

LOVE-ACRE

BY

MRS. HAVELOCK ELLIS

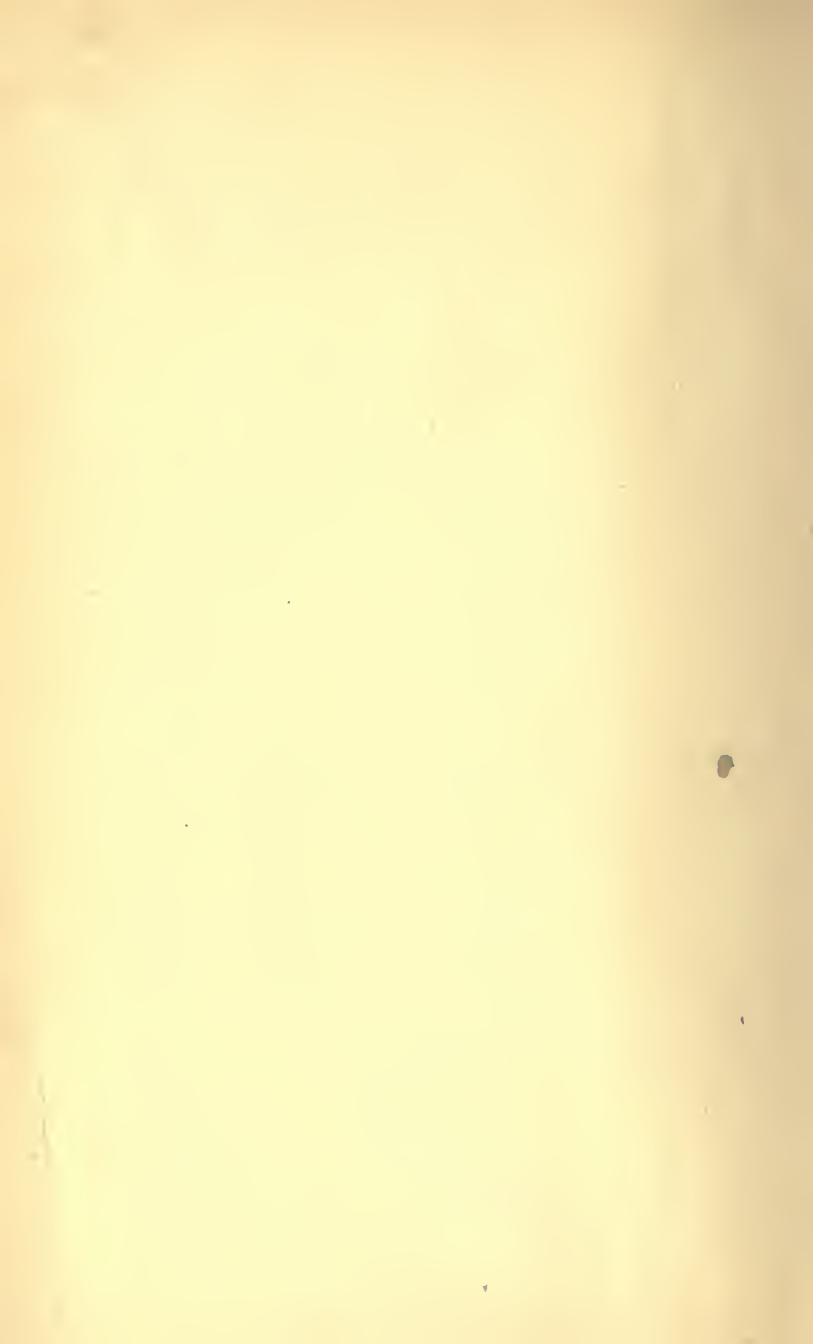
University of California
Southern Regional
Library Facility

~~1000~~
~~75~~ 1
7



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES







Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

LOVE-ACRE

BY MRS. HAVELOCK ELLIS

THREE MODERN SEERS

THE IMPERISHABLE WING

LOVE-ACRE

NEIGHBOURS ALL

LOVE-ACRE

AN IDYL IN
TWO WORLDS

BY
MRS. HAVELOCK ELLIS



MITCHELL KENNERLEY
PUBLISHER, NEW YORK
MCMXIV

*Copyright 1914 by
Mitchell Kennerley*

6009
E46 l

DEDICATED TO
MARY, MY MOTHER IN LOVE-ACRE,
AND
MARGARET, "THE MOTHER"
AT DORINCOURT

524953
LIBRARY

CONTENTS

PART		PAGE
	PROLOGUE	11
I.	THE PSYCHIC	15
II.	THE SHEPHERD	47
III.	THE LOVER	75
IV.	THE ALIEN	117
V.	THE DREAMER	173
VI.	THE OUTCAST	201
VII.	THE PILGRIM	229
VIII.	THE WOMAN	283
	EPILOGUE	295

PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

Was it a corner of paradise or a slum in a place of uncelestial fire? Who can tell? Who dare even guess? An observer, from one of the planets, would probably only have seen a strange light moving in and out on a plot of ground named at random by either a world's surveyor or a casual visitor Love-Acre. The light appearing and disappearing in the little plot was certainly under control in the same way that our lanterns are. To an observer from a distance, however, impressions may be at fault or intuitions prove fallacies. Here and there the light flickered, glimmered, and now and then almost went out. Then as it reappeared it seemed to dip and dodge as if the holder of the lantern was undecided what to gather in such a wilderness of Love.

Suddenly a spasmodic jerk of the light

seemed almost to suggest a laugh. Then there was the intimation of a form. A face there certainly was, but one quite unlike the face an earthly observer would recognize. It seemed all breath, as if the wind had taken shape, and the oceans had borrowed a voice from the storms to enable the messenger to speak to all the worlds. Why had this strange gardener suddenly stooped and what had he gathered? Apparently the minutest atom of fluff like the clocks of a dandelion with which children play in the earthly fields. The face which was like the wind and the sea blew and laughed as it whirled the tiny seed into space. Before the lantern was raised it was blown worlds away from Love-Acre. Another Face, not at all like the Sea and the Wind but just a Consuming Light, saw this tiny speck of a tempestuous soul flung on the wings of our world, to wither there or to blossom afresh, or perhaps to become a gardener in Love-Acre.

PART I.
THE PSYCHIC

THE PSYCHIC

TOBIAS TREWIDDEN, even in petticoats, was a puzzle to those around him. His mother had died when he was three weeks old and his father had married shortly after, being one of those men unable to do without the domestic orderliness of a good woman. There was no question of affection in Andrew Trewidden's second marriage. "I've a cub as can hardly suck," he said, "a wife scarcely cold, and a house-place in confusion." Everyone knew he had saved money, and so the matter was settled.

"I were mazed with one woman," said Andrew to Jock Peters, "that's enough for a life time. A sober life counts as well as any other."

Children arrived annually, and by the time seven had to be provided for, besides

Tobias, Andrew's temper, which was never of the best, was the terror of the whole family. Tobias, as soon as he began to think about things at all, found he was always in the way. His father seemed only to want to see him when a good thrashing made it necessary. Sometimes, however, Tobias said such queer things that his father forgot to whip him. Andrew informed his son once that he was a wooden spoon, which made the boy laugh so much he could not stop even when his father laid him across his knees and administered the usual caning.

When Andrew cursed at him one day and said no man could make a ray of sunshine out of a cucumber or a silk purse out of a sow's ear, Tobias nearly told him about two friends of his who could do quite as clever things as that. His father stared at him so hard and with such a smile on one side of his mouth that Tobias clapped his hands at the thoughts he had in his head, and but for

a good box on the ears might have let out his big secret.

When his stepmother told him he was as ugly as a little devil and asked him if his face didn't hurt, it set him wondering as he never wondered before outside his own big world. Somehow, when she asked him about his face and laughed, Tobias felt a pain worse than the one he had once in his "lower chest." Then Leah, the maid, had given him elder tea and he got better, but he never told her of this pain, for it seemed all over him. It made him want to swim far out into the sea or to dance till he was giddy. It was some time before he could go to his friends in the Big World, as he called it, for comfort. This world of his was so very real and so very large. Sometimes, at night, when in sheer terror, he crept out of bed to hide in the bottom shelf of the large store cupboard in the bedroom passage, in case his father might find him and thrash him, he found comfort and help in this world of his

imagination. The cupboard to Tobias was really a cave where the fairies and "tiredlings" came at will. Tiredlings were little people who were not wanted anywhere, and fairies were tiny folk who laughed a great deal about nothing and flew in circles in bright colored frocks and velvet shorts. The tiredlings got heaps of help from the fairies, and the fairies, in their turn, used the tiredlings for odd errands requiring drudgery and memory. Tobias held long conversations with these people whenever he was locked up for having his socks over his shoes or not having his curly head tidy like all the other children. He loved catechising these little people. They told him it was no worse being shut up with his dreams than being shut up in a summer-house, as they were at times, with nothing to amuse them but going to sleep. Tobias grew at last to like being locked up in the attic, for Leah used to slip up and smuggle a bit of the end of her own pasty through the door or a

slice of heavy cake or saffron cake for "Saucy," as she nicknamed him because his eyes were so bright and a smile nearly always hovered over what his stepmother called his "mug of a mouth." His little brothers and sisters were rather fond of him, but as he never played top or skipping rope or hop at the appointed seasons they had little to do with him.

Trailing Topsy and Fan-Fan, as he called the tiredlings, were much more exciting to be with than his home people. He learnt so much from them that after he went to school he confided in them that he had been taught "a passil of nonsense."

Fan-Fan laughed at this and just packed it all up in a cobweb bag, and Trailing Topsy turned it over to her great grandmother's half-nephew they called Turvey, who rode with it on a broomstick to the Land of Odds and Ends. Tobias longed to sit at the back of the broomstick, as real ladies and gentlemen did on the bicycles

that passed their home, but Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy said that you had to know even more than witches and grasshoppers to be allowed to do that. It was not quite safe, either, as all the foolishness of the world was taken there. A big Hop o' My Thumb creature, half fairy and half mannikin, picked over the bundles, so Fan-Fan said, and he was rather a cross-patch at times. Turvey had evidently whispered to Fan-Fan about the things he had seen once or twice, but he told him on no account to tell Trailing Topsy, for it might waken her up for life. As lazy trailers were in great request at times, like mad people were in some heavenly districts, this would be a dreadful thing to do. All Fan-Fan confided to her, for he hated her to be kept altogether in the dark, was that it wasn't a fit place for ladies to go to, but really not as bad as it was painted. He told Tobias it was not a bit like Leah's dust heap, which he had often investigated when on a little quiet business

of his own. He admitted, however, after Tobias had inundated him with more questions, that it was often a shining glory of a place where things that were apparently no good anywhere were turned into candles or nightlights and other servicable things. Tobias said he would love to see them changing, but Fan-Fan grew very serious at this. The Great Moth covers it all, he said, and under his big wings no one can see how things are done. From what he could make out there was a lot of pain attached to it all, but as the Big Moth was evidently not a fairy or a bat or a mannikin, he had learnt to change things into other things millions of years ago, when he was the wickedest of the creepy crawlies. This all comforted Tobias very much, and when his stepmother told him he was worse than a useless tool and dear at any price, and his father said he was a thorn in his side and he wished he had never been born or had died when he was a baby, Tobias only smiled. He knew

that if it ever came to the worst the Odds and Ends Co-operative Store could alter the whole of him and set him going again like Nathaniel Martin's lovely big top. It was just splendid to think of it all, for, from what they often said at home, it didn't seem any good living at all. He grew to love the Big Moth the more he thought about him. When he tried not to answer back or kick his biggest stepbrother when he pulled his hair, he felt sure the Big Moth would be pleased. When he was very greedy or pitied himself till he nearly cried, he thought perhaps the Big Moth had had a horrible tussle before he learnt how to shelter woe-be-gones or make good-for-nothings spick and span for ordinary wear and tear.

The boys at school told Tobias his own mother was dead and buried. This puzzled him very much, because he could not understand why his father had never told him this when he said he was so different to the other children. He asked Leah.

She only laughed and said it was not for little boys to reckon up what was what, and that he had better ask the fairies about his mother, as she had gone to dreamland when he came out of it. At last he laid the whole matter before Fan-Fan, who told him that his mother was a sort of caterpillar for a time after she had kissed him and said good-bye to him. He told Tobias that she kept house for some fairies who wore primrose frocks. Through these fairies she could send messages sometimes to her son. This so excited Tobias that when Trailing Topsy said she had never been quick enough to follow the yellow fairies, who were the swiftest of them all, he wondered how she could bear up under her laziness. Fan-Fan told him, however, that he knew his mother quite well, as his wings were very strong and he had no leanings to sleepiness like Trailing Topsy. His mother was the best housewife in the fairy country, he said, and she had a little shop there in a beautiful garden

where she dealt in dust for butterflies' wings and little gossamer harpoons with which to catch small flies too young to stick properly in cobwebs. These midgets of flies were more useful, too, alive than dead, and so they were worth catching. Fan-Fan also told Tobias that his mother lived in a transparent house where she made sweet little dew-drop earrings for the fairies' wedding gifts. She also sent the tiny pink fairies, who were too young to do anything else, to drink up ugly children's tears. That was why sometimes the tears of a little child went away so quickly and a strong man's tears only dried up in his heart, being so big and heavy a fairy could not swallow them. This made Tobias know his mother was always thinking of him, and in a sudden burst of confidence he told Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy what his stepmother had said about his face. It was so funny, the way he told it, that even lazy Trailing Topsy rolled head over wings, for she had no heels, and

Fan-Fan said that some things silly mortals said were enough to turn even a wasp's eyes inside out. When they had finished laughing Tobias heard a fluttering of wings, like the sound of a windmill his father had driven him to see one day when he was buying sheep. Thousands and thousands of fairies seemed to come from far off and they were the color of mushrooms and dog-roses, the yellow ones were just the color of the primroses and daffodils in the woods at Easter. All the fairies were laughing, and Tobias drooped his head in shame, thinking it was at his dreadful ugliness. Suddenly they all seemed to cross radiant wings with slender legs, and before Tobias could say "sawdust," his favorite expression when surprised, he was floating, floating he never knew where. All he knew was when Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy were tickling him with some Old Man's Beard and propping his mouth open with a sunflower seed.

"It's only once in ever so long a time,"

said Fan-Fan, "that mothers send all the errand fairies with a message at once. It is only the deep hurt of a little human child that makes it worth while. Your dear face hurt you so that she had you taken to her, but if you had really looked at her your eyes would have been no more use in your face. What she whispered in your ears, though, you will never be able to tell anyone, not even to Trailing Topsy or to me."

Tobias felt his fat little cheeks.

"Perhaps she put me wiv' Jesus," he said, "and let me play rounders with him."

Trailing Topsy flew away at this and Fan-Fan cried out "Hoots and Treacle," which made Tobias know he was hungry. When his stepmother gave him plum jam he longed for golden syrup, but he did not really mind. He just said "Mammy Love," which made his stepmother say, "Drated queer kid," but how could she know he was talking to his own dear mother?

Nothing ever hurt quite so badly again

because he had not only Trailing Topsy, Fan-Fan and the Big Moth as companions, to say nothing of a host of lovely colored fairies, but, better than all, he had a real mother of his very own, keeping a shop in heaven, with such "nicies" in it that Mother Carbines and her Tom-Thumbs and Pearly Drops were nothing in comparison.

One day Tobias met a man very like his father, but with such a ragged coat and with so many holes in his boots that you could hardly see the leather. He was so friendly that Tobias confided in him that his own mother was supposed to be dead, but that she really was nothing of the kind. He thought it would cheer the kind man, who said his mother was dead and that he had no friends. Tobias felt very happy when the poor fellow told him that his own dear mother with her little shop was no dream to the ragged man, but that he used to know her quite well, and so would Tobias please give him a penny at once. Tobias said he

had no penny, but he had a money box with ten three-penny bits in it. Would that do? It seemed very little to give to such a nice man. Tobias found out later that he had been "taken in," but what that exactly meant he must ask Fan-Fan. Anyhow, the man seemed happy, and Trailing Topsy would say nothing else mattered. His sister Patience told his stepmother what he had done, and he had to go without pudding for a week. Fan-Fan said that being taken in was neither here nor there, so long as he didn't turn into a begging boy too.

Fear began to leave Tobias little by little. Only once, when he was put to drag a big roller over the orchard grass to "break him," as his father declared, was he a little afraid because something in his chest seemed to be swelling till he felt the lump was as big as himself. He thought he was fading away, but he got over that. Soon after, because he had cut off his eyebrows to make himself more like Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy, his

father thrashed him harder than ever before. He would not scream, because Fan-Fan said only things that would never grow wings made a fuss if they were hurt. He felt, however, he must do something, so he bit his father's leg. He thought he should grow into ice he was so terrified afterwards, for Mr. Trewidden used words he generally only said to Tom the Carter and Fly the bull-dog. Tobias ran away when he heard his father swearing so loudly and meant never to come back. Even the thought of his mother only made him lie on his face and cry like a silly girl. He did not return of his own free will. Leah found him in the paddock fast asleep with his head against a tree stump and "a yellow light all amongst his curls," she told her mistress. She added "that the setting sun played on him like a Bible story." He had such a dazed look in his eyes that they sent for old Hannah, the midwife, who ordered a purge and a tumbler of salt and water.

“He’ve taken a fear,” she said, “and seemly ’ave been beyond mortal reach.”

Tobias smiled, but never told even Leah what lovely dreams he had had and that he had no idea where he had really been. Even Fan-Fan himself said he was not sure where people like Tobias went to at times. He said anyone who could live in two worlds was liable to go to a third, so they must leave it at that. Tobias asked Trailing Topsy why he need ever go to school or even home again. Fan-Fan answered him, as Trailing Topsy was half asleep, and whisked a sort of tail he kept under one wing for special occasions.

“Mannikin,” he said, “some secrets never leak out. Pepper put on the bill of a black-bird might make him sing it out, but even then they might misunderstand the language. Imps and fairies never minded,” he added, “not a wing’s flutter, where they were or what became of them.”

"There's always the sun," yawned Trailing Topsy, "and others do the rest."

Fan-Fan put out his tongue, which was long and narrow, and glanced sideways at Trailing Topsy.

"She's so very sweet asleep," he said, "and a dewdrop suffices when she is awake. We never fuss so long as we're together."

Tobias tried to imitate his little friends, and when the school-mistress boxed his ears and put him to the bottom of the class he tried to forget the pain and thought of fairyland. He was always very perplexed at the Scripture lessons and mixed the hymns up with things to do with his father and the home life. He had to wear a dunce's cap the whole afternoon because when he was told to repeat a hymn to the minister's wife, who had come into the school unexpectedly, he had shocked her so much she nearly cried. Her face was burning red and she wiped her eyes as if she must choke. Tobias repeated the verse to Fan-Fan and

Trailing Topsy, who, perched on a fuchsia bough, listened intently with their heads on one side and bulging eyes. Tobias repeated it very softly:

“Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.”

Fan-Fan said he thought the only thing wrong with it was that it was like the rhymes the teeny-weenies told the young mice for practice, but Trailing Topsy said she thought there was more in it than that or no human would cry over it. Fan-Fan saw he had not really cheered Tobias, so he made up something as near it as he could, for fairies like Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy are like Chinamen in the way they can imitate.

Forward, little Brother,
Into light and flame,
Where you'll find your Mother
Just the very same.

The mere mention of his mother made Tobias quite happy. That afternoon the school-mistress gave him another hymn to master, and it was astonishing how quickly he learnt it. With his hands well tucked in his pockets, he repeated it with the same pomposity that his father gave out family prayers on Sundays.

“Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child.
Pity my simplicity.
Gentle Jesus, come to tea.”

“Tobias Trewidden,” said the teacher, “are you a willin’ liar or what?” Tobias suddenly saw Fan-Fan outside the window and without Trailing Topsy. He simply answered what he heard.

“I’m Mammy’s own little make-up,” he said. The teacher had just had a letter from her sweetheart, in which he had said some quite idiotic things too, so she only said,

“Don’t be foolish, Tobias Trewidden, and learn it again.”

Tobias was told marvellous things by Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy. At Sunday school, because of this, he often forgot he was not with his own little playmates and asked the new teacher if angels laid eggs like caterpillars and if they had web-feet as well as wings. The day after he had asked these questions the school-mistress came to see Mrs. Trewidden and told her she ought to see a doctor about Tobias. His stepmother said she knew her stepson was not “exactly,” but whenever he was “fancikel” he was always tidy and good, and that, as he ate well and slept longer than the other children, there could be nothing really the matter with him.

“His brain is too active,” said the school-mistress, and Mrs. Trewidden said that it was not more so than his body, which was like a bit of quicksilver more than anything else. When Tobias asked Fan-Fan why he

had made the lady jump when he had asked about the angel's feet, he did not answer for a minute. Trailing Topsy opened her mouth for a dewdrop, which Fan-Fan, to save time, popped into it. Then Trailing Topsy spoke quite quickly, before Fan-Fan had time to invent an answer. He was really up a bramble bush, so to speak, and Trailing Topsy knew it. She loved him too much to go to sleep when she could help him.

"It's because she didn't know anything about eggs or angels either," said Trailing Topsy. "Don't you remember, Fan-Fan, that you were once asked by a glow-worm why I didn't shine, and you nearly broke in two with rage?" She turned to Tobias. "He," pointing to Fan-Fan and fluttering her wings, "went quite discolored for days after and only damp clover leaves on his head and the scent of evening stock in the moonlight revived him."

Tobias was always getting into trouble

about "shedding" his clothes, as Leah put it. He loved the soft warm air to kiss his body and the sea to hold him fast and hug him and cradle him. He persuaded his little brothers to play rounders with him without their clothes, and this led to punishments all round. He consulted Fan-Fan as to why all this was considered wicked. Fan-Fan sat up like a minister and wiped his mouth.

"It's just envy," said Trailing Topsy, "and no wonder."

"She's right there," said Fan-Fan. "They steal fur and feathers from all our relations and they get very nervous in only their own skins because the fairies can see all the drawbacks."

"It's the buttoning and unbuttoning which is so wearisome," said Tobias. Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy buzzed joyfully.

"We're buttoned to last till we go to the Odds and Ends Corner," said Trailing Topsy, "when it doesn't matter a bit if they

do undress us. It's not our affair then, but theirs."

One day Tobias was very surprised when his father took him on his knee and told him his grandfather, his own mother's father, was dead.

"How very jolly," said Tobias. "Did he write and tell you?"

He never could understand why his father pushed him away and said, "Cold-hearted little idiot." He shyly asked his stepmother why his grandfather minded dying.

"He's left a lot of money behind," she said. Tobias asked his little friends about this, but they were half asleep, he thought, for all they murmured was "foolishness." Trailing Topsy opened one eye and said a friend of theirs had tried to eat the tail end of a rainbow and was slowly dying, but no one bothered as to what she would leave behind. Fan-Fan said it would probably be a trail of glory, but Tobias found out he was laughing at him. He was nearly cry-

ing about it, but Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy flew on to his shoulder and whispered, "Nicer than money bags, anyway."

An Inspector came to look at the school one day. He called Tobias to him in his private room, for the child's eager eyes and gentle face had attracted him, and he found that Tobias answered easily and cleverly all his questions. At last the examiner asked the boy if there was not something he would like to know.

"Yes," said Tobias, suddenly feeling as much at ease as with Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy.

"Well?" asked the Inspector.

Tobias put his chubby hand on the visitor's knee.

"Can God really do everything?"

"Certainly," was the answer.

"Can He," asked Tobias, "make a stone too big for Himself to lift?"

"Good God!" cried the Inspector, and Tobias seemed quite satisfied. It was a

shorter answer than Fan-Fan or Trailing Topsy would have given, but it evidently meant He could.

At last the happy day came when Tobias left school and the question arose as to what was to be done with him. A blacksmith was out of the question, as he was not strong enough. A butcher's apprenticeship was offered.

"He's so damned fond of animals, there's his chance," said his father. His step-mother broke in.

"There's what belongs and what don't belong," she said. "Now Nathaniel Thomas could eat a pasty without turnin' a hair while he was in the midst of skinning a bullock, but Tobias would only retch and go fainty at any portion of the trade. He don't never eat lamb because he says he fancies he hears the bleatin', so he'd make but a poor butcher. It needs the proper constitootion, same as our own children have."

A cousin of Mr. Trewidden, who was a farmer, happened to come in one evening, and incidentally said he needed a shepherd boy.

"That's perhaps a better trade for the youngster," said Andrew Trewidden. Tobias was called in and the matter was settled that night.

When Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy were told of this great event they circled wing over wing above the head of Tobias. Trailing Topsy soon tired, but Fan-Fan seemed to go up as high as a skylark. The drawl of Trailing Topsy was slower than ever as she watched Fan-Fan till he was out of sight.

"He's gone to where the homing pigeons rise," she said. "He's a great one for soaring. It makes me giddy so I don't go. If they venture far enough up, the eyes with slits can see hundreds of miles off, and they often get the great secrets that way. Fan-Fan has heard them from only as far as a

lark rises." She turned round and round on a large bed of soft green moss and went to sleep. Fan-Fan suddenly dropped down again. He seemed in a great flutter and never even noticed Trailing Topsy, a most unusual thing for him. He jumped on the arm of Tobias.

"You're going nearer and nearer the Great Moth," he said. "Out in the cool nights and the quiet days, with the sheep and lambs, the messages will be sent to you from the Lullaby Shores and the Make-Shift Meadows. Even birds can't make out all the signs and tokens sent from there, and it's appointed so, for fear they would never trespass upon the earth again and bring comfort to the wingless ones who only sing in their hearts. If mortals could hear some of the messages they would die, like some do of too much sunshine. Far away, so far that the Great Moth has to travel miles and miles before he can give the tiniest message, there is a Wonder World called Love-Acre.

The greatest secrets that are sent to us come from there. Sometimes, on moonlight nights or in the red sunrises, the fairies with purple skirts and carrying juices squeezed from fruits from over all the earth, come and sing in the big mountains. In those songs are some of the great mysteries of life and love. They can only tell them to those who have been friends with all of us and who cannot speak the foolish words which hurt the silence. They took you away once and they never forget after that. Poor Boy, poor Boy.”

Tobias was very heavy-hearted. His friend was talking like the Bible and the school-teacher, and it made him very sad. Suddenly Fan-Fan saw Trailing Topsy asleep and almost chirruped at the sight.

“I’ve been so high,” said Fan-Fan, “I’ve got a dragon-fly’s jerks. A lark gave me a message and I’m overweighted with it. He brought it from a Golden Eagle, who got it

straight from Love-Acre. It sounds gibberish to me and no play in it anywhere." Fan-Fan's eyes bulged more than ever.

"What is it?" asked Tobias anxiously.

"It's this," said Fan-Fan slowly. "Fly without wings, dream without sleep and see from within. It means good-bye, little brother," he ended sadly, "and that is all I know."

"It's terrible after all, then," said Tobias slowly, "to be a shepherd."

PART II
THE SHEPHERD



THE SHEPHERD

TOBIAS TREWIDDEN's childhood had been spent in fairyland, the ogres in it had been the mortals who destroyed his fancies and disturbed his dreams. Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy, his imaginary mates, seemed realities and affinities, while his stepmother, his father, and his little stepbrothers and sisters were shades in comparison. It is true that he had lived in a world of gossip, but it was a gossip which had no malice in it and no bitterness. His little friends were Nature's god-children, and so were reverent and humorous. Through them Tobias had come to realize that the ants, the flies, the spiders, the beetles, and especially the dragon-flies had work as great to do, and ends as wonderful to serve, as his father, the minister, or even the doctor in his little village.

When it was decided that Tobias should leave school and become a shepherd a deep dreaminess took possession of him. This was not because he had left school, for there his fancies had been stifled, but because Fan-Fan had told him that it was good-bye to him and to Trailing Topsy, the two great friends of his childhood. He found he had literally "changed worlds," and Fan-Fan must have known what this meant. To be a shepherd was evidently to enter a region of terrible desolation. At first it was almost more than he could bear, especially when things in the very image of Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy whisked by him with no recognition of him. It was a new world of Silence, and it terrified him more than the thought of his father with the cane in his hand ready to strike him. He missed the laughter and the joy and the nonsense-explanations he had received from the insect world which transformed his unhappy childhood into beauty and joy. Was this being

grown up, he wondered? How long it seemed since he heard last about the yellow fairies and the Great Moth and his real mother in heaven, with her little shop there full of wonders! Everything in shepherding seemed so very still except the sheep and the magpies. He felt sure Fan-Fan would have objected to their company, as he did to owls and woodpeckers. "The Great Moth," Fan-Fan once said to him, "puts a world of nonsense into a cobweb or a nutshell. It is often to be found in the skins of sheep and of some mortals, but it is packed so tightly that lots of people never guess it is there. There are those who can chatter, and those who can sing, and others—well,—the Silence may tell." Fan-Fan never finished. Were the others here, Tobias wondered, and was all this dreadful ache in him their ache trying to speak, or was it his fault because he could not hear? He shivered with the gloom which fell upon his spirits, especially at night. There seemed

no play anywhere, only mystery and silence. His sheep, huddled into a gray throbbing mass, which gave forth plaintive cries at intervals, yielded him no sense of companionship. The desolation was on him which divides one life from another. Speech had comforted him in his child life. Silence had to be reckoned with in the new. The curly head drooped wearily and at last dropped into sleep in a perplexity which even dreams could not unravel. His food was brought to him once a day by the village carrier, part of whose round was near the end of one of the big fields Tobias had to guard. The man took away one basket and put down another, and rarely spoke to Tobias. The Shepherd's change of linen was brought in the same way, and his little hut he kept easily clean and sweet, to sleep in when the weather was very bad. He rarely went home, as it seemed only to increase his general feeling of hopelessness. The voices accentuated the terror of the silence and the

silence vulgarized the voices. Tobias came to the conclusion that all the evil was in him and the less said or thought of it the better.

It was quite two months before the strange sadness began to depart from the heart of Tobias. He never quite knew how the change came. A fear had grown upon him again, the fear which Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy had once before managed to send away, the fear the alien always has that there is no real place in the world for him. He tried to pray, but it was no use. He found he could only stammer: "Mother, dear, and the fairies, this is not what I want and I don't know how to get it." Only the round face of the moon seemed to be laughing at him, and the stars, in their baby way, twinkled at his fears. He was seventeen and should have known better, but when he fell asleep big drops were in his eyes as he heard the baaing of his flock before he passed into dreamland. No wonder the face of the moon seemed to widen into a smile.

as she looked down upon the little huddled form of a mortal afraid of her rapture and her power. The white glory touched his face, and the outstretched hand, flung open in despair, suddenly closed in his sleep as if it had grasped a shepherd's crook. It was more than this, however, that the silence of sleep had brought to Tobias. When he awoke a great longing was on him, the longing to shout or sing or dance or swim. He ran to the river and flung aside his few clothes, and as the water folded round his bare body he began to understand. He had been to his mother, he felt sure, and she had whispered to him and so taken some of the ache from his heart. Once before she had done it, and nothing else after mattered in the same way, because he understood. Now he became certain that the river was his brother and the clouds were his sisters, and the moon and the stars and the tender grass and even the rocks were a part of him and he of them. The silence was really only

their deep voices which he was too young and foolish to understand. He could scarcely eat that day, he was so excited. The grass called to him, and he lay down on it and heard it speaking to itself. He felt certain the trees had ears and even hushed voices, and also a great patience, like the sheep with their lambs. The flowers suddenly became all eyes to him, and as he gazed at them he understood why the scent had to come from some of them or they might have died of trying to speak and failing. His flock seemed almost a moving mockery in front of the beautiful Silence, and Tobias felt himself almost a ghost in the midst of these splendid realities. As one in a wilderness, and yet crying out with wonder at the joys to be found there, he realized how little school had taught him. Here was Dame Nature, with her wide open book in her hand, and he learnt happily and rapidly, and his heart sang within him. He found new names for everything about him, and

he slowly realized that he could speak within himself and get an answer back. The difference between that sort of talking and human voices was the difference between a half moon and a full moon. He began to pity Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy in case they had never fallen on the great secrets. Perhaps insects only knew the little secrets, and the Silence held fast the bigger ones. The grass revealed more to him than anything else. Perhaps it was because he rested on it so much. Its life seemed so curious. It quivered cool thoughts, and yet in a way it looked like little green swords of defence shielding the crotchety old earth. He began to understand that it carpeted the world, not only to give food and rest to animals and humans, but also for its own peculiar joy, the joy of cradling mushrooms and listening to the music made by swinging harebells in a midsummer madness. It was like a soft mother and father in one. It understood the whole world, and so encom-

passed it with a softness and a deliciousness that later in life Tobias only found in an Irish heart.

One day, when Tobias was watching the swaying of the ripe corn, he clapped his hands in glee. He had found out the glowing secrets of the poppies. He suddenly realized that they were a special sort of red fairy sent to ease the pain in the ripening corn, as it grew in dignity, in order later to feed its enemies, who cut it down just when it was the strongest and the happiest. The red poppies were there ready to give rest and then to die with their lovers. "How wonderful!" cried Tobias, "to die for what you love, but then—" and his strong young face clouded—"what is love?" The magpie, as it flew past him, tried to answer, but its language was so strange that Tobias simply laughed. He grew to love the corn and the little dainty poppies, and wondered what they said to one another. One night, when the moon was at its full, he seemed to hear

the voices of the corn and the poppies distinctly. It was not the wind or the murmur of the sea, but something mysterious and sweet, and yet glowing and masterful, and as clear as a bell, and the timid, laughing voices of the poppies answered as the strong wind flung them against the cornstalks. He had never heard either that rasp or that sweetness in any human voice. Now and again he felt sure he caught a twitter among the poppies like the mother-bird in her nest in the spring.

As time went on, Tobias became almost a sun-worshipper, and from its first blush in the morning to its rosy rest in the evening he drove his sheep to where he could catch its passionate breath on his limbs. It made his heart swell and sink with the aching in him to be like it, a light and a flame and a great warmth to cheer what was cold or lonely. He often held his thin body with both hands, as if he must break it to find a lamp inside him or at least a glow-worm.

“Something burns so within me,” he muttered. “Something which can’t get out of me. It is caged and hurts me. I must get it free.” Then he would swing his shepherd’s crook, and run and leap and at last sink exhausted near the gorse, which was never really out of blossom. He need not despair, he thought, if such a lovely smell could come from such a prickly, ugly bush as that. It was so lovely to keep finding out that everywhere there was a stand-by when any horrid thing happened. The nettle, he found, had always had the dock as a little hospital nurse to heal the wounds of those whose grasp was not tight enough to make real friends with the tetchy old nettle. It was all a matter of nerves, after all, and the nettle’s sting went the moment it was properly handled. Tobias took every chance to hold it very firmly, as he felt sorry that it could not make people see that it was their fault why it stung. Timidity irritated it and strength soothed it. Its friendliness, as To-

bias knew, was great, or it could not take the poisons out of the blood, as it did when made into soup or eaten instead of cabbage. He heard an old man tell his father once that a month of nettle-tea had taken the tantrums out of his great-aunt and made her comfortable and kindly. It was such a joy to Tobias to find that everything everywhere was really as anxious as Leah, the servant at home, to be useful and helpful, and he began to wonder if even the sheep would mind being eaten if they understood all the great secrets. Perhaps they did understand, and that was why some people thought they did not know or suffer much when they were huddled into the slaughter-houses. Tobias could never sleep properly or sing at home when he knew just where and when these dreadful things happened. Now, as a shepherd, he wondered if it might be some sort of joy to give up one's life, and as he wondered he came closer to his flock. He gave them all names and loved

each sheep or lamb for its various looks and individual ways. It was astonishing how different they were, and how some of them had eyes which looked like blind eyes, and so unable to see a snare and escape from it.

Tobias found out more than cats and dogs and even birds seem to know about the wonders of trailing plants and brilliant berries. They seemed all to have some sort of healing in them for the strange disorders in the world. Some evidently thought themselves more beautiful than the rest, like the nightshade, and were proud when men called them *Bella Donna*, as if they were great dames and fine ladies. Tobias seemed to hear their secrets only in the twilight. As for the honeysuckle and the foxglove, he never quite understood some of the things which were breathed out in a midsummer dawn by them. He became as still as they appeared when the tiny hints of their upward growth flooded him. It seemed some-

times that only something white, like the gulls, could understand. Tobias watched, one early morning, a big gull poised over a dip in the brushwood where the honeysuckle crept in and out among the old tree stumps and boulders. The bird hid its legs as it hovered and listened, as if wings alone were any use in the understanding of some things. When the gull had flown away with a sound like happy laughter, Tobias entered the little hollow over which it had hung, and there he found the greenest moss he had ever seen. As he bent and felt it with his lips, because of its softness, the cool ferns touched his cheek, teaching him the music of their message to the whole world, hidden, as the best of them were, in the undergrowth and often in darkness. When Tobias came to examine the moss more closely, he found it was really like a tiny fern itself, and also like the leaf of a tree, a Christmas tree. The whisper he heard among the ferns was that in one likeness are we all made, and it is in

us all to be a shade and a coolness and a great peace. Tobias looked up suddenly, for it was as if someone very tender and strong had said this close to his side, but no one seemed near, so he lay down to watch the red dawn, which is a voice and a signal to any careful shepherd. It crept over the sea and the earth and made everything lovely and passionate.

The dewdrops in the early morning had a special meaning for Tobias. They made the gorse bushes into fairy castles and spider webs into spangled nets. The dewdrops might be mistaken for little children's tears, yet he remembered that Fan-Fan said his mother dealt in them for fairies' weddings. He saw whole worlds sometimes in the biggest drops, and drank them when his heart ached with a sweet sort of pain. There were some days when he longed to leap like a grasshopper or saunter like a caterpillar, or drowse as a bee seemed to do when made giddy with the sweetness of a wild rose.

He looked at his hands and his feet in despair and shook his curly head with rage. To swim and to shout and to run was all that was left for him when all his brothers and sisters in the great silence could do so much more. He wanted to wave to and fro like the trees when the jealous wind tossed them which way it would. He longed to be part of the sea and to be kissed by the moon and burnt by the sun and at night to be a looking-glass for the stars. What secrets they could tell, and the flat big face of the sea must have guessed them all or how could it bear its own deep sorrow and only show it by sighing and heaving in its odd way? Tobias would not have really loved the sea had he not watched it trying to cuddle up to the sands and run backward and forward in a playful way, as if half ashamed at its great longing for a companion in its silence. He knew it hungered, as he did, for something out of reach, and

his ache became one with that of the big oceans of the world.

He felt he loved and was loved by all about him. Even the sheep became sweet and holy to him, at last, and the jerky wagging of a lamb's tail as it sucked made him understand a mother's heart, as he was beginning to realize his own. For in Tobias Trewidden was hidden, from the day he was born, a threefold nature. Fate, by the aid of the world of men, the Silence of Nature and the cruelty of Love, would make of the man, the woman and the child entombed in his little sensitive body just what Destiny needed to accomplish its purpose. To fulfil this purpose he had to learn the great secrets. He found, for instance, that the lichen on the gray Cornish walls had as great an end to serve in Nature's nurseries as her big oak trees or her brilliant rhododendrons in her halls and drawing-rooms. An artist, coming into the field one day to paint, told Tobias that he got more beautiful thoughts

from the little, shiny green plants notched into the walls with their gray bloom than from mountain peaks or blue lakes in Italy. Then again he realized how dead leaves made manure, and manure, in the Odds and Ends dust-heap of Nature, was transformed into new shapes. So manure was as beautiful and valuable as dog-roses and daffodils, which in this curious way got much of their life and beauty through decay and death. The flowers, to Tobias, were little evangelists of the whole of Nature. The daisies, with their patient eyes, the buttercups, with their satin skins, the primroses, with the hoard of the winter's dreams turned into wrinkled leaves and untroubled yellow faces, the snowdrops in their pursed and lowly purity, who acted as heralds of the spring, all spoke to Tobias as to a little half-brother they were just learning to love. The daffodils made him dance as no other flower could. He tiptoed to their hidden rapture; they came in such armies to disperse the last signs

of winter, and the wind joined so merrily in their joy and self-assurance. As for the violets, especially the white ones, Tobias was a shepherd to them, asleep or awake, nearly all the year round. For in Cornwall sheep-rearing and guarding cattle is not such arduous work as in some parts of England. The manuring and hoeing and gathering of several acres of violets, which were fenced off in the sheltered corners of the big fields where the sheep grazed, is almost as great a task as the ordinary work of a shepherd. Sometimes the farmer who owned the land and the sheep lent a hand himself, but Tobias was glad when he had gone and he was once more alone with his work and his dreams. He began to feel that he had always lived in a world of soft sounds and sweet smells. Everywhere there was a new glad wonder, and nothing was more of a surprise than when one morning Leah came to see him in order to bring him a cake and a white smock, for it was his twentieth birth-

day, she said. He had grown into a man without realizing it. His birthday was near St. Patrick's Day, said Leah, and that meant that the winter was nearly over. Not that Tobias really disliked the winter. As a child he had feared cold and darkness, but as a shepherd he found that cold was really heat turned inside-out, in order that those trying to escape the snow might escape their enemies. He also realized that cold and frost gave many things rest which the warmth kept awake. As for the darkness, he found it made a sort of light within itself, as the great storms made a hush when the winds were the wildest, and in this hush Nature's maddest children could cradle themselves into sleep. It was a little like sleep and perhaps like death, a way of re-making and re-touching things not yet arrived at their fullness or their joy.

Tobias had often seen death as a shepherd, and he had grown at last not to be afraid of it. At first its coldness and stiff-

ness frightened him, but as ice and snow are hard and cold and many other lovely things stiff and still, he grew to understand Nature's deeper sleep, and even his own heart at times was cold and strange. He felt at last that the body was only a mask, and the spirit within just like the lamp in a lighthouse, the only thing of any use in a storm or in darkness. He grew to understand that the eyes are little peep-holes of this strange light inside, and he guessed that rats, sheep, cats, and horses see things only according to their light within, and so the eyes are shaped differently, just to let the radiance be manifested according to the spirit. He wished he could see as they all saw. He envied the lizard and, above all, the eagle he had heard about but had never seen. He had always wished he could be a Golden Eagle, and so able to kiss the sun and rest on the moon and fly from mountain peak to mountain peak to see the cities as specks in the distance. The dreams of an eagle must be like

the secrets in fire and in lightning. Even as a little boy he had guessed some of the secrets of the flames. His stepmother had laughed at him when he shouted with glee at the blue and golden glory in the driftwood burning in the great open fireplace in the winter. He had told Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy what he saw in the flames, and Fan-Fan said that the secrets of the great deep were beyond knowing and that even birds perhaps dare not tell them. Tobias wondered what he meant, but Jack Richards told him afterwards that he had heard lots of funny things had been seen in the flames of driftwood from old ships. As a shepherd, Tobias began to understand the secrets. Some of the great inner life of the oceans had passed into the driftwood, and so water was turned into flame at last and gave away, even to stupid mortals, some of the secrets of the deep. His father said it was only the brine and other things that gave the blue and yellow color. It had

always, however, seemed a miracle to Tobias, and made him understand why Jonah could live in a whale's belly or Lazarus walk out of his grave-clothes as if he had only been asleep. The pale purple and blue of those driftwood fires with the encircling forks of flaming gold had remained as lasting joys in the heart of Tobias, and the trees and the sea and the silence gave him the clue to it all. When he became a shepherd, he saw that the life of an oak began as an acorn and, after many adventures in the great oceans, ended in flame. Tobias after that always envied the trees, as being nearer to the life of a Golden Eagle than even a gull. The thoughts of a mole must be wonderful too, in a different way to the trees, thought Tobias, and he wished he could see without eyes deep into the great secrets of the soil, as a mole did.

Tobias noticed that it was difficult for some animals to make friends with each other and that some who seemed most alike

were really the furthest apart. One day he saw a funny meeting. A farmer must have lost his ferret. It ran up to Tobias and did not seem afraid of him at all, so he fed it with some bread and a little milk from his can. Then it scurried away. In the morning Tobias was wakened by a queer sound and this was so unusual that it broke into his sleep. The ferret and a squirrel had met and the sounds were so funny that he laughed till he nearly cried. Then suddenly he began to see that it was the sad and terrible meeting of one so like the other that they were enemies because of it. It gave him a feeling of dreadful loneliness until his eyes lighted on a group of jackdaws perched on the backs of a herd of his sheep and busily employed in plucking out the wool for their nests. With sleek heads, bent sideways between each dive for the wool, they reminded him of the minister at home eating cake at the Sunday school tea. It took away all his loneliness because he was so glad he

was not there, but just a shepherd boy who knew a few things he was sure neither his father nor his stepmother had come across even in books or in chapel. He remembered, for instance, how his stepmother hated rain and he had grown to love it. It was this voice of the wet which, breaking in suddenly on the silence, made him aware of other secrets Mother Nature kept to herself when betraying others. The patter on his sailor's oiled coat, yellow as a cowslip, with its black collar like a ram's ears, made him understand the clouds as never before. Not only were they moving castles in the air, but some of them were glorious heavenly yachts with fantastic sails. He would lie at full length sometimes, and let the anger of a thunder shower vent itself upon him, and as the lightning laughed and the thunder roared he slept as a child sleeps in his mother's arms when too many fireworks have tired him with noise and color and swiftness. When he awoke he always found the birds singing

and Nature's gentle sigh of relief scarcely breaking the silence after the storm.

How well he remembered when Fan-Fan had brought him the message from the Big Moth and he had thought how terrible a thing it was to be a shepherd. And now he smiled as he thought of it. "It would be like being afraid of being a Golden Eagle," he murmured, "or a Lover, for that must be the greatest of all." As a flock of crows cawed over his head they said, "Mad, Mad, Mad." Tobias, as he fell asleep, as was his way when the messages reached him, murmured, "Glad, Glad, Glad," but the Moon, the Stars, and the Stillness which precedes the Storm kept their Secrets.

PART III
THE LOVER

THE LOVER

IT was St. Patrick's Day. The shrill wind of the night had at last worn itself out. There was a faint sob left, like that of a child as it nestles to its mother's breast with the tears wet on its cheeks. The wind following the downpour had been so strong that Nature's tears had been dried up in her fierce mood. To-day, however, the hail and the rain and the tempest had all fled before her smiles and laughter, and the sun had his own will with the Earth. A flood of glory made her restless with her joy and the birds, her little feathered handmaidens, carolled out the deep hopes of the spring. Nature's voice, vibrant with passionate desire, and now and then shrill with foreboding, echoed plaintively through the cries of the four-footed beasts Tobias was shepherding

till the day of sacrifice came. The demure primroses, with their yellow eyes wide open as if in wonder, had been tossed in the gale as far as their short stalks would allow. The recklessness into which the wind had betrayed them had flung many of the daffodils into an ecstasy ending in death. The sea was one dazzling breast, gently swelling toward the warmth of the sun, and intoxicated into a rippling smile by the gentle touch of the west wind. The blue in the sky and the blue in the sea vied with one another, as if to eclipse the greenness of the earth even on St. Patrick's Day. The storms before and the rains after seemed of no account on this day "lent," as the Cornish say, as a very image of midsummer.

Tobias Trewidden, the shepherd, coming out of his hut at dawn, felt, as he said to himself, like a catapult. He wanted to spring outward and inward at once, to kneel and to soar. Between the ache of joy in his heart and the strength of the muscles

in his body he stood motionless, listening to the outburst around him. How he envied the gulls and the rooks and more than all the blackbirds. They, at least, could cry out or warble or sing both their prayer and their desires. The blackbird's note was so strangely like the joy and the ache in the heart of Tobias. A sudden sting and sweetness had pulsed through his flesh, and a desire, strong as death over the living, had taken hold of his soul. He had slept dreamlessly and only now, awake in the perfect dawn, did he feel as in a dream. His cruel and solitary childhood, his strange and lonely youth as a shepherd of flocks and flowers, had suddenly merged into a young manhood which had made his laugh deeper, his muscles more tense, and his inner sense of a coming joy a reckless peace. This jubilant madness of the spring on St. Patrick's Day gave a new light to his eyes and a new meaning to his life. Leah, the maid-of-all work at home, had years ago had an Irishman for a hus-

band, and she had told Tobias on one St. Patrick's Day, when she had pinned a bit of shamrock in his school cap for luck, that because of his strange fancies she was sure God had put the soul of an Irishman into the body of an English boy. Perhaps it was true. Tobias sat on the grass clasping his knees as he thought about it all. From what Leah had told him, St. Patrick was not a bit like his father would be, even if, later, God turned him into a saint. Perhaps on a day like this, if St. Patrick was as full of glee as Leah's husband had said, he could come back to earth and recognize the people who were a bit like him. Tobias felt almost giddy with the feelings surging in him. He had found out long ago that his mother was his guardian angel. His whole childhood was one lovely dream of her, his sweet mother Mary, who had died when he was born and said "puir mitherless bairn" before going. Leah, who told him this, and had said that as his mother was Scotch and

St. Patrick Irish it was almost a certainty that she would over-persuade St. Patrick to be the other guardian angel, as no woman alone, even if she was an angel, could rightly lead a boy in the way he ought to go. He thought of them both, his mother and St. Patrick, and wondered what they would like him to do after sending him something so very big and wonderful. For to-day was not only St. Patrick's Day. It was Tobias Trevidden's birthday and love had come to him on the eve of it. It surely must be love he thought, or all the world would not seem so different. It was glorious even to take into his lungs the fresh morning air and breathe it out again to the sky. There seemed no past and no future, not even a to-morrow, only the sun and to-day. Tobias prayed as most people talk and some sing. He prayed as he breathed, almost unconsciously, and always familiarly, as he would have spoken to his mother had she lived, and as he had spoken to Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy and

the other fantastic fairies of his childhood. After he had seen to his flocks and his flowers he jumped into a little hollow where the moss and lichen grew among the gray old stones. He came out with some "shamrock" a real Irishman would have rejected, but Tobias prayed as he fastened it in his cap. It was the prayer of one in what Leah called "deliricums," which was the equivalent of the desire Tobias expressed when he wanted to be a catapult; "Send her quick and then stop the sun from waning till to-morrow." So certain was he that his prayer would be answered that by eleven he had whirled through his daily work, whistling and singing so loudly all the time that the birds seemed overborne by the human lover in their midst. As he noticed them preening their feathers, in between their bursts of song, Tobias realized that he also must make himself orderly in dress. A shepherd is one thing, a lover quite another. A shepherd can afford to be careless in his dress, may

even leave his curls astray as the wind or sleep have tossed them, but a lover! He smiled, and with three gymnastic feats he had stripped and flung himself into the river. The river probably realized, as the birds and the sky and the sun understood too, how clean, not only the heart but the body of a lover must be. It was Sunday, the day for "changes," as they called his underlinen at home. He had one white smock in the hut which he had never worn. Leah had made it for him in the evenings. His stepmother had laughed at it because on it Leah had worked little shepherd's crooks. Now it seemed a part of this vibrant day, and no more ridiculous than when on Easter Sunday he had gone with his school teacher to church and seen boys singing in what he at first thought were their shirts. Leah had told him that while she was making the smock she had been thinking of her husband when he first wooed her, and she said that there was no knowing if he could not come

back some day to a "saucy" soul like Tobias and teach him all the wonders wooing a maid meant.

As Tobias put on his smock, a curious shyness crept over him. He had suddenly recalled his Love's hands. Perhaps it was because she was a dressmaker that they were so unlike Leah's hands, as unlike in fact as a crow was from a gull. He leaned against his hut and looked at his own fingers. Was it possible that there should be all that difference between the male and the female hand? He trembled at the thought of those slender fingers. The mere vision of her wrist and her ankles sent a message through him like the wild anemones did as they hid their gentleness under the stubbly gorse-bushes on the wild moor. It was always in April they were the most beautiful, just when the fiercest gales blew. What a wonderful thing, thought Tobias, it must be to be either a woman or a flower, and yet he would not be a woman for anything, just

because he would know all the great secrets, as his mother did, and not have to hunt them out and half lose them as he caught them. It was the sport and the madness and the swing of the chase in everything which held him, and here was this lovely body and soul of his sweetheart advancing towards him, and yet retreating, even in his thoughts about her, just when he imagined he had caught her moods and understood her. He thought of her slender hands and arms, and the prison of her love was a lure to his soul. He dwelt on her mouth and the posies of the world were as weeds in comparison. She had talked of her little necklace, won at a village treat, and the Holy Scriptures had no greater wisdom in his ears. Her voice had a lilt in it which no woe that could befall him would withstand, and the arc of her budding breast held more hope for Tobias than the rainbow after any flood. There seemed to be a silence, even among the birds, as the knowledge flooded him that

these thoughts of his about her were only the signals of the nearness and the distance which one day would melt into a great belonging. For to Tobias love was just a great belonging, an intimate and eternal mating. Something had befallen him which made no thought and no action wholly his own. It belonged to her hopes and to her purity, as his heart and his body were hers for the mere accepting. He had only seen her twice, when a kind fate had sent her for violets for a big wedding in the village, and again for more in the case of a child's sudden death. They had scarcely spoken, and yet Tobias knew he had been re-born, for now the woman's point of view must always mingle with his and alter it to a different outcome. Her will was his law. He touched the lambs with almost a woman's tenderness, and approached their patient mothers with a feeling of awe. The rams he bustled and hurried about a bit, as a little unworthy of all they produced. Perhaps,

had Tobias guessed love was on its way to him, he would have run from it as he sometimes hid his face when lightning and thunder made him forget all but their beauty. But it was too late to flee now, and his heart leapt at the thought of his bondage. She had promised to meet him at the wall of the wood, where the blue-bells would soon be in a shimmer of color, and where, even now, the primroses had longer stalks and larger faces than anywhere else he knew. The songs of the birds were hopes in themselves. He would lead her to the pond, where later the water-lilies grew, and try to tell her that his prayers and his songs and his laughter went from his heart to hers and made a new music for them both. His spirit rippled into peace at the thought of her and his veins seemed filled with clear spring water that had once been ice and snow. And yet, when he thought of her asleep, as he did before he undressed, a glowing ache just to kiss her hair went through him. He felt sure she

plaited it, and he made up his mind that one day he would venture into a shop and buy some pale purple ribbon to tie up the ends. She was never out of his thoughts. He enfolded her as the mists enfold the earth in the early days and nights of spring. She possessed him as the grass grasps the earth. How long it seemed to wait for her! Suppose she had got hurt? Suppose she were to die before he saw her again? He went suddenly cold at the bare thought. Suppose she could never love him? His lips, curving to the thought of her beauty, smiled almost before such a thought was born. Of course she would love him or he would die. He almost felt dead as he imagined such a blankness. If she did not love him now neither did his mother in Love-Acre. That settled the whole matter and he pushed up his curls in a gesture of security.

Suddenly she was there, smiling at him, and waiting for him to speak. Tobias instinctively pinched himself, in order, first of

all, to see if he was alive, and then to enable him to keep so, for a sudden faintness came over him. It was, however, only for a moment. Erect and strong, the tall figure of the man faced his hopes made visible. He clasped his hands and she heard the gesture, for at the first sight of his glowing face she had lowered her head. Their eyes spoke and a slow smile broke over her face and showed her beautiful teeth. His eyes fell on them and he grew serious.

“They’m more wonderful than the white horses by the lighthouse rocks,” he said simply.

Her smile vanished. She looked toward the sea and then at him.

“How funny!” she said.

Tobias stepped closer to her and whispered:

“Heaven itself seems nonsensical before this. Even flowers be only signs.”

She laughed.

"You are splendid, Tobias. No other boys talk like that. They only fuss round."

"By the side of you," said Tobias, "everything seems gray, even the sun." He looked up unblinkingly. "There's cowslips over there on the bank. Come." He walked swiftly and she followed. They sat and watched the flock of sheep without speaking. The girl took off her white cotton gloves. Tobias clapped his hands.

"I knew there was something wanting," he said. "To hide they be a sort of murder."

She caught his meaning from the tender glow of his face, and laid one of her hands on both of his, clasped as they were.

"They please you as you please me," she said. "I'm some glad." The color fled from the eager face of Tobias.

"Please me!" he echoed passionately. "They'm just a world somehow. They touch me in my sleep and set me praying when I'm awake. They'm long and cool

like wings, in a manner of speaking, and yet they could hold a shepherd's heart too tight for it ever to stray. It's a great bewilderment to me," he ended simply, "that flesh and blood alone should be so wonderful."

The beautiful slender girl suddenly faced him.

"Tobias," she said gently, "your curls maze me a bit like that, so we'm both of one mind."

"I've always leaned to lank hair in men," said Tobias, "but it's curls forever if you've leanings that way. Before they've always minded me of the sheep's wool, but now——" He did not go on. She pulled away the hand he held and suddenly reached up and clasped both of hers round his head. Her white arms touched his face and his whole body quivered in response to her touch.

"They'm like baby's faces to me," she said, "and I want to cuddle them."

What more she would have said was

spoiled in the uttering. Tobias leaped to his feet, and the girl, alarmed at her own audacity, stood too. Her fair head was on his breast before she could open her lips to speak, his strong young hands touched her golden hair first and then gripped her shoulders, and with one quick movement he had lifted her into and cradled her in his arms. She never spoke or moved, and he just ran with his slender little love toward the water-lily pond muttering, "Nothin' matters but this, nothin' ever can matter any more."

The delicate curves of her body spoke to him, as all Nature spoke to him, of deliciousness and fragrance, and his joy made her weight as that of a new-born lamb in his arms. He must cherish her life as he did those of the lambs, he thought, but he must save her—as, alas! he was powerless to do with his flocks,—from disaster and death. He galloped at last in the mere delight of moving and the girl's eyes opened softly and shut again in a tremulous ecstasy. He in-

haled her breath as she tried to speak and it had the scent of primroses in it. Her eyelashes rested on her white skin, like the dainty fringe edging a blue veined curtain which covered the way to a sanctuary. The body of Tobias changed, in that swift journey, into a meeting place for gods. He loved beyond himself, and flung a challenge to Fate as he cried in his soul, "She'm more than bread and water to me and even death be of no account after this."

The friendly trees, as he laid his love down by the water-lily pond, seemed to make a cloister round the resting-place of these mortals who, like them, were at last escaping from a winter's lovelessness.

"Tobias," she said, "how wonderful strong your arms are. You'm a man worth while. I do dearly love you."

Tobias was very grave.

"It's overpowering me," he said.

"What?"

She spoke so sweetly and gravely, he re-

mained quite still looking down upon her. Her pale-purple cotton dress, with the glimpse of the white petticoat underneath, was all he noticed at the moment, except that in carrying her he had crushed some dark wall-flowers she was wearing.

“Life,” answered Tobias softly and bent over her to take out the dead flowers from her dress. “The great secrets seem very near and I’m dazed and joyful to once’st.” He looked at the dead flowers in his hands. “They be overcome too, and no wonder, but they’m dead and no use to you now. I’m alive, Loveday, and your Boy. See!” He knelt over her on one knee as she lay on the bank of the pond. A shiver like the wind makes when the sun kisses the daffodils passed over her.

“It’s all we was born for,” said Tobias.

Her upper lip trembled as she looked into his face. She could not move, and he could hardly speak, but in a deep whisper he ended: “It’s a fire and ice together and a great

hush and gallop in one. It's a frenzy and yet the peace of the falling snow is in it. I've never been near it before. It's like a voice and a light in one."

"It makes us feel gay and happy, doesn't it?" she said. "You have such a way with you too. I feel I shall never know what's coming next, and it's just lovely, like a surprise packet or a letter you've had no notion was on its way."

"Perhaps it comes all different to girls," said Tobias. "I can't reckon with it at all. It's like a devastation, in a manner of speaking, and yet a grand awakening. I feel I've been mostly asleep always, and have just woke up."

"You'd help to waken the dead now, Tobias Boy." A little happy laugh escaped her. "You'm more like a gypsy than anything else, but I'd not have you different. You'm so turbulent and masterful."

"I'm full of faults," said Tobias.

"And I'm crotchety," said Loveday.

"I'm full of moods and fancies. You'll hate me one day if I show you my grainey ways."

Tobias clasped his hands behind his head.

"It would be just the same if you'd wrinkles or warts or sunburn," he said, "I'd miss them if they was wanting. Clouds and rain would never make me turn against the sun."

"Have you never fancied a girl, Tobias?" she whispered.

He did not answer for a moment. Her throat was so long and white, he was thinking that the swans in the squire's lake were unshapely in comparison. It was the echo of her question which at last reached him. He had waited long enough to make her exclaim: "You rascal, you've kissed many maidens and just forgotten." He knew she could not be serious, but it gave him joy to answer, though he began to wish he had thousands of remembered kisses to press on her lips as a testament if that was what girls liked. He felt a little shamefaced as he answered.

"I've never cast a thought toward a maid," he said. "Fairies and the silent things have been so near always."

She looked at him incredulously.

"Fairies," she echoed, "why they'm all make-believes. Surely you've had fun?" Her face was one expectant smile. "Larks, I mean, nothing to matter, of course."

Tobias smiled.

"Only with Leah," he said. "We've played hard at pillow fights and rounders and such."

She threw back her lovely head and thought for a moment before answering him, "Then you're by yourself. There never was anyone just like you, I expect. So you were never tempted?"

"I never cast a thought before. Do girls, before they mark their lad for good and all?"

She laughed. "All girls be drawn to lads and all of us loves to be fussed over, but you have a way with you different to the

rest and make me forget they others." She looked at him under her eyes. "There was just one I leaned to, but you've made him like brass before gold, somehow."

Her simple statements had eased the tension of his mood. He sat close by her and clasped his hands round his knees.

"We'll live on a hill-side," he said, "and be happier than the swallows. We'll lie under the stars and sing to the moon and then sleep till the dawn."

She laughed merrily.

"That's many baking and washing days off," she said.

"We'll always be thinking of it to make its wonder understandable," he said. "Every day and night will bring it nearer."

She edged closer to him.

"Tobias, isn't it well I'm a dressmaker because I can make my wedding clothes, free of expense."

"Wedding clothes?" he echoed. "I never

thought of they. Why! We're wedded already, you know, if we love one another."

She nestled up to him.

"Only in a manner of speaking," she said. "But girls like all the fuss, you know, and the ring to show the other girls and—oh! all sorts!"

Her head was on one side, and a lurking tremble of vanity was in the happy twitching of her mouth.

Tobias closed in on her mood.

"And ear-rings and beautiful shoes with buckles, like they have in the pictures of Cinderella, and silk stockings, and laces and brooches and best kid gloves," he murmured.

"Yes, yes," she panted eagerly. "Oh! how they'll all envy me. And you'll always love me, Tobias, and be proud of me?"

For answer he leaned over and his curly head lay on her breast. He was too near the eternal mysteries to speak, and she ruffled up his curls about his neck as he held her close. It seemed to him that he might

easily die of the surging glory of the peace within him. At last he spoke.

“Even a mother in Love-Acre might be envious of this ’ere.”

“Love-Acre?” she asked. “Wherever is that? I’ve never heard of it.”

Tobias suddenly raised his head. - Everything in him was surging to one desire and in the fulfilment of it he answered her question. He gently folded her in his arms and looked a moment at the soft parted lips. His manhood and her womanhood met suddenly and passionately on them and the breath of love swept them into one. A fierce gust of wind and a driving hail shower were both unheeded. The sun had come again before four eyes had opened upon the secrets two mouths had revealed. The intimate sweetness had flung them into a world where touch alone can speak. Tobias, aching with rapture, laughed the lover’s low laugh of joy. He caught her long white hands and kissed them so madly she sobbed and crooned

as a child does when it is pleased. Then, emboldened through her delicious passivity and her tremulous smiles, he held back her head and kissed her throat and chin, and closed her eyes with his lips to have his will with her eyelids. The fragrance of her hair, as he sought it with hands and mouth, turned him suddenly lonely and sad at his limitations. His hands were only the ministering angels for his whole body as they swept over her in a sort of prayer. The fierce longing broke at last into bald words.

“Seemly I want to hurt you because I love you.”

“Hurt—hurt, Tobias lad,” she said breathlessly. “It’s just heaven.”

His kisses smote her like hail in the spring, and she knew they would make the flowers of her summer. Tobias suddenly pulled off the little shoes.

“But for they, you couldn’t stand upright,” he cried as he covered her feet with kisses. At last he lay back on the grass by

her, a strange light in his eyes. Some inner knowledge of him held her. She whispered gently:

“Tobias, do all men folks love their women like this?”

“I don’t know,” he said. “I’ve never asked. I’ve never known nothin,’ seemly, till to-day. You’m just everything and the close meanin’ of everythin’. There’d be no world for me now without you. It’s just light or darkness, and no betwixt or between for ever more.”

She glanced under her eyes at him.

“A woman would never be a trailer to you, Tobias,” she said. “A man mostly leads and let’s a woman drag after.”

Tobias pointed to the setting sun. “It’s not that as you’d ever be,” he said, “but just the risin’ one as gladdens the world.”

“Girls say men be allus saucy and mazy afore marriage and gluttons and drivers after,” said Loveday. “Perhaps you’d have

no taste even for kisses, once you got me tight."

Tobias looked at her almost calmly.

"To bed and board with thee, sweetheart, would surely be a daily surprise. I'd never overtake you in meanings, I'm thinking, for every minute you'm almost a new girl in wonder, and how could that stop if you was my wife and we'd little ones?"

She reddened, and he drew her to him, a subtle tenderness in his face. "You see, it's with minding sheep and lambs that makes me so forthy," he said. "It's all so grand to tend and minister to them, and I'm one with them all in that too. It's what belonging means, just everything. I'd sooner have a little lad of my own than be a lord."

"And I'd sooner bear your children, Boy, than be the squire's lady."

She spoke shyly out of his mood and out of her own revelation of herself.

He held her for a moment in his arms.

"We'll love everything," he said, "and be

wonderful happy. Here's a ring," he went on. "The hours crawled so this morning that I picked daisies and made this." He drew something from his smock pocket and opened a tiny match box.

Her eyes fell.

"Daisies," she said sadly.

"Just to begin with," he said, "and threaded as close as a mat." He slipped it on her wedding finger. "Just fits. See how I knew."

She tried to please him but her voice betrayed her.

"Isn't it an ill omen to change rings, even a make-believe one?"

He snapped his fingers.

"Loveday, my jewel girl, I'd risk all of they things. It's a parcel of fool's palaver, all the talk of spells and such like. Our kisses could drive any disaster away, I'm thinking."

"I love diamonds," she said, "and rubies next."

“They don’t grow on eighteen shillings a week,” he said gaily.

“Oh!” said Loveday, “I thought you had much more. We can’t furnish on that.”

“Then we must live on the grass in a hut,” he said smiling.

Her lips puckered.

“No girls ever begin like that. They’d all scorn us. I like them to envy me.”

He twisted the daisy ring round on her finger.

“Who be they?” he said. “It’s all in our hearts, and furniture is no real stand-by. Outsiders don’t count either.”

“Father and mother wouldn’t hear of it,” she said slowly. “I’ve a bottom drawer to fill with things for a home, and presents be a big part of a wedding. Those and the cake.”

“You shall have them,” said Tobias. “Even birds deck themselves out for their pairing. I’ll get thee all thee dost need in time. You wait and see.”

"Then you will have to leave the shepherding," she said. "It's a lean trade for profit."

"Leave the shepherding," he cried. "I should feel like a man without a skin. It's part and parcel now of all my make-up."

A hard look flitted over her face.

"I thought you loved me better than all the world?" she queried.

"Of men and women," he said gravely. "But the life of a shepherd is scarcely a man's own, either to leave or to keep."

She laughed merrily.

"Oh! Tobias! what a funny thing to say! It sounds like the proverbs."

"It is true," said Tobias.

"If you love me you'll give it up and be a head grocer," she said. "And from that a wholesale merchant. I'd be some proud of you then."

A foreboding held him, and perhaps the thought of Mr. Carbines, the local village dealer, awed him.

"I'd have to grow portly and smile to oblige," said Tobias.

The sun was kissing the sea good-night, and Loveday leaped to her feet.

"It must be quite late," she said, "and there will be a fuss at home. Oh! Tobias! It's been so nice and I do love you so. When shall I see you again? Fancy! It seems quite horrid to go."

"To-night," said Tobias eagerly, "and even that seems too far off to reckon with. I can get away an hour to run in and kiss you again and then back to the flocks. I can leap like a goat and so need waste no time."

She held out her hands to him coquettishly.

"Some day you'll have no flocks," she cried joyfully, "only me."

He knelt on the grass and clasped his arms round her waist.

"Only you," he murmured, "and then you too will have a shepherd."

"Oh! I feel so gay, Tobias, and so wholly

yours," she rippled. "It's just fine." She drew his head close against her body and ran her fingers through his curls. "Never let the barber damage them, my Shepherd Boy, and"—her eyes contracted slightly—"never let another woman touch them."

"Not till I reach Love-Acre," said Tobias.

"You're always thinking of that outlandish spot," said Loveday. "Who lives there?"

"My mother," answered Tobias simply.

"Your mother," she repeated absently. "How queer! And who else?"

"Lovers, I imagine," said Tobias, "but I know very little about it except in dreams."

"Dreams," she echoed. "Then it's no real place at all? It's like the fairies and all that tosh."

Tobias did not answer. How could he? What was reality? What were dreams?

"I don't exactly know in the face of your kisses," he said at last. "They be the only sure things for us both, it seems. And yet Love-Acre and the fairies be quite real to

me. Love-Acre began by being a fanciful place to me as a youngster, but as a Shepherd it's become more like a home. Perhaps our little ones will come from there, who can tell?"

Loveday gazed at him with open eyes and mouth.

"Tobias, if you wasn't a darling you'd be a sawney," she said, "but you makes nonsense sound like sense. That's a sillier story than the parsley beds and the big stork."

"I've never heard of they," said Tobias, "but I know my mother is in Love-Acre by all the signs."

"What signs?" she asked.

Could he tell her those innermost secrets of his, those long talks with Fan-Fan and Trailing Topsy and the greater things whispered to him in the Silence? And yet she was his and he was hers and the barriers were all down as far as he could tell. What held him silent? Only a curious twist about her mouth which was half a smile and half a

sneer. It was, he felt, as if she had held out a little cup for him to fill, and having a large pitcher of clear water in his hand, it would grieve her that the cup could not hold or her thirst require what he had brought from his well for her.

He did not answer. He kissed her mouth into sweetness and her eyes into gladness. Then he walked with her to the end of the field and in the awed mood which makes every parting between lovers the shadow of death, he retraced his steps toward his hut. He was surprised to find a man there.

“What ho?” cried the stranger.

Tobias greeted him curtly. If some casual acquaintance had met Moses coming from the Mount, just at the moment when he had been obliged to put a veil upon his face, for fear his inner joy should slay the outsider, he would probably have answered as sharply as Tobias.

“I’d best drive they sheep to the slaughter house to-night,” said the stranger.

"It's the Sabbath," said Tobias.

"All the quieter on the roads," said the butcher; "they'll have time to calm down. It makes the flesh better if they'm not too flustered."

"Not to-night," said Tobias. "It's unthinkable."

The butcher looked at the shepherd curiously. Then he grinned.

"Had a drop, shepherd?" he hazarded.

Tobias looked full at the slaughterer. To the butcher his eyes seemed glazed.

"Yes," said Tobias. It was the easiest thing to say and not a lie, except to the butcher. Dewdrops could intoxicate as much as beer, if the drinker was a white violet under April leaves. And if the "drop" was the bliss of his love's lips, why worry to deny anything to the grinning man before him?

"Thought so," said the stranger. "Beastly work shepherding?"

"What of butchering?" asked Tobias.

“How you do it unless you be gone in liquor is always a wonderment to me.”

“Butchering be not slow a bit,” said the man. “It’s full of dare-devilry excitement, and as good sport as hunting if the beasts be frightened or gamesome.”

“It’s devil’s pastime,” said Tobias and the butcher laughed.

He handed Tobias a paper. On it was written: “Twenty sheep and ten lambs marked S.” and signed by his master.

“I’ll bring them to you at dawn,” said Tobias.

“Why dawn? Why not now?” asked the butcher.

“I’ve a fancy,” said the shepherd. “Give them another night in the open.”

“Look!” said the man, “I’m taking my girl to Poltreath Fair to-morrow, and I want the job over and a wash and a change by twelve. Time they’re slaughtered and skinned and dressed, it’ll take till eleven.”

Tobias was very pale.

“It’s just murder,” he muttered.

“Don’t take it neat next time, shepherd,” laughed the butcher. “Your head be too young to stand it.”

Tobias looked full at the other man.

“That’s how I always take it,” he said, “neat, and it burns like fire.”

The butcher filled his pipe, while Tobias went towards his flock and called the twenty by name and picked out ten lambs. He was very white and the butcher grew grave at last.

“You’ve got a chill over that drink of yours,” he said. “Your eyes are feverish and you’re as white as death. Help me drive them to the field with the dog. It’ll warm you up,” he added kindly.

Tobias drove the little chosen herd to the road and fled back to his hut.

“How can I touch her to-night with that sin on my hands?” he cried. “They trust me and love me. I’ve sent them to their death, and yet what can I do? They’re as believ-

ing as she is, and as innocent." He hung his head. "It's a dreadful thing to be a shepherd, as she says, and a glorious thing to be a lover."

Out of her presence the common events in his work bewildered and depressed him. He felt only half alive without her. He could neither eat nor sleep till he had seen her again. It was almost as if he had given her over to destruction, so great was the strain on his soul as he sent his four-footed friends to the slaughter. Even the sight and sound and touch of Loveday, in the few hurried moments he saw her, only partially soothed him. She noticed how pale he was, but he would not depress her, so only said that he always slept all tiredness away. He nearly added that he was sure he got a new life in his sleep, in Love-Acre, but he just stopped in time.

Loveday was going to chapel with a girl friend who was to be married at Easter.

"Her man be a bitter rind to swallow,"

said Loveday, "and mine be the pick of the world."

Tobias went slowly back to his hut by the light of the stars. He fell asleep pondering, first on love and then on death, and in his dreams they became one.

PART IV
THE ALIEN

THE ALIEN

MATTHEW TREWIDDEN always rose at five in the morning, as he declared that "wet or dry, sick or well, I've got to work to fill young mouths." When night came he made a rule of having bread and milk at half past eight, and then went straight to bed. This had the same effect on his family circle that children generally have on their parents when their heads are safely on their pillows and there are a few hours free from noise. The neighbors knew that nine o'clock or thereabouts was the best time to catch Mrs. Trewidden for a friendly gossip, and no man, hoping to supersede Leah's Irish husband, ventured into the wooing lists till after that time. It grew into a custom that neighbors dropped in while Mrs. Trewidden and Leah did the family mending. Many lives

were spiritually lost and few saved at these times. The great subject at the moment was Tobias and his sudden declaration that he could no longer be a shepherd. He had been home a week already, and his father was very angry that he had given up one job before finding another. Leah's companion, Phillipa Trehwella, who had lately married a German servant belonging to a county family near, and Wilmot Harry, the district nurse, had dropped in rather late. Leah was ironing and Mrs. Trewidden knitting.

"I can't sit and do nothing," said Mrs. Trewidden. "My fingers itch to sew or knit. Now Leah there can often doze over the fire, just twiddling her thumbs, but I can't. It's having a family, I suppose. It makes one feel it a sin to be idle a minute."

"Having a family modifies natures," observed Wilmot Harry, "but there's restless mothers same as there's peaceful maidens."

"I wonder what sort of wife and mother Loveday Cocking will make?" Phillipa

Trewhella spoke thoughtfully. "She'm in some rush of pride over Tobias. To hear her talk there's been but one shapely lad born in this world and she've got him."

Leah held the iron she had just taken from the stove close to her cheek.

"She's not far wrong," she said. "He've sprung up like a tree and he's full of a fine sap and joyfulness."

"Leah allus leans to Tobias," said Mrs. Trewidden. "My children be toad-stumps by the side of he."

Leah bent over her ironing. She suddenly turned to her friend.

"You know why, don't you, Phillipa Jane?"

"Not exactly," was the answer.

"I've always a dream child in my head," said Leah. "It's an Irish one, of course, but I feel it is like Tobias. He often says things I've made up in my heart that my little one, if I'd had one, would have said to me. If Tobias went wrong, in a manner of

speaking, I feel I should grasp at once why he was led into misdoing."

"He's more likely to go mad," said his stepmother. "He's never been exactly all his life and I believe he fairly tries to be unlike my boys. He's fantastical and unbeknowns."

"He can't help it," said Leah. "He sees."

"Sees what?" asked Wilmot.

"Pixies," said Leah, "and such."

"Bosh!" said Mrs. Trewidden.

"Them as hears and sees be in a fair way to take the short cut to the asylum, so I understand. I've heard neighbors say that Tobias have got an evil spirit. I know one boy as he've ill-whisht with them strange eyes of his. They fair gives you the creeps at times," ended Wilmot.

"Evil spirits indeed!" cried Leah, as she tossed her sprinkled clothes from the wash basket on to the table. "Look at him! The dear! What comfort would evil spirits have inside a man like that? I reckon they'd soon

have a fit of homesickness and go back to the devil with a dreary account of their trip. As for being ill-whisht! Them eyes of his makes folk confused, I grant you, but mostly over their own misfits in thoughts and deeds. He'm as tender as a woman over misfortune."

"He'm a saint," according to you," said Mrs. Trewidden.

"No," said Leah gently. "He'm a forthright human creature and neither saint nor devil. He do never lie nor bear a grudge."

Wilmot laughed.

"Maybe that's witchcraft in itself," she said. "Daily life needs grease, like cart-wheels, and a little deception be no worse than a bit of gossip at times. It makes things quiet and easy."

"What of his temper?" sneered Mrs. Trewidden. "As a kid he was some masterful. Even with his father he was furious at times and he bit his father's leg once and flew at my throat."

Leah's face darkened and the other women gasped.

"Be fair," said Leah, "for he'm not here to explain. His father was seemly thrashing all the life from him when he bit as rats in a trap bite, and you missis, begging your pardon of course, told him his mother had spawned a devil's imp in her own likeness. He've allus loved his mother though he never saw her."

Leah hung a flannel shirt on the horse before the fire.

"He tormented me into it with his coldness and his g'eat wide open saucer eyes," said Mrs. Trewidden.

"Thanks be," said Leah, "that his pluck have saved him from a winding sheet. He was never spared no rod that could flay, I can testify, having often gone between it and him and had black wheals on my flesh in his place. My child should never have been caned. The wonder is Tobias is not a devil."

"Your child be a dream one, remember, Leah Martin," said Mrs. Trewidden. "Real children wants hiding same as dogs and horses."

"Even that's a frustration mostly," said Leah. "Sugar and coaxin' be cheaper and more profitable."

"Loveday will take a deal of doing for," said Phillipa. "Men wanders in some ways, once matrimony be a fixture."

Mrs. Trewidden laughed.

"Have you found that out already?" asked Wilmot. "Lor! it's early days to know that you've tied a knot with your mouth you can't ever undo with your teeth."

"Six months can seem a life-time if you're full of either happiness or misery," said Phillipa. "I'm all right. Bill be first class if I get his meals to time and if I brush his Sunday suit when he's ready to put it on, and if I keep the house-place clean and fitty."

"Where is he now?" asked Mrs. Trewidden.

“At the ‘Lamb and Flag,’” said Phillipa. “Him and Albert Tremayne have a bet on over something and Bill keeps laughing to himself over it and won’t tell me, till it be lost or won. It’s over a woman I can tell, though it’s generally over horses. A lot of the chaps are going to see it through, so I shan’t hurry home. I met Loveday, by the bye, as I came in. Tobias, she says, had asked her to pop in here and wait for him. Him and Albert seemed to be quite pals. I met them talking just before.”

“Goodness,” said Wilmot, “that’s queer. I always thought Bert was a bit soft on Loveday himself.”

“He’s never spoke out, I believe,” said Mrs. Trewidden. “He’s a cautious fellow, is Albert, and a bit saving. A wife be a consideration to men of his make and not to be undertaken without the certainty of a nest-egg from the family.”

“Perhaps he’ll only fancy a woman when it’s too late,” said Phillipa. “Bill never got

really took up with me till Jack Sandow came round sparking. Then he seemed to see blood. I hates scenes," she ended with a nervous laugh, "and so I just married him."

"Females must be a great bewilderment to males," said Leah, poking her finger through a big hole in Mr. Trewidden's sock.

"Matthew says most of us wants putting into a washing tray to be swimm'd till we'm meek and lowly," observed Mrs. Trewidden.

"Some of us wants seasoning, like wood," said Phillipa. "I believe I'm that sort. But men allus be in a fluster, and just takes us or leaves us as if we was all of one make."

"There be as much variation in females as in flowers, in a manner of speaking," said Leah.

Wilmot was thinking and had not heard her friend's conclusion.

"Some women wants leaving entirely in peace," she said. "It's enough occupation for me at any rate to watch the pairing and

the doldrums of them as hungers after happiness, without joining in at all. I never feel a bit slighted, but glad I'm cut out for an old maid."

"Tobias don't seem to dread no doldrums," said Leah. "I went a bit faintey when I looked upon him after he'd given up shepherding. He seemed all wrapped in glory, like a thing. He seems to look on Loveday as more than mortal."

"That's a sure sign she'll never be a help-mate," said Mrs. Trewidden. "No female can be expected to live up to the eager hopes in Tobias' eyes. He'm daft with love and longing, and that's cured easier than he thinks."

The three women laughed loudly, but Leah sighed.

"In some it's never cured," she said.

"Then Death must surely take him," said Phillipa, "or the mad-house. Love like that be a frenzy and not a real stand-by."

“And a terrible nuisance in family life,” said Wilmot.

“It makes me shiver even while I’m ironing,” said Leah, “just to think of him. He’s so reckless and yet so humble, so glowing and yet so terrible sombre at times. A woman will play on him like the wind on a harp.”

“Thanks be if a female conquers once in a way,” said Mrs. Trewidden. “Men mostly gets the upper hand, and though women kicks in their hearts they wear the appearance of a spaniel on the chain.”

“Tobias ’ave won my respect more than I should have thought,” said Phillipa. “When I met him just now I chaffed him over leaving shepherding before he’d fixed in with another job. ‘I have got one,’ he made answer, ‘just got it now as under-manager at Charles’ farm.’ He’ve to deliver produce, keep the accounts and see the place is at all times secure. He’s young for the post.”

Mrs. Trewidden laid down her knitting and put the kettle on the fire.

"Matthew will be some glad," she said. "Tobias be so strange that it looked as if no job would come along. That's a fine one, sure enough. Did he mention the wages?"

"Thirty bob a week and over-time," said Phillipa. "You bet he'll do plenty of over-time to get married as soon as possible. Lor! who's knocking? Come in, do."

It was Loveday. She stepped into the kitchen and peeped about as she advanced toward Mrs. Trewidden. They all came forward, looking at her in the way women eye a newly engaged friend or a bride.

"Tobias bade me come," she said. "He've news, I believe."

"We won't spoil his fun by telling you," said Wilmot. "He'll be saucier than ever now and maybe more in love too, if that be possible."

Loveday smiled the radiant smile of the

woman who alone knows what the outside world cannot even guess.

"Maybe," said Loveday.

"When's the wedding?" asked Phillipa.

Loveday glanced out of the window as she answered carelessly. "Nearly a year. We've fixed the seventeenth of March."

"Silly!" said Mrs. Trewidden. "The gales be worst then, and the weather be chill for moving furniture and settling in."

"It's primrose time," said Loveday and St. ——" She blushed as Leah turned to gaze at her.

"Blessed children of love," murmured Leah, "and may St. Patrick bless you both."

"We shall be able to save by then and have a real nice villa," said Loveday, "and a fine house warming too."

"Tobias be coming on, sure enough," said Mrs. Trewidden. "Love have pushed him forward even to getting a new suit and a bowler hat."

"He'll be a bit masterful," said Phillipa.

“Look out, Loveday. It would be like lighting a fire with a big chimney draught to make him real angry or jealous. One of you would likely die of it. With all his dreamy ways he’ve a terrible lot of spirit.”

Loveday leaned back in the rocking-chair. It suited her lithe young figure. The little feet in the buckled shoes swung to and fro.

“I can’t fancy him in real rages,” said Loveday, “and as for jealousy!” Memories of her shepherd boy flooded her. “I wonder if that could ever be?”

“Jealousy only comes to them as ’ave no real hold,” said Leah, “and be but a devil’s hammer to break a chain as be weak. Tobias will hold till death and believe no evil.”

“Them be just the ones as be always fooled,” said Mrs. Trewidden. “The surprises fall on them as be cock-sure. What do you say, Loveday?”

“We’m both sure,” she answered softly. “We’m both of one mind. I couldn’t give a

thought to another while he be as he is. Tobias and me just suits."

The door opened and her lover came in. His glance was on Loveday almost before he had shut the door. He saw no one else and put his hand on her shoulder.

"I've got a job," he said, "a real good one. Next March seems hundreds of years to wait. A real life-time."

Mrs. Trewidden laughed.

"We'm all here, Tobias," she said.

He turned from Loveday.

"Evening all," he said. "The sky be full of promise for to-morrow."

"Why, it's May-day of course," cried Phillipa turning to Mrs. Trewidden. "We mustn't forget the cream. The first of May without your lovely cream would be like chapel without an organ. The poorest runs to a quarter on that day."

Tobias turned to Loveday.

"You and me will go to the Green and dance round the pole," he said. His eyes

gleamed so brightly they reminded Leah of a fire on a frosty night. "It's the beginning of summer and the lilac be in bloom already."

"Do you miss the shepherding?" asked Wilmot.

Tobias laughed softly.

"I miss nothing," he answered. "It all seems of a piece somehow. I don't think I'd care what I worked at so long as it wasn't the butchering or a hangman's job. Where be the youngsters?"

"Gone to the choir to practise the singing," said Mrs. Trewidden. "They'm getting ready for to-morrow night."

"We'll sing ourselves hungry," said Tobias, "and dance ourselves thirsty and——" He looked at Loveday and smiled, "Come, let's be moving. I've promised to go to the 'Lamb and Flag' at nine, so we've only just time for a walk first and I'll see you home on my way."

The lovers shook hands and went out.

Tobias threw his cap in the air and whistled when they got into the lane.

“I must kiss you right away or I’ll drop dead,” said Tobias. “I began to wish they lot asleep. They seemed like blinking owls by the side of thee and me.” Joy and laughter rang in his voice. “I’ve been like one famine-struck,” he went on, “and the sight of you and your buckled shoes and new hat sent me into a fervor of spirit unmanageable before company.”

Loveday had no time to answer. Her mouth was closed as she was clasped to his breast. As he released her she said shyly:

“Tobias Boy, my face seems sore all over and I feel weak with thy strength, somehow.”

He caught at her shoulders and held her fast.

“Think, Loveday,” he cried, “I’ve got steady work, so there’s only a wait while we get all ready and a daily wonder of meeting, and then—you always. My heart be in

a maze of joy. It's throbbing all through me, the thought that you are my wife."

She put her hand on his arm as he let her go.

"That's unlucky," she said. "You mustn't call me that till we'm wed. It spells disaster. I'm only your sweetheart yet. Isn't that enough?"

Tobias looked down upon her uplifted, questioning eyes as the moon lit up their faces.

"Let disaster come," he cried. "I'm strong enough to fell it and whoever brings it. Enough to be your sweetheart only! No! Wife, wife, wife," he cried.

Loveday clung to him and she was trembling at the passion in her lover.

"Tobias," she said solemnly. "The Almighty can smite down a man's pride and it's a fearsome thing to boast in His face. It's courtin' tribulation to dare Him to send it."

"He'm love," said Tobias simply. "He do

surely know the signs and can make allowance for great love and joy?"

"He'm jealous," said Loveday in a whisper. "The Bible says so."

"I don't wonder," said Tobias softly. "He've perhaps not calculated the full wonder of what he've suffered to wander to the earth. There can't be another like my girl in the making, even in heaven."

Loveday stood still and looked at her lover with a slight frown on her face.

"Boy," she said, "folks say you are not like other chaps. It's these queer things you say makes them jeer. They think you're godless and full of whimsies and strange imaginings. It'll only be because you've got this splendid job as will pacify my people, I can tell you."

"For why?" asked Tobias indifferently.

"They've heard foolish tales about you and they keep questioning me and I don't know how to answer."

“Well,” laughed Tobias, “what do they say?”

“That you are not exactly,” she answered slowly, “and that you once bit your own father and flew at your stepmother and—and——” she hesitated, “that you talked to yourself and to insects when you was a youngster and was always falling asleep when other people kept wide awake.”

Tobias still laughed.

“All of it was because I was put to and lonely,” he said. “My heart was in a continual longing and ache and bitterness. I’d never even dreamt of you, you see, so how could it be prevented? Without you, even now, I should be driven to tantrums and dreams again, I reckon.”

“There!” she cried. “You’re not even sorry.” She looked at him unsmilingly and with a little touch of fear in her eyes.

Tobias was almost walking on tip-toe with the joy in his heart. He bent his head towards her as she murmured:

"Perhaps you'd torture me? How can I be sure?"

He laughed as he caught her chin and tilted up her sweet face.

"We'd torture one another, in that case," he said, "for what was woe to you would be death to me."

She looked at him for a moment as if he were a stranger.

"There's a bit of me terribly afraid," she said.

"If you loved me as I love you, Loveday, there'd be no room for such a foolish thing," said Tobias.

"I do love you," she said simply, "that's why I'm afraid."

"And I love you," he said slowly, "and that's why I'm not."

"It may not last," she said. "They'll give us no peace. I'm not one for beating back trouble. I likes things smooth and peaceable."

"Loveday, my sweetheart," said Tobias,

"it's all in we and not in they. They've no more power than beetles if we believe in one another. It's to us, not to them. Have you doubt of me?"

"Have you of me?" She asked the question to get time to think.

"None," he said. "Even you couldn't alter some things. It's fixed same as the sun or the moon or the big hills. And you?"

He held both of her hands, the cool hands which had first set his heart on fire.

"Seemly, men knows and girls only wonder," she said. "You lead always, Tobias Boy, and I'll follow."

"That's it," he cried, "just as girls, seemly, likes being loved and men just longs only to love. It's likely all in a wonderful piece and past finding out."

They walked on and Tobias held one of her hands against his heart.

"What did you do, Tobias," Loveday murmured, "after you left me on St. Patrick's Day?"

He threw back his head and smiled happily.

"Slept," he answered, "like a dormouse, all cuddled up in joy, girl."

Loveday's eyes contracted.

"Would you ever tell me a lie, Tobias?"

"Are these riddles?" asked Tobias. "Lie to you? I love you!" he answered simply. How she liked to play with him! It was even joy to answer all this make-believe. "You'm joking, Loveday."

"No, I'm not. Sam Bryant said you were drunk that night and that you could hardly stand or see. Father heard what he said and begged me not to marry you."

Still Tobias smiled.

"What did you say, sweetheart?" He put her hand against his cheek and then kissed it.

"That you was a total abstainer. You are, aren't you, Tobias?"

Her voice was low and troubled.

“Not likely,” said Tobias. “There’s no need.”

“Oh!” said Loveday slowly. “It’s all true, then, what they do say?”

She gazed at him. Had he not heard or why was he smiling? A fear shot through her.

“What did they say?” Tobias asked. He was thinking of his gallop with her to the water-lily pond.

“That you’m a drunkard and—and—oh! it frightens me.”

“Come closer,” he said tenderly, “and let me comfort you. It’s all foolish chatter.”

“I’m just near home,” said Loveday. “I must go in or they’ll wonder. I’ve got to see little Annie Curnow to-night. Father be taking me, so as to help carry some broth and a blanket and a big chair, as she’s dying, they think.”

Tobias lifted Loveday suddenly in his arms when they got to the dark little lane leading to her house.

"It belongs," he said, "same as the kissing. I'd like to smother you in love and hide you from the gaze of all mankind somehow. Just you and me away from the noise and the glare and the silly talk, and only our love for company. They can manifest and speak then."

"They," she echoed.

"The fairies and the spirits of the woods, to say nothing of the sea and the stars," he said tenderly. "It's them things that counts and not foolish gossip."

"How very odd," said Loveday. "It's all unbeknowns and a bit silly to me. Give me neighbors and houses, and a fair name."

"Folks dim the glory to me," said Tobias. "But you'm joy and wonder to me and nothing else counts. It's just everything to be alive and well and hearty, and in love with the most precious girl in the whole world. Do you know, Loveday, everything I do or say has a bit of you in it? If I skipped my job or answered back sharp or

thought ugly and spiteful things, I'd feel I'd slapped your face, in a manner of speaking."

She clung to him.

"It's when you're like this I loves you, Boy, but I never could face talk."

"To Jerusalem with that!" said Tobias. "It seems like bothering over what worms or scorpions do. Let 'em crawl and bite. It's their nature, but it's nothing to do with we. We're nearer flying, you and me, with all this love atween us. We'm fathoms deep in beauty, and gossip be nothin' but ugliness."

"I feel a bit easier when you talk like this," she added; "but when I hears the others it makes me tired and fearsome. I began to think they're wiser than I am, and I must attend and follow what they say."

"They'm blind, that's all," said Tobias. "They'm like a sheep with one eye looking toward a flock it wants to follow. It runs astray and into mischief."

"That's what they think of you," said Loveday, "and father be very tender over me, being his only girl, you see."

"Tender over you!" echoed Tobias. "Who could help it? I would save you from any disaster."

"I know you would," she said gently. She looked up at him gravely. "But why did Sam Bryant say you drank? He said you told him so yourself and he's seen you tipsy."

There was a long pause as Tobias looked down into the beautiful face. She shivered.

"I could never love you if you drank," she said.

"Nor I you," he answered gently. "I mean I'd keep off till I was cured."

"Why did he say it?" she insisted. She suddenly lowered her head. "He said you were drunk on St. Patrick's night. How could he know it even if it was true?"

"He'm a drunkard himself and lies in his cups," said Tobias slowly. "He knows it's a lie, and you——" He was smiling at her

again. The memory of St. Patrick's night had suffused him. He lifted her again in his arms and kissed her passionately.

"Put me down, Boy," she gasped. "I must go in. They are waiting."

She was agitated and some foreboding in him answered to her mood.

"Loveday, dearest," he said, "I'll meet you later."

"Are you sure?" she asked. "Why do you go to the Lamb and Flag to-night? Don't go. I ask it. Stay away, for my sake."

"It's a great nuisance," he said, "but you see I've promised."

She had vanished before he could say more, and he saw the light in her little home as she opened the door. He walked down the lane with a very solemn face.

"Love be the most fearsome of all things," he muttered. "Shepherding be a pastime by the side of it."

By the time Tobias had arrived at the Lamb and Flag he was himself again, and

he whistled as he entered the square stone building with the light behind its red blinds, giving a welcome which many good housewives declared was more suitable to a home than a tavern. The inn was noted for its remarkable roof. The thatch had borne the gusts of many winters, and the common house leek flourished about the eaves and on the thatch. Many of the little cottages had begged a bit of this "welcome home husband be you ever so drunk," which was the local name for the plant, to put on their own walls or roofs for luck.

The first person Tobias saw as he entered the little parlor was Sam Bryant. He was laughing at something Bill Trewhella had just said. The sight of Sam recalled suddenly to Tobias the whole incident of St. Patrick's night when the butcher had come for a flock of sheep. How could Sam know that it was love and not beer which had intoxicated him then? What a fool he was not to have remembered and explained to

Loveday. He saw it all now and spoke cordially to Sam, after greeting Albert Tremayne and several others lounging in the settles on both sides of the open fireplace.

"Good evening, mate," he said cheerily to Sam. "How's things?"

"Slow and sure," answered Sam. "How's yourself?"

"Fine," said Tobias as he squared his shoulders and sat down.

"Have a glass?" asked Albert Tremayne. Tobias shook his head.

"Just a toothful to keep us company?" said Bill.

Tobias smiled.

"Not a leak," said Tobias. "I'm not a bit thirsty yet."

"Come, shepherd," said Sam. "It's for luck and will bring you a job."

"I've got it," said Tobias. He told his good news.

Albert Tremayne scowled. He pulled surlily at his pipe.

“What’s this nonsense about Loveday Cocking?” asked Albert. “Town’s talk only, of course?”

Tobias laughed happily and shook his head.

“Be you really plighted?” asked Bill.

The pressure of Loveday’s lips seemed still on his as Tobias framed a proper answer.

“By all the signs,” he said.

Albert’s gaze slowly wandered from the feet of Tobias to his curly head.

“You’ve filched she,” said Albert. “A measly trick in any chap.” He turned and looked at Bill.

“Snapped her, sure enough, right out of Albert’s mouth,” said Bill.

Albert Tremayne stood up, and with thumbs in his waistcoat he faced Tobias. The whole room seemed interested and the clatter of mugs ceased.

“Don’t be fools,” said Tobias. “She never belonged to no man at all.”

Sam laughed a coarse laugh.

“How the devil do you know that, youngster?”

Tobias quietly crossed his legs and folded his arms.

“I’ve her word,” he said.

The three men laughed loudly.

“While you’ve been shepherding she’ve been grazing, lad,” said Sam. “You don’t know the ways of maidens out at grass, seemly.”

“It’s a silly joke,” said Tobias, “just to pass the time. It’s a passil of foolishness, seems to me, to talk like this ’ere anyway.”

“Don’t you believe it?” asked Albert. He came closer to Tobias and the men grinned in anticipation of a row.

“No, I don’t,” said Tobias, smiling. “I’m not such a ninny.”

Bill got up too and leaned against the mantelpiece as he faced Tremayne and looked down on Tobias.

“Do you fancy,” he asked slowly, “that

women tells greenhorns what man they've kissed and cuddled?"

Sam spat into the little tin spitoon as he spoke thoughtfully. "Their craft be allus to hold up a clean slate for fools to write on, eh, mates?" He turned to Albert and Bill. "Every man reckons on that, don't he?"

Albert was gazing steadily at Tobias. He suddenly called for the landlord. When he came he pointed to Tobias and Bill and Sam.

"Four half and half," he said. When the glasses were on the little table Albert looked full in the face of Tobias.

"I'll pledge you on your bargain," he muttered.

Tobias waved his hand. "Let someone else drink the stuff," he said. "It's not my liquor."

"Dill water perhaps," sneered Albert.

There was a loud laugh from the end of the room.

Albert turned and winked at the men.

“Tobias Trewidden,” he said roughly, “if you be a man at all I’ll challenge you to drink Loveday Cocking’s health in this ’ere if you believe her innocent. If not, well, we shall all know what’s the matter.”

“There’s no need to drink,” said Tobias, frowning; “I’ll not sully her name with such stuff.”

“He knows she’s a flighty one,” said Bill. He sat down near Tobias.

“Superfine youngster,” said Sam. “Come, shepherd. It’s no use putting on too much swank. I’ve seen you reeling tipsy, mind.”

“Nonsense,” laughed Tobias. “You knew that was a joke. I’ve never drunk anything stronger than well water in my life.”

Albert doubled up with laughter and held his sides.

“My God!” he cried. “And you dare to make love to a buxom woman like Loveday. If your kisses be on that soft sawney line she’ll——” He stopped and looked round

as the men nudged each other and grinned.

“She’ll just pass ’em on,” said Bill, “that’s all. Women likes ’em hot and strong, shepherd, whatever they may say.”

Tobias had grown very white. He looked stubbornly round the room. “Seemly you know nothing,” he said sternly, “neither about women nor mating nor yet kisses. Women be bad and good, surely, same as men, and as for kisses——” He stopped and a stern light leapt into his eyes as he heard them jeering.

“Tell us what wisdom you’ve picked up over they, shepherd,” said Sam kindly. “We’re all men here and won’t peach.”

Tobias colored to the roots of his hair.

“Let’s drop it,” he said.

Albert Tremayne drew his chair nearer to Tobias.

“You ought to be bound up in velvet and put along with the family Bible,” he said. “Men’s talk over women be like drink and swearing. It’s only a drivelling sawney who

can't or won't tell his ventures with girls. You needn't mention names. We'll guess those."

"It's beastly," said Tobias, "and no real man would do it."

Albert bit his lip.

"Look here," he said. "If you are such a fine rooster, mate, drink that there. I challenge you from man to man. It's to her health, mind, and if you daren't do it I'll see she knows of it this very night."

"She'd commend me," said Tobias. "She hates drink and them as takes it."

"That's all you know," said Albert. "I happen to know better."

"I've proof," said Tobias.

"Women be very foxey, mind," said Bill. "Often what they desires they condemns most and pretends to despise, just to see if their sweethearts be as masterful and strong-headed as they hopes."

"It's the weak-headed what drinks," said Tobias, "and the long-winded as boasts."

“Damn you, Tobias!” cried Albert hoarsely. “We want none of your Sunday school jargon here. Drink to Loveday.”

All the men in the room gathered round Tobias and Albert.

“I’ll drink in ginger beer,” said Tobias.

“You won’t,” said Albert. “That’s ill-whist. You’ll drink to her proper or not at all.” He turned to the men with his glass in his hand. “Here’s to her joy and health and marriage to a seemly man,” he cried. They all clinked glasses.

Tobias suddenly sprang to his feet.

“Here’s to her, then—Loveday, my future wife. Let’s drink to her, body and soul.” He drained the glass.

Albert stared at him with his glass only begun.

“My gosh!” cried Sam. “The woman won’t whine for an owner. He’ll hold her beyond stealing, sure enough.”

“The devil!” cried Albert. “You’m an old hand, after all.”

"You've lost your wager, Albert," cried Bill.

"Your what?" asked Tobias.

The three men stared blankly at one another and the group in the back of the room whispered together.

"We'd a bit of a bet on the female constitution," said Sam sheepishly. "Bert there said you knew no more than a maiden about women folk, and I said you could outstrip we in knowledge."

"It was nothing of the kind," said Albert. "What I mean I may as well say. I'm playing with cards on the table now. That girl Loveday have got to retrace her steps a bit, that's all. She'm mine and I mean to have her. You're a paltry thief. If you've any doubts go and ask her."

A whirling sensation was mounting to the brain of Tobias. He saw Albert's flaming face close to his as he stammered out.

"I'd scorn to ask her such a shameful

thing. It's not in nature she can belong to both of us."

Albert grinned.

"Well, that's a point gained anyway," he retorted. "No, she cannot marry us both, young cuckoo. Who be she foxing, do you think?"

"No one," said Tobias. "She'm comely in soul and body and her word be her bond. She'm mine and so cannot be thine."

"Leave him be, Albert," said Bill suddenly. "It's a bit of a shame, after all. He'm a suckling and pitiable."

"Pitiable!" cried Tobias. "Who be pitiable? You're all clean daft. What do you mean at all?"

"Look 'ere, Trewidden," said Albert. "Listen to me. This is getting beyond a joke. When two men be bent on getting the same woman, one of 'em have got to take a back seat. I'm in the front row for the moving picture. See?"

“I’m in the picture, in a manner of speaking,” said Tobias.

“Clear out of it, then, if you wants to keep alive,” cried Albert. “The woman’s bespoke. She’ve got to marry me and we’ll have the banns put up before you’ve taken your first month’s wages. I’m a chap to my word.”

“And I don’t belong to bow to frustration,” said Tobias. “The maid be vowed to me and so be pledged beyond recall.”

“I’ve seen Albert and Loveday dinking afore now,” said Bill.

The landlord came in and filled the empty glasses at a sign from Sam.

“Takin’ arms bean’t nothin’,” said Tobias.

“And I heard a smacking of lips once,” said Sam as he wiped his mouth, after emptying his glass at one draught.

Tobias looked hard at Sam. He spoke bitterly.

“By the time you’ve got out of this room, mate, you’ll likely have heard more than that. This filthy, fiery stuff be enough to

make you see and hear any disaster. I guess you'll both see and hear double before dawn."

"Fiery stuff! Beer!" cried Albert. "Have a gin and bitters for coolness, do."

"It's the first and last of its sort I'll ever reckon with," said Tobias. "I feel as sick as a dog and must be going."

"Going where?" asked Albert.

"To meet Loveday," Tobias answered. "I'm late now."

"He've lost!" It was echoed through the room. The landlord had just come in with more beer and the four men stood close to Tobias, who suddenly sat down with his hand to his head as they closed round him.

"You'll not meet her," said Albert savagely. "I'll go instead."

"Instead of me," cried Tobias. "No, thank you. I'm off to once'st."

Albert lurched towards him.

"Take that," he said, "and that for the measly thief you are." He hit Tobias across

the face and the second blow sent him sprawling, because of its unexpectedness, on to the sandy floor. His head caught the tin spittoon and the force of the fall brought blood running down his face. He leaped to his feet and rushed at Albert, who stood doubled up with laughter. His hands were in his trousers pockets.

As Tobias rose and advanced toward his foe Albert shouted at him:

“She’ve mocked at you, fool, and wants to be free of her bargain in crazy shepherds. She says you boasted you’d separate her and me, and she’ve the kisses of two saviors on her lips, mind.”

Tobias flung his long arms in the air as he came toward Albert. With two crashing blows he felled his foe. With a roar like a bull, Albert sprang to his feet and the two men were locked in one another’s arms. There was absolute stillness in the room, except for the thudding blows and the quick breathing of the two fighters. It was a

savage struggle, but Tobias won, and with bowed head fled from the inn. He wiped the wet red stream from his face, but his hair was matted with it and he felt giddy and shameful. Scarcely knowing what he was doing, he walked to the little invalid's home, where Loveday had told him she would be. As he stood under the big lamp over the door, Loveday and her father stepped out. They saw Tobias at once. Loveday screamed and her father stepped forward.

"Whatever is this?" he cried. "What in the name of heaven has happened?"

"I've had a fall," said Tobias.

"Oh!" cried Loveday. "Bring him in, father. He's bleeding."

"No," whispered Mr. Cocking. "We can't go in. It will frighten the girl. Come on home. How did it happen? You look fit to faint."

"An accident," said Tobias.

"An accident in 'The Lamb and Flag,' gasped Loveday. Her voice was hard.

"Yes," said Tobias.

"Was it your fault?" asked Mr. Cocking.

"Yes," said Tobias.

There was silence as they slowly walked toward the next lamp-post. There they faced two men, Albert Tremayne and Sam Bryant. Albert's face was already swollen and his eyes had the expression of a fighting tom-cat.

"He," pointing a finger at Tobias, "have tried to murder me." He pointed to his face. "He'm not safe abroad."

Loveday looked from her lover to Albert and then at her father. Her face was white and scared.

"You've lied, Trewidden," said Mr. Cocking. "It evidently was no accident."

"In a manner of speaking it was," said Tobias, "and in another way it was not." He had turned away from Loveday as he spoke and the light from the lamp fell on his matted hair.

"Oh!" cried Loveday. "How horrible he

looks." Then turning to him, she said: "Doesn't your face hurt you?"

Something woke in him, and a great anguish, like a gray mist, enveloped him.

"It all hurts," he said brokenly. "Where shall I go, what shall I do?"

A burst of laughter broke from Albert Tremayne.

"Tell the cry-baby, Loveday," he said. "Where shall he go, what shall he do?" he mimicked.

Fear was in Loveday's eyes. She looked up at her lover. He looked down on his love. It seemed that Death held him by the throat. He could not speak. In her alone was the rescue.

"Smell his breath," cried Albert. "Ask Sam there. He saw it all."

"Oh!" murmured Loveday. "Yes—Sam——" she said. "You see, I don't know much about——"

The despair in her lover's eyes stopped

her and she shrank from Tobias toward her father.

“He’s waiting to know where he shall go,” sneered Albert.

“To hell as far as I am concerned,” said Mr. Cocking. “Answer him quickly, Love-day, and let us go! Don’t get too close. He certainly smells of drink.”

The lamplight showed the pale face of Tobias and his arms were outstretched. The grotesque figure, with the hair matted with blood, standing against the lamp-post, seemed in the dim light a sort of crazy image of Christ. Tobias stood motionless a moment.

“Go where you like. How should I know?” The words rang clearly and cruelly, and Tobias dropped as the dead drop.

“Here, Tremayne,” said Mr. Cocking. “This is no sight for a woman. Take Love-day home for me, there’s a good chap, and Sam and me will carry this shaver to bed.

He'm not as seasoned in drink as I was led to believe, so there's hope for the girl yet."

Loveday, with bent head, took Albert Tremayne's arm, and Mr. Cocking raised Tobias from the ground. Sam ran after Albert and whispered:

"My Gosh, you've won, Bert. It was nearly lost. We was all in a stew, for we'd bet hard on you winning back the girl tonight. Real sport, old man, and no one really hurt." He dashed back to help Mr. Cocking, and said in a friendly voice:

"Tobias be'ant half a bad youngster. We all badgered him a bit, and he'd only a glass, after all. He showed fine fight."

"We'll get him to bed and let it pass," said Mr. Cocking. "Youngsters will be youngsters, and he'll be as right as rain by morning."

The two men carried their apparently lifeless burden to the house and tapped gently at the kitchen door. Leah opened it with her finger on her lip.

"They'm all in bed," she whispered. "I stayed up for Tobias." She started back as the men silently brought in the shepherd.

"Oh! sakes," she cried. "He'm dead!"

"No, not at all," said Mr. Cocking kindly. "He've had a drop too much, and have been fighting."

Leah looked eagerly at Tobias.

"That's the unlikeliest thing that could be," she said. "He could never compass sin and shame like this 'ere. Something must have driven him silly crazy with woe."

Sam smiled.

"I've seen him ordinary tipsy afore," he said, "even while tending his flock, but never as far gone as this."

Leah bent forward towards Sam.

"He's seemingly light-headed at times," she said, "and full of fancies. He's been overdone some way, I'm sure. See! there's blood."

"He fought hard," said Mr. Cocking, "and won, I believe."

“He’s some sorry sight for a victor,” said Sam, “and he’d best just sleep it off till the morning.”

“He has an unbeknowns look,” said Leah. “He’ve once or twice seemly passed beyond reach. Perhaps he’s that way now. He’s not like the others, you know.”

Mr. Cocking bent over Tobias as he lay on the hearth rug.

“He do look a bit queer,” he said. “Perhaps we’d better send the doctor along as we goes home, just to ease your mind.”

The two men carried Tobias gently to Leah’s little room. They came down in a few minutes and tiptoed to the door.

“He’m more like a child as have played and fought beyond his strength,” Mr. Cocking murmured. “He’m scarcely fit for the natural strife of daily life.”

“He’ve the spirit of a lion,” said Leah, “but he was only a seven months’ little one and perhaps somethin’ was left out as most of we do belong to have, and somethin’ else

put in, as I, for one, should pray to be delivered from."

"Same here," said Sam. "Give me steady nerves and a work-a-day brain-piece."

"And me a man of that make for my daughter," said Mr. Cocking emphatically, "and not a crazy, dreaming chap, all nerves and moods."

When they had gone Leah crept upstairs and put a shaded lamp near Tobias. She then brought a basin with some soft water and a rag and wiped away the blood and dirt from his face. He scarcely breathed and his lips were purple. She heard a footstep and went down. It was old Dr. Rosewarne.

"Tobias ill, I hear?" he queried.

"He's very strange," she answered.

"Drinking and fighting, they say. Odd thing," said the doctor.

Leah nodded.

"Not a bit like him," said Dr. Rosewarne. "The cub has always interested me. It's a case of prenatal congestion. His mother had

a blow and was a little paralyzed—you know.”

“Yes,” said Leah. “A window cord broke and fell on her head.”

The doctor whistled.

“It’s sometimes just those things that alter nations. Madmen and psychics, Napoleons and Wainwrights, are produced with less than that. Cerebral——”

“Oh! lor’!” cried Leah. “Don’t say he’s that too, whatever it is. Why, he’ll never recover.”

“Oh! it all sounds worse than it is,” said the doctor, smiling. “We must give names to these things, though we know little enough about them. All that matters really is that people like Tobias need delicate handling or they become dangers. It’s the difference between a Shetland pony and a racer. This lad, I confess, is beyond me. I can’t always cure him by purges and tonics. He baffles me. Let me see him.”

Leah led the way upstairs and closed the

door softly when they were inside the room. The doctor felt his pulse, lifted his eyelids and probed under the curls where the blood showed. He was silent some time and then beckoned Leah out of the room. When they were in the kitchen he pointed to the stove.

"A hot water-bottle to his feet, no noise, watch him most of the night, and when he wakens treat the whole affair as if it had never happened. Much depends on this. Probably he may waken a different man. Till now he has been a child and a dreamer. Some shock has done this."

Leah was crying gently.

"He's had no shock," she whimpered. "He'm in love and crazy happy. It can't be."

The old doctor put his hand on Leah's shoulder.

"Now you give me a clue," he said. "It is just love that builds or breaks a nature like that."

"Surely there's a betwixt and between," said Leah feebly.

"Not to creatures of Tobias' make," he answered. "Is the woman any good?"

Leah looked hard at the doctor.

"I'm no judge of females," she said. "I don't cotton to them. She be perfect in the eyes of Tobias. That's all I know."

"Lucky dog and poor devil," said the doctor. "I've no drug to cure that. Nature must help him or kill him. Rest, warmth and your care. That is all that can be done. I'll come in to-morrow. No drink and no fighting can beat love for disaster," he muttered to himself as he went out.

"Or for glory," added Leah. "Tobias will make that manifest."

"If he lives," said the doctor. "Most of them die and have grand tombstones erected by the women who kill them."

PART V
THE DREAMER

THE DREAMER

IT was a wonderful place, and Tobias Trewidden, even as a shepherd, had never seen anything so lovely. It was an exquisite garden and a divine wilderness in one. Nothing seemed in order and yet all was orderliness. The scents and sounds around him were like dreams and music, and the flutter of winged and chirruping things made Tobias begin to hum the soft lullabys Leah had taught him when he was a child. These were answered at once by invisible playmates, and a vibrant whirr, like the soft melodies from harps and guitars, filled the air.

“I feel washed inside and out,” murmured Tobias, “and my mother seems very near.”

She was near, just as near as his thoughts of her. Tobias had not noticed a transparent house among a tall avenue of trees.

Evidently she lived in that. A line of odorous shrubs leading to it seemed alight with tiny crystal lamps of every color. The glass door of the house was wide open and a figure stood within. It beckoned to Tobias and he ran quicker than a shepherd runs to his flock.

"Mary, my mother," he cried.

"Tobias, my beloved son," she answered. With one impulse they knelt together and clasped hands. Then she cradled his curly head upon her breast.

"At last," she whispered.

"Mammy," he cried, for he had forgotten he was a man. He had missed her so long that he went back to the time he needed her most and had called for her in vain. He suddenly raised his head and looked into her wonderful face. She had such large eyes that Tobias knew, without being told, that they could see far beyond mortal vision.

"My child," she whispered softly, "this is

a great gift to us and a big price must be paid for it."

Tobias laughed joyfully.

"We'll pay," he said. "I knew I'd see you one day because of all the messages, and here you are in——" He hesitated. He was going to add, "flesh and blood," but something stopped him. He held her robe and sighed. "It's just heaven," he said.

"My only begotten son," she answered, "and so my love pierced all the veils. You knew and know."

"Mother," he said, "it's a g'eat loveliness, isn't it? The loneliness don't count now. If I'd only known I'd have had patience."

"It is why it is permitted," she said. "I have had little peace because of your pain. I've longed to change the mountain peaks into valleys in the map of your life and the wilderness into a garden. I've ached to bring softness where roughness alone would avail. My prayers and my work here have

prevailed at last and my arms enfold you.”

“Where are we?” asked Tobias.

“In Love-Acre,” Mary answered, “and the laws here must be fulfilled to the last letter. Even in the World-Acre they are not so hard if disobedience comes from not rightly knowing. Here we know.”

“Love-Acre!” cried Tobias. “Why, this is the land of all my dreams!”

“It is the Acre where the Great Meanings begin to show,” she said.

“How?” cried Tobias.

“Have patience, little son,” Mary answered as she rose to her feet. “Hold me close, for the time is short and I have much I want to say.” She led him to the transparent house.

“Why!” he cried, “here is the shop. See! the dewdrops hanging in the window and the gossamer threads and the lovely wings!” He ran from place to place and in a boy’s ecstasy flung himself against her robe. She led him beyond the shop into a large en-

closure and they lay together on a thick yellow carpet of pollen dust which covered the entire floor.

"I'm so full of fervor and joy," said Tobias. "I want to die so that I can breathe easy, seems to me."

"You have first to live," said Mary the mother, "and to die in living. Remember, child, that to love is to die continually, but to die for what you love is the only life. I want you to have patience and never forget that."

"Patience," said Tobias, "is only for sheep and women. I'm a man."

His mother ran her hands through his curls.

"When a man learns as you must learn he needs more than the patience of women and sheep," she said. "He must learn to have the patience of the gods, for they know only love."

"The gods!" cried Tobias. "There's only one God."

“Who has many sons and daughters who die the death,” said Mary, and Tobias wondered at the radiance in her face. “The annunciations are beyond reckoning, but the still-births frustrate the great Will.” She put her hand across the puzzled brow of her son.

“Is this a school?” asked Tobias. “Are the teachers afraid and the scholars dull, or what is the matter? The shop is so very pretty, and the flowers and you are all I knew you were in my dreams.”

“The biggest lessons are taught here to the simple, and the greatest chances of renunciation are offered to the weak,” said the mother. “The pure in heart suffer most and the best beloved often seem to die of drought.”

Tobias drew closer and held his mother’s spotless robe.

“How very horrid!” said Tobias, “I’ll escape all that and be happy.” Mary bent down and kissed the feet of her son.

“Only if you fail,” she cried.

“Fail where, how? Oh, it’s very puzzling,” said Tobias.

“The Gardener will tell you better than I,” she said. “It is a great favor that I may see you for this moment to tell you that my watchword to you is Patience. I dare say no more. Patience is the mother’s watchword to her child.”

The transparent house was suddenly suffused by a light as from a rising sun. A sound was heard like a thousand belled carillon and the body of Tobias grew charged with a current which lifted him from the ground and floated him down the avenue toward what seemed to be a big sun. He had lost his mother, but this Light flooded him so completely that prayer just then became like the cry of a dreamer and his mother seemed a ghost. From the Light came a Voice, and in the sound of it the sorrows of the whole world were lost. Tobias tried to remember all the things which mattered

most to him, but this Light absorbed them and the Voice drowned them.

“I am an Elder Brother,” said the Voice. “I am one of the Gardeners in Love-Acre. Like you, I have been a traveller and have sinned and sown and reaped in the World-Acre and again in Love-Acre, for there is little difference here and there. You have loved and suffered and so have unknowingly been trained as a Gardener too. The law is, love and suffer till you die the death, and through your living death you will see the beginning of Eternal love and life.”

An exaltation was upon the soul of Tobias and a great understanding of the Light and the Voice.

“I’ve no tools,” said Tobias softly, “and I know nothing.”

The Light burst into red flame and back again to a whiteness which almost blinded him.

“The tools are human hearts and needs,” said the Voice. “To know you know noth-

ing is the only beginning of wisdom. The real teacher is always the humblest pupil."

"How very strange," said Tobias. "Is Love-Acre a school after all?"

"It is one of the seeding-grounds of the Greater Worlds," said the Voice. "It has need of gardeners, for it is full of weeds. Many of the seeds brought from the World-Acre prove to be weeds."

"I'm used to weeding," said Tobias.

The Light flashed into purple and white as Tobias thought of his acre of purple and white violets.

"Some weeds here excel some flowers in the World-Acre," said the Voice, "but here you can tell at once which must be saved for the greater blossoming. Come!" The Light flashed down the long avenue, and Tobias found himself near a large water-lily pond and a memory stirred him.

"They'm wonderful," he said. "Not a pin's space between their white faces."

The Light grew suddenly murky and

brown, and Tobias felt he only understood through the Voice.

“From sin and sorrow, to use your foolish earth words,” said the Voice, “do such white things grow. Their long slimy roots are in a mud such as no earthly gardener would dare to use even for manure. In Love-Acre the very dirt is the promise of these lovely flowers.”

The Light flashed a silver brilliance on the pond.

“How can we know these things if we are not gardeners?” asked Tobias.

“Everyone has to become a gardener in time,” said the Voice. “The first lesson a gardener must learn is to reject nothing and see the hidden beauty in every living thing. The Mother and the Poet are idealists because they see, not because they are blind. Love sees very clearly always. Till the Harvest no one can tell what is worthy or unworthy. Here the jealous, the glutton, the adulterer, the gossip, the self-righteous, the

murderer, and the miser are seen, not as the ugly stalk in the slime, but as the lily which has been forced out of corruption into beauty. The flower is the reality and the mud and slimy stalk are only means to the floating purity and peace and beauty. Good gardeners know this and have patience."

"Patience!" cried Tobias. "That is my mother's watchword. Is that a tool?"

The Light flashed into orange as it glowed over the earth and then gleamed into yellow on a long bank of wild flowers.

"Every joyous and beautiful thought in the World-Acre produces a flower here, and every jealous and selfish thought a weed," said the Voice. "The gardeners have to be very busy. Sometimes they have no rest and nearly faint."

"There are more weeds than flowers on this bank," said Tobias.

"Many are called but few follow. You must follow," said the Voice.

“Where?” asked Tobias tremblingly.

“To loss and shame and failure and death,” said the Voice. “To understand these things is to begin to love. To fail is to learn, to stumble is to see, and to die is to live.”

The Light broke into a million rays and Tobias covered his face. He felt he must be quite blind. He heard the Voice almost in darkness.

“To have seen this Light and heard my Voice, the Voice of one once crying in the wilderness of failure, despair, and shame, is to be called to the work of a Gardener. No one can really ever hurt you but yourself now, but the price for this vision must be paid in loneliness and shame. The Vision and the Knowledge bring more and not less suffering. Gardening gives understanding, nevertheless, to those who see and hear, and this makes all things bearable. One who has seen and heard is no longer only a learner, but a teacher, even in his failures.

No Gardener made worthy to touch flowers condemns or destroys anything, but uses all things for the Great End."

"Great End!" echoed Tobias. He could scarcely hear his own voice.

"The Great End of Joy," said the Voice. "In the World-Acre you use Joy too little. It is a tool of great value. The drought here is often caused by the lack of vivid and entrancing joy in the World-Acre as torrents of rain, destroying many flowers, are caused by the stupid excess of folly mortals call pleasure. Rapture and joy are the voices of the soul, even more than pain, but pain is the outer court leading to joy. The utter joyfulness of men and women, growing toward perfection in the World-Acre, uproots weeds here as a wind cleanses the air of poisons."

Suddenly Tobias felt he was the only dark spot anywhere, though he was bathed outwardly in golden light. The Voice became deep and more vibrant.

“The voices of joy make the worlds,” said the Voice, “and the great conquests are the Lights. Love is the Breath. Become a deep Breath, and teach the World-Acre the greater Love which can share and dare not spare.”

Tobias knelt on the golden-colored ground, and the prayer of an humble Gardener filled the air.

“Give me the understanding heart and the healing hands,” he cried. “Use me as thy tool and spare no plough on thy furrows. Prune me to the uttermost and make thy wild vine into a wine for the thirst of men.”

Tobias felt Mary his mother close to him, as if she had folded his hands in prayer, as he had seen Leah do to his stepbrothers and sisters. He had repeated something out of his mother’s heart and stood up smiling.

Strange galaxies of sunbeams of every color were in the air, and soft elfin whispers and fairy bells, with a sound of happy laughter, was the Amen to his prayer. A great

peace fell upon Tobias, the peace which passes all the knowledge in the World-Acre.

“This is not exchangeable for a diamond crown or even——” He did not finish. The Voice thundered and the lightning played around Tobias. A great calm followed and a little ruby-colored light was all that was left. It lit up a long, sweet-scented bank of flowers.

“Apparently there is not a single weed left here,” said Tobias, pointing to a bank of what seemed to be Lad’s Love and Lassie’s Delight. The Light shone in a fairy blue and white.

“The plants here are full of promise,” said the Voice. “The Gardeners can rest often who take care of this plot, for some of the loveliest thought-seeds from the World-Acre produce these. Rapture and Joy are hidden in their petals.” The Mothers take care of this plot and can dream and rest more than the others.”

The Light suddenly flashed dark red as

it hung over a morass where Love lies bleeding and Love in a Mist seemed scorched with too much heat.

“These often die before they fully flower,” said the Voice. “Passion, the great forging power of human life, often dries up before its flowers blossom or its fruit ripens.”

The Light flashed into the shape of a cross of amber and lit up some purple and white tendrils climbing round what seemed waxen or marble pillars. The Voice was tender and low.

“These are the crucified loves who save others though they cannot save themselves. These are they who, in spite of tempests, show nails and cross as signs.”

“How strange,” said Tobias. “It’s like conjuring, in a manner of speaking.”

“It is the sweetest of all miracles,” said the Voice. “To save through losing and to grow beautiful through sorrow. Remember that always, little brother. No one can be a good Gardener who does not understand and

follow these things. The tools are of no use except in the hands of those who know the big secrets of the soil and the souls of the flowers. The wages of great love are often loss and death, but these are only names to those who can prune and weed and who understand fully the difference between seed-time and harvest. The real Gardener knows there is no loss anywhere, only growth and change and sometimes delay in blossoming."

The Light flickered and seemed almost lost for a moment, but at last feebly showed long lines of weeping willows.

"These are shading those who are resting till the anguished cries at their transplanting cease in the World-Acre," said the Voice. "They cannot grow fully till the weeping ceases." The Voice almost became a sigh as it went on. "It is the Gardener's blight and delays many beautiful fruits from ripening as well as trees and flowers. The wild cries in the World-Acre over those whose work is now in Love-Acre sweep like a cruel wind

and hinder growth. No Joy is more lovely to a trained Gardener here than that over the travellers safely crossing from Acre to Acre and so learning perfection. It brings softness and peace and a great unfolding, as the sun on a half-opened rose. The grief of one mourning without hope blasts the young plant and hinders growth in both acres."

"Is no one really ever dead, then?" asked Tobias.

"Not to a real Gardener," said the Voice. The Light grew incandescent and still. "Sleep and death are twins, like Life and Love. Death is only a replanting from garden to garden."

"Wherever is the Devil?" suddenly cried Tobias.

The Light flamed downward and upward and sideways and the Voice had in it a sound of laughter.

"Only in the hearts of those who fear," it said. "No true Gardener knows fear, be-

cause Love and Beauty destroy it as Light destroys Darkness. Half the sins and sorrows of the World-Acre would shrivel into nothingness or expand into Beauty but for Fear."

"I am often afraid," said Tobias, "so I shall be but a poor Gardener."

"Courage is a habit," said the Voice, "an hourly and daily habit. Those who learn it never crawl or sacrifice or reject or condemn. They glow and give and laugh and cast aside the old with the same reverence that they accept the new. It is a foolish Gardener who despises the fallen leaves which have left him the flower or who gathers the full flower before it has turned into fruit. The gibes of men or the witcheries of women are all in order to the Gardener, who accepts sunshine and frost as he accepts summer and winter. To dig and weed and hoe beyond the rules of the gardening books, however old, and to be joyful and hopeful in all seasons is the work of a real Gardener. Re-

member your Vision and never forget that Freedom and Love are the keys of the Great Mansions which lie far beyond the World-Acres and the Love-Acres.

“Is there more than one Love-Acre then?” asked Tobias.

The Light broke into a million stars.

“No Gardener’s wisdom can compass it,” said the Voice. “You are a beginner. Your will remains free. You are called, but need not follow. No vision alters that. The Light you have seen may only scorch you, the Voice only molest you. It is all in you. Beauty calls and you can betray her. She beckons and you can follow. Have patience and never fail her.”

“It seems unforgettable,” said Tobias softly.

“So seems Love to the Lover,” said the Voice. “Memory only really begins in Love-Acre when Beauty buds and the Gardeners are ready.”

“Loveday!” cried Tobias, and a fierce light burnt into his eyes.

“She’s not here,” said a gentle voice, and Tobias looked into the anxious face of Leah.

“My poor Tobias,” said Leah.

Tobias sat upright and rubbed his eyes. He laughed joyously.

“Poor!” he cried. “My blessed Life! Rich as two lords and twice blessed! I could fly with the wonders of the Vision.”

Leah wrung her hands and burst into tears.

“What are you crying for?” asked Tobias. “All the secrets of the gardener and the voices and the lights be upon me. I’m some happy and blest.”

“Oh! the doctor,” she muttered. “He’m right. It’s a changeling.”

“Yes,” said Tobias. “How did you know? I’ve seen and I’ve heard and I’m in a maze of joy.”

He told her his dream. He told it so rapidly and happily she caught the infection

of his joy and held his hands over what he called "the unspeakable glory."

"Everything beside it be a dream," he said, "or a fairy-tale. That's a mountain of truth and seems beyond even a mother's love."

"Tobias," said Leah gently, "what of Loveday? Did the dream-folk say nothing of she?"

His face became serious.

"How very strange," he said. "She was never forthcoming in words or in flame pictures either, or," he hesitated, "in my thoughts."

"An instrument only," muttered Leah. "A tool, sure enough."

"A what?" cried Tobias. "The tools aren't women. You'm a foolish maid, Leah."

"They know, I reckon, and we can but trust," said Leah.

"I must see Loveday at once," said Tobias, "and tell her." He looked round the

room. "Why am I here?" he said. "What's the matter?"

Leah looked into the eager face. Tobias had evidently no recollection of the previous night's disaster.

"You fell asleep downstairs and we couldn't waken you, so we carried you here and undressed you, as the others had gone to bed and I'd ironing to do and stayed up."

He drew his hand across his forehead.

"Where was I last night?" he asked.

"With Loveday," said Leah.

A smile broke over the face of Tobias.

"To be sure. No wonder I had such a lovely dream," he said. "Surely this is my first day at the dairy."

"It's only six yet, Tobias," said Leah. "Try to sleep till seven."

"Sleep!" he cried. "I've slept all I can, and I feel like a g'eat man of muscle and nerve, and as if I could lift a world on my shoulders."

"A day in bed would do you good," she

said. "You was fainting with tiredness last night."

He suddenly hit the bedclothes.

"Gracious," he cried, "wasn't it last night that I was in a maze of rage with Bert Tremayne?" He laughed. "A pack of foolishness," he went on. "What was it all about? The dream have drowned it, I reckon."

Leah came close to the bed and looked at Tobias.

"Let me send word you'll go to work tomorrow and just lie there for the day," she said. "It's better so."

"What should a man in love and in work do lying here dreaming," he cried. "I never felt better in my life. I feel as if I'd been swimming in—in——"

Leah sighed as she finished his sentence for him: "Heavenly waters, I suppose. May it bring no disaster," she said.

"By all the signs disaster be like the devil," said Tobias cheerily, "only in we."

“Devils and disasters can torment and destroy,” said Leah.

Tobias jumped out of bed and pulled aside the little curtains. The room was flooded with the red rays of a lovely May morning.

“They can’t destroy Light,” said Tobias, “nor yet a Voice.”

PART VI
THE OUTCAST

THE OUTCAST

IT was the evening of Tobias Trewidden's wedding day. It might have been the evening of his funeral, to judge by the faces of the little group assembled in the Trewiddens' kitchen. It was half-past nine, but Matthew Trewidden was still up. He sat with folded arms near the fireplace, and Mrs. Trewidden, opposite, looked at him. Leah was moving to and fro, clearing away what she called the remnants.

"He's a damned outcast," said Matthew, "and thank God he's left my house-place and the village for good, let us hope. They could never have faced the music here."

"Husht!" said Mrs. Trewidden. "He's your son after all."

Matthew Trewidden stared at his wife.

"Be thankful he ain't yours too, but a dead

woman's brat as she can never weep over. Poor Mary deserved a better son than Tobias."

His face softened as he went on. "It's no man's part to sing up the first wife's praises, but Mary were the peacemaker of this village. Not a row or a sore heart or a twisty-crosty bit of confusion anywhere but she would be called to put it right, and with a flick and a smile enemies was friends and the crooked was put straight."

"Pity but what she'd lived," said Mrs. Trewidden curtly.

"Don't be frosty, Jane Maria," said Mr. Trewidden. "She'd her points and you've yours. Seven cubs like Tobias would have turned me from she in time, I reckon, as our healthy little crew have made me cosset thee."

Mrs. Trewidden folded her hands and twiddled her thumbs in supreme content.

Leah came over to the stove and poked the fire.

"Though it's July there's a big wind up

and a moaning in the air," she said. "The weather be hardening, I fancy."

"I'm in a boil of perspiration," said Matthew Trewidden. "It was a wet day with a new moon on Sunday, and that allus means a rainy month. It's been one of ill omen so far, anyway. I thought that young cub Tobias was going to settle down in a reasonable manner after all."

"It's beyond my understanding," said Leah sadly. "It's going to break my heart in the end."

"Bosh!" said Mr. Trewidden. "Hearts don't break."

"They bulges a bit after each blow," said Mrs. Trewidden. "Tobias must 'ave been took with a sudden qualm and frenzy," she went on. "Anything might befall a topsy-turvey nature like his be."

"Begetting a child and murdering it, and then jumping to marry the mother to save his skin and forgetting the woman he was plighted to is more than a qualm or even a

frenzy," said Mr. Trewidden. "It's just wickedness, and even Leah can't deny it."

"He've allus been a bit queer," said Mrs. Trewidden kindly. "Seven months' children arn't never the same as others, I've heard. It's allus a toss which they belongs to have, extra good luck or awful disaster."

"Why the devil didn't he die? He's been always a thorn in our flesh, and now he's a scourge, in a manner of speaking, as well," said Mr. Trewidden.

"He'm so very lovable," almost whispered Leah. "To me he's been allus a little child with the ghosts of a man and a woman trying to work through him."

"Rats!" said Mr. Trewidden. "What fantastical nonsense! What he've done now be no childishness, anyway. You surely don't uphold it?"

"No," said Leah, who was crying softly into her apron. "It's as clear as daylight, I know, but something must have dazed him the night he was brought in fainty and ill."

"Iss, very likely," sneered Mr. Trewidden. "But he'd been dazed afore that, according to the age of the child."

Leah blushed.

"Oh!" she cried, "I could have sworn he was as guileless as a girl and too full of dreams for such poor doings as that."

Mrs. Trewidden looked at her husband and laughed.

"It's the unlikeliest as falls the lowest when they do go down," she said. "Them blue eyes, like saucers, looked as if they'd deceive no one, but apparently they was just aids to corruption. Poor Loveday!"

Leah shuddered.

"She might surely have saved him," she said. "He loved her and she him. It's a great mystery."

"Saved him?" cried Mr. Trewidden. "She'd have to have started at birth, then. I think she's behaved fine. She went before the magistrates and answered like a good one. I thought once at the sight of Tobias

she was going to faint, but she pulled herself well together."

"She'd never have faced the talk anyway," said Mrs. Trewidden, "but he gave her no chance about that, thanks be, when he confessed."

"He saved his skin," said Mr. Trewidden, "but through it she've been delivered from a poor marriage. There could be no outlook more beastly than to be wedded to a dreamy coward like Tobias."

Leah put down a saucepan she was carrying.

"Look!" she said. "All my hopes and longings be gone in, but I don't believe he's quite as bad as you do say."

Mrs. Trewidden bent forward.

"If he'd been your own child, Leah, and not a dream child, would you have spoken to him again?"

Leah put her face in her hands.

"I don't know," she cried. "No one, I should think, could refuse the child of their

body, and yet—oh!” she went on stammeringly, “I should have prayed continually to God to take him and cleanse him from his great transgressions.”

“Sakes!” said Mrs. Trewidden. “To look at him you’d think that was a hopeless task. He’s some hardened.”

“That’s what surprised me so,” said Leah. “He wasn’t contrite a bit and never seemed to fret over Loveday. That’s why I’m sure he be not exactly. I tried to get him to talk, but he always turned me off with a smile and his eyes shone more than ever, but seemly he never whistled and sang as he belonged.”

“You’ve half a leaning to him yet, Leah,” said Mrs. Trewidden.

“No,” said Leah. “I’ve only the love and liking of what I thought he was, just as I have for the dream-child. There’s no excuse, I know, and all the evil and ruin be before me as plain as that.” She pointed to the

open window where the wind was driving the jasmine against the panes.

"He was always an alien," said Matthew Trewidden, "and now he be a fair outcast. The neighbors all shun him, and no wonder."

"He might have swung," said Mrs. Trewidden, "or been transported."

"And I always thought of him as a leader of men," said Leah.

"He was just fitted to be a leader of sheep," said Mr. Trewidden bitterly, "but Loveday frustrated his calling. What a calf of a lover he must have made." He winked at his wife. "Spoon-meat sort of stuff he'd likely say to her. He'd no real manliness in his make-up. Why, he believed in fairies till he was a shepherd, and I've seen him handle flowers like a girl, many a time."

"He thought they had souls," said Leah softly.

The man and woman bent forward simultaneously and laughed loudly.

"It do fairly cheer me up to hear such blither," said Mr. Trewidden, "because it makes me know how right we all are in thinking him a bit daft. We'll hear more of his doings yet, I fancy, but thank God he's in harness at last, of sorts, for marriage be mostly either heaven or hell."

"Or purgatory," said Leah.

"What's the difference between hell and purgatory?" asked Mrs. Trewidden, smiling.

"One you can get out of and one you can't," said Leah.

"Marriage be no purgatory, then," said Mr. Trewidden. "It's a cage mostly, if not a prison, and it's a clever bird what can fly out of it." He beckoned Leah to his side and spoke more genially. "Here, Leah! There are times when the only thing to do is to drink yourself a bit soft. When your eldest son escapes the rope and is the by-word of the village, it's not the time to be

too fanciful. Missis, you and me will have a fine stoop of what the uplongs call white satin. It'll mind us of our wedding night." He laughed coarsely.

"We generally keep it for funerals," said Mrs. Trewidden, "but I must say I'd dearly like a noggin."

"Leah shall have her fancy drink if she'll go and fetch the lot," said Mr. Trewidden.

"I allus leans to stone ginger with just a leak of gin in it," said Leah.

"Good!" said Mr. Trewidden. "Here's the needful."

He slapped his hands on his knees as Leah went out.

"Bring a bottle of good Plymouth. It'll keep," he said, smiling at his wife. "We'll just drink ourselves warm and cozie and go to bed and forget the young varmint as if he'd never existed. I mean to do a bit of a deal with old Cocking over poor Loveday. The girl 'ave had a nasty time, but a lucky miss. I shall put a little sum I'd saved for

the lad into the savings bank for Loveday. Perhaps the chaps won't fight shy of her if it gets wind she've a bit put aside, not only for a rainy day, but for a wedding outfit."

"It do put a mark on a girl, a thing like this 'ere," said Mrs. Trewidden.

"Not such a slur as marrying a fool," her husband answered.

Leah put on her hat and shawl and went to the "Lamb and Flag."

When she had gone Mrs. Trewidden went upstairs.

"I'll tidy myself a bit," she said, "and we'll make a night of it after all."

Matthew Trewidden stood up, and as he did so he heard a knock at the door. He opened it and Dr. Rosewarne walked in.

"Evening, Trewidden," he said. "I hope I don't intrude?"

"Not a bit, sir. Glad to see you."

"I expect you're not feeling quite as gay as the little event of to-day generally finds people," said the kindly old man.

“You’re right, sir. We’ve just been talking it over.”

The doctor sat down.

“Trewidden,” he said, “there’s more than meets the eye in this. It must have been an old love affair. Mr. Carbines has just been with me, and he says he remembers lots of little things while Mathilda was in his service. He says that even when Tobias was shepherding he used to run in at times and that he’ve often caught the two talking.”

“The devil they did,” said Mr. Trewidden. “Young rip!”

“He’s a God-fearing kindly man is Carbines,” said the doctor.

“Never heard any other,” said Trewidden, “and she be noted for keeping her servants a long time. She said to my missis once, ‘I go on the plan of a whip in one hand and a sugar stick in the other, and, moreover, when a servant breaks things and lies I gives her a holiday, as it’s the drudgery telling at

last.' This is the first mishap in servant girls she's had."

"It has upset her very much," said the doctor, "and in fact the whole affair has unnerved them both. I've just been to see them, and he surprised me with a very generous offer."

Matthew Trewidden looked at the doctor.

"He's a misard in his way," he said. "He've an end to serve if he's generous."

"No," said the doctor, "not a bit of it. It's sheer good nature. You see, they've no children, and Mathilda Jones, as you know, is an orphan. They blame themselves that this tragedy ever happened, and Mrs. Carbines said she ought never to have left her alone to take care of the shop or let her out in the evenings."

"She's a comely girl," said Mr. Trewidden, "but seemly aged terrible lately."

"Well, the long and the short of it is," said the doctor, "Mr. Carbines is coming here to-night to consult you as to the best

way to settle a little nest egg on the poor girl. He doesn't feel it wise to hand it over to Tobias, but he wants to place a matter of fifty pounds in the bank for the girl herself, in case Tobias turns out a poor lot."

Mr. Trewidden laughed.

"He can bet his top hat on that," he said. "I call it grand of him. I've often made a joke of his constant chapel-going and thought it was mainly done for custom, but I see it's a bit of the real article. Tobias 'ave nothin' but what he earns, except twenty pounds his mother had laid by, and I kept it for the cub till now. He's got that to-day with a silver tea-pot. His stepmother and Leah between them have bought them a few sticks of furniture and got some house-linen at the sales."

A sharp knock at the door was answered by Trewidden, and Mr. Carbines came in. The sight of him made Matthew Trewidden pull down his waistcoat and glance at his rather muddy boots. Mr. Carbines was

immaculate. His shirt front shone as well as his round red cheeks. A benevolent smile beamed all over his face. He shook hands with Matthew Trewidden and nodded at the doctor.

"I've told Mr. Trewidden," said the doctor.

"Very kind, I'm sure," said Matthew. "More than the young rascals deserve."

"If we all only got what we deserve," said Mr. Carbines devoutly, "things might be very horrid for many. We don't always reap what we sow."

"It depends on what we know of farming, I reckon," said Matthew.

Mrs. Trewidden came downstairs and looked surprised as she greeted her two guests.

"Mathilda and Tobias 'ave fairly fell on their feet," explained Mr. Trewidden. "Here's Mr. Carbines offering fifty pounds to settle on Mathilda."

Mrs. Trewidden looked sharply at the grocer.

"That's a queer punishment for a maid as have gone astray," she said. "An invitation, I call it, to others to follow."

The doctor spread out his hands protestingly.

"No, no, Mrs. Trewidden. A kind heart and a childless home, isn't it?" He turned to Mr. Carbines.

"Exactly," said the grocer. "In fact," with an air of patronage, "had the young shaver not have come by such an untimely end I believe my wife would have wanted to adopt it, but you see we had no suspicion. That is the queer part of it all. Mathilda was as cunning about that as she was before the magistrates about giving the name of the father of her child."

"If I'd been Mathilda," said Mrs. Trewidden, "I would have had his name broadcast over the whole village long ago."

Mr. Carbines stared at his shiny boot toes as he said generously:

“Tobias owned up bravely, I thought. He almost won my respect the way he faced his wrong-doing.”

“Just a brazen devil,” said Mr. Trewidden. “It’s a pretty perilous place for any man to be in when the girl he’s appeared mazy over is on one side of him, and the mother of his murdered child be on the other, and both women facing each other like cats at bay.”

Mr. Carbines shivered.

“It’s a terrible situation,” he said, “and a Christian can but pity.”

Mr. Trewidden stared at Mr. Carbines.

“The magistrates and the police don’t cotton to such feelings at times like that,” he said, “thanks be. Christianity, if that’s what you mean, have got to be suited to the occasion. Tobias be a fair outcast at last and serve him right.”

“An outcast!” cried Mr. Carbines.

“Yes,” said Mr. Trewidden, as the door opened and Leah came in. “We shall never willingly look on his face again. We thought he was only a bit mazy as a child, but he seemed mad at times as a boy, and now the slur on the family name is almost more than we can bear.”

Leah had curtsied to the two men and walked over to the cupboard with the bottle. The doctor remembered his last conversation with Leah, and said gently, as she turned towards him.

“Did you ever see any real signs of oddness in the boy?”

“Or forthiness with females?” asked Mr. Trewidden.

“I’ve never seen him with any girl but Loveday,” said Leah, “and if love be an oddness he was odd enough. Nothing else. His baby fancies kept him quiet as a child’s sucker does other children, and he was kindly to everything living.”

The old doctor looked keenly at Leah.

“Do you believe the child was his?”

Mr. Carbines almost laughed.

“Whose could it be if not?” he said. “And why should Tobias confess if there was a doubt?”

Mr. Trewidden dismissed the matter with a wave of his hand and Mrs. Trewidden sighed plaintively.

“There ain’t a doubt,” said Leah slowly. “Who loves him now loves him in the face of his sin and shame.”

“It is a little in that spirit,” said Mr. Carbines gently, “that I’ve come here to-night. Let anyone of us imagine ourselves in Trewidden’s place. The mere thought is depressing. He must be almost too miserable to live, even if he loves the girl he has married.” He sighed deeply. “He’s not unhappy?”

“No,” said Leah. “That’s the strange part in it all. That is what makes me know his brain-piece be a bit wanting. He don’t look cowed a bit. He put Mathilda’s wrap

on her as if she was snow and would melt, and there was no side glances at neighbors nor nothing. It was just as if he'd done his simple duty to all and everyone."

"What does Loveday say?" asked Mr. Carbines.

"She'm relieved, I think. She told father she'd allus been a bit scared of him in her heart, though she thought she cared."

"She's a level-headed woman, be Loveday," said Mrs. Trewidden, "and no whimsies and crotchets. Tobias would have driven her bitter in time, though."

"And she him," said Leah. "He'll allus be a man to himself, and an orderly life be a sort of nutshell to him. He can't rightly move in it. She's a woman as would frustrate him for having a dog, if a crumble got on the floor through it, and he's one as seeks freedom like a gull the sky."

"If a man once puts his soul into the hands of his wife, freedom is only a name," said the doctor.

“Tobias would ’ave had to shelter his soul in Loveday’s hands,” said Leah, “and I’m not sure he won’t do that even out of them.”

“Will you kindly tell Mathilda that we will put the fifty pounds in the savings bank for her?” asked Mr. Carbines. “When we hear we’ll send her the notes in a registered envelope and she can do as she likes about telling Tobias.”

“Why don’t you write to her yourself, Mr. Carbines?” said Mrs. Trewidden. “She’d dearly like to have a letter from you, I’m sure.”

Mr. Carbines put his finger inside his shirt collar. It seemed a little tight, for his face was flushed.

“I want to spare her,” he said. “She must feel it all a disgrace, and I don’t want to rub it in.”

“You’m a real gentleman,” said Mrs. Trewidden.

The doctor was speculating in his usual

way on men and things. He looked at him searchingly, but said in a level tone:

“You’re evidently a father at heart, Mr. Carbines.”

Mr. Carbines coughed, smiled, and bowed, and the two men went out together.

“Now I call that a stepping in of Providence itself,” said Mrs. Trewidden.

“My gosh!” said Mr. Trewidden. “How mistaken I’ve been in Carbines! Where’s the gin, Leah! Don’t be sparey. We’ll never have a doldrum wedding again.”

He took the bottle Leah gave him, poured a generous helping into each glass and filled the two up with hot water. Leah had hers with her ginger beer. The three sat sipping silently before the fire.

“God bless ’em,” said Leah suddenly.

There was a long silence.

“When we’ve drunk that bottle, and we’ll have a try afore we goes up to bed,” said Matthew Trewidden, “Missis and me may say the same. Now I just feel like cursing

Tobias for bringing shame on our heads. He poured out more of the colorless fluid and drank it nearly neat, but filled up Mrs. Trewidden's glass with water.

"I'm feeling a sort of mother to them already," mumbled Mrs. Trewidden. "This 'ere spirit takes the snarls right out of my system."

"The first time as I took gin," said Mr. Trewidden meditatively, "was the night of my first wedding. I've favored whiskey since."

"I'm going to bed," said Leah, "and I'll just pray for them."

The man and wife laughed hilariously.

"You'll have to do it for we too," said Mrs. Trewidden. "My head be reeling."

"I'm ready to comfort you, Mother," said her husband thickly. "I ain't felt so jolly since I heard the blasted news."

Leah's cheeks were flushed and her eyes flashing.

"The dream," she said, "was just a passil of nonsense."

"The dream!" Mrs. Trewidden cried. "Why, you ain't slept yet, Leah. Off with you to once'st. Leave Master and me alone."

The girl went out and they heard her stumbling up the stairs.

"My God! Missis! It's on stuff like this that a man sees clear—clear as a pike-staff."

"What do you see?" asked Mrs. Trewidden.

"What I don't mean to tell no woman," he said, "even in my cups. I can lay a man-snare if I've even a mind to. But it's half a riddle to me yet. Tobias be Mary's son, after all, and maybe he's got a bit of her nature in him. He's got none of mine, but that's no matter, as things have fallen out. I'd have liked my eldest-born to have been head and shoulders above other men, but we can't pick and choose." He lolled over to the chair where his wife sat and grinned at

her. "Give us a kiss, old dear. Perhaps it'll take the flavor of this day's job out of my teeth." He held up her head and kissed her, almost falling over her as he did so.

"Matthew!" Mrs. Trewidden slobbered, "you be fairly drunk."

"Come up and kiss me sober," leered her husband. "I'm as fit as a fiddle, after all, on my eldest son's wedding-night."

They rolled upstairs, and Leah, on her knees as she heard the bedroom door bang, sobbed out, "St. Patrick, St. Patrick, what can it all mean?"

PART VII
THE PILGRIM

THE PILGRIM

TOBIAS TREWIDDEN was dying. The young Irish doctor, who had just bought the practice in Venvin village, heard of him for the first time from a carrier who had brought him a stock of bottles and a note from the invalid asking him to come and see him as soon as possible.

"They say he do look like a living corpse," said the carrier.

"Has he no relations?" asked Dr. Bligh.

The carrier laughed as he rolled his tobacco in his palms.

"He don't belong to we at all," he said, "though his misdoings hang fast around his neck, even here as well as thirty mile off."

"No friends," muttered the doctor. "Does he live alone?"

"Except for cats and such," said the man.

“He’s all to himself and has the look of one lost to the world. You see,” he went on in a half whisper, “he’s like a man ill whisht, sure enough. A power of evil follows wherever his shadow do fall. Everyone be scared of he.”

“But if he’s ill and dying someone must surely see to him,” said Dr. Bligh.

The carrier shielded his pipe with one hand as he lighted it.

“No neighbor for miles round would come nigh him living or dying,” he said, “for fear of hell letting loose more than could be captured again. He’m ready made for the place, having tried to send two there already. He only needs a push and he’ll be home. You won’t risk going, will you, doctor?”

“Of course I shall go to him at once,” said Dr. Bligh. “I expect it’s all superstition!”

The carrier jumped on to his wagon and took the reins in his hands.

“Not at all,” he said. “We Cornish know the difference between that and this. The

screams of his wife afore the poor thing died and the murder of his child, to say nothing of other horrible things rightly put to his account, ain't no superstitions but evil deeds. He'm a mortal pestilence, in a manner of speaking."

"Where does he live?" asked the doctor as the man prepared to go.

"On the moors beyond the Giant's Crag," answered the carrier. "He be far from human habitation and makes use of spells and such. Tom Andrew saw him once praying by the Eagle's nest, unobserved, as he thought, and he was waving his arms like a scarecrow, at least that's what Tom thought, but it might have been his shadow on the white wall close by, as Tom's lantern shed its light on the wizard. Anyway, I'll own I'm scared of him, and I'd sooner carry goods for a twelve-month for nothing than minister to he for diamond studs and a fortune."

Ernest Bligh was interested. His medi-

cal career, short as it had been, had proved to him that the complexities of human nature defied the hard and fast dictates of either science or religion. He had formed a habit of believing no evil report or repeating it.

That same afternoon he cycled over to Tobias Trewidden's little cottage and knocked at the door. As there was no answer he lifted the latch. A tall, thin man was fast asleep in a chair with his head on his folded arms which were spread out on the big wooden table. A small black cat was asleep across his neck. Dr. Bligh shut the door softly and looked round the room. It was very bare and by the open fireless grate were empty hampers. He had no time to examine further for suddenly Tobias Trewidden raised his head and the cat arched herself and sprang to the ground.

"Good-morning," said Dr. Bligh, "you sent for me to-day."

Tobias Trewidden stood up and the quick

eyes of Ernest Bligh saw that the man was doomed. The body was almost fleshless and the clear blue eyes had sunk far into the head. He held out a bony hand to the doctor.

"Thank you, sir," said Tobias.

"I came as soon as possible after you wrote," said the doctor, as Tobias pointed to a chair.

"You're welcome, I'm sure," said Tobias. "The rages of coughing be most beyond bearing at times. The earthly tabernacle be breaking up fast."

The cat jumped on the doctor's knees, doubled up her front paws, and gazed into the empty grate. Tobias smiled.

"They'm forthy," he said. "They fear no one. Kindness be all they've reckoned with for generations. I've trained them in the ways of the spirit."

"Good gracious!" said Dr. Bligh critically eyeing Tobias. His short sojourn in the West had taught him already that mysticism

was compatible with common sense and superstition worth serious study, in order to find its substratum of scientific truth. When, however, Tobias Trewidden began to talk about his cat as if it were a mortal possessing a soul, he began to observe him more keenly. Perhaps, after all, the enemies of this invalid were right. Poisons in the blood made fantastic havoc in a sensitive brain, and the eyes showed that this man was not of the average type. It might be a case worth noting. As he stroked the cat on his knees he said thoughtfully:

“Human beings are in the rough as yet, but even then there’s a great gap between them and the dumb beasts. You can’t prove to me, for instance, that the kindness of a dog could be so trained that he’d spare a rat.”

“Iss! I can!” cried Tobias. “I’ve taught a terrier-pup to play with rats so that when he grew up he’d not kill them, and many a friendship I’ve watched as close as a dog and a cat can have at times. It ’ave occu-

pied me for years watching and tending animals, for they've been my only companions for a long time. I've put down in a book there," pointing to a shelf where a few odd things were lying, "what I've come across in the way of friendliness between them as be reckoned enemies. It 'ave occupied me most of my time these last three years, but lately I've put them to sleep, for fear later they ever fell into human hands."

Dr. Bligh instinctively glanced at the long, tapering fingers of the cat's owner as he stroked her head. Tobias caught the look.

"Mine be mostly claws now," he said, smiling, "and so be safer, in a manner of speaking. Animals be real gentry with their immortal souls unhurt," he added thoughtfully.

Dr. Bligh looked into the mystical eyes of the man standing near him. Serenity and control were written on the firm, big mouth and unwrinkled forehead. His slight stoop

was the only sign of age and that was more from weakness than anything else.

“Is this cat all you have left?” asked the doctor, for want of something to say. For answer Tobias pointed to a little white box lined with soft wool. The doctor pointed an interrogative finger at the cat’s back which was towards him, as it sat on his knees and then he glanced towards the box.

“Iss!” answered Tobias. “I can’t risk it no longer. If I pass and she be left to human society, may be a bull-terrier would finish she, or someone might mix her up with what they think of me and act according to.” He coughed and put his hand to his left side.

“Good heavens!” said Dr. Bligh, “have you no one you can trust to kill a cat?”

“Not in a seemly way,” said Tobias. “A cat be like a witch and knows some of the secrets. Fur be no barrier to me, and the silence have been a voice within me for many years. I see as she sees, and even the ad-

ders have made the Bible more of an open book to me than before. It was through the Scriptures that I charmed them into safety and friendliness.”

“What was the charm?” asked Dr. Bligh smiling, as he put his fingers on the man’s wrist.

Tobias grew very grave as he said solemnly.

“Some charms would be broken by telling. If I told you, unless you too was one with us in understanding of the great secrets, the next snake as I got would sting me and rightly, for some things be unforgivable, even with reptiles.”

Dr. Bligh scarcely heard the last sentence. With a set professional face he took his fingers from his patient’s wrist, and undid the button of the flannel shirt as the man stroked his cat.

“I’m scarcely good enough for burial,” said Tobias smiling. “It’s a cage of bones I’ve been for long enough now.”

"How many years has this been going on?" asked the doctor.

"A matter of eight," he said.

Tobias looked calmly into the doctor's eyes as he asked, "How long now?"

For a moment the two gazed eye to eye. There was hesitation in the medical man's glance, and expectancy in the look Tobias fixed upon the grave face before him. Dr. Bligh's habit with his patients held him silent and perplexed, but the longing in the keen blue eyes made him blurt out suddenly:

"Not many days."

"Thanks be," said Tobias gently. "I've not sought it nor yet hurried it, but if the appointed hour be near, it's a real savor to my spirit."

Dr. Bligh stood up and pushed Tobias into a low chair. He took out his stethoscope and put it inside the open shirt.

"Ninety-nine," said Tobias smiling. "I learnt that at the hospital years ago."

"Thank you," said Dr. Bligh, after he had

finished his examination. "You must go to bed at once and be nursed." The cat was lying full length on the arm of Tobias and licking his bony hand.

"They've all done that since they was but youngsters," said Tobias smiling at the cat, "and it's a comfortable and kindly practice. They've allus licked my curls too, but there's so little of they left she prefers my hand. Cats be so soft and grateful."

"Shall I destroy her for you?" asked Dr. Bligh kindly, "or will you give her to me when—when——"

"Thank you, sir," said Tobias. "You mean well, I'm sure, but it's best as I puts she to sleep, as Nature, by and bye will put me. She'd find me wanting, and maybe not understand, and if I'm a bit lonesome at the end it will only be what belongs and what I'm used to." He pointed to the empty baskets and cages as he went on:

"Them captives I've had in there be released afore me, for the same reason as I'm

going to put the cat to rest. Adders and toads and rats and all them things I used to reckon only as vermin, but they've ministered greatly to my faith. They'm comradely when you understand their ways, and full of dignity and a great courage. It's become a habit to me to try and live as they live and to die as they belong to die, like children falling into a beautiful sleep. They'm likely here for a purpose, and it seemly gets frustrated by them as be full of lustful pride, because they can chatter and don't wear neither fur nor feathers."

Dr. Bligh turned toward the door.

"You must not talk. See! How it brings on the cough. Have you taken any physic for it?"

Tobias smiled.

"Physic to my mind," he said, "be a passil of nonsense. I follows the example of my cat, and as she eats grass if she be sick I eats green stuff and plenty of onions. I reckon a man's thoughts be his best physic

and when he comes to die his gut will tell what manner of life he's led better than anything else. My beasts have taught me that too. The mothers head the class as they give most of theirselves away."

"I will call again to-morrow," said Dr. Bligh laughing, "and you shall tell me more of your fancies."

"Thank you kindly, sir. What do I owe you?"

"Nothing yet," said the doctor. "So far it's I who owe you for quite a pleasant hour."

Dr. Bligh rode direct to the Vicarage, hidden among lovely trees in a large old garden.

"Passon be out but missis be in," said the old cook-general who answered the door.

"I want to see her, please," said Dr. Bligh.

"Surely!" said Wilmot. "Come forward. No one real bad, I hope?" added the woman as she looked inquisitively at the doctor. When they were inside the library Dr. Bligh suddenly turned to the servant.

“Do you happen to know a man called Tobias Trewidden?” he asked.

“Lordy! Lordy!” cried Wilmot. “Do you mean the Wizard?”

“Why such a title?” asked the doctor laughing.

Wilmot’s face was solemn. “His house reeks with witch-craft,” she said. “They do say that the Devil himself ’ave been seen peering out of his chimney more nor once.”

“He’s ill,” said Dr. Bligh, “in fact he’s dying. Someone must nurse him at once.

Wilmot tossed her head.

“Let ’em rot,” she said. “It’s tit for tat at last, anyway.”

With this cryptic sentence she left the room to find her mistress. Mrs. Hewett came in and greeted the new doctor with a smile.

“I’ve just been hearing your praises sung,” she said. “Old Nancy Nanoledra declares you’ve cut a bit out of her head-piece and altered her brains so that she can

add up and write a long letter to her son in America.”

Dr. Bligh laughed.

“If I live here long enough I shall have to open my own headpiece,” he said, “in order to make room for all the wisdom I pick up as I go along. I’ve come to-day to ask you if you know anything of a man called Tobias Trewidden?”

Mrs. Hewett sat down and so did her visitor.

“That man,” said the clergyman’s wife, “is the problem of this village. My husband says it is a clear case of possession and he forbids me to go near him.”

“Possession!” echoed Dr. Bligh. “Auto-intoxication is the modern name for that sort of thing.” He smiled. “Are we never to get out of the devil’s clutches?”

“Not while he can take hold of men like Tobias Trewidden,” said Mrs. Hewett seriously. “He’s a warning to us all.”

“To me he seems the most harmless con-

sumptive I've ever treated," said Dr. Bligh. "He interests me enormously. A little religiously touched, I grant you, but that often goes with the disease. He's near the end, anyway, very near, and I don't think it possible he can live more than a few hours."

"Well, it will be a great danger gone," said Mrs. Hewett, "but he may live on. Nothing, they say, is impossible to Tobias Trewidden. It almost seems as if evil-doing, as well as good works, could produce miracles."

"What on earth has the man done," asked Dr. Bligh, "that people seem so against him?"

"Everything," said Mrs. Hewett, "according to report. It appears he was always unlike anyone else from a small boy. He's a desperate character."

"Name the worst crime he's committed," said the doctor smiling. "I'll promise not to

jump out of my chair. To me he seems so very harmless."

It was some time before Mrs. Hewett spoke. She wiped her thin lips once or twice with her handkerchief, took off her ruby ring, and put it on again.

"They say he practises black magic, for one thing," she said at last. She spoke in a half whisper, looking towards the door. "Incantations and horrible things he does, they say, though I must confess I don't understand what it all means, but I know it is against the Bible teaching and very dangerous."

"Is that all?" asked the doctor.

"No," said Mrs. Hewett. "He is supposed to have killed his own child and there have been dreadful rumors about a woman he lived with who was apparently tortured to death. None of us know the real truth, as he's never confided in anyone, but the evidence is all against him."

"But the law," gasped the doctor. "Sure-

ly no one can do such things with impunity, even here. I feel convinced it's a great deal scandal, owing to the lack in this village of adequate dramatic entertainment."

Mrs. Hewett stared fixedly at the doctor, who was smiling.

"Where there's——"

"Excuse me," interrupted Dr. Bligh, "in my limited experience I've more often than not seen flame without any smoke, and if I can trust my intuitions at all I believe this is a case in point. However, at this moment the man's sins are not the urgent matter. He is dying, and I want a nurse for him at once. Can you tell me where I can get one?"

Mrs. Hewett wrinkled her brows. She was distinctly annoyed.

"This is a Christian village," she said severely.

"So I understand," answered Dr. Bligh blandly. "That is why I am making my request."

“You won’t find a God-fearing man or woman in it to stay alone a whole night with Tobias Trewidden,” she said.

“Good God!” cried Dr. Bligh. “Not one?”

“Well, perhaps one,” said Mrs. Hewett suddenly. “There’s Bidly Beaver, the net-mender. She’s very deaf and it might have been too tedious a job for the neighbors to have told her all that is said about Tobias Trewidden. Deaf people escape many things, and she’s a kindly creature. I will write down her address but she lives beyond the cemetery.”

Dr. Bligh took the piece of paper, thanked Mrs. Hewett and went away. He did not go direct to Bidly. Instead he went to a widow he had treated free of charge for a serious tumor, and whose gratitude had been expressed many times by saying that if she could not pay him in hake she would in herring. “Now,” he said to himself, “I’ll claim the herring.”

Widow Rasselas was washing. As the doctor entered the back gate her elbows, in the "wash-tray," were covered with soap-suds. She wiped her arms and led the way into her cottage.

"It's lonesome sometimes, Doctor," she said, "and I washes just for washin's sake to keep me company."

"I've got a cure for loneliness," said Dr. Bligh. "I've a patient sick, dying in fact. Will you nurse him for me?"

"Iss!" said Widow Rasselas. "I dearly love the sick and feeble."

"It's Tobias Trewidden," he said.

"He?" she shrieked in a high interrogative. "My blessed Father in Heaven!"

"Are you afraid of death?" asked the doctor.

"Death!" she echoed. "Not me! I'm more used to corpses, in a manner of speaking, than gentry, but I'd never venture near he."

"I should have thought a good mother like

you could venture anywhere," said Dr. Bligh. "To my mind he's a tender-hearted man."

"He've been a woman-tamer so I've heard," said Widow Rasselas, with wide open eyes, "and he be as bitter as lemon-rind over all of we. My man, afore he died, said as only men among themselves could reckon up what a passil of women he must have ruined when he was young and afore he came to live here, or the talk would never be so fierce against him."

"He's dying," said Dr. Bligh.

"Well," said Widow Rasselas solemnly, "he can't never go to heaven, thanks be."

"Why not?" asked Dr. Bligh.

"Heaven," said the widow emphatically, "be a prepared place for prepared people. Tobias Trewidden will surely be in hell and safe from all of we and we from him."

Dr. Bligh looked into the woman's face.

"He's there now," he said, "here, in this godly village."

“Serve him right if he is,” said Widow Rasselas. “It’s his own fault,” she snapped. “According to hearsay no decent body can tell up his wicked actions. It’s them tales as ’ave scared even youngsters away from his cottage.”

“Rubbish!” said Dr. Bligh. “The man’s face gives the lie to all these idiotic tales.”

“Thanks be,” said Widow Rasselas, “I’ve never looked upon his countenance but once, and then not to know exactly whether he was pock-marked or had a beard.” She tapped her forehead suddenly as she went on. “Yes, come to think of it though, he had a beard when he first come here to live. My Annie Lizzie, what be buried these five years now, made her father laugh some hearty when he was lying in bed ill with the miner’s complaint. ‘There’s a man come to live in Dickie Gibbart’s cottage that have got fur all over his face,’ she said.”

Widow Rasselas came closer to the doctor and ended in a whisper, “I’d not be fright-

ened but what he's got the cloven foot, too, and the stump of a tail. Sin be forgivable, but witch-craft 'ave always to be shunned the same as poison."

Dr. Bligh put his hand on the door-latch as he prepared to go.

"How many chapels," he asked, "are there in this village?"

"Three," answered Widow Rasselas, "so we know of the doctrine."

"Good-bye," said the doctor. "I'm going home without either herring or hake. I came to ask you for the one you promised long ago and you've refused it."

Widow Rasselas laughed happily.

"Why you never reminded me," she said. "But as it happens I've a bit of newly caught hake in the larder, so please accept of it."

With self satisfaction written all over her sunburnt face she brought a small parcel from the scullery and put it in the basket which was tied on to the doctor's bicycle. As he rode away he called out gaily. "If it

makes me sick, Mrs. Rasselas, I won't put it down to witch-craft anyway."

She shook her head drearily as she went back to her cottage.

"You can't touch dung and remain undefiled," she murmured as she went into her cottage again. She was sure she had come across that in the Scriptures.

Dr. Bligh made his way to Bidly Beaver's cottage. She was mending a big pilchard net outside her door. The doctor made signs to her and she got up and curtsied. She handed him paper and a pencil. He saw hope for his cause in her kindly, wrinkled face with the clear brown eyes, which seemed to be always listening for what the ears could not catch. He wrote down what he wanted, and watched her reading it. She shook her head.

"He 'ave the evil eye they do say," she said. "Bein' unable to hear I'd be afraid. Though wanting money badly, I won't undertake the job."

“Three shillings a day,” wrote Dr. Bligh.

She read the paper, smiled, licked her lips slowly and then said eagerly.

“For double I’ll favor you.”

“To-night,” he wrote, “at seven, I’ll be there and write down all you have to do. It’s very simple, and if he can’t talk, so much the better, as he is very weak.”

Biddy nodded her head and he left the cottage.

Dr. Bligh happened to have an unusually busy day. Tired out, about six o’clock, he entered Tobias Trewidden’s door.

“To bed at once,” he said, as he realized what his patient had been doing. The box with the wool inside had gone and a spade was lying on the floor.

“I never thought I could care so much, knowing what I know,” said Tobias. “She licked my hand to the last. I put her to sleep same as the doctor put me when I’d the head-fever. I’d kept the stuff in case I’d ever need to stop the violent pain again.

She'm comfortable now." The man's eyes were alight with passionate eagerness. "There's no one else to care, and it'll be a birthday for she as well as me. No one won't be able to maul she when I'm gone."

"You really must go to bed," said Dr. Bligh almost sternly.

Suddenly a thought struck him. "You must have some nourishment at once. You can scarcely stand," he said. Tobias staggered to a cupboard and took out a large jug and drew a saucepan from a shelf near. He lighted a small oil-stove and put the broth on the flame.

"The leeks are all cooked," he said, "and it will soon be ready. I've made use of them for gargles and supper and general maintenance for weeks, with a crust of bread and some milk."

"Have you no money?" asked Dr. Bligh.

The dignified simplicity of the man made the doctor sorry he had spoken.

"No, none," said Tobias. "The garden

suffices, as there I've all I need. I've never craved nothin' for a long time. A few pennies put by have given the cat and me milk and the last went yesterday." He poured out the strong-smelling broth into a basin as the doctor pointed to the staircase.

"While this is cooling," he said, "slip into bed. I've brought you a draught and we'll have you rubbed by someone soon." In less than ten minutes Dr. Bligh went upstairs.

"Sir," said Tobias, "it's a sweet savor to me that you ain't afraid of me and will minister to me like this 'ere."

There was a knock at the door.

"That's Bidy Beaver come to sit up with you all night," said Dr. Bligh.

Tobias leaned forward suddenly.

"A woman," he cried. "In God's name what next?"

Dr. Bligh went downstairs. It was not Bidy. As he opened the door a small boy handed him a piece of paper. On it was written: "A little thing would soon capsize

Biddy, the money would be ill got. No." The boy touched his cap and ran off. Dr. Bligh hesitated before going upstairs. Then he sprang up like a boy.

"I didn't like the look of that nurse," he said smiling, "so she's packed off. I'm going home to do some dispensing and I'll return till the morning. Sleep till I come."

Tobias felt over the bed-clothes and then lay back.

"The cat was allus a stand-by at twilight," he said. "She'm well on the journey by now and knows the great secrets. Death have allus seemed to me to be more wondrous than all other things put together."

He coughed, and Dr. Bligh held out his hand. Tobias took it and said in a hoarse whisper: "You might be one of they dumb lot, you're so understanding and kind, sir, but maybe you've not heard the talk."

"Damn talk," said Dr. Bligh.

Tobias laughed.

"No swear words can kill it," he said, "for

it's from Genesis to Revelations for disaster. I'm careless of it now, but then you see I'm dying at last. I'd dearly love to know you're a match for it, sir."

"Take this," said Dr. Bligh, handing Tobias a cachet, "and sleep till I come back. I'll leave the door on the latch. No one will disturb you?"

Tobias smiled.

"It's as still as a grave here," he said, "and so very beautiful. Thank you kindly, sir."

The moon was rising and one star was in the sky as her sentinel. The big fuchsia tree in the little garden did service as a yew-tree over the newly turned patch where Tobias had buried his cat. The fuchsia flower-bells swayed in the southwest wind. Dr. Bligh stopped a moment to listen to the distant lapping of the waves on the seashore. It was early September and the sky was a soft purple and gold.

When he returned he found Tobias Tre-

widden asleep. He put his fingers gently on the man's pulse and smiled. If Tobias looked upon Death as his birthday, it was close at hand. The man stirred, turned round his head, and smiled at his new friend.

"That was balm to my spirit," said Tobias, "and the sign was in the dream."

"What sign?" asked Dr. Bligh, again feeling his pulse.

"The sign of a new daybreak," he said, "and of spirits made manifest. The lights were so wonderful." Perspiration had broken out on his face and a sudden radiance lighted the whole countenance. "Nothin' matters now," he went on. "It's just a great understanding and a loveliness."

Dr. Bligh poured out some liquid food and handed it to Tobias.

"You've had a rough time," he said. "No wonder you don't dread the end."

Tobias laughed softly.

"What sweetmeats be to children," he said, "and kisses to maidens, Death be to me."

“What began all this?” asked Dr. Bligh, pointing to his patient’s chest.

“Worritin’, I reckon, before I’d learnt how to make use of the ways of the spirit,” said Tobias. “It sent me into a sleepless decline, wrestlin’ with more than principalities and powers. I’d had my vision, sure enough, but somehow, like a mist at sea, all was hidden from my eyes in misfortune.”

“Don’t talk if it tires you,” said Dr. Bligh, opening the shirt front, as Tobias was breathing heavily.

The patient leaned on his elbow.

“It’s an easement,” he said. “I miss they dumb lot. I’d often talk to them of things they understand without speech. They seemed to know all, without condemnation.”

“Was it a woman?” asked Dr. Bligh.

“Seemly a passil of them,” said Tobias, “and battalions of folk seemed to be whisperin’ and interferin’ too.”

The doctor eyed Tobias a little severely.

“We all pay for our wild oats,” he said.

“I suppose they had something to go on? People generally have.”

Tobias coughed till he could scarcely speak, and then went on slowly. “It fairly chokes me with the laughableness of that there,” he said. “Excuse me, sir.”

Dr. Bligh was curious and very puzzled.

“I’m in my thirty-one,” said Tobias, “and when I were twenty I was as gay as a robin on the bough. I began as a shepherd-boy, and it was then I learnt some of the great secrets. I went afterward as a milkman and manager to a cousin as was a farmer, and it was on the very first day of my work there that disaster overcame me. I was in love and I’d a beautiful girl all my own.” He looked keenly at the doctor. “If I eases my chest of all this you won’t mouth it in the place, sir, will you, even when I’m dead and buried? The truth would maze ’em worse than the lies they’ve built up.”

“Not a word to a soul,” said Dr. Bligh. “It may help you to—to——”

“Pass,” said Tobias gently. “So it may. I’ve carried it close for eleven years, and they’ve built a mountain of lies on what they neither knew nor could understand if they did know.” He tried to sit up, but had to lie back again.

“If you’ve anything on your mind or remorse about something,” said the doctor, “don’t hesitate to confess. I’m quite safe and have heard too many strange things in my life to be either shocked or shaken.”

After another fit of coughing Tobias went on.

“There’s nothin’ in that line,” he said. “I can face the Light and the Voice, as a child its mother. The only remorse I have is, perhaps, that I’ve made too much use of the Gospels, and so got more kicks than thanks for following the things I fell across in my dreams. A minister once said in our chapel that it don’t do to make use of Christ’s words as he meant them, but according to.”

"I've only known one Christian in my life," said Dr. Bligh, "and he died of it."

"I daresay," said Tobias gently. "The human heart in me 'ave often quailed before the outbreaks as 'ave come upon me by livin' the word and not only listenin' to the doctrine."

"It's the big man who willingly dies for the truth," said Dr. Bligh. "The little ones, at the worst, can but stone him to death."

"When I was shepherding," said Tobias, "everything seemed such wonder and glory that no disaster seemed possible. The lambs and the clouds and the hills fell in line with the Scriptures and my thoughts. When a maid gave me her heart it was just the same. It was compassed in what I'd learnt at night from the moon and the stars and the great silence. Even when the first disaster fell, it was like the sleet and the thunder and a power of things, apparently harmful, I'd grown to see the meanin' of in winter and spring."

"Hush!" said Dr. Bligh, as he slipped away a pillow and laid Tobias flat on his mattress. "Wait a moment."

Tobias took a few deep breaths and mumbled out:

"I've learnt some of the secrets, though. Nothing can take them from my heart, and they pan out wonderful near to what nobody 'ave ever taught me but the dumb beasts and the flowers. A dream altered everything when I was twenty, and nothin' but dying will bring the fulfilment."

"You never married then?" asked Dr. Bligh.

Tobias smoothed the sheet with his thin hand.

"Only in a manner of speaking," said Tobias.

Dr. Bligh stroked his mustache to hide a smile.

"You are credited with a great knowledge of women," he said.

"You see," said Tobias, "it was a slip and

miss job altogether. We was plighted on St. Patrick's day, but before the next one came round ruin was on us. Perhaps it 'ave all been for the best. I can never feel certain. When I was shepherding, it was the darkest nights when the stars shone brightest, but the sunshine always held my spirit at its liveliest."

Dr. Bligh wiped the tired face as Tobias went on slowly and with more difficulty.

"Love 'ave never been a pastime with me," he said, "but a world of meanin', same as the Gospel itself. The maid I never married is the one woman I've cared about and she be still the woman of my dreams. She was best off to be rid of me. No one saw that clearer than Tobias Trewidden. Besides, what else was she to do? The thought of her sweet manners often came over me like a flood when I was alone with the dumb ones. She was a maze of wonder and beauty."

Tobias tried to get up, and the doctor

propped him in a sitting position to ease the coughing.

“She left you?” queried Dr. Bligh.

“They all did,” said Tobias simply. “There was nothing else to do, seemly. I nearly left myself, in a manner of speaking, same as mad folks do. I don’t fancy I’d quite reckoned with the make of the world nor of them in it. I’d lived so much in fancies and make-believe.”

“What pulled you out?” asked Dr. Bligh.

“A baby,” said Tobias.

“Good heavens!” cried Dr. Bligh. “They are right, then? Are you a father?”

“Only in a manner of speaking,” said Tobias. “It was like everything else about me, a half and half and betwixt and between sort of thing. The baby was a dead one, you see. All the tribulations and trials over it ’ave allus made me feel a bit as if it was my own. That, and having its mother to tend same as a child.”

Dr. Bligh moistened the dry and purple

lips. "It may hurt you too much to go on," he said.

"Oh! I feel I'd like you to know, sir. It's just fine having this handshake before I goes round land. You see, sir, how could anyone do anything else but shun me? It's no blame to them as can't see in the darkness like a cat. Even if I could have tried to make it clear, words confuse some things, and only muddle matters more. It would have meant telling my dreams and the great watchword too."

"Try and tell me," said Dr. Bligh. "I've an Irish brain, you know, and it gets hold quickly." He spoke flippantly to pull himself together, for the skeleton form and face of Tobias were moving him strangely.

Tobias leaned over toward the doctor.

"I was delivering milk for the first time and on the first morning after I'd got my job," said Tobias, "when a neighbor, Mrs. Carbines, the grocer's wife, ran out in a terrible fluster and begged me to stay in the

house while she ran to a neighbor to fetch the doctor. I never gave it a thought, but just tied the pony to the gate and went into the kitchen. I'd no sooner stepped in than I heard the maid-servant, Mathilda, call me from upstairs. 'Tobias,' she said, 'be that you?' I wondered how she knew, but it appears it had got about that I'd a job and would soon be married, for luck was coming in on every hand. She begged me for the love of God to go up to her. Her voice was pitiful and I could hear she was some frightened and in pain. I never thought no more about it but ran up to where she was in bed. She was white as white and held out her hands. I can see her now."

There was a pause. Presently Tobias went on slowly and quietly, but stopped now and then for breath.

"'Tobias,' said the maid to me, 'don't say me nay. Go to that box and take out a parcel you'll find there and bury it or drown it 'fore nigh time. It's my dead little baby.'

I thought I should have dropped as she said it. 'Have patience,' she screamed, 'or I'm a ruined woman.' I trembled like a willow in the wind. 'Have patience,' she cried again, 'or they'll hang me.' My dream of the night before was close on my spirit, and, like one in a trance, I opened the box. Before I knew where I was the poor little dead worm was in my cart and Mrs. Carbine's back in the cottage. As I drove off I saw the doctor tearing along with a very serious face. I seemed to be no good at my work all the morning. I gave the customers wrong measure and change and entered things forth and back, for the thought of the little baby confused my mind. I touched the parcel again and again, but I'd no stomach to open it."

The doctor handed Tobias a cup of hot milk he had brought in a thermos flask.

"The police should have dealt with it," he said.

"So they did later," said Tobias. "That night I tried to bury the parcel in the gar-

den when it was dark, but I smelt a neighbor's tobacco smoke over the wall and felt he could somehow know what I was doing. I began to wish I'd refused the maid and then I knew it was all meant. You see," said Tobias softly, "patience was my mother's watchword to me. At last I thought of the mare as drawn the milk cart, and, without asking permission, I jumped on her and galloped to Tommy's Pond, which lies dark and low among a lot of tall trees, not far from the main road. I threw the parcel into the water at last. I heard a great splash at the same time and a dog was after it. I jumped in, scarcely knowing if I was in my reasonable senses. Sandy, the ratting terrier, had followed me. I fought him in the water, but it was no use. He swam to shore with the thing in his mouth and I after him. The moon had got up by then and we were met by two constables on the bank. It appears they'd been on the look-out all day."

“What an infernal mix up,” said Dr. Bligh. “Surely you were able to prove your innocence?”

Tobias coughed and laughed.

“Seemly, that’s the last thing as anybody who be in the right can do,” he said. “It’s what folks makes up their minds you are, or what they thinks you’ve done, and not what you really are, what makes or mars you, seemly. They told me my best plan was to be silent. It appears they fathered the child on me, and the girl wouldn’t deny it, as the real father was a chapel-goer and a married man with an honest name to support.” Tobias clasped his hands together. “If I was a ’vengeful sort of chap I’d feel forced to have a word yet with that man. He’s going to his grave in honor and I’m dying in shame. If I’d known at the time that he was the coward who gave the fifty pounds to us when we was married, I’d have sent it back with a very unchristian speech along with it. But I never knew for years.”

“What happened,” asked Dr. Bligh, “when the police opened the parcel?”

“There was nothin’ but talk and fuss for days,” went on Tobias. “All the neighbors believed I’d murdered it, and I only escaped because the doctor said the little lungs of the baby had never worked and that it was born dead. They’d have brought it in as manslaughter and that saved me from more than the rope, for I’d rather have died right away than have been shut out from the sun and the fields, even for a term. The minister and the clergyman and the magistrates talked it over, it seems, and they said if I’d marry the girl and make her honest they’d just dismiss me with a warning. I said I was bespoke to another girl. This dragged her dear name in and she were fetched.”

Tobias lay back exhausted and murmured: “That were the real crucifixion, sir, and it eats in me still like rust.”

“Wait a bit,” said Dr. Bligh. “Hearing

this takes it out of me even. To have endured it must have been hell."

Tobias went on in a thick whisper.

"If I could have spared her I'd have sold my soul to the devil, but somehow they got me by the throat, in a manner of speaking, when they wanted me to leave she and take another. When I could bring myself to look upon she I saw she was scared and tormented, like a rabbit with the dogs right on it. When they asked her if she was my sweetheart she looked fit to drop."

"She said yes, I hope," said Dr. Bligh. "The worst woman comes out true blue at these times."

Tobias had a far-a-way look in his eyes.

"I'm sure, had it been at all possible, she would have done all a girl can do, but you see I gave her no chance. My heart seemed tied with red-hot bands in my chest. It came over me like a dream how the neighbors would buffet and torment her. She could never have no pride in me again. I was to

be a byword and it would be shameful to be seen with me, much less to marry me.”

“She failed you!” cried the doctor. “My God! she was no Irish woman.”

Tobias smiled.

“All women be like ewes in a storm,” he said, “and rush to any shelter if the gale be too fierce. Afore she’d time to answer, I called out what came into my head like a swear word. ‘I’m willin’ to marry the mother of the child.’ After I’d said it I could have eat my tongue out.”

“So I should think,” said Dr. Bligh. “What on earth made you do it if the child was not yours?”

Tobias spoke very slowly.

“It was just seein’ my sweetheart’s eyes full of terror and hatred,” he said. “As she looked upon me, I knew it was the call—the call in which ‘Patience’ was the watchword. It flooded me all of a sudden and the balm of the Holy Spirit fell on me and I knew I had given she the fullest of love’s tokens.”

“The love of a lifetime in a moment of madness,” said Dr. Bligh.

“Not madness,” said Tobias. “I had died that she could live, that was all,” he went on simply. “Even if she never knew the truth, something of the meanin’ of the great love we’d spoken of in the shepherding days would lighten her heart. She’d surely guess some day what my gift was, and so love me still. I never saw her no more after that. They carried her away, for she fainted with terror and sorrow.”

Dr. Bligh blew his nose as he said almost gaily:

“You’re a sporting chap, Trewidden. So you married?”

“Iss!” said Tobias wearily, “but it were never nothin’ but tending my lawful wife night and day. Her nerves were destroyed, they said, and she’d never be no use no more. She upbraided me for my part in all the mishap and talked continual of the dead baby. She told the neighbors I beat her and

kept her short of victuals." Tobias smiled. "That was the bit of real truth in the maze of talk over me. It was hard work at last to make even cinder tea or buy skim milk for bread and sops. I lost one job after another through the rumors which followed us. My father cast me off, and anyway I could never have stayed in the village where Loveday lived. At last I came here because the doctor said the sea salt swould cure my wife, and I happened, through saving a dog one day, to fall in with a vet at Pinover who boarded out some cats and dogs with us when his place was overcrowded. Their cries were often put down by the neighbors to me beating my wife. Bit by bit the whole story of my shame got out, with more tacked on to it, and a nest of adders would have had more reasonable chance than we had of a peaceful life. Mathilda died at last of a long-named pain in her head and her death was unholy and tempestuous. I've no call

for remorse, sir, for I tended she as if she'd been the other woman."

"Since then," said Dr. Bligh, "you and the animals have been the best of friends?"

A light broke over the dying man's face.

"They and the holy spirits," he said. "When the world have been most darkened for me, strange lights came as if from the stars and the moon and the rainbows. The travellers on the road, too, have told me their sorrows and we've comforted one another."

"I thought it was so desolate here?" said Dr. Bligh.

"They've been sent," said Tobias simply. "I never refused anyone, and a tramp or a tempest-driven soul have come toward my little cottage without fear. There've been wondrous days and lovely nights. It's been a great homesickness, that is all."

Dr. Bligh bent over the dying man and stroked his brow.

"You'll be at peace soon now, Tobias Tre-

widden," he said. "Give me that woman's name and address and let me tell her the truth at last."

Tobias tried to raise himself, but fell back gasping.

"The truth is surely in her heart," he muttered, "and will keep till the Judgment Day. The lies as 'ave festered in them as be my natural enemies don't count, but she loved me, and love can't harbor no lies." The voice grew fainter and Dr. Bligh bent close to the man's lips in order to hear.

"It might wound her to reckon with it now or to know what it have spelt to me. She were wonderful tender, you see, and so very winsome."

Dr. Bligh bit his lips.

"It must have been a living death," he said.

"Not with love to support me," said Tobias, "and I did love she so very true. 'You love me for myself,' she said once, and that's how Fan-Fan loved Trailing Topsy. Don't

fret she. She've been married these ten years and more and has four children." Dr. Bligh felt the man's pulse and whispered.

"Trewidden, leave me free about this matter. Just say I may tell her. I'll find her all right. Just nod your head if you can't speak."

A faint smile accompanied the whispered answer.

"Sir, I do trust you as if you was four-footed." The eyes closed and only a faint breathing was heard. Suddenly a little sound of soft laughter came from the parched lips of Tobias.

"Why arn't you in white? Why in blue?" he murmured.

"Delirious, thank God," muttered the doctor.

The distant bark of a dog was the only sound as Tobias Trewidden passed into a rigid peace.

Dr. Bligh opened the window wide and waited a moment. A robin and a thrush

hopped on the bushes close by. The robin suddenly sang, and as the doctor stepped back into the room a smile had settled upon the dead face of Tobias Trewidden.

PART VIII
THE WOMAN

THE WOMAN

A FEW days after Tobias Trewidden's death, Dr. Bligh, partly from curiosity and partly from a desire to do justice to the dead, went to the address he had got from the father of Tobias. He had made it his care to tell him of his son's death, but gave no details and did not stay to discuss the matter. He hurried to the house of Tobias Trewidden's old love. He found a row of villas in the street where the "Laurels" was situated. A few straggling chrysanthemums did duty for laurels, and two terra-cotta dogs, with mouths wide open and lolling tongues, guarded the grained door on which the doctor knocked. It was opened by a dowdy maid-servant with loose red hair and a cap supported chiefly by her left ear.

"Is your mistress at home?" asked Dr. Bligh.

“Yes,” said the girl, “step inside.”

Dr. Bligh was ushered into a little parlor and there left for some time. He heard voices upstairs and much shuffling of feet. The ships of blown glass on the mantelpiece, the stuffed birds under a case and a stuffed squirrel on a stand were the largest ornaments in a room crammed with knick-knacks of every sort and kind. A small harmonium, whose top was covered with photographs of men and women smiling in stiff clothes, stood in the corner.

The door suddenly opened and the woman of Tobias Trewidden's dreams entered. She was full-busted and with a double, if not treble, chin. Her self-satisfied eyes looked a little puzzled as she came forward towards her visitor.

“Forgive my intrusion,” said Dr. Bligh. “I'm a doctor. Dr. Bligh, of Venvin. A week ago I was at the death-bed of Tobias Trewidden.” He paused. The woman before him put a plump hand to her forehead.

He noticed how deeply the wedding-ring was embedded in her flesh.

"I thought you would care to know his end," said Dr. Bligh.

A giggle was the answer.

"This is the Laurels," she said, "and I am Mrs. Albert Tremayne."

Dr. Bligh coughed.

"I know," he said. "Once, I believe, you were to have married Tobias Trewidden."

She paled and her plump hands clasped each other in agitation.

"I'd fair forgotten who he was for the moment," she said anxiously. She looked nervously toward the door. "Bert, that's my husband, you know, can't bear any of that mentioned. You may not have heard that there was a dreadful scandal. Bert says Tobias was a blackguard from birth and don't even allow me to speak of him. That's why," she spoke apologetically, "I didn't fall on the name at once. We just put him aside, in a manner of speaking, when he

married that girl as was as bad as himself."

"Has it ever struck you," asked Dr. Bligh, "that he was faithful in spirit to you all these years and innocent of the crimes laid to his charge?"

The woman laughed.

"Go on," she said familiarly, "that was all proved, and, even if it wasn't, it was a poor job anyway. He was a wastrel."

"Was he?" asked Dr. Bligh. "I wish you'd seen him die."

She shuddered.

"I'm some thankful he's really dead, for in the back of my mind I dreaded some outburst or other. He and Bert had a bad fight once, and Bert said he wished he could have a second."

"What makes you think him a wastrel?" asked Dr. Bligh.

"Well, you see, when Ma and me come to look well into things we found he'd saved nothing at all. He was a man to scatter, not to save."

The doctor smiled.

“He died without a single farthing in the world,” he said, “and had scarcely a pillow for his head.”

“More fool he,” said Mrs. Tremayne. “A poor life it must have been for his wife. He’d allus have been a worrit with his silly fancies.”

“His dreams seemed to have turned into peace at last,” said the doctor. “He had lived so long alone he was never alone.”

“Well, that’s as funny as his clap-trap talk,” she said. “Ma have said to me many a time, ‘It’s just been God’s Providence, Loveday, my handsome, that you’ve married a man as can drive a hard bargain and one who doesn’t grumble at his victuals.’ Mrs. Tremayne tossed her head and smiled as she went on, “Bert be some dapper chap, I can tell you, and the four children takes after him.”

Her face beamed with pride.

"Tobias Trewidden had also children of sorts," said the Irishman.

"There now. Well, I never. I heard he'd none. We've four. Bert 'ave saved a pile already for them when they grows up, besides bein' insured in four clubs. He can wear a gold watch-chain with the best and he's a grand scholar too."

"Listen," said Dr. Bligh, leaning forward and looking keenly at Mrs. Tremayne. "Tobias Trewidden was a finer scholar than your husband."

Mrs. Tremayne laughed.

"How can you know that?" Then, with a sudden fear in her face, she cried, "You ain't met Bert afore seein' me, have you? Nothin' would rile him like being minded of Tobias. They was rivals, you see, though if I'd known Bert was really after me I'd never have given a thought to Tobias, but he never let on till the night the two of them had knocked each other about."

"No, I've never seen your husband," said

Dr. Bligh, "but I know that their colleges have not been the same, so the scholarship differs." He smiled.

Mrs. Tremayne wrinkled her brows.

"Bert ain't never been to no college," she said, "but we means to put Alf to a grand school and then after that to college and make a gentleman of him anyway. He'll help the others and the girls must marry swells."

"Tobias Trewidden's scholarship was greater than can be got even at Oxford or Cambridge," said Dr. Bligh.

"Goodness!" she said reflectively, "as far as I can remember he never even wrote me a single proper love letter. Bert began his, I own, with ruled lines, but he ended like a gentleman born afore we was married and never made use of crosses for kisses at all. Tobias was dust and ashes by the side of Bert."

Dr. Bligh got up to go.

"It was flame—all flame, when I knew him," he said.

"I don't understand," said Mrs. Tremayne. "Had he gone into a new line of business or what?"

"Quite a new line, I fancy, but one that he must have inclined towards from a youngster."

"Whatever was it?" asked Mrs. Tremayne. "Fireworks or the electric light business, perhaps? Bert says electric light 'ave a lot of money in it."

"This work had no money in it," said Dr. Bligh, "and I've not met anyone yet who would care to carry it on. It kills worse than dynamite."

"Lor'!" said Mrs. Tremayne, "just like him, and yet he told me once he'd rather be a gardener than anything."

"Perhaps he is, who knows?" said Dr. Bligh, smiling. "I never thought of that."

"Is?" asked Mrs. Tremayne. "I thought you said he was dead?"

"What is death?" said Dr. Bligh. "As a medical man I've never been able to tell

where life really ends or death begins, and Tobias Trewidden has made me more bewildered than ever."

He raised his hat as he left the little garden.

Mrs. Tremayne called her servant hurriedly into the parlor and the two peered behind the long muslin curtains. "Sarah," said Mrs. Tremayne, "you see that gentleman?"

"Yes, m'am," said the servant.

"That's seemly a madman, like one I knew years ago. Don't for goodness sake tell master he've been heré. He'd be some angry, for I'd have to tell him all he said."

"What shall I say if he do come again?" asked the girl.

"Oh! anything," said Mrs. Albert Tremayne. "Say I'm dead and buried, if you like."

It might have been the truth, judging from the horrified look on the face of the untidy little drudge.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

There was a great rejoicing in Love-Acre. A Gardener had brought a tiny seed developed in a human heart from a bit of fluff like the children blow into the air in the green meadows on sunny days. Blown from Love-Acre to the World-Acre, a seed had grown from this bit of fluff. But it remained only a seed. It did not germinate. The Gardener's sojourn in the World-Acre had seemed very long to him and his tiny gift to the Gardeners in the great flower world of Love-Acre appeared of no account. It was all he had, however, and he laid it down shyly in a bed of nettles. He was so weary he fell asleep after he had planted it. When he awoke the seed had burst into small but lovely flowers in the congenial soil. The flowers had a strange vital-

ity and an unusual power. They killed all weeds through their sweetness as they grew. The Gardeners delayed naming the flower until they had watched it more closely. It developed more unusual characteristics day by day. The blossoms could withstand any drought or any heat, and they made a soft lilting music with their petals as they opened to the Light. This sound vibrated the ether so strangely that one day it was taken up by invisible players and dissolved into a chorus so glorious that a thousand violins in the World-Acre would have been like a boy's penny whistle in comparison. The Gardeners all assembled when this happened and the Lights from many worlds flashed upon them. A Voice seemed to answer the Silence of the Lights as they lit up the places which once were desolate and which now were covered by the new blossoms.

"We will blow back," said the Voice, "in thousands, the seeds of this tiny flower to the World-Acre and it shall bloom there as

here, making the unclean clean and the ugly places beautiful.”

All the harps in the *World-Acre* seemed to have joined the violins, thought the little Gardener who had brought the seed and who was sitting humbly before the Voice and the Lights. The music was more than any mortal could have heard and lived, and the Lights would have blinded one accustomed to seeing with only human eyes. Again rose the Voice, the Voice of a Head Gardener in *Love-Acre*, once known in the *World-Acre* as *Emanuel*:

“The Seed of the Greater Love holds the Flower of Joy and Joy shall be its name. The Fruit of Joy will help to nourish all the Worlds. As the Seed could not germinate in the *World-Acre*, the Fruit may ripen best in other Worlds than ours. How can we tell? But we must prepare the Seeds and cultivate the Flowers for the Great Harvest of Fruit, whether it be here or there.”

As the Lights vanished and the Voice

ceased the new Gardener sank once more into sleep. The journey had been long and the home-coming too beautiful to be borne without a little rest. The after-glow of the Lights illuminated what might have been, in the World-Acre, a woman's form, robed in a pale blue gown. She was kneeling by the side of the sleeping Gardener, with her face turned towards an emerald green Light which had suddenly appeared in her transparent house.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

NON-RENEWABLE

JAN 13 1998

DUE 2 WKS FROM DATE RECEIVED

UCLA URL/ILL

ILL/UAB

REC'D LD-URI

JUN 09 1998

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

S R L F

SEE SPINE FOR BARCODE NUMBER

PR
6009
E46 1

University of Cal
Southern Regi
Library Facil