green in the other. That spot represents sex, and the nearer you come to it, the more the two discs differ in colour. Well then, if you turn them so that the red sides touch, they seem to be exactly alike, but if you turn them so that the green and blue paint form their point of contact, they will seem to be entirely unlike. That's why you notice the brutal, sensual men invariably believe women are entirely different from men, another species of creature; and very cultured, intellectual men sometimes believe we are exactly alike. You see, sex love in its substance

may be the same in both of us; in the form of its expression it must differ. It is not man's fault; it is nature's. If a man loves a woman, he has a right to try to make her love him because he can do it openly, directly, without bending. There need be no subtlety, no indirectness. With a woman it's not so; she can take no love that is not laid openly, simply, at her feet. Nature ordains that she should never show what she feels; the woman who had told a man she loved him would have put between them a barrier once and for ever that could not be crossed; and if she subtly drew him towards her, using the woman's means—silence, finesse, the dropped handkerchief, the surprise visit, the gentle assertion she had not thought to see him when she had come a long way to meet him, then she would be damned; she would hold the love, but she would have desecrated it by subtlety; it would have no value. Therefore she must always go with her arms folded sexually; only the love which lays itself down at her feet and implores of her to accept it is love she can ever rightly take up. That is the true difference between a man and a woman. You may seek for love because you can do it openly; we cannot because we must do it subtly. A woman should always walk with her arms folded. Of course friendship is different. You are on a perfect equality with man then; you can ask him to come and see you as I asked you. That's the beauty

of the intellect and intellectual life to a woman, that she drops her shackles a little; and that is why she shrinks from sex so. If she were dying perhaps, or doing something equal to death, she might. . . . Death means so much more to a woman than a man; when you knew you were dying, to look round on the world and feel the bond of sex that has broken and crushed you all your life gone, nothing but the human left, no woman any more, to meet everything on perfectly even ground. There's no reason why you shouldn't go to America and look for a wife perfectly deliberately. You will have to tell no lies. Look till you find a woman that you absolutely love, that you have not the smallest doubt suits you apart from love, and then ask her to marry you. You must have children; the life of an old childless man is very sad."

"Yes, I should like to have children. I often feel now, what is it all for, this work, this striving, and no one to leave it to? It's a blank, suppose I succeed . . . ?"

"Suppose you get your title?"

"Yes; what is it all worth to me if I've no one to leave it to? That's my feeling. It's really very strange to be sitting and talking like this to you. But you are so different from other women. If all women were like you, all your theories of the equality of men and women would work. You're the only woman with whom I never realise that she is a woman."

"Yes," she said.

She stood looking down into the fire.

"How long will you stay in India?"

"Oh, I'm not coming back."

"Not coming back! That's impossible. You will be breaking the hearts of half the people here if you don't. I never knew a woman who had such power of entrapping men's hearts as you have in spite of that philosophy of yours. I don't know," he smiled, "that I should not have fallen into the snare myself —three years ago I almost thought I should—if you hadn't always attacked me so incontinently and persistently on all and every point and on each and every occasion. A man doesn't like pain. A succession of slaps damps him. But it doesn't seem to have that effect on other men. . . . There was that fellow down in the country when I was there last year, perfectly ridiculous. You know his name . . ." He moved his fingers to try and remember it—"big, yellow moustache, a major, gone to the east coast of Africa now; the ladies unearthed it that he was always carrying about a photograph of yours in his pocket; and he used to take out little scraps of things you printed and show them to people mysteriously. He almost had a duel with a man one night after dinner because he mentioned you; he seemed to think there was something incongruous between your name and——"

" I do not like to talk of any man who has loved me," she said. " However small and poor his nature may be, he has given me his best. There is nothing ridiculous in love. I think a woman should feel that all the love men have given her which she has not been able to return is a kind of crown set up above her which she is always trying to grow tall enough to wear. I can't bear to think that all the love that has been given me has been wasted on something unworthy of it. Men have been very beautiful and greatly honoured me. I am grateful to them. If a man tells you he loves you," she said, looking into the fire, " with his breast uncovered before you for you to strike him if you will, the least you can do is to put out your hand and cover it up from other people's eyes. If I were a deer," she said, " and a stag got hurt following me, even though I could not have him for a companion, I would stand still and scrape the sand with my foot over the place where his blood had fallen ; the rest of the herd should never know he had been hurt there following me. I would cover the blood up, if I were a deer," she said, and then she was silent.

Presently she sat down in her chair and said, with her hand before her : " Yet, you know, I have not the ordinary feeling about love. I think the one who is loved confers the benefit on the one who loves, it's been so great and beautiful that it should be loved.

I think the man should be grateful to the woman or the woman to the man whom they have been able to love, whether they have been loved back or whether circumstances have divided them or not." She stroked her knee softly with her hand.

"Well, really, I must go now." He pulled out his watch. "It's so fascinating sitting here talking that I could stay all night, but I've still two engagements." He rose; she rose also and stood before him looking up at him for a moment.

"How well you look! I think you have found the secret of perpetual youth. You don't look a day older than when I first saw you just four years ago. You always look as if you were on fire and being burnt up, but you never are, you know."

He looked down at her with a kind of amused face as one does at an interesting child or a big Newfoundland dog.

"When shall we see you back?"

"Oh, not at all!"

"Not at all! Oh, we must have you back; you belong here, you know. You'll get tired of your Buddhist and come back to us."

"You didn't mind my asking you to come and say good-bye?" she said in a childish manner unlike her determinateness when she discussed anything impersonal. "I wanted to say good-bye to everyone. If one hasn't said good-bye one feels restless and feels

one would have to come back. If one has said good-bye to all one's friends, then one knows it is all ended."

"Oh, this isn't a final farewell! You must come in ten years' time and we'll compare notes—you about your Buddhist Priest, I about my fair ideal American; and we'll see who succeeded best."

She laughed.

"I shall always see your movements chronicled in the newspapers, so we shall not be quite sundered; and you will hear of me perhaps."

"Yes, I hope you will be very successful."

She was looking at him, with her eyes wide open, from head to foot. He turned to the chair where his coat hung.

"Can't I help you put it on?"

"Oh, no, thank you."

He put it on.

"Button the throat," she said, "the room is warm."

He turned to her in his great-coat and with his gloves. They were standing near the door.

"Well, good-bye. I hope you will have a very pleasant time."

He stood looking down upon her, wrapped in his great-coat.

She put up one hand a little in the air. "I want to ask you something," she said quickly.

"Well, what is it?"

"Will you please kiss me?"

For a moment he looked down at her, then he bent over her.

In after years he could never tell certainly, but he always thought she put up her hand and rested it on the crown of his head, with a curious soft caress, something like a mother's touch when her child is asleep and she does not want to wake it. Then he looked round, and she was gone. The door had closed noiselessly. For a moment he stood motionless, then he walked to the fireplace and looked down into the fender at a little cigarette end lying there, then he walked quickly back to the door and opened it. The stairs were in darkness and silence. He rang the bell violently. The old woman came up. He asked her where the lady was. She said she had gone out, she had a cab waiting. He asked when she would be back. The old woman said, "Not at all"; she had left. He asked where she had gone. The woman said she did not know; she had left orders that all her letters should be kept for six or eight months till she wrote and sent her address. He asked whether she had no idea where he might find her. The woman said no. He walked up to a space in the wall where a picture had hung and stood staring at it as though the picture were still hanging there. He drew his mouth as though he were emitting a long whistle,

but no sound came. He gave the old woman ten shillings and went downstairs.

That was eight years ago.

How beautiful life must have been to it that it looks so young still!

On the Banks of a Full River

ON THE BANKS OF A FULL RIVER

IT was in the year 18—, the year of the great rains.

I, a young girl of sixteen, was going home from the South where I had been at school.

We travelled in a Cobb & Co.'s coach, nine passengers inside and four out; and all day and night it rained. We did in two days the journey we should have done in one; and when they changed horses they gave us no time to sleep. Night and day we travelled. On the evening of the ninth day we stopped on the banks of a full river. The greasy, coffee-coloured water flowed level with the banks, and the heads of half-drowned willow trees showed themselves on either side. We should not be able to cross that night, it might be not for days.

We looked out through the pouring rain. Beside us was a little mud house, the only habitation within thirty miles. It was square, with a divided door and one small window. The man to whom it belonged came out to meet us; he lived there alone and sold liquor to the passers-by. It was arranged between him and the driver we should stay there for the night.

We alighted from the coach and streamed into the house; we found it consisted of one small room. I and the woman who was my only female travelling companion stood before the fire drying our clothes which had got damp in the passage from the coach to the house; the men stood round the table drinking bad brandy and whisky in cups and glasses, while the driver went out to see to his horses. There was nothing to be had to eat but some stale biscuits from a tin and some leathery roaster-cake. Some one brought up the one chair the room contained and an empty soap box, and the woman and I sat down before the fire. By and by the driver came in, and the night darkened down quickly. The men still stood smoking and drinking round the table. The rain was falling less heavily. After a while the men conferred together and they decided, with that gentleness which rough men travelling alone with women always show, that they should all find shelter in the coach and the hut be left to us alone. The owner put the large stump of an uprooted willow tree upon the fire and in half an hour the men stumbled out; we could hear them swearing and grumbling in the rain on the way to the coach; and for an hour we caught broken peals of ribald laughter or obscene songs through the sound of the falling rain; then gradually all became quiet.

The room in which they left us had a bare mud

floor on which was only a white sheepskin that lay before the fire; on the brown mud wall there was a rack with two guns and a pistol, and in the centre of the room stood the table with empty bottles and glasses, and in the corner was a stretcher with one band broken and a thin mattress and three dirty blankets. There was no place in which one might lie down. The firelight flickered over the walls; the three inches of tallow candle they had left in a black bottle on the table had burnt itself out.

I grew tired of sitting on the soap box and slipped down and crouched on the white sheepskin before the fire. The woman sat in the chair on the right, her head so far back that the firelight did not shine on it. One could hardly tell whether she was awake or asleep.

She was a tall, slight woman dressed in black, and might have been any age between thirty and forty-five. She had been very kind to me all the way; in the night when, without my knowing it, I grew sleepy and my head dropped, she laid it on her shoulder and I woke with it there in the morning. When it was cold she made me put on her great fur cloak, such as women from England have, and we talked of the scenery we passed through and of books, and we were friends, though neither of us had asked any question or knew anything of the other.

The rain still fell heavily, and far off one could

hear the rush of the river. I stared into the fire till the blaze from the glowing coals almost scorched my eyelashes.

Suddenly I turned to my companion. "Life is very wicked; it is very unjust," I said.

I raised myself on my knees.

She looked down at me and leaned forward. She had seemed almost asleep. She did not speak.

"It is very cruel; it is very unjust!" I said. "It is no use trying! Some people have everything and some people have nothing; and things are not as they should be!"

She put out her hand and I felt it on my head for a moment. Then she drew it back.

I was young, and I was suffering my first surprise at my first shattered ideal.

The woman raised herself and looked down at me. I laid my clenched fists upon my knees.

"I have found no balancing interrelation between the material and mental world," she said. "If you go with love in your heart to fetch a cup of water for your friend, there is no relation between the intensity of the love and the cup's fracture; if that is what you mean by justice in life, then there is none. But, in the emotional and intellectual spheres, human nature has a deep power of working out compensations; what is taken from us on the one hand works itself back to us on the other. There is nothing mysterious

in this, just as there is nothing mysterious in one scale of a balance going down and another up when you move matter from one to the other, though it might seem so to a little baby. There are times, thinking over life," she said, " I have almost seemed to see the terms in which this balancing process might be stated so as to be clearly grasped intellectually. I think it is there."

I sat looking into the fire. My heart was very bitter. I had had my first ideal shattered, my great plan for what was beautiful broken. I was beating my wings against the bars of the inevitable in life as young things do, battering the wings but not hurting the bars.

" Yes, but you do not know," I said. And after a while I told her my story. It was a long story, and seemed to me then the only one in the world. There is no need I should repeat it fully :

Three years before I had gone to school on a farm in the South ; it was a mixed school where boys and girls were taught together. There was one boy three years older than I. He and I were always at the head of the school. He worked hard at first to get up to me because he could not bear a girl should stand higher ; but afterwards we became great friends.

(*Note by S. C. C. S.*—There is evidently a page or so missing here ; the narrative would introduce the other girl and begin the delineation of her character in her attitude towards the lad ; the delineation

is, however, clear enough in the passages immediately following. Apparently they had been having, were having, school holidays when the tale continues.)

. . . taught him to make flutes of reeds; sometimes she sat in the fork of the apple trees and he lay below and she threw down fruit to him; sometimes she brought her books to him and asked him questions, and she said he was so wonderful when he could explain; and the one thing he had never needed was praise. Then the holidays came to an end. We had brought much work to do that he might pass the last examination; but, when I came to look for him, he was walking laughing with her, and I hid the books under my arm. The last day of the holidays she came to me and said he was not going back to school. Her father had offered him £20 a month to oversee the wine farming. They could have got anyone else for five, she said, but her father had done it because she asked him. "All this is mine," she said. "There is no one else to inherit it; my father lets me do what I like with it and I want him to have it." I talked with him once. He seemed a little sorry, but he could not refuse £20. I did not go back to school for the next quarter; I came straight home; I was on my journey up. I sat beside the fire and told the story.

"You see," I said, when I had finished it, "he is lost, his beautiful possibilities are dead; she will

drag him down, down. It would have been better if she had killed him!" And I laid my clenched hands on my knees. It would have been easy for me to have killed myself, I so hated that girl as I stood there.

The woman said: "Are you quite just? Are you sure it is she who has dragged him down?"

"I hate her, oh, I hate her so!" I said. "I would have forgiven her if she had killed him, but not for this."

(*Note by S. C. C. S.*—A gap occurs here.)

". . . study more. You see," I said, "I don't mind that he hates me, but I mind that he will never do anything more; he will marry and settle down. She has killed him. It is as if she were a soft greasy snake, and she had crept over him, and put her tooth into his body and the poison has crept in and in and he is dead, he is asleep for ever."

She said: "Can other people ever poison us?"

I said: "They can! But I could wake him. That is the terrible thing. If I could tell him what she was, if I could have had one half-hour's talk with him (and he had sought it), I could make him fling her off as a man flings off a toad when he wakes and sees it sitting on him. That's the terrible thing! That's why I've asked my friends to get me home at once because I dare not stay there. If once I were to

talk against her to him, then my soul would be lost, as hers is now. You see I can't," I said. "I must go away where I can never see him any more and leave him to her!"

I looked up, but the woman was sitting motionless on the chair and the firelight was dancing on the guns in the rack.

"You see," I said, "people say she is a clever woman; she is strong; they say she can have everything; it's the poor, weak, gentle, little women that need looking after, that must be taken care of. It's a lie; it's we that are weak! If the snake once thinks it wrong to use its poison fangs and begins to develop feet, and makes a noise with them as it comes on, is it stronger? It's higher, of course, higher! What is that *higher*? It is weakness. Is there anything so strong as the snake when it creeps on noiselessly with its fangs and its silent glide? The horse, the elephant, the lion, are nothing to it. Take this from it and what has it left? It has not the speed, the claws, the thick skin of the others! A snake without its poison bag, who gives notice when it is coming," I laughed,— "every creature can put his foot on its head and crush out its poor unused poison bag that it has never used. It will never be a lion or an elephant for all its feet. A woman with intellect and strength and the ideal of acting strictly by other women—haugh! She is dirt beneath everyone's feet. There is nothing

so weak on the earth. She will never be a man! Life gave women subtlety and lying and meanness and flattery that they might defend themselves. They have all things if they will use their tools."

We were silent for a moment; then she said: "Do you think any strong, intellectual woman ever really wanted to be a weak one? Is it not better to have half-developed hands and feet, and be trodden on? Does it matter so much what one has as what one is?"

And she said after a time: "Does one really ever gain anything by subtlety? Is it not seeming?"

I said: "Oh, it is such a terrible thing to be a woman. You can do nothing for those you love. You must wait, crush out, kill, in yourself. The old passive women who took indirect means, they are happy."

She said: "Do you think so?"

Then she said after a time: "I knew two women in England; one was older, and the younger lived with her; she was her cousin. The younger was what the world calls a strong, intellectual woman; she painted. The other was what the world calls a gentle, womanly woman; she had married, when she was young, a rich man, and had three children. She had a very beautiful home, and she always pictured herself to herself as the central image in it, the most beautiful of all. The younger woman knew an artist who worked at the same studio; she loved him as only

people can love who love the work and the objects of others, not only their persons. Every day she went to his studio and criticised his work ; when he was satisfied, she was not ; she wanted something better ; she had a greater dream for his future than she ever told him. They were very near to each other. She never spoke of love to him : what need is there to talk of love to a man, when he knows his work is more to you than your own ; and you love your own ? "

" And then ? " I said.

" After two years he came to the house where she lived with her older cousin. At first the woman took little notice of him ; then she used to have glasses of jelly ready for him when he came, and let him lie on the sofa in her great room in the garden. He took her to his studio : she stood still a long time before one picture, and said, ' Oh, please don't speak to me ; it makes me feel like a beautiful summer's day to look at it ' ; and the young woman had told him to burn it ; it was unworthy of him. She said she wanted her picture painted with her little baby, and he painted her as a madonna with her child in her arms with their cheeks touching. I do not think he cared for her then. He simply painted her. She gave the picture to her husband, and asked the young man to come to her house oftener."

" And then ? "

" Then one day she talked of him to the younger

woman. I do not say she told the younger woman she loved him; that would have been wrong in a married woman; but she knew the nature of the younger woman; she spoke so that she implied that she liked him. When she wanted to go for a drive she did not say to the younger woman, 'You stay at home. I want to go this afternoon.' She said, 'You go, dear, I don't mind staying at all; I'm sure you'll enjoy it more than I do'; and then the younger woman stayed. And that night it was moonlight and the younger woman was walking in agony on a terrace that ran beside the house. It was terrible another woman should love the man she loved; in a moment all the lovely beauty was gone . . . "

I said, "I hate that woman!"

. . . "and then the older woman and the man came out and stood under a great tree to hear the nightingales sing, and she talked of the younger woman, and the young man said, 'Yes, she is too restlessly energetic,' and so they talked. The elder knew that the younger was there, and the younger knew she knew it. Then she went into the house. You see her love was broken. She thought what was best to be done. You can't cope with such women, you can't touch them, you must leave them. The day you touch them you sink to their level; you don't only lose your love, you degrade it: it was white as far as she was concerned. So she thought the thing out;

and that night she packed her things; the next day she left. She did not say good-bye to the man. She came out to Africa; for many years she lived here. After a while, seven or eight years, she married a man who was dying of consumption and took care of his two children when he was dead. She had a happy life. It was nice to take care of the children. She had plenty to do."

The woman sat still.

"And the other woman?" I asked.

"She lived on in her beautiful house with her husband and children and was very happy. The young artist never understood why his friend left; he came often to the house; and lay on the great sofa, and the woman gave him jelly and soups to strengthen him for his work. He never worked much, but he always came to see her; they were very intimate friends till her husband died,"

(*Note by S. C. C. S.*—The page numbered 16 by Olive ends here; what follows is on page numbered 18.)

". . . Need you envy a man for holding dust in his hand? What is the use of possessing a man if you hold him and possess him through flattery? Is a man worth having who desires it?"

I said, "Yes, but she had what she desired. When her husband died she could have him always with her; the last little restraint was gone; she could wait

on him and help him. That is what we women want when we love a man."

She sat still, twirling the . . .

(*Note by S. C. C. S.*—Here ends page 18. What follows is on page numbered 20 by Olive.)

I said, "What?"

She said, "Pity her, she married him."

We sat still in the firelight.

I said at last: "Did those two women ever meet again?"

She said: "Yes, once, after years. The elder woman came out to South Africa and they met once."

I sat looking into the fire.

The Wax Doll and the Stepmother

THE WAX DOLL AND THE STEPMOTHER

ROLLY was a small boy five years old who wore knickerbockers. He had great brown eyes and curls that hung over his forehead; but Nina, his sister, who was a year older, had yellow hair and a white face. She was so thin that when Rolly tried hard he could lift her off the ground.

They had no mother, but their Papa was kind to them, and one day when he came from town he brought a beautiful wax doll for Nina. She had many dolls, but none like this one. Its hair was real; you could curl and comb it as much as you pleased; it had real eyelashes, and fingers and toes of wax, and the best of all was it had little teeth. You could see them always, for its mouth was never shut.

Nurse Bromage, who looked after the children, said it was quite too good to play with, and put the doll away on the top shelf. Nina cried; she loved the doll so much, with its little teeth. But Nurse Bromage did not care; for, you see, she was a cross old thing and didn't mind if other people weren't

happy, if only she was. But sometimes she went to visit her cousin in the country, and then Jennie the housemaid used to let them play with it as much as they pleased. One day when they were playing with her one of the tucks in the doll's flannel petticoat got loosened. Nina kissed her and Rolly told her they didn't mean to do it; and so they thought it was all right.

A little time after that Nurse Bromage told them that when their Papa came home the next day he was going to bring them a new Mamma. The children clapped their hands when they heard that.

"Then we will have a Mamma too!" they said, "like the other children!"

"Yes," said Nina. "Perhaps she will come and kiss us when we are in bed, like the pretty lady kisses the little girl in the picture in Papa's bedroom!"

But Nurse Bromage knit up her forehead and shook her head.

"All the house will belong to your new Mamma," she said, "and all the things in it. She will not like you at all, because if it were not for you she would get all your Papa's things when he dies; but now you will have to get some."

Then Nina and Rolly were quite unhappy. They went and sat on a little box behind the door where they always sat when Nurse Bromage scolded them.

"We'll tell the new Mamma that we don't want any of Papa's things," said Nina. "Won't we, Rolly?"

"We'll tell her just as soon as she comes," said Rolly. "But perhaps she looks like Nurse Bromage!"

"Oh dear!" said Nina, and hung her head. Her neck was so thin that when she hung it, it always seemed as though it might break off.

The next day when the carriage came the servants and the two children went into the great hall to meet their Papa and the lady. Nina had on a white dress with a blue sash; and Rolly had a black velvet suit with three pockets, one in the jacket and two in the trousers.

"I think she'll think I'm quite a big boy, when she sees me in this," said Rolly.

When the carriage stopped their Papa helped out the lady. She was very beautiful; tall, with red cheeks, and lips like cherries, and black hair shining like a crow's wing. She had on a silk dress with a black rustling train, and that made her grander still. She was very beautiful, but she had not a happy face. No one had ever taught her that it was not money and fine houses and fine clothes that could make a person happy; and so her heart felt all over as though it were pricked by little pins. So the hearts of all people feel, when they want more than they have got and are not full of love.

"She isn't like Nurse Bromage. She's just like your best wax-doll," Rolly whispered; but Nina was so afraid she did not lift her face.

When their new Mamma came into the hall, "These are my little children," the Papa said. But she did not look at them; she only bent down and touched Rolly's forehead with her lips. Nina she did not kiss at all.

"Rolly, I can't tell her she can have all Papa's things! Oh! I am so afraid of her," said Nina, when they went up the long stairs holding each other's hands.

"*I'm* not frightened," said Rolly, "*I'm* a *man* and you are only a woman, you know. But I don't like her. Why didn't she kiss you?"

"Oh, Rolly, I love her!" said Nina, with tears in her eyes.

That evening Nurse Bromage brought them to sit in the parlour for a little while. Their Papa gave them some nuts to crack, but the beautiful lady never spoke to them; she sat with her screen before the fire.

"You see, Nina," said Rolly, when they were lying in their little beds in the dark, "it is quite true; she does hate us. And I don't love her; not a bit. I'd like to take my big drum and beat it at her bedroom door when she's asleep!"

"Oh, you mustn't say so, Rolly!" said Nina.

But Rolly didn't care, and soon went to sleep and so did she. But the cough soon woke her up again, and she lay alone in the dark, and a beautiful thought came to her. She wished it would be morning soon that she might tell Rolly. She folded her little hands together, and pressed the palms. For all that she couldn't tell him when the morning came, for Nurse Bromage was by, and no one could say anything nice while *she* was there. After breakfast she taught them their letters. When Nina called B, D, she whipped her hands with a little rod tied with a red string; but she didn't whip Rolly because he was her favourite.

By and by, when it was afternoon, Nurse Bromage went to sleep on the sofa. Then Nina called Rolly behind the door.

"What is it?" said Rolly, coming close and lifting his ear.

"You know my wax doll, Rolly; my best wax doll?" said Nina.

"Yes," said Rolly.

"I want to give it to her, Rolly. Do you think she'll like it?"

"Who?"

"Our new Mamma."

"Oh, yes!" said Rolly, "of course she will. I don't believe she ever saw one like it in her life before!"

"And you'll take it to her, Rolly? You are not afraid, are you?"

"I should think not," said Rolly, sticking his hands into his knickerbocker pockets, and swelling himself out. "I'll take it."

"Let us go and fetch it before Nurse wakes," said Nina. But Rolly paused, shaking his head and looking very sagacious.

"She'll find out and she'll whip you, Nina!"

"It doesn't matter," said Nina, a little sorrowfully. "You know she will whatever I do."

So they went to the next room. Rolly pulled the chair, and Nina put the footstool on; and he climbed up, while she held fast. When he had got the doll he came down quickly; and they took a beautiful piece of white paper with a silver edge, that came with the china tea-service, to wrap it in.

"Isn't she lovely?" said Nina, as she laid it in the paper and smoothed out the little soft curls.

"She just is!" said Rolly. "Aren't you sorry to give her away?"

"No," said Nina; but when she looked at the little teeth her lip trembled. She gave it to Rolly to hold while she went for a piece of string. They neither of them knew how to tie a bow; but Rolly said he didn't think it mattered, because their new Mamma could untie a knot by herself, he guessed.

"You must tell her I'm sorry the one tuck is out,"

said Nina, " and I would have mended it only I don't know how to work."

Rolly put the doll under his arm, and Nina went with him to the door of the long passage.

" You are not afraid, are you ? "

" Oh, no ! " said Rolly ; but his heart beat so that the doll against his breast went up and down, up and down.

He walked up the long passage to the door of the new Mamma's bedroom. He gave a little knock with his forefinger, but no one answered. He thought there could be no one inside, so gave a very brave one with his fist.

The new Mamma said, " Who is there ? "

" I," said Rolly ; and he pushed open the door, and walked in.

It was almost dinner-time, and there were going to be visitors that evening. The lady was sitting before the glass dressing. She had on a black velvet dress, and the sleeves were wide open to show her arms, as white as the snow, and covered with bracelets.

Rolly walked in and stood before her looking at her.

" What do you want ? " she asked.

He was such a wee boy when he stood so close beside her, and she was a grand, beautiful woman.

" I've brought this for you," said Rolly, " and you may keep it for your own. It's Nina sends it to you."

He put the parcel down in her lap, and folded his hands behind him.

"And who is Nina?" asked the lady.

"Why, Nina *is* Nina, to be sure! My sister," said Rolly. "And she says you mustn't mind the one tuck being out, because she would have mended it if she could."

The lady unrolled the parcel and looked at the doll.

"You see," he said, picking up the doll's dress and showing the petticoat, "that's the tuck; but it's all that's the matter with her. Isn't it lovely?" said Rolly, sticking his hands in his pockets and watching to see what effect it would have upon her.

"You didn't notice the teeth, I suppose, did you?" said Rolly, eyeing her critically. "It's real teeth, and the hair too. You can put oil on if you like."

"Who told Nina to send it?" asked the lady.

"Why, no one," said Rolly; "she thought of it last night when she was in bed."

"What made her want to send it to me?"

"Well," said Rolly, drawing confidentially nearer, "you mustn't tell, of course; but Nina, she said if she gave it you, perhaps you'd kiss her, like the lady in the picture kisses the little girl, you know, when she's in bed."

The lady looked down at the doll. "Go and tell Nina, that I say 'thank you.'"

"It's a beautiful doll," said Rolly, fearing she had not enough admired it, "and the boots are red. Good-bye!"

When he got to the door he looked back. "I'll tell her you don't mind about the petticoat, eh?"

"Yes," said the lady, so Rolly went.

That evening the children sat on their hassocks before the fire. Nurse Bromage had taken the light out and gone downstairs to get some of the nice things that were over from the big people's dinner; so they drew their little hassocks as close together as they could and sat looking at the fire.

"She said 'thank you,'" said Rolly; "she must have liked it!"

"Oh no, I think she's angry," said Nina.

Rolly could see two large tears on her face, so he rubbed her cheeks with his coat sleeve. It was rather rough, but it did her good.

"I don't believe she could be so bad as not to like your doll," he said; and they sat still looking at the fire.

Then the door opened softly.

"There she comes!" said Rolly, looking round—"I knew she would."

But the little girl sat quite huddled up with fear, and quite cold. The lady came in; you could see in the firelight how beautiful she was, with her diamonds sparkling, and her velvet dress and her black hair.

"This is Nina!" said Rolly. "Here she sits!"

The lady did not speak. She brought the rocking-chair from the corner and put it before the fire and sat down.

"Come!" she said; and she lifted the little girl up with her strong white hands and sat her on her knee. She held the thin little face fast and kissed the mouth six times, very softly.

"My dear little daughter," she said, and laid the head down on her breast.

Rolly, on his hassock before the fire, stroked his little knees for gladness, and his round eyes were just as bright as the coals.

The new Mamma called him to come and stand at her side. She put her arm quite tight round him.

"You are just like the wax doll, and much prettier too," he said, looking up at her. "Nina and I, we like you very much. But I didn't like you first."

"Why not?"

"Because—a—because—a—because—you didn't kiss her. But I like you now," he said, edging suddenly nearer to her, and taking hold of her face with one hand to turn it to him. "And you know, New Mamma, we didn't want *any* of Papa's things. You can have them all. *I'll* take care of Nina," he added, drawing himself up; "I'm nearly a big man already. I can climb into bed right from the ground by myself, and button my clothes too!"

"You dear little boy!" said the lady, and she kissed him on his eyes, and on his forehead, and on the brown curls that hung down.

Then Rolly put his head down on her shoulder, and rubbed his curls softly against her neck.

"It's so nice and happy; just like a birthday! Isn't it, Nina?" he said.

But Nina only pressed the lady's waist with all her little strength.

"And you won't let Nurse Bromage s-col-d Nina for giving you her doll; will you, my New Mamma?" said Rolly. "Poor Nina, you know!"

"No one shall hurt her now," said the lady, "she is my little daughter."

"Yes; and I'll be your big son too, if you like!" said Rolly, looking up, "and take care of you!"

"So you shall, my darling."

"Yes," said Rolly, very much excited, "and—I—I'll always get you—canary seed—for your bird—and—I—I'll build you a house of shells—and—and——"

"You shall do it all for me, just to-morrow," said the lady. "Where are your little beds? I shall carry Nina, and you shall show me. I want to undress you both."

"Will you kiss us when we have our nightgowns on?"

"Yes."

Rolly put his mouth close to her ear.

"Will you lie with us a little while?"

"Yes."

"Close?"

"Yes."

"Oh! it's just like a birthday," said Rolly—"only it's much nicer!"

The Adventures of Master Towser

THE ADVENTURES OF MASTER TOWSER

I—HIS SORROW

SMALL TOWSER sat with his tail in a puddle of mud. The puddle was small, but so was his tail. His nose was turned down to the paving-stones; there were two drops running down towards the tip of it, but they weren't raindrops, though the afternoon was sad and cloudy enough—they came from his eyes. Presently, out of the swell gate of the house over the way came a most respectable-looking dog, of a very comfortable appearance, and as big as eight Towsers, for he was a mastiff.

"Why don't you take your tail out of the puddle?" asked the comfortable-looking dog.

Towser gave it a feeble little splutter in the mud: he didn't know why he let it hang there, except that he was miserable.

"Starve you over at your house?" inquired the comfortable dog.

"No," said Towser, "there are dishes of bones and nice little bits of fat in the kitchen."

"Other dogs bite you?"

"No." Towser shook his head.

"Have to sleep out in the cold?"

"No, I've got a house," said Towser.

"You're a nice gentlemanly-looking little dog; you oughtn't to be unhappy. What's the matter?" asked the comfortable-looking dog.

"I'm not any good," said Towser.

The big dog didn't comprehend.

"I want someone to love me," said Towser; "I want to help somebody; I want to be of use."

"Love!" said the big dog. "Did you ever smell it?"

"No," said Towser.

"Or see anybody eat it?"

"No."

"Or sleep on it?"

"No."

"Then what use is it?" said the big dog; and he went away.

Shortly after that Towser got up off the stone, and took his little tail out of the mud. He shook his little ears and let the two drops run off his nose.

"I'll go and seek for someone that needs me," said Towser; and so he started on his travels.

II—HIS SEARCH

"I must look as pleasant as I can," said Towser, as he went down the street; and he perked up his little ears. He really was a pretty terrier, with long

silky hair. Presently he saw a boy walking on the pavement. He was ragged, he looked as if he hadn't had any dinner or breakfast either. Towser's heart ached for him. He looked very lonely.

"I'm sure he would like a nice little dog like me to be a companion to him," said Towser. "Yes, he wants me; I won't trouble him for food, because everyone gives me something when I go to the back doors, because of my big eyes."

So Towser began dancing a little dance of affection, shaking his ears and looking from under them with his round eyes. This proceeding was meant to say, "I want to love you."

"Doggy, Doggy, Doggy!" said the little solitary boy, standing still and holding out his fingers; "Doggy, Doggy, Doggy."

So Towser came close up, just curling into a ball with excitement. He didn't know whether he should lick the little boy's hands first or his feet.

"There!" said the little boy. He gave Towser a powerful kick on the tip of his black nose.

When he looked back, Towser was standing quite still, with a great singing in his ears. Then the little lonely boy laughed.

When the singing had left off, Towser trotted away down the street. He wasn't so ready to caper now. He saw several little lonely boys as he passed, but he didn't think they wanted him.

At last he got to the outskirts of the town. There was a bonny little house with roses and creepers all round. He went to the back door and put his fore-feet on the step, and looked in to see if there was anybody wanted him. A lady lay on a sofa in one corner; she had not walked for ten years, and her eyes were heavy with pain.

"Dear little creature, where do you come from?" she said.

Towser made a motion with his fore-feet, to explain that he would come in if he were invited.

The lady said, "Come in," and he sat down on the rug before her and the lady felt his ears.

"Beautiful ears," she said, "come!"

Towser jumped up on to the sofa beside her.

"I never saw such large eyes," said the lady. "Dear little dog, if I can I shall keep you for my own," and she made a place for him on her chest.

He lay with his paw close to her chin, and looked as loving as he could. Presently he licked her chin, and she said he had a soft little tongue. When her lunch came she fed him with brandy and egg out of a spoon. He didn't like it, it burnt his throat, but he drank it.

"She wants me awfully, I can just see that," said Towser, "and I'll stay with her as long as I live."

The lady had him taken to her bedroom that night, and a nice little rug laid for him across the foot of

her bed. In the night, when she woke to cough, he walked up to her face and licked it, and she covered him with the blankets till there was just the tip of his black nose sticking out.

"The big, comfortable dog said love was nothing, but it's something," said Towser, "and it's nice"; and he put his little muzzle against her cheek. Next day he danced before her, and tried to catch his tail when she looked sad.

"Oh, I'm a dear, nice, happy little dog; she does love me so. She couldn't live without me; I'm such a comfort to her," said Towser. He wished he'd been six months younger, then he'd have six months more to live.

So weeks passed.

One afternoon a lady came in.

"I've brought Nola home," she said, "so much better for her change to the sea-side; here she is." And the lady put down on the floor the most snow-white terrier (Towser was brown), all soft with curls, and with little sleepy eyes.

"She looks better," said the lady—"dear Nola."

Nola climbed quietly up on the sofa and curled herself up in a little nest and shut her eyes.

Towser stood looking on. He thought he would jump on the sofa, too.

"Down, Towser, down!" said the lady.

Then Towser went and got behind the crimson

curtain, with only his nose and two bright eyes peeping out. At last tea-time came, and there was a dish of milk put down on the floor. Nola got off the sofa and went to drink some; Towser came out, and put his little black muzzle in too. As soon as the curly white one saw it, she lifted her pink nose, and got quietly back on the sofa.

"Nola won't drink with Towser," said the lady; "take him to the kitchen and give him a nice basin of milk with plenty of cream on it."

Then Nola got off the sofa again; but Towser wouldn't go to the kitchen. He got behind the curtain and looked out with his great saucers of eyes.

"It'll be bed-time soon, and I am sure she is wanting me badly to lick her chin. I'm sure she is wishing it was bed-time," said Towser.

"Make a comfortable bed for Towser in the kitchen, and be sure it's nice and soft," said the lady.

Towser wouldn't get into the bed; he sat on the stone looking at the fire. He wondered if a coal had got into his heart. He felt so wicked.

"I wonder what is the matter with Towser," said the lady the next day; "he used to be such a nice little dog, always so lively."

Then Towser got up, and began dancing about after his tail, and then he got on the sofa, and began playing with the lady's fingers and rings. Then the

white curly one opened her eyes slowly and got off the sofa.

"Nola, Nola, come here! Down, Towser, down!" said the lady.

Then Towser went out in the garden and sat in the gravelled path looking up at the sun. I don't know how he felt.

"Towser's such a nice little dog," said the lady one day; "quite the nicest little dog I've ever seen. I wish I could get someone to take him away; someone who would be kind to him."

Now Towser didn't wait to be given away to a very kind person. I fancy he had a pain at his heart. He put his tail close between his hind legs, and went out at the back door.

III—HIS REWARD

Towser sat alone in a wood. He leaned his head on a stone at his side. He was thinking; you could see that by his big, round eyes.

"I made somebody happy; that's a great comfort," said he (for all that there were tears running down his nose). "I must be happy; I must think I once made somebody happy"—here his little chest swelled out immensely. "It doesn't matter if you're not loved if only you've made somebody happy. Yes, I won't want to be loved any more, I'll just try to

help people, and then I'll be happy too. You mustn't want to be loved; just to be good."

So he took his head off the stone and went trotting away through the wood. Presently he saw a country boy before him carrying a flitch of bacon; not long after from the bushes at the path-side burst a gipsy-looking fellow.

After a minute, the rough fellow said to the boy, "Give me your bacon."

Said the boy, "No."

The man said, "I can make you; there is nobody near."

He took hold of the bacon; the boy began to struggle. He knelt upon the boy. Then every hair upon Towser's little body stood on end, and his tail was stiffened out. He forgot he was Towser, he forgot he wanted to be loved, he forgot everything, and flew at the trousers of the gipsy man. Then the gipsy man thought there was someone coming, ran away, and left the boy and the bacon.

Towser stood in the middle of the path barking furiously. He was in great excitement.

Slowly the country fellow got up; his face was purple with rage. He cut a little stick from the bush growing by; it wasn't thicker than his finger; Towser's backbone was not thicker either.

"So, you stand here barking at me, do you?" said the country fellow. "Why don't you go after

your master? You want to bite me! do you? do you? do you?"

Towser thought his little backbone would be broken, and when the stick hit his little skull it was terribly sore. The country fellow held him fast with one hand; he was so small he wasn't much to hold, and beat him on his little fore-feet, and in his eye; then he took up his bacon, and walked away.

Towser went into the brushwood close by, and sat down on his tail and lifted his nose to the sky. The one eye was shut up, but the other was wide open, and the water running out of it.

If he ever went home and became a comfortable, respectable dog, I don't know; the last I saw of him he was sitting there in that wood.

Eastbourne,
March 1882.

DREAMS AND ALLEGORIES

A SOUL'S JOURNEY—TWO VISIONS

"There is no light in earth or heaven,
But the cold white light of stars."

A SOUL was born down in the deep and dark where all souls are, in a cavern under the earth. And it crept along the floor, and it saw a glow-worm and it went after it. And when it got to the door of the cave it put out its hand to take it; and the glow-worm crept into a little hole in the ground; and the soul sat down in the dark, at the door of the cavern, and cried.

And after a while it looked up, and over its head in the darkness it saw a light moving; and it got up and walked after it. And the light went on, and on, and on, and at last the soul caught it. And it sat down on the ground, and parted its finger and thumb to see what it had got. And there was a little damp matter on its finger-tips; because it was a firefly, and it had crushed it.

And the soul sat on the ground, and screamed and flung itself on the ground, and all was dark, and the soul was young. And after a while it looked up, and, in the dark on the heights above, it saw a light that burnt bright and clear. It began to climb.

This light did not move. When the soul came to it, it found a house of pure gold, with windows of crystal, and through them the fierce, iridescent light burst; for the house was full of fire. And the soul walked round and round it. And it said, "This is light; this is warmth. How dark it all is elsewhere!" And it went round the house tyrol-leer-ing; tyrol-leer-ing; tyrol-leer-ing! And it went round the house and it sang. And it said, "Oh, I wish the door would open, that I might go in!" And at last it went to the door and knocked softly: and the door opened and it went in. And the door was shut behind it. And the fire burnt inside.

And afterwards the soul came out of that house of fire, with its arms above its head. And it went and lay down in the dark. And there was an odour as of burnt flesh: but the soul was quiet.

And at last the soul looked up. And above it on the height it saw a light burning, still, without flickering. And the soul stood up and began to climb. And it got to the top of the height at last and it came to the light. And the light was a tallow candle in a tin lamp and behind it was a reflector and on the lamp was written "Fame." And the soul looked at the lamp. And it went a long way off; and sat upon a rock, with its elbows on its knees. And after a while it looked up, and it saw a light burning on the height above its head. Then again it rose up

and climbed. And when it had got to the top of the hill, the last range, it found the light burning. It was a great fire of logs, laid across and across; and on the logs was written "Friendship." And the steady blaze went up straight to heaven. It did not flicker or turn; it sent out a steady warmth. And the soul said, "This is truth! This is reality! For this I climbed!" And it held out its hand to the blaze. And over its head were the stars shining, but it looked at the firelight. And it went to sleep there by the fire. And at last the soul woke up. And the fire had gone out. And the soul groped among the ashes with its hands. And there was one tiny coal left; and it clung to its forefinger, and it ate the flesh away, till it had eaten to the bone. And the soul laid its hand in its breast, and it lay down on the ground by the ashes.

And the soul said, "There is now no light more. I have reached the last height. There is now no light to strive for!"

And it lay still with its face on the ground.

And after a while the soul looked up. And over its head were the stars, they that neither rise nor set: that shine not for the individual, but for the whole; they looked down on it.

. . . . .

And the soul rose to its feet.

It knew why it had climbed.

GOD'S GIFTS TO MEN

THE angels stood before God's throne to take down his gifts to men.

One said, " What shall I take to the little child ? "

God said, " A long cloudless day in which there shall be no rain, to play in."

And one said, " What shall I take to the woman ? "

And God said, " The touch of a little child upon her breast."

And one said, " For the man ? "

God said, " He has all things, let him enjoy."

" And what shall I take for the poet ? "

And there was silence for a little while.

And God said, " For the poet, a long sleep in which there shall be no dream, and to which there shall be no waking : his eyes are heavy."

And the angels went down.

Alassio,
Riviera, Italy.

THEY HEARD . . .

THE Poet and the Thinker sought for truth.

God bent and held a hand to either.

To the poet he put out his hand from a cloudless vault of blue; the Poet saw it, and climbed.

To the Thinker God stretched his hand from the heart of a mighty cloud; the man looked up and saw it move: he mounted.

On far-off mountain sides they laboured, looking upwards.

Then he who looked into the blue, cried: "Brother, you are wrong! What lies above you is but dark cloud; reach it—you will find it cold mist. In it you will wander for ever. Over me in the blue sky is that which calls me; I rise to it!"

The Thinker answered: "Fellow, you are dazed. The sun has shone too long upon your head. What lies above you is an empty vault of blue. Enter it, you will find it empty space; you will grasp—air! Over me in that dark storm cloud lives that which calls me: when the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls and the cloud is riven, I see illuminated that which beckons. I mount to it."

The Poet cried—" Fool ! "
The Thinker—" Blind ! "
They both mounted.

. . . . .

At last, when they were very tired, they reached their mountain summits.

God bent, and took his Poet in his left hand, and his Thinker in his right, and laid them in his breast. When they awoke, they were side by side upon the heart of God. One whispered, " By the left hand, I ! " ; the other, " By the right ! " . . . and they heard the truth beat.

Mentone,
Riviera.

LIFE'S GIFTS

LIFE came to me, and she gave me a flower; and I wore it in my breast.

Life came to me, and she gave me a jewel; and I set it in a diadem and wore it in my hair.

Life came to me, and she gave me a draught of water when I was thirsty unto death; and I drank it up.

Life came to me, and shot a ray of light on me; and I did not try to catch it. I cried, "Shine on! Thou art not to be held within the hand. Thy mission is to go forward. Shine on!"

London, 1887.

THE FLOWER AND THE SPIRIT

A FLOWER grew by the roadside.

A spirit passed.

It said: "Beautiful white flower, let me take you in my hands and carry you home. I will take you up with all the soil about you, and carry you safe."

And the flower said: "No. Your hands will disturb me. Your hot breath will curl my leaves. I grow here by the roadside in my beauty, and all look at me. Go; your hot hands will curl my roots."

So the spirit went.

And many days after it passed that way: and it was winter now, and all the ground was bare and white with frost. And the flower stood alone in the cold: and it said: "Oh, spirit, take me up, carry me home in your warm hands. I am freezing to death."

And the spirit said: "No, my hands are full with other flowers. It cannot be now. See, this is all I can do"—and it bent over the flower and wept

into its frozen cup burning tears; and for a moment they melted it.

Then the spirit went its way, and the flower stood alone in the cold.

Alassio,
Italy,
April 2, 1887.

THE RIVER OF LIFE

A SOUL stood on the bank of the River of Life, and it had to cross it.

And first it found a reed, and it tried to cross with it. But the reed ran into its hand at the top in fine splinters and bent when it leaned on it. Then the soul found a staff and it tried to cross with it: and the sharp end ran into the ground, and the soul tried to draw it, but it could not; and it stood in the water by its staff.

Then it got out and found a broad thick log, and it said, "With this I will cross." And it went down into the water. But the log was too buoyant, it floated, and almost drew the soul from its feet.

And the soul stood on the bank and cried: "Oh, River of Life! How am I to cross; I have tried all rods and they have failed me!"

And the River answered, "Cross me alone."

And the soul went down into the water, and it crossed.

Amsteg,
Thursday Night,
May 1887.

THE BROWN FLOWER

THE angel who guards the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven left them open one evening by chance, and a man wandered in.

As he looked at the silvery light a holy one came up to him.

"What are you doing here, friend?" it asked. "You have no pass from the Angel of Death; you must go out again."

And the man answered: "Oh, I am willing to go. I do not wish to stay here" (for the woman he loved was below and his heaven was there). "But let me only gather a few of these flowers of heaven to place on the heart of one I love."

And the angel said, "Gather them." For it knew he was in the rapture of first love, and the Angels of God look down with pitying eyes when they see soul fiercely knit to soul.

And the man gathered from their beds crimson, silver, and golden Flowers of Heaven; Rapturous-joy, Hope-in-the-future, Sweet-touch-of-hands, Union-in-daily-life; these he took and turned to go.

But the angel called him back.

"You have left the best of all," she said. "See that small brown flower growing close to the root of the tree; take that. For the flowers you have got, they are only immortal in heaven; on the earth they fade."

So he gathered the brown flower, and went.

. . . . .

And it came to pass after thirty years that Death went to visit a lonely woman who was at the end of her journey. And Death, Death the all-seeing, before whom all things are laid bare, looked into the lonely woman's bosom. Once there had been brilliant flowers laid there, by the hand of a man: Rapturous-Joy—but that had been nipped by a cruel frost; Sweet-union-in-daily-life—that she had given up to another; the Sweet-touch-of-hands—it had dropped from her while she was still young; Hope-in-the-future—it had faded and faded slowly away from her. But when Death looked into her bosom, lying against the old shrivelled breast was still one small brown flower, fresh and tender as on the day the man laid it there, and the name of the flower was Trust.

THE TWO PATHS

A SOUL met an angel and asked of him: "By which path shall I reach heaven quickest—the path of knowledge or the path of love?" The angel looked at him wonderingly and said: "Are not both paths one?"

A DREAM OF PRAYER

I STOOD on the footstool of God's throne, I, a saved soul, and I saw the prayers that rose up to heaven go up before him.

And they floated up ever in new shapes and forms. And one prayed for the life of her son, and the sufferer prayed for rest, and the wronged for redress, and the poor for food, and the rich for happiness, and the lonely for love, and the loved for faith. And amid them all I saw a prayer go up that was only this: "Give me power to forgive," and it passed like a cloud of fire.

And years passed and I stood on the footstool of God's throne again and saw the prayers go up, and all were changed: he who prayed for love prayed now for power, he who prayed for ease prayed now for strength, she who had prayed for her son prayed now for his child; but I noted one prayer that went up unchanged: "Give me power to forgive."

Again years passed and I stood on the footstool of God's throne once more, and saw the prayers go up. Then among them all I noted one I knew; it said only: "*Give me power to forgive.*"

And years passed and I stood there again. And the prayers ascended, and were all changed. And I heard a prayer faint and low, which said: "Teach me to forgive." And I said, "Surely this may be granted now," for the voice grew weak.

And God said: "It is answered; even now I have sent Death with the message."

Gersau,
Switzerland.
May 10, 1887.

WORKERS

IN a far-off world, God sent Two Spirits to work. The work he set them to do was to tunnel through a mountain. And they stood side by side and looked at it. And they began to work. They found that the place they had to work in was too narrow; their wings got interlocked. They saw they would never get through the mountain if they worked at it only from that one place.

And one spirit said to the other, "You stay here; I will go and work from the other side."

And it flew away. And they worked on, each from his side of the mountain. And after years in the dark, each one heard the sound of the other's axe, picking, and they knew they were getting near—that the other was at work.

But before they got to the centre, these spirits' sleep-time came; and God sent other spirits to take their work and place.

But they had heard each other's axes picking, in the dark; that was enough for them.

Alassio,
Riviera, Italy.
April 1887.

THE CRY OF SOUTH AFRICA

GIVE back my dead!
They who by kop and fountain
First saw the light upon my rocky breast!
Give back my dead,
The sons who played upon me
When childhood's dews still rested on their heads.
Give back my dead
Whom thou hast riven from me
By arms of men loud called from earth's farthest
bound
To wet my bosom with my children's blood!
Give back my dead,
The dead who grew up on me!

Wagenaar's Kraal,
Three Sisters.
May 9, 1900.

SEEDS A-GROWING

I SAT alone on the kopje side; at my feet were the purple fig-blossoms, and the yellow dandelion flowers were closing for the night. The sun was almost sinking; above him in the west the clouds were beginning to form a band of gold. The cranes were already beginning to fly homeward in long straight lines. I leaned my head against the rock upon the kopje, and I think I slept.

Then it seemed that in the sky above me moved a great white figure, with wings outstretched.

And I called, "Who and what are you, great white Spirit?"

And the Spirit answered, "I am the Spirit of Freedom!"

And I cried, "What do you do here, in this sad land, where no freedom is?"

And he answered me, "I am watching my seeds a-sowing."

And I said, "What is there a-sowing here? Our cornfields are down-trodden; at day the flames from

burning farm-houses rise into the sky, and at night the stars look down on homeless women and young children. Here the walls have ears; we look round to see if no man is following us to listen to the very beating of our hearts. What place is left for you here?"

And he said, "I have watched my seeds a-sowing. At the foot of every scaffold which rises in town or village, on every spot in the barren veld where men with hands tied and eyes blindfolded are led out to meet death, as the ropes are drawn and the foreign bullets fly, I count the blood drops a-falling; and I know that my seed is sown. I leave you now, and for a while you shall know me no more; but the day will come when I will return and gather in my harvest."

And I cried, "Great Spirit, when shall that time be?"

But his wings were spread, and it seemed they covered all the sky as he passed.

And I cried, "Spirit, beware, lest even in the sky they shoot up at you and you be killed for ever in this strange sad land."

But he cried as he fled from me, "I cannot die! . . . *Mors janua vitæ!*"

And I started up. I saw no spirit, but the sun was sinking. The west was gold and crimson. The last line of cranes with their heads stretched forward

and their wings outspread were flying homeward. I heard their long, strange cry.

I glanced around me on the kopje, fearing one holding by English gold might have followed me. But the kopje was silent. As I passed back into the village, the barbed-wire gates were not yet closed; only the dark-skinned guards scowled at me as I passed them with their rifles at the gate, and armed white men jeered as I went by them; but not one of them knew that I had been speaking with their great enemy on the kopje!

Hanover,
October 25, 1901.

THE GREAT HEART OF ENGLAND

I HAVE had a dream; again and again it comes to me, till I fear the night for its return.

I dream that in the war I have lost all my clothes. That they have shot to pieces the old dress that I wore so long and love so. And I go to have a new dress made, and I take the only stuff I can find, and the skirt is of three colours, red, white, and blue, and the body is a strip of green.

And when I have got it on I go down the street, dancing, dancing, dancing. And the people stop me and they say, "Why have you got that dress on?" And I say, "Do you not see it is the four colours? They shot all my old dresses to pieces in the war, the old dresses that I loved so. Now I could get nothing else but this." And they say, "Why are you dancing so?" And I say, "Because my heart, my heart, is broken."

And all the time, as I dance, the tune that I dance to, and the words that I sing, are the words of an old song I heard long ago when I was a child:

> "They are hanging men and women now,
> For the wearing of the Green."

And then there is a sudden stop, there is a gleam of bayonets, and a sound of guns firing; and then all is silence.

> "They are hanging men and women now,
> For the wearing of the Green."

And I wake, and the cold drops are hanging on my forehead, and I cry aloud in my anguish, "Who will save me from this nightmare? Can nothing break it?"

And then I know that one thing only can break it: if I could hear the beat of a great heart, the heart that has loved justice and hated oppression, that has sought after righteousness rather than gold,

> "That strikes as soon for a trodden foe,
> As it does for a soul-bound friend,"

—the great heart of England.

And in the dark I lean forward listening, that across six thousand miles of sea I may perchance hear that heart beat.

WHO KNOCKS AT THE DOOR?

I LAY upon my couch. Outside for days heavy snow had fallen, and the long trails of the roses that grew over the balcony were weighted with balls of frozen snow, and the wind blew them hither and thither. They tapped upon the window panes and against the woodwork of the balcony.

I had grown weary of looking at that dreary world outside; and I rose and drew the curtains across the windows and lit the light at the head of my couch, and lay down again to read the evening newspaper.

It was the old, old story, such as one read every night: Death and destruction; "heavy losses of the enemy"—always that; and then the long straight list of names, which one followed holding oneself tight, lest one among them should stab one to the very heart; then columns of hatred and abuse; then statements which men in calm hours would never make, or balanced men listen to; omissions and suppressions, till, amid it all, the mind groped like a small animal under a pile of decaying mould seeking to find the way to one ray of light; one judged

what might be truth only by what was left out, and the reality by what was denied. It was an old, old story; one read it every day. There was nothing new in it.

I was going to drop the newspaper on to the floor, and try to turn my thoughts to other matters, and then my eye caught sight of a paragraph, in very small type, at the left-hand corner on the inside page. It was printed in type so fine and the paragraph was so short that many reading might not notice it, and if they did, might not trouble to decipher it. Yet, it was something new; it seemed to have crept into the corner of the paper by chance. Having read it once, one read it over, and then again. It set one's thoughts travelling far.

Holding the paper in my hands, I think I must have fallen fast asleep, for I thought I found myself in a great forest. On every side the stems of the trees towered up above me like the aisles of some vast cathedral, and high above my head the wind struck their mighty branches together. I wrapped my mantle tight about my head and struggled on in the darkness: there was no path, and the dead branches cracked beneath my feet. It seemed to be one of those primeval forests, such as sheltered the forbears of our peoples—Suevi and Alamanni, Goth and Visigoth, Frank and Saxon, Lombard and Burgundian, before we spread ourselves out over Europe from the shores

of the Atlantic and the Bay of Biscay to Gothland, from the wet Tin Islands of the North Sea to the blue waters of the Mediterranean; who followed Ruric into the frozen steppes of the north, and Theodoric into Italy; and drank Sicilian wines with our Northmen leaders under the slopes of Mount Etna.

As I wandered in that impenetrable darkness, at last it seemed to me as though, from far off, I saw a gleam of light, and it almost seemed to me I heard distant sounds which were not those of the forest and the storm. I struggled onward, and, at last, I came to a place where through the darkness, under the over-arching trees, I could see looming a mighty building; light streamed from its windows of many-coloured glass, and from within came sounds of song and music, and loud laughter and shouts, as of those who applaud and rejoice.

I crept close up to the building, and pressed my face against a pane in a small window and looked in. It was a wonderful scene that met my eyes. Within was a vast hall built of richly carved woods, and the pillars that supported it were shaped in every lovely form, and sprang upwards into the groined roof, from which hung thousands of glittering lights; and along the walls golden torches were flaming; and beneath stood works of art, and scattered about the Hall were large tables, covered with glittering crystal and gold and silver vessels; and upon the tables were loaded

all of rich and rare of viands and wines that the earth produces.

Around the tables sat men and women clad in gorgeous robes; some had golden crowns on their heads and sceptres in their hands, and others paid court to them; and the women wore jewels of gold set heavily with precious stones, till they seemed weighted with them.

And I saw that from table to table they passed the rare viands and wines, exchanging them with one another; and men and women sang and danced now before this table and then before that, and the feasters showered gold and jewels upon them; and I saw men take ornaments from their own breasts and pass them on to men at other tables. And I noticed that though there were differences between those who sat at the different tables, yet they were all really of one garb and one appearance. And I said to myself, "Surely this is some vast banqueting house, where a great kindred are holding high festival together." And I thought, "Surely never since earth was earth has so much of richness, of rarity, been gathered together in one spot." And I marvelled when I thought of the labour which had brought all these things together, where once only the trees of the forest stood.

And then, as I looked, I noticed that all the men wore daggers fastened at their sides: and as I watched,

I thought I saw that though their lips were smiling sometimes their brows lowered; and I thought that some cast looks of envy as the viands passed from table to table; and it even seemed to me some whispered behind their hands as they glanced at one another: and though dance and song and feasting went on, the feeling came to me that, perhaps, all was not so well with that great company.

And then, I hardly seemed to know what happened, but at a table at the far end some drew their daggers and a man and woman fell dead upon the floor. Then from other tables others arose and stabbed at one another, and flung one another to the earth; and more and more arose, till from end to end of that great Hall blood flowed and men fell wounded and dying to the ground. And the tables were overturned; and the rare viands and the rich wines and glittering crystals and costly ornaments and rare works of art fell scattered and broken on the ground. And I saw that, in their mad rage, men seized broken fragments from the floor and hurled them at one another, till the glass in every door and window was shattered and the very walls were indented. And I saw women, who, with wild, hoarse voices, called on the men to stab and kill yet more; and some passed on to the men fragments to hurl at one another, though they themselves fell often buried beneath the heaps of killed and wounded.

And I, looking on through the shattered window, wrung my hands and cried, "Stop it! Stop it! Can you not see, you are destroying all?" But it might have been two small leaves in the forest trees overhead clapping themselves together, for any sound the feeble words made in that vast tumult.

And in their madness I saw men drag down the great glittering lights that hung from the centre of the Hall, and fling the fragments at one another; and tear down the lighted torches that were fastened to the walls, and strike one another with them. And as the lights fell down on that seething mass that covered the floor, they set fire to the garments of the fallen, and smoke began to rise. And outside the window where I stood came the stench of burning human flesh.

And I was silent with horror; for surely never since man was man upon the earth was there such a great and horrible destruction in any Hall where a great human kindred were gathered together.

And then, as I stood gazing in, it almost seemed to me, though I could not tell surely, that, from the far end of the Hall, where the great shattered doorway stood, I heard—three, slow, clear, distinct knocks! I listened; and then again I heard the sounds, and this time I knew I was not mistaken —slow, clear, distinct! And as I looked across that fallen mass of ruin, it seemed to me, I saw,

through a broken pane in the great shattered doorway at the far end, a human face looking in! The smoke came in between it and me; but I know I saw it.

And as I gazed, the flames began to creep up the walls of the Hall, and up the carved pillars, towards the roof itself.

And I wrapped my mantle tight about my head, and turned away into the darkness and the night. For my heart was *wae* for the great desolation I had seen—that men with their own hands should tear down that which with so much toil they had reared, and should consume that which with so much labour they had gathered, and that so much of the rare and beautiful should be no more! I sorrowed me over that great, brave company which had wrought so much. It might be, I knew well, that those whose knock I had heard might enter in, and take possession of that great Banquet House, and might even rebuild it in a nobler and fairer form: might build it so wide that not only one kindred but all kindreds might gather in it; and that the wine which they drank might give no madness, and the weapons be no more found at the sides of those who banqueted.

But for me, I was sore sorrowful over the destruction of that great kindred, and I wept as I stumbled onwards in the dark.

And the trees of that primeval forest, as they knocked

their vast branches together over my head, cried: "*Mad!*—MAD!—MAD!"

I woke: I was still lying stretched on the couch with the electric light burning at my head: the paper I had held up in my hand had fallen down on my breast. Outside the wild wind that had raged had grown silent, and the rose branches no longer tapped on the woodwork. I listened to the silence.

Then again I took up the evening paper and re-read the small paragraph at the left-hand corner on the inside page. And one's thoughts travelled far into the future.

London, 1917.

THE WINGED BUTTERFLY

THE insects lived among the flowers. They were all soft, lovely little creatures without wings.

By and by one little caterpillar began to have tiny lumps upon his shoulders that grew out and out. "Ah," said the others, "he is ugly, see, he is deformed." And the little caterpillar hid behind the leaves, and the lumps grew more and more, and at last they came out lovely little wings. Then he came back to his fellows, and they all said, "Oh, lovely little brother! Oh, lovely brother." And he shook his little wings, and he said, "It was for this I went away, for this to grow I was deformed." And he flew round. And he came to one that he loved and he said, "Come, climb with me and let us go and sit on that flower." And his comrade said, "I cannot climb; it tires me; I have no wings like you. Go alone." And he said, "No, I will go with you." And the other said, "I am going here in this little hole in the earth." And the butterfly tried to fold his wings and creep in after him, but he could not; and he almost tore his wings off in the door, but he could not. Then he went away, and he said to another, "Come, let us be companions." And the other said,

"Yes, I like your wings, but you must walk by me; you must not use your wings and fly." And he said, "Yes, I will only wrap them down." And they walked a little way together. Then the other said, "You are going too fast; your wings blow you on; do go slower." And the butterfly held his little wings as still as he could. And the other said, "They stick up so; couldn't you lay them against your side?" And he said "Yes." But when he held them against his side they ached so they nearly fell off. They ached, and ached, and ached. And the other said: "What are you so slow for? I thought one with wings would go faster than another. I thought you were so beautiful when you were up in the air. You are very ugly now. What are wings for? They only draggle in the mud."

Then the little butterfly spread his wings and flew away, away, away; and he kept far from the others and flew about by himself among the flowers.

And then the others said, "See how happy he is flying about there among the flowers, he's so proud of his wings."

And one day the little butterfly sat on a rose, and died there. And the others thought it died of drinking too much honey. None of them knew that it died of a broken heart.

Harpenden,
August 27, 1888.

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THE DAWN OF CIVILISATION

(HER LAST WORDS, IN 1920)

THE DAWN OF CIVILISATION

(HER LAST WORDS, IN 1920)

Stray Thoughts on Peace and War. The Homely Personal Confession of a Believer in Human Unity

I—INTRODUCTION

I HAVE thrown these scattered thoughts, written at intervals during illness, into a somewhat personal form. I have done so intentionally, because I have felt that many persons, even those of high intellectual attainments, were not able to understand what the question of peace and war in its widest aspects meant to certain among us; that, for us, it stands for something far more intimate, personal, and of a far more organic nature than any mere intellectual conclusion—that, for some among us, as a man is compelled to feel the beating of his own heart and cannot shake himself from the consciousness of it, whether he will or no, so we are under a certain psychic compulsion to hold that view which we do hold with regard to war, and are organically unable to hold any other.

There are many ways in which a man at the present day may conscientiously object to war. His forebears may have been objectors and have handed down to him a tradition, which, from his earliest years, has impressed on him the view that war is an evil, not to

be trafficked with. His ancestors may have been imprisoned and punished by the men of their own day, for holding what were then entirely new and objectionable views; but, where once a man can prove that he holds any opinions as a matter of inheritance and that they are shared by a certain number of his fellows under a recognised collective name, the bulk of human beings in his society may not agree with him, may even severely condemn him and desire to punish him; but, since the majority of human creatures accept their politics, their religion, their manners and their ideals purely as a matter of inheritance, the mass of men who differ from him are, at least, able to understand *how* he comes by his views. They do not regard him as a monstrosity and an impossibility, and are able to extend to him in some cases a certain limited tolerance; he comes by his views exactly as they come by theirs; and in so far they are able to understand him.

But a man may conscientiously object to war in quite another fashion. He may object to a definite and given war, for some definite, limited reason. He may believe that war to have been led up to by a false and mad diplomacy, to be based on a mistaken judgment of the national interests; to be even suicidal; and therefore he may feel compelled to oppose that particular war while the bulk of men and women in his society desire and approve of it. The unthink-

ing herd, unable to understand or tolerate any opposition to the herd-will of the moment, may regard him as incomprehensibly wicked; but, at least, an appreciable number of intelligent persons, not sharing his view, will understand that a man may be sincerely compelled to oppose certain lines of public action which the majority of his fellows approve. They may hate him for opposing their will, they may attempt to ostracise and crush him; but, in their calmest and most reasonable moments, they do understand that they might themselves under certain circumstances be compelled to act in the same manner, and are willing, therefore, to allow him the virtue of possible sincerity, if nothing else.

But a man may object to war in another and far wider way. His objection to it may not be based on any hereditary tradition, or on the teaching of any organised society, or of any of the great historic figures of the past; and, while he may indeed object to any definite war for certain limited and material reasons, these are subordinate to the real ground on which his objection rests. He may fully recognise the difference in type between one war and another; between a war for dominance, trade expansion, glory, or the maintenance of Empire, and a war in which a class or race struggles against a power seeking permanently to crush and subject it, or in which a man fights in the land of his birth for the soil on which he

first saw light, against the strangers seeking to dispossess him; but, while recognising the immeasurable difference between these types (exactly as the man who objects to private murder must recognise the wide difference between the man who stabs one who has a knife at his throat and the man who slow-poisons another to obtain a great inheritance), he is yet an objector to all war. And he is bound to object, not only to the final expression of war in the slaying of men's bodies; he is bound to object, if possible, more strongly to those ideals and aims and those institutions and methods of action which make the existence of war possible and inevitable among men.

Also, while he may most fully allow that certain immediate and definite ends may be gained by the slaughter of man by man—not merely as where Jezebel gained possession of Naboth's vineyard, for a time, by destroying him, or David acquired Uriah's wife by putting him in the forefront of battle, but aims even otherwise excusable or even laudable—he is yet compelled to hold that no immediate gain conferred by war, however great, can compensate for the evils it ultimately entails on the human race. He is therefore unable to assist not merely in the actual carnage of war, but, as far as possible, in all that leads to its success.

This is the man, often not belonging to any organised religion, not basing his conviction on the teachings

of authority external to himself, whom it appears so difficult, if not impossible, for many persons, sometimes even of keen and critical intellectual gifts, to understand.

We have, in South Africa, a version of a certain well-known story. According to this, an old Boer from the backveld goes for the first time to the Zoological Gardens at Pretoria and sees there some of the, to him, new and quite unknown beasts. He stands long and solemnly before one, and looks at it intently; and then, slowly shaking his head, he turns away. "Daar *is* nie zoo'n dier nie!" ("There *is* not such a beast") he remarks calmly, as he walks away.

This story returns often to the mind at the present day, when watching the action of certain bodies of men called upon to pass judgment on the psychic conditions of their fellows, on the matter of slaughter and war. The good shopkeeper, the worthy farmer, the town councillor, the country gentleman, and dashing young military man may understand perfectly their own businesses of weighing and measuring goods, rearing cattle, levying rates, or polo playing, or the best way to cut and thrust in the slaughter of war; but, when suddenly called upon to adjudge on psychological phenomena of which they have no personal experience, they are almost compelled to come to the conclusion of the good old backveld Boer—

"Daar *is* nie zoo'n dier nie!" "There *is* no such thing as a Conscientious Objector! He may stand before us; he may tell us what he feels; but we have no experience of such feelings. We know, therefore, that such a being *cannot* exist—and, therefore, it *does* not!"

In the few pages that follow I have allowed, as I said, a personal element to enter, and I have done so intentionally. As a rule, the more the personal element is eliminated in dealing with the large impersonal problems of human life, the wiser the treatment will be; and it is perhaps always painful in dealing with that to be viewed by those not in sympathy, to touch on those phases of life sacred to the individual as they never can be to any other. But I have felt that, perhaps only by a very simple statement of what one insignificant human creature has felt and does feel, it might perhaps be possible for me to make clear to some of my fellows that such a being as the universal conscientious objector to war does exist.

We are a reality! We do exist. We are as real as a bayonet with human blood and brains along its edge; we are as much a part of the Universe as coal or lead or iron; you have to count us in! You may think us fools, you may hate us, you may wish we were all dead; but it is at least something if you recognise that we are. "To understand all is to

forgive all," it has been said; and it is sometimes even something more; it is to sympathise, and even to love, where we cannot yet fully agree. And therefore, perhaps, even the feeblest little attempt to make human beings understand how and why their fellows feel as they feel and are as they are, is not quite nothing.

II—SOMEWHERE, SOME TIME, SOME PLACE!

When a child, not yet nine years old, I walked out one morning along the mountain tops on which my home stood. The sun had not yet risen, and the mountain grass was heavy with dew; as I looked back I could see the marks my feet had made on the long, grassy slope behind me. I walked till I came to a place where a little stream ran, which farther on passed over the precipices into the deep valley below. Here it passed between soft, earthy banks; at one place a large slice of earth had fallen away from the bank on the other side, and it had made a little island a few feet wide with water flowing all round it. It was covered with wild mint and a weed with yellow flowers and long waving grasses. I sat down on the bank at the foot of a dwarfed olive tree, the only tree near. All the plants on the island were dark with the heavy night's dew, and the sun had not yet risen.

I had got up so early because I had been awake much in the night and could not sleep longer. My heart was heavy; my physical heart seemed to have a pain in it, as if small, sharp crystals were cutting into it. All the world seemed wrong to me. It was not only that sense of the small misunderstandings and tiny injustices of daily life, which perhaps all sensitive children feel at some time pressing down on them; but the whole Universe seemed to be weighing on me.

I had grown up in a land where wars were common. From my earliest years I had heard of bloodshed and battles and hairbreadth escapes; I had heard them told of by those who had seen and taken part in them. In my native country dark men were killed and their lands taken from them by white men armed with superior weapons; even near to me such things had happened. I knew also how white men fought white men; the stronger even hanging the weaker on gallows when they did not submit; and I had seen how white men used the dark as beasts of labour, often without any thought for their good or happiness. Three times I had seen an ox striving to pull a heavily loaded wagon up a hill, the blood and foam streaming from its mouth and nostrils as it struggled, and I had seen it fall dead, under the lash. In the bush in the kloof below I had seen bush-bucks and little long-tailed monkeys that I loved so shot dead,

not from any necessity but for the pleasure of killing, and the cock-o-veets and the honey-suckers and the wood-doves that made the bush so beautiful to me. And sometimes I had seen bands of convicts going past to work on the roads, and had heard the chains clanking which went round their waists and passed between their legs to the irons on their feet; I had seen the terrible look in their eyes of a wild creature, when every man's hand is against it, and no one loves it, and it only hates and fears. I had got up early in the morning to drop small bits of tobacco at the roadside, hoping they would find them and pick them up. I had wanted to say to them, "Someone loves you"; but the man with the gun was always there. Once I had seen a pack of dogs set on by men to attack a strange dog, which had come among them and had done no harm to anyone. I had watched it torn to pieces, though I had done all I could to save it. Why did everyone press on everyone and try to make them do what they wanted? Why did the strong always crush the weak? Why did we hate and kill and torture? Why was it all as it was? Why had the world ever been made? Why, oh why, had I ever been born?

The little sharp crystals seemed to cut deeper into my heart.

And then, as I sat looking at that little, damp, dark island, the sun began to rise. It shot its light across

the long, grassy slopes of the mountains and struck the little mound of earth in the water. All the leaves and flowers and grasses on it turned bright gold, and the dewdrops hanging from them were like diamonds; and the water in the stream glinted as it ran. And, as I looked at that almost intolerable beauty, a curious feeling came over me. It was not what I *thought* put into exact words, but I seemed to *see* a world in which creatures no more hated and crushed, in which the strong helped the weak, and men understood each other, and forgave each other, and did not try to crush others, but to help. I did not think of it, as something to be in a distant picture; it was there, about me, and I was in it, and a part of it. And there came to me, as I sat there, a joy such as never besides have I experienced, except perhaps once, a joy without limit.

And then, as I sat on there, the sun rose higher and higher, and shone hot on my back, and the morning light was everywhere. And slowly and slowly the vision vanished, and I began to think and question myself.

How could that glory ever really be? In a world where creature preys on creature, and man, the strongest of all, preys more than all, how could this be? And my mind went back to the dark thoughts I had in the night. In a world where the little ant-lion digs his hole in the sand and lies hidden at

the bottom for the small ant to fall in and be eaten, and the leopard's eyes gleam yellow through bushes as it watches the little bush-buck coming down to the fountain to drink, and millions and millions of human beings use all they know, and their wonderful hands, to kill and press down others, what hope could there ever be ? The world was as it was ! And what was I ? A tiny, miserable worm, a speck within a speck, an imperceptible atom, a less than a nothing ! What did it matter what *I* did, how *I* lifted my hands, and how *I* cried out ? The great world would roll on, and on, just as it had ! What if nowhere, at no time, in no place, was there anything else ?

The band about my heart seemed to grow tighter and tighter. A helpless, tiny, miserable worm ! Could I prevent one man from torturing an animal that was in his power ; stop one armed man from going out to kill ? In my own heart, was there not bitterness, the anger against those who injured me or others, till my heart was like a burning coal ? If the world had been made so, so it was ! But, why, oh why, had I ever been born ? Why did the Universe exist ?

And then, as I sat on there, another thought came to me ; and in some form or other it has remained with me ever since, all my life. It was like this : You cannot by willing it alter the vast world outside of you ; you cannot, perhaps, cut the lash from one

whip; you cannot stop the march of even one armed man going out to kill; you cannot, perhaps, strike the handcuff from one chained hand; you cannot even remake your own soul so that there shall be no tendency to evil in it; the great world rolls on, and *you* cannot reshape it; but this one thing only you can do—in that one, small, minute, almost infinitesimal spot in the Universe, where your will rules, there, where alone you are as God, *strive* to make that you hunger for real! No man can prevent you there. In your own heart strive to kill out all hate, all desire to see evil come even to those who have injured you or another; what is weaker than yourself try to help; whatever is in pain or unjustly treated and cries out, say, "I am here! I, little, weak, feeble, but I will do what I can for you." This is all you can do; but do it; it is not nothing! And then this feeling came to me, a feeling it is not easy to put into words, but it was like this: You also are a part of the great Universe; what you strive for something strives for; *and nothing in the Universe is quite alone*; you are moving on towards something.

And as I walked back that morning over the grass slopes, I was not sorry I was going back to the old life. I did not wish I was dead and that the Universe had never existed. I, also, had something to live for—and even if I failed to reach it utterly—somewhere, some time, some place, it was! I was not alone.

More than a generation has passed since that day, but it remains to me the most important and unforgettable of my life. In the darkest hour its light has never quite died out.

In the long years which have passed, the adult has seen much of which the young child knew nothing.

In my native land I have seen the horror of a great war. Smoke has risen from burning homesteads; women and children by thousands have been thrown into great camps to perish there; men whom I have known have been tied in chairs and executed for fighting against strangers in the land of their own birth. In the world's great cities I have seen how everywhere the upper stone grinds hard on the nether, and men and women feed upon the toil of their fellow men without any increase of spiritual beauty or joy for themselves, only a heavy congestion; while those who are fed upon grow bitter and narrow from the loss of the life that is sucked from them. Within my own soul I have perceived elements militating against all I hungered for, of which the young child knew nothing; I have watched closely the great, terrible world of public life, of politics, diplomacy, and international relations, where, as under a terrible magnifying glass, the greed, the ambition, the cruelty and falsehood of the individual soul are seen, in so hideously enlarged and wholly unrestrained a form that it might be forgiven to one who cried out to the powers that

lie behind life : " Is it not possible to put out a sponge and wipe up humanity from the earth ? It is stain ! " I have realised that the struggle against the primitive, self-seeking instincts in human nature, whether in the individual or in the larger social organism, is a life-and-death struggle, to be renewed by the individual till death, by the race through the ages. I have tried to wear no blinkers. I have not held a veil before my eyes, that I might profess that cruelty, injustice, and mental and physical anguish were not. I have tried to look nakedly in the face those facts which make most against all hope—and yet, in the darkest hour, the consciousness which I carried back with me that morning has never wholly deserted me ; even as a man who clings with one hand to a rock, though the waves pass over his head, yet knows what his hand touches.

But, in the course of the long years which have passed, something else has happened. That which was for the young child only a vision, a flash of almost blinding light, which it could hardly even to itself translate, has, in the course of a long life's experience, become a hope, which I think the cool reason can find grounds to justify, and which a growing knowledge of human nature and human life does endorse.

Somewhere, some time, some place—even on earth !

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