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# Dark Princess

## *A Romance*

by W. E. B. Du Bois

With an introduction by Claudia Tate

Banner Books

University Press of Mississippi / Jackson

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To

*Her High Loveliness*

TITANIA XXVII

BY HER OWN GRACE

QUEEN OF FAERIE,

Commander of the Bath; Grand Medallion of Merit; Litterarum Humanarum Doctor; Fidei Extensor; etc., etc.

OF WHOSE FAITH AND FOND AFFECTION

THIS ROMANCE

WAS SURELY BORN

them. I went to the residence of Mrs. Towns and found it locked on account of her absence, but I secured entrance."

"That kind of thing sometimes lands people in jail," said Sammy dryly.

"Yes," said the Indian, "and the theft of jewels like these might land one further in jail and for a longer time."

Sammy didn't answer, and the Indian continued: "I searched the house and was satisfied that the bag was not there, and then I learned that certain things had been delivered at your office. I came down here and saw the bag sitting here. That was early yesterday morning, while the janitor was sweeping."

"Damn him!" said Sammy.

"It wasn't his fault," said the Indian. "I forget what excuse I gave him, but you may be sure it was a legitimate one. Yesterday and today I have spent watching you to be sure of your attitude."

"Well?" said Sammy.

"Well," returned the Indian, "I had hoped that the proof which I have would secure the bag, untampered with and without question or delay."

"What proof?" asked Sammy.

"A careful description of the jewels made by the well-known firm which has insured them and which would at the slightest notice put detectives on their track. Also, a letter from her Royal Highness directing that these jewels be delivered to me."

"And you expect to get these on such trumped-up evidence?"

"Yes," said the Indian.

"And suppose I refuse?"

"I shall persuade you not to."

Sammy thought the matter over. "Say," said he, "can't you and I come to some agreement? Why, here is a fortune. Is there any use wasting it on Matthew and that Princess?"

"We can come to an agreement," said the Indian.

"What?" asked Sammy.

"You have," said the Indian, "an unset diamond in your pocket which, with a certificate of ownership that I could give you, would easily be worth ten thousand dollars. You may keep it."

Sammy rose in a rage. "I can not only keep that," he said, "but I can keep the whole damn shooting-match and—" But he didn't get any further. The Indian had arisen and showed in

the folds of his half-Oriental dress a long, wicked-looking dagger.

"I should regret," he said, "the use of violence, but her Royal Highness' orders are peremptory. She would rather avoid, if possible, the police. I am therefore going to take these jewels to her. If afterward you should wish to prosecute her, you can easily do it."

Sammy quickly came to his senses: "Go ahead," he said.

The Indian deftly packed the jewels, always managing to face Sammy in the process. Finally, with a very polite good night, he started to the door.

"Say," said Sammy, "where are you going to take those jewels?"

"I have orders," said the Indian slowly, "to place them in the hands of Matthew Towns."

The door closed softly after him. Sammy seated himself and thought the matter over. He had a very beautiful diamond in his pocket which he examined with interest. His own feeling was that it would make a very splendid engagement ring for Sara. Then he started. . . . Suppose these jewels were given to Matthew, or part of them, and suppose Sara got wind of it? Would she ever give Matthew up? That was a serious matter—a very serious matter. In fact, she must *not* get wind of it. Then Sammy frowned. Good Lord! He had actually had his hands on something that looked like at least one million dollars. Ah, well! It was dangerous business. Only fools stole jewels of that sort.

A messenger boy entered with a telegram.

"Have decided to go to Atlantic City. Do not expect me until I write.

"SARA."

## VII

"I've got a job," said Matthew, early in June.

Kautilya turned quickly and looked at him with something of apprehension in her gaze. It was a beautiful day. Kautilya had been arranging and cleaning, singing and smiling to herself, and then stopping suddenly and standing with upturned face as though listening to inner or far-off voices. Matthew had been gone all the morning and now returned laden with

bundles and with a sheaf of long-stemmed roses, red and white, which Kautilya seized with a low cry and began to drape like cloud and sun upon the table.

Then she hurried to the phonograph and put a record on, singing with its full voice—a flare of strange music, haunting, alluring, loving. It poured out of the room, and Matthew joined in, and their blended voices dropped on the weary, dirty street. The tired stopped and listened. The children danced. Then at last:

"I've got a job," said Matthew; and answering her look and silence with a caress, he added: "I got it myself—it's just the work of a common laborer. I'm going to dig in the new subway. I shall get four dollars a day."

"I am glad," said Kautilya. "Tell me all about it."

"There is not much. I've noticed the ads and today I went out and applied. There was one of Sammy's gang there. He said I wouldn't like this—that he could get me on as foreman or timekeeper. I told him I wanted to dig."

"To dig, that's it," said Kautilya. "To get down to reality, Matthew. For us now, life begins. Come, my man, we have played and, oh! such sweet and beautiful play. Now the time of work dawns. We must go about our Father's business. Let's talk about it. Let's stand upon the peaks again where once we stood and survey the kingdoms of this world and plot our way and plan our conquests. Oh, Matthew, Matthew, we are rulers and masters! We start to dig, remaking the world. Too long, too long we have stood motionless in darkness and dross. Up! To the work, in air and sun and heaven. How is our world, and when and where?"

They sat down to a simple lunch and Matthew talked.

"We must dig it out with my shovel and your quick wit. Here in America black folk must help overthrow the rule of the rich by distributing wealth more evenly first among themselves and then in alliance with white labor, to establish democratic control of industry. During the process they must keep step and hold tight hands with the other struggling darker peoples."

"Difficult—difficult," mused Kautilya, "for the others have so different a path. In my India, for instance, we must first emancipate ourselves from the subtle and paralyzing misleading of England—which divides our forces, bribes our brains,

emphasizes our jealousies, encourages our weaknesses. Then we must learn to rule ourselves politically and to organize our old industry on new modern lines for two objects: our own social uplift and our own defense against Europe and America. Otherwise, Europe and America will continue to enslave us. Can we accomplish this double end in one movement?"

"It is paradoxical, but it must be done," said Matthew. "Our hope lies in the growing multiplicity and world-wide push of movements like ours; the new dark will to self-assertion. China must achieve united and independent nationhood; Japan must stop aping the West and North and throw her lot definitely with the East and South. Egypt must stop looking north for prestige and tourists' tips and look south toward the black Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and South Africa for a new economic synthesis of the tropics."

"And meantime, Matthew, our very hope of breaking the sinister and fatal power of Europe lies in Europe itself: in its own dread disaster; in negative jealousies, hatreds, and memories; in the positive power of revolutionary Russia, in German Socialism, in French radicalism and English labor. The Power and Will is in the world today. Unending pressure, steady pull, blow on blow, and the great axis of the world quest will turn from Wealth to Men."

"The mission of the darker peoples, my Kautilya, of black and brown and yellow, is to raise out of their pain, slavery, and humiliation, a beacon to guide manhood to health and happiness and life and away from the morass of hate, poverty, crime, sickness, monopoly, and the mass-murder called war."

Kautilya sat with glowing eyes. She looked at Matthew and whispered:

"Day dawns. We must—start."

Matthew hesitated and faltered. He talked like one exploring the dark:

"I had thought I might dig here in Chicago and that you might write and study, and that we together might live far out somewhere alone with trees and stars and carry on—correspondence with the world; and perhaps—"

"If we only could," she said softly; and in the instant both knew it was an impossible idyl.

A week went by. There grew a certain stillness and apprehension in the air. The hard heat of July was settling on

Chicago. Each morning Matthew put on his overalls and took his dinner-pail and went down into the earth to dig. Each night he came home, bathed, and put on the gorgeous dressing-gown Kautilya had bought him and sat down to the dinner Kautilya had cooked—it was always good, but simple, and he ate enormously. Then there was music, a late stroll beneath the stars, and bed. But always in Kautilya's eyes, the rapt look burned.

And little things were beginning to happen. At first Matthew's old popularity in his district had protected him. He always met nods and greetings as he and Kautilya fared forth and back. Then came reaction—the social tribute of the half-submerged to standards of respectability. Here and there a woman sneered, a child yelled, and a policeman was gruff. As weeks went by, Sammy interfered, and active hostility was evident. Jibes multiplied from chance passers-by who recognized them; the sneers of policemen were open. Then came the question of money, which never occurred to Kautilya, but drove Matthew mad when he tried to stretch his meager wage beyond the simple food to American Beauty roses and new books and bits of silk and gold.

Tonight as they returned from a silent but sweet stroll a bit earlier than their wont, they met a crowd of children, those children who seem never to have a bedtime. The children stared, laughed, jeered, and then stoned them. Matthew would have rushed upon them to tear their flesh, but Kautilya soothed him, and they came breathless home.

They stood awhile clinging in the dark. Then slowly Matthew took her shoulders in his hand and said:

"We have had the day God owed us, Kautilya, and now at last we must face facts frankly. Here and in this way I cannot protect you, I cannot support you, and neither of us can do the great work which is our dream."

"It was brave and good of you, Matthew, to speak first when you knew how hard the duty was to me and how weak I am in presence of our love. Yes, we have had the day God owed us—and now, Matthew, the day of our parting dawns. I am going away."

He knew that she was going to say this, and yet until it was said he kept trying to believe it would not come. Now when it did come it struck upon his ears like doom. The brownness

of his face went gray, and his cheeks sagged with sudden age. He looked at her with stricken eyes, and she, sobbing, smiled at him through tears.

"You are a brave man," she went on steadily. "In this last great deed, I will not fear. I go to greet the ghosts of all my fathers, the Maharajahs of Bwodpur. India calls. The black world summons. I must be about my fathers' business. Tomorrow, I go. This night, this beautiful night, is ours. Behold the good, sweet moon and the white dripping of the stars. There shall be no fire tonight, save in our twined bodies and in our flaming hearts."

But he only whispered, "Parted!"

"Courage, my darling," she said. "Nothing, not even the Mgh Majesty of Death, shall part us for a moment. There is a sense—a beautiful meaning—in which we two can never part. To all time, we are one wedded soul. The day may dawn when in cries and tears of joy we shall feel each other's arms again. But we must not deceive ourselves. It is possible that now and from this incarnate spirit we part forever. Great currents and waves of forces are rolling down between. It may not lie in human power to breast them. But, Matthew, oh, Matthew, always, always wherever I am and no matter how dark and drear the silence—always I am with you and by your side."

Matthew was calm again and spoke slowly: "No, we will not deceive each other," he said; "I know as well as you that we must part. I am ready for the sacrifice, Kautilya. There was a time when I did not know the meaning of sacrifice, when I interpreted it as surrendering an ounce to get a pound, exchanging a sunrise for a summer. But now, I know that if I am asked to give up you forever, and nothing, nothing can come in return, I shall do it quietly and with no outcry. I shall work on, doing the very best I know how. I shall keep strong in body and clear in mind and clean in soul. I shall play the great game of life as we have conceived and dreamed it together, and try to dream it further into fact. But in all that living, working, doing, dear Kautilya, I shall be dead. For without you—there is no life for me."

"I suppose that all this feeling is based on the physical urge of sex between us. I suppose that other contacts, other experiences, might have altered the world for us two. But the magnificent fact of our love remains, whatever its basis or

accident. It rises from the ecstasy of our bodies to the communion of saints, the resurrection of the spirit, and the exquisite crucifixion of God. It is the greatest thing in our world. I sacrifice it, when I must, for nobler worlds that others may enjoy."

"I did not mistake you, Matthew; I knew you would understand. The time is come for infinite wisdom itself to think life out for us. This honeymoon of our high marriage with God alone as priest must end. It was our due. We earned it. But now we must earn a higher, finer thing."

Then hesitatingly she continued and spoke the yet unspoken word:

"First comes your duty to Sara. Even if you had not miraculously returned to me, you would have been forced to let Sara know by some unanswerable cataclysm that you would no longer follow her leading—either this, or your spiritual death; for you knew it, and you were planning revolt and flight. You were frightened at the thought of poverty and unlovely work; but now that you are free and have known love, you must return to Sara and say:

"'See, I am a laborer: I will not lie and cheat and steal, but I will work in any honest way.' If it still happens that she wants you, wants the *real* you, whom she knows now but partially and must in the end know fully—a man honest to his own hurt, not greedy for wealth; loving all mankind and rejoicing in the simple things of life—if she wants this man, I—I must let you go. For she is a woman; she has her rights."

Matthew answered slowly:

"But she will not want me; I grieve to say it in pity, for I suffer with all women. Sara loves no one but herself. She can never love. To her this world-tangle of the races is a lustful scramble for place and power and show. She is mad because she is handicapped in the scramble. She would gladly trample anything beneath her feet, black, white, yellow, if only she could ride in gleaming triumph at the procession's head. Jealousy, envy, pride, fill the little crevices of her soul. No, she will not want me. But—if you will—as you have said, hers shall be the choice. She must ask divorce, not I. And even beyond that I will offer her fully and freely my whole self."

"And in the meantime," said Kautilya, "there are greater things—greater issues to be tested. We will wait on the high

gods to see if maybe they will point the way for us to work together for the emancipation of the world. But if they decide otherwise, then, Matthew—"

"Then," continued Matthew gently, "we are parted, and forever."

"Yes," she whispered. "You and I, apart but eternally one, must walk the long straight path of renunciation in order that the work of the world shall go forward at our hands. We must work. We must work with our hands. We must work with our brains. We must stand before Vishnu; together we will serve."

"For, Matthew, hear my confession. I too face the horror of sacrifice. All is not well in Bwodpur, and each day I hearken for the call of doom across the waters. The old Rajah, my faithful guardian and ruler in my stead, is dead. Tradition, jealousy, intrigue, loom. For of me my people have a right to demand one thing: a Maharajah in Bwodpur, and one—of the blood royal!"

Matthew dropped his hands suddenly. Suddenly he knew that his own proposal of sacrifice was but an empty gesture, for Sara did not want him—would never want him. But Bwodpur wanted—a King!

Kautilya spoke slowly, standing with hanging hands and with face upraised toward the moon.

"We widows of India, even widows who, like me, were never wives, must ever face the flame of Sati. And in living death I go to meet the Maharajah of Bwodpur."

"Go with God, for after all it is not merely me you love, but rather the world through me."

"You are right and wrong, Matthew; I would not love you, did you not signify and typify to me this world and all the burning worlds beyond, the souls of all the living and the dead and of them that are to be. Because of this I love you, you alone. Yet I would love you if there were no world. I shall love you when the world is not."

She continued, after a space:

"I did not tell you, but yesterday my great and good friend, the Japanese baron whom you have met and dislike because you do not know him, came to see me. He knows always where I am and what I do, for it is written that I must tell him. You do not realize him yet, Matthew. He is civilization—he is the high goal toward which the world blindly gropes; high in

birth and perfect in courtesy, filled with wide, deep, and intimate knowledge of the world's past—the world, white, black, brown, and yellow: knowing by personal contact and acquaintance the present from kings to coolies. He is a man of lofty ideal without the superstition of religion, a man of decision and action. He is our leader, Matthew, the guide and counselor, the great Prime Minister of the Darker World.

"He brought me information—floods of facts: the great conspiracy of England to re-grip the British mastery of the world at any cost; the titanic struggle behind the scenes in Russia between toil and ignorance defending the walls against organized stupidity and greed in Western Europe and America. He tells me of the armies and navies, of new millionaires in Germany and France, of new Caesarism in Italy, of the failing hells of Poland and dismembered Slavdom. The world is a great ripe cherry, gory, rotten—it must be plucked lest it fall and smash.

"My friend talked long of Asia—of my India, of poor Bwodpur. The Dewan who now rules for me, for all his loyalty and ability and his surrounding of young and able men, is distraught with trouble. It is unheard of that a Maharanee without a Maharajah should rule in Bwodpur. Some will not believe that the old Rajah is dead, but say that, shut up within his castle in High Himalaya, that ancient and unselfish man, who was my King in name, still lives as the reincarnate Buddha—lives and rules, and they would worship him. Around this and other superstitions, the continued and inexplicable absence of the Maharanee, the innovations of schools, health training, roads, and mysterious machinery, the neglect of the old religion, looms the intrigue of the English on every side—money, cheap goods, titles, decorations, hospitality, and magnificent Durbars—oh, all is not well in Bwodpur; even the throes of revolution threaten: Moslem and Hindu are at odds, Buddhist and Christian quarrel. Bwodpur needs me, Matthew, but she needs more than me: she needs a Maharajah.

"Facing all this, Matthew, my man, with level eye and clear brain we must drain the cup before us: if return to India severs me from the western world and you—if the dropping of ocean-wide dreams into the little lake of Bwodpur

is my destiny—the will of Vishnu prevail. If your reunion with Sara is the only step toward the real redemption and emancipation of black America, then, Matthew, drain the cup. But after all, the day of decision is not yet. And whatever comes, Love—our love is already eternal."

Matthew pondered and said:

"The paradox is amazing: the only thing that was able to lift me from cynical selfishness, organized theft and deception, was that finest thing within me—this love and idealization of you. If I had not followed it at every cost, I should have sunk beneath hell. And yet now I am anathema to my people. I am the Sunday School example of one who sold his soul to the devil. I am painted as punished with common labor for following lust and desecrating the home. People who recognize me all but spit upon me in the street. Oh, Kautilya, what shall we do against these forces that are pushing, prying, rending us apart? Is it possible that the great love of a man for a woman—the perfect friendship and communion of two human beings—can ever be mere evil?"

They turned toward the room and looked at it. "I cannot keep these things," he said. "They mean you. They meant you unconsciously before I knew that I should ever see you again. The Chinese rug was the splendid coloring of your skin; the Matisse was the flame of your high spirit; the music was your voice. I am going to move to one simple, bare room where again and unhindered by things, I can see this little place of beauty with you set high in its midst. And I shall picture you still in its midst. I could not bear to see any one of these things without you."

She hesitated. "I understand, I think, and the rug and picture shall go with me," she said. "And yet I hate to think of your living barely and crudely without the bits of beauty you have placed about you. Yet perhaps it is well. In my land, you know, men often, in their strong struggle with life, go out and leave life and strip themselves of everything material that could impede or weight the soul, and sit naked and alone before their God. Perhaps, Matthew, it would be well for you to do this. A little space—a little space."

"How long before—we know?" he said, turning toward her suddenly and taking both her hands.

"I cannot say," she answered. "Perhaps a few weeks, perhaps a little year. Perhaps until the spirit Vishnu comes down again to earth."

He shivered and said, "Not so long as that, oh, Radha, not so long! And yet if it must be—let it be."

And so they dismantled the room and packed and baled most of the things therein. At last in full day they went down to the Union Station and walked slowly along toward the gates with clasped hands. A beautiful couple, unusual in their height, in the brownness of their skins, in their joy and absorption in each other.

A porter passed by, stopped, and glanced back. He whispered to another: "That's him; and that's the woman." Then others whispered, porters and passengers. A knot of the curious gathered and stared. But the two did not hurry; they did not notice. Some one even hissed, "Shameless!" and some one else said, "Fool!" and still they walked on and through the gates and to the train. He kissed her lips and kissed her hands, and without tears or words she stepped on the train and looked backward as it moved off. Suddenly he lifted both hands on high, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

#### VIII

Matthew wrote to Kautilya at the New Willard in Washington, and in one of his letters he said: "I am digging a Hole in the Earth. It is singular to think how much of life is and has been just digging holes. All the farmers; all the miners; all of the builders, and how many many others have just dug holes! The bowels of the great crude earth must be pierced and plumbed and explored if we would wrest its secrets from it. I have a sense of reality in this work such as I have never had before—neither in medicine nor travel, neither as porter, prisoner, nor law-maker. What I am actually doing may be little, but it is indispensable. So much can not be said of healing nor writing novels. I am digging not to plant, not to explore, but to make a path for walking, running, and riding; a little round tunnel through which man may send swiftly small sealed boxes full of human souls, from Dan even unto Beersheba.

"Yes, just about that. Just about fifty miles of tunnel we

will have before this new Chicago subway is finished. And you have no idea of the problems—the sweat, the worry, the toil of digging this little hole. For it is little, compared to the vast and brawny body of this mighty earth. It is like the path of some thin needle in a great football of twine. The earth resists, frantically, fiercely, tenaciously. We have to fight it; to outguess it; to know the unknown and measure the unmeasured.

"There lies the innocent dust and sand of a city street held down from flying by bits of stone and pressed asphalt. So pliant and yielding, so vulnerable. But it is watching—watching and waiting. I can feel it; I can hear it. It will make a bitter struggle to hide its heart from prying eyes. Its very surrender is danger; its resistance may be death. I go down girded for a fight with a hundred others in jerseys and overalls and thick heavy shoes. We are like hard-limbed Grecian athletes, but less daintily clad. One can see the same ripple and swelling of muscles, and I felt at first ashamed of my flabbiness. But this thing is real, not mere sport: we are not playing. There is no laughing gallery with waving colors and triumphant cries. For us this thing is life and death, food and drink, commerce, education, and art. I am in deadly earnest. I am bare, sweating, untrammelled. My muscles already begin to flow smooth and unconfined. I have no stomach, either in flesh or spirit. My body is all life and eagerness, without weight.

"Rain, sun, dust, heat and cold; the well, the sick, the wounded, and the dead. I saw a man make a little misstep and jump forward; his head struck the end of a projecting beam and cracked sickeningly. In fifteen minutes he was forgotten and the army closed ranks and went forward; I just heard the echo of the cry of his woman as it sobbed down to the mud underneath the ground. Yes, it is War, eternal War from the beginning to the end. We plumb the entrails of the earth.

"The earth below the city is full of secret things. Voices are there calling day and night from everywhere to everybody. I did not know before the paths they chose, but now I see them whispering over long gray bones beneath the streets. Lakes and rivers flow there, pouring from the hills down to the kitchen sinks with steady pulse beneath the iron street. Thin blue gas burns there in leaden pockets to cook and heat, and light is carried in steel to blaze in parlors above the dark earth. There



is a strange world of secret things—of wire pipes, great demi-johns and caverns, secret closets, and long, silent tunnels here beneath the streets.

"The houses sag, stagger, and reel above us, but they do not fall: we hold them, force them back and prop them up. A slimy sewer breaks and drenches us; we mend it and send its dirty waters on to the canal, the river, and the sea. Gas pipes leak and stifle us. Electricity flashes; but we are curiously armed with such power to command and such faith like mountains that all nature obeys us. Lamps of Aladdin are everywhere and do their miracles for the rubbing: great steel and harnessed Genii, a hundred feet high, lumber blindly along at our beck and call to dig, lift, talk, push, weep, and swear. Yesterday, one of the giants died; fell forward and crumpled into sticks and bits of broken steel; but it shed no blood; it only hissed in horror. We strain in vast contortions underneath the ground. We perform vast surgical operations with insertions of lumber and steel and muscle; we tear down stone with thunder and lightning; we build stone up again with water and cement. We defy every law of nature, swinging a thousand tons above us on nothing; taking away the foundations of the city and leaving it delicately swaying on air, afraid to fall. We dive and soar, defying gravitation. We have built a little world down here below the earth, where we live and dream. Who planned it? Who owns it? We do not know.

"And right here I seem to see the answer to the first question of our world-work: What are you and I trying to do in this world? Not merely to transpose colors; not to demand an eye for an eye. But to straighten out the tangle and put the feet of our people, and all people who will, on the Path. The first step is to reunite thought and physical work. Their divorce has been a primal cause of disaster. They that do the world's work must do it thinking. The thinkers, dreamers, poets of the world must be its workers. Work is God."

Matthew laid down the pen and wrote no further that day. He had a singular sense of physical power and spiritual freedom. There was no doubt in his heart concerning the worth of the work he was doing—of its good, of its need. Never before in his life had he worked without such doubt. He felt here no compulsion to pretend; to believe what he did not believe; or to be that which he did not want to be.

## IX

To the woman riding alone into an almost unknown world, all life went suddenly black and tasteless. In a few short years and without dream of such an end, she had violated nearly every tradition of her race, nearly every prejudice of her family, nearly every ideal of her own life. She had sacrificed position, wealth, honor, and virginity on the altar of one far-flaming star. Was it worth it? Was there a chance to win through, and to win to what? What was this horrible, imponderable, unyielding mask of a world which she faced and fought?

The dark despair of loneliness overwhelmed her spirit. The pain of the world lay close upon her like a fitted coffin, airless, dark, silent. Why, why should she struggle on? Was it yet too late? A few words on this bit of yellow paper, and lo! could she not again be a ruling monarch? one whose jewels and motor-cars, gowns and servants, palaces and Durbars would make a whole world babble?

What if she did have to pay for this deep thrill of Life with submission to white Europe, with marriage without love, with power without substance? Could she not still live and dance and sing? Was she not yet young, scarce twenty-six, and big with the lust for life and joy? She could wander in wide and beautiful lands; she could loll, gamble, and flirt at Lido, Deauville, and Scheveningen; she could surround herself with embodied beauty: look on beautiful pictures; walk on priceless carpets; build fairy-tales in wood and stone!

On all this she was trying to turn her back, for what? For the shade of a shadow. For a wan, far-off ideal of a world of justice to people yellow, black, and brown; and even beyond that, for the uplift of maimed and writhing millions. Dirty people and stupid, men who bent and crawled and toiled, cringed and worshiped snakes and gold and gaudy show. What, where, and whither lay the way to all this? It was the perfect love and devotion of one human soul, one whose ideals she tried to think were hers, and hers, his.

Granting the full-blown glory of the dream, was it humanly possible? Was there this possibility of uplift in the masses of men? Was there even in Matthew himself, with all his fineness of soul, the essential strength, the free spirit, the high heart,

and the understanding mind? Had he that great resolve back of the unswerving definiteness of a keen brain which could carry through Revolution in the world? He was love. Yes, incarnate love and tenderness, and delicate unselfish devotion of soul. But was there, under this, the iron for suffering, the thunder for offense, and the lightning for piercing through the thick-threaded gloom of the world, and for flashing the seething crimson of justice to it and beyond? And if in him there lay such seed of greatness, would it grow? Would it sprout and grow? Or had servility shriveled it and disappointment chilled it and surrender to the evil and lying and stealing of life deadened it at the very core?

Oh, Matthew, Matthew! Did he know just what she had done and how much she had given and suffered? Did he still hold the jewel of her love and surrender high in heaven, or was she after all at this very moment common and degraded in his sight? Gracious Karma, where was she in truth now? She of the sacred triple cord, a royal princess of India and incarnate daughter of gods and kings! She who had crossed half the world to him, fighting like a lioness for her own body. Where was she now in the eyes and mind of the man whom she had raised in her soul and set above the world? Only time would tell. Time and waiting—bitter, empty waiting. Waiting with hanging hands. And then one other thing, one thing above all Things, one mighty secret which she had but partially breathed even to Matthew. For there was a King in India who sued for her hand. He willed to be Maharajah of Bwodpur. He would lead Swaraj in India. He would unite India and China and Japan. He pressed for an answer. Bwodpur pressed. Sindrabad pressed. All the world pressed down on one lone woman.

Then as she sat there crumpled and wan, with tear-swept eyes and stricken heart, slowly a picture dissolved and swam and grew faint and plain and clear before her: a little dark cabin, swathed in clinging vines, nestling beneath great trees and beside a singing brook; flowers struggled up beside the door with crimson, blue, and yellow faces; hot sunshine filtered down between the waving leaves, and winds came gently out of sunset lands. In the door stood a woman; tall, big, and brown. Her face seemed hard and seamed at first; but upon it her great cavernous eyes held in their depths that softness and understanding which calls to lost souls and strengthens

and comforts them. And Kautilya rose with wet eyes and stumbled over time and space and went half-blind and groping to that broad, flat bosom and into those long, enfolding arms. She strained up into the love of those old, old eyes.

"Mother," she sobbed, "I've come home to wait."

# X

"I am tired," wrote Matthew in August, "but I am singularly strong. I think I never knew before what weariness was. At the day's end I am often dead on my feet, drugged and staggering. I can scarcely keep awake to eat, and I fall to bed and die until sudden dawn comes like crashing resurrection. Yet I have a certain new clearness of head and keenness of vision. Dreams and fancies, pictures and thoughts, dance within my head as I work. But I half fear them. They seem to want to drag me away from this physical emancipation. I try to drown and forget them. They are in the way. They may betray and subdue me."

"Where is the fulcrum to uplift our world and roll it forward? More and more I am convinced that it lies in intelligent digging; the building of subways by architects; the planning of subways and scrapers and states by workmen."

"Curiously enough, as it is now, we do not need brains here. Yes, here in a work which at bottom is Thought and Method and Logic, most of us are required not to think or reason. Only the machines may think. I wrote of the machines as our Slaves of the Lamp, but I was wrong. We are the slaves. We must obey the machines or suffer. Our life is simply lifting. We are lifting the world and moving it. But only the machines know what we are doing. We are blindfolded. If only they did not blindfold us! If we could see the Plan and understand; if we could know and thrust and trace in our mind's eye this little hole in the ground that writhes under Chicago; how the thrill of this Odyssey would nerve and hearten us! But no, of the end of what we are doing we can only guess vaguely. The only thing we really know is this shovelful of dirt. Or if we dream of the millions of men this hole will shoot in and out, up and down, back and forth—why will it shoot them and to whom and from what into what Great End, whither, whither?

"I could not finish this, and three days have gone. Yesterday I arose with the dawn before work and began reading. It was a revelation of joy. I was fresh and rested and the morning was bright and young. I read Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. I am sure now that I never have read it before. I told people quite confidently that I had. I looked particularly intelligent when *Hamlet* was discussed or alluded to. But if this was the truth, I must have read *Hamlet* with tired mind and weary brain; mechanically, half-comprehendingly. This morning I read as angels read, swooping with the thought, keen and happy with the inner spirit of the thing. *Hamlet* lived, and he and I suffered together with an all too easily comprehended hesitation at life. I shall do much reading like this. I know now what reading is. I am going to master a hundred books. Nothing common or cheap or trashy, but a hundred master-thoughts. I do not believe the world holds more. These are the days of my purification that I may rise out of selfishness and hesitation and unbelief and depths of mental debauchery to the high and spiritual purity of love.

"Now I must go. I shall walk down to the morning sunlight which is soft and sweet before its midday dust and heat; others gradually will join me as I walk on. On some few faces I shall catch an answering gleam of morning, some anticipation of a great day's work; but on most faces there will be but sodden grayness, a sort of ingrained weariness which no sleep will ever last long enough to drive away—save one sleep, and that the last.

"These faces frighten me. What is it that carves them? What makes my fellow men who work with their hands so sick of life? What ails the world of work? In itself, it is surely good; it is real; it is better than polo, baseball, or golf. It is the Thing Itself. There is beauty in its movement and in the sunshine, storm, and rain that walk beside it. Here is art. An art singularly deep and satisfying. Who does not glow at the touch of this imprisoned lightning that lies inert above the hole? We touch a bit of metal: the sullen rock gives up its soul and flies to a thousand fragments. And yet this glorious thunder of the world strikes on deaf ears and eyes that see nothing. At morning most of us are simply grim; at noon, we are dull; at night, we are automata. Even I cannot entirely escape it. I was free and joyous this morning. Tonight I shall be too tired to think

or feel or plan. And after five, ten, fifteen years of this—what?

"I am trying to think through some solution. I see the Plan—our Plan, the great Emancipation—as clearly and truly as ever. I even know what we must aim at, but now the question is where to begin. It's like trying to climb a great mountain. It takes so long to get to the foothills.

"This problem of lifting physical work to its natural level puzzles me. If only I could work and work wildly, unstintingly, hilariously for six full, long hours; after that, while I lie in a warm bath, I should like to hear Tschaikowsky's Fourth Symphony. You know the lilt and cry of it. There must be much other music like it. Then I would like to have clean, soft clothes and fair, fresh food daintily prepared on a shining table. Afterward, a ride in green pastures and beside still waters; a film, a play, a novel, and always you. You, and long, deep arguments of the intricate, beautiful, winding ways of the world; and at last sleep, deep sleep within your arms. Then morning and the fray.

"I would welcome with loud Hosannas the dirt, the strain, the heat, the cold. But as it is, from the high sun of morning I rush, lurch, and crumple to a leaden night. The food in my little, dirty restaurant is rotten and is flung to me by a slatternly waitress who is as tired as I am. My bed is dirty. I'm sorry, dear, but it seems impossible to keep it clean and smooth. And then over all my neighborhood there hangs a great, thick sheet of noise; harsh, continuous, raucous noise like a breath of hell. It seems never to stop. It is there when I go to sleep; it rumbles in my deepest unconsciousness, and thunders in my dreams; it begins with dawn, rising to a shrill crescendo as I awake. There is no beauty in this world about me—no beauty. Or if these people see beauty, they cannot know it. They are not to blame, poor beeves; we are, we are!

"I grow half dead with physical weakness and sleep like death, but my body waxes hard and strong. I refused a clerk's job today, but I have been made a sort of gang foreman. I know the men. There are Finns and Italians, Poles, Slovaks, and Negroes. We do not understand each other's tongues; we have our hates and fancies. But we are one in interest: we are all robbed by the contractors. We know it and we are trying to organize and fight back. I do not know just what I should do in this matter. I never before realized that a labor union

means bread, sleep, and shelter. Can we build one of this helpless, ignorant stuff? I do not know. But this at least I do know: Work is God."

Matthew wrote no more. He was alone, but he was trying to think things out. What could really be done? If the task of the workers were cut in half, would they all work correspondingly harder? Of course they would not. Some would; he would. Most of them would sit around, dull-eyed, and loaf. Profits would dwindle and disappear. There might even be huge deficits. And could one get the men who knew and thought and planned all this to guide and to lead without the price of profit?

Oh, yes, some could be got for the sheer joy of fine effort. They would work gladly for board, clothes, and creation. Some men would do it because they love the game. But the kind of men who were spending profits today on the North Shore, on Fifth Avenue, Regent Street, and the Rue de la Paix—no! It would call for a kind of man different from them, with a different scheme of values. Yes, to work without money profit would demand a different scheme of values in a different kind of man; and to do full work on half-time in the ditch would need a different kind of man, with a new dream of living: perhaps there lay the world's solution: in men who were—different.

He sat alone and tried to think it all out; but he could think no further because he was too lonely. He needed the rubbing of a kindred soul—the answering flash of another pole. His loneliness was not merely physical; his soul was alone. Kautilya was not answering his letters, and she had been gone two great months. Far down within him he was sick at heart. He could not quite understand why it had seemed to Kautilya so inevitable that they must part. He kept coming back to the question as to whether the excuse she gave was real and complete.

Could it be possible that she must sacrifice herself to a strange and unloved husband for reasons of state? What after all was little lost Bwodpur in the great emancipation of races? What difference whether she ruled as Princess or worked as worker? What was "royal blood," after all?

And then, too, why this illogical solicitude for Sara's right

to him, after that supreme and utter betrayal and denial of all right? Was it not possible, more than possible, that he had disappointed Kautilya, just as he had disappointed himself and his mother and his people and perhaps some far-off immutable God?

Kautilya had built a high ideal of manhood and crowned it with his likeness, and yet when she had seen it face to face, perhaps it had seemed to crash before her eyes.

Perhaps—and his mind writhed, hesitated; and yet he pushed it forward to full view—perhaps, after all, there was unconsciously in Kautilya some borrowed, strained, and seeping prejudice from the dead white world, that made her in her inner soul and at the touch, shrink from intimate contact with a man of his race; and perhaps without quite realizing it, they had faced the end and she had seen life and love and dreams die; then softly but firmly she had put him by and gone away.

Thus Matthew's dull and tired brain dropped down to clouds of weariness. But he did not surrender. The old desolation and despair seemed overlaid now by harsher iron built on sheer physical strength. He did not even rise and undress lest the ghosts of doubt grip him as he walked and moved. He slept all night dressed and sitting at his empty deal table, his head upon his hands. And he dreamed that God was Work.

# xi

Sara had at last arrived. Sammy had met her. It was early in September, and he had not seen her for five months. They had a good breakfast at the Union Station, and Sammy had retailed so much news and gossip that Sara was happier and more alive than she had felt for a long time. She was very calm and sedate about it, but after all she knew that the Black Belt of Chicago with its strife, intrigue, defeats, and triumphs was, for her, Life.

"And where have you been?" asked Sammy.

"New York, Atlantic City, Boston, Newport, and a few places like that."

"Have a good time?"

"Fair."

Sammy whirled her home in a new Lincoln that was a

dream, and a black chauffeur in brown livery who knew his spaces to the tenth of an inch and glided up Michigan Avenue like smooth and unreverberating lightning.

"New car?" asked Sara.

"Yep! Celebrating."

"Celebrating—what?"

"Saw the old man last Wednesday down at Springfield." And then Sammy adroitly switched into a long and most interesting account of the latest and biggest Jewish tabernacle which her pastor had bought with liberal political donations.

Sara said nothing further about the car and that Springfield interview. Sammy knew she was curious, but just how deeply and personally curious she was, he was not certain. So he waited. In Sara's apartment he wandered about, a bit distraught, while she took her usual good time to dress. The apartment was immaculate and in perfect order. Sammy saw no trace of that scene five months ago. And as for Sara, when she emerged, her simple, close-fitting tailor-made costume was all Sammy could ask or imagine.

"I say, kid, don't you think we might talk this thing out and come to some understanding?"

Sara opened her eyes. "Talk what out?"

"Well, about you and me. You see, you had me going, and I had to do something. I couldn't just stand by and lose everything. So I got busy. I hated to do it, but I had to."

"You didn't do it—God did."

"God nothing! I remembered the woman on that train wreck and I found her."

"It is a lie. She found you," said Sara.

"Well, it was a little like that, but the minute I laid eyes on her I knew she was the woman I had heard about. And I told her all about Matthew; how queer he was, and how he was hesitating, and how no man like him could ever make a politician. Then she laid low, but she came that night. I didn't think she would."

"You're a pretty friend."

"Say, kid, don't be hard. It was a bit tough, I own, for you. But I had you in the plan. Now listen to reason. Matthew was no good. He was going flabby. He's no real politician. He didn't know the game, and he had fool Reform deep in his

system. He was just waking up, and he'd 'a' raised Hell in Congress. We never could have controlled him. Now when I get in Congress—"

"Congress!" sneered Sara. "Do you think any nigger has a chance now?"

But Sammy talked on.

"—and when you are my wife—"

"Wife!"

"Sure, I've never been a marrying man, as I have often explained—"

"Not retail," said Sara.

"And wholesale don't count in law; but I need you, I see that now, and I'm damned if I am going to lose you to another half-baked guy."

"I am not divorced yet, and I am not sure—"

"You mean you ain't sure you ain't half in love with him still?"

"I hate the fool. I'd like to horsewhip her in City Hall."

"Too late, kid, she's left him."

"Left him?"

"Sure—gone bag and baggage, and what do you know! He's digging in the subway—a common laborer. Oh, he's up against it, I'll tell the world. Reckon he wouldn't mind visiting the old roost just now." And Sammy glanced about with approval.

Sara looked him over. Sammy was no Adonis. He was approaching middle age and was showing signs of wear and tear. But Sara was lonesome, and between her and Sammy there was a common philosophy, a common humor, and a common understanding. Neither quite trusted the other, and yet they needed each other. Sara had missed Sammy more than she dared acknowledge, while without Sara, Sammy felt one-armed.

Sammy continued:

"No, kid. Your lay is still the quiet, injured wife, shut up at home and in tears, until after the next election. See? A knock-out! Matthew is politically dead this minute. Right here I come in. The bosses know that they got to take a dose of black man for Congress sooner or later. They came near getting a crank. But even your fine Italian hand couldn't make him stay put. He never would have been elected."

"Oh, I don't know."

"You got it right there, kid, you *don't* know, and you know you don't. And now here I am. The bosses will have to take me sooner or later. All I need is you."

"But I hear that the governor and Thompson are at outs."  
"Sure."

"And you're hitched up with the governor?"

"Sure again. I'm opposing Thompson. But after he's elected by a smashing majority, the governor and the Washington crowd will need him, he'll need the governor, and they'll both need me!"

"H'm—I see. Well, you'll have to do some tight-rope walking, my friend."

"Precisely, and that's where you come in."

"Indeed! Now listen to me. Don't think, Sammy, you're going to get both money and office out of these white politicians at the same time. When they pay big they take the big jobs. If you want to go to Congress you'll pay. The only exception to that rule was the game I played and won and then that fool threw away."

Sammy smiled complacently. "Did you see my new Lincoln?"

"Yes, and wondered."

"Four thousand bucks, and the shuffer's gettin' thirty-five per. And say! Remember that big white stone house at Fiftieth and Drexel Boulevard?"

"You mean at Drexel Square, with the big oaks and a fountain?"

"Yep!"

"Yes, I remember it—circular steps, great door with beveled glass, and marble lobby!"

"No different! Driveway and garage; sun parlor, twenty rooms, yard, and big iron fence. Well, that's where we're gonna live. I've bought it."

"Sammy! Why, you must be suddenly rich or crazy!"

"Kid, I've made a killing! While you were leading me a dance for Congress, I got hold of all the dough I could grab and salted it away. Oh, I spent a lot on the boys, but I had a lot to spend. Graham and the Public Service was wild to return Doolittle. I spent a pile, but I didn't spend all by a long shot. I put a hunk into two or three good deals—real estate, bootlegging, and—well—other things. Then when Mat-

they flew the coop I rushed at the gang and put up such a yell that they let me in on something big: and listen, sister! Little Sammy is on Easy Street and sittin' pretty! Believe me, I ain't beggin'—I'm going to buy my way into Congress if it takes a hundred thousand simoleons."

Sara looked Sammy over.

"And you're counting on me, are you?"

"Sure thing! As soon as election is over, we can have proceedings for a divorce on foot quietly, and it will be over in a week or so. Meantime, you're my secretary again, and you're going to name your own salary."

Sara arose and smoothed her frock. She looked so unmoved and unapproachable that Sammy half lost his nerve.

"Don't let him get you, Sara. Don't let black Chicago think you're down and out because of one man. What do you say, kid? You know, I—I always liked you. I was crazy about you the minute you stepped through that door five years ago. I figured that nobody but me was ever going to marry you. But you were so damned stand-offish—I sort-a wanted you to melt a little first and be human. But now, Lord, kid, I'm crawlin' and beggin' you on any terms. What do you say? See here! I'll bet you a diamond as big as a hen's egg against a marriage license that you'll be happier as my wife than you've been in ten years. What d'ya say, kid?"

Sara still stood looking at Sammy thoughtfully as she reached for her vanity case. She turned to the mantel mirror and was some time powdering her nose. Then she obeyed an impulse, a thing she had not done for ten years. She turned deliberately, walked over to Sammy, and kissed him.

"You're on, Sammy," she said.

## XII

"Dearest Matthew, my man," wrote Kautilya in September, "forgive my silence. I am in Virginia with your mother. I could not stay in Washington. I wanted to sit a space apart and in quiet to think and hear and decide. The wind is in the trees, the strong winds of purpose, the soft winds of infinite desire; the wide black earth around me is breathing deep with fancies. There is rain and mud and a certain emptiness. But somehow I love this land, perhaps because mother loves it so. I

seem to see salvation here, a gate to the world. Here is a tiny kingdom of tree and wood and hut. Oh, yes, and the brook, the symphony of the brook. And then there are the broad old fields as far as we can look toward the impounding woods.

"Beloved, I am beginning to feel that this place of yours may be no mere temporary refuge. That it may again be Home for you. I see this as yet but dimly, but life here seems symbolic. Here is the earth yearning for seed. Here men make food and clothes. We are at the bottom and beginning of things. The very first chapter of that great story of industry, wage and wealth, government, life.

"On such deep founding-stones you may perhaps build. I can see work transformed. This cabin with little change in its aspect can be made a place of worship, of beauty and books. I have even planned a home for you: this old and black and vine-clad cabin undisturbed but with an L built behind and above. The twin cabin must run far back and rise a half story for a broad and peaceful chamber—for life with music and color floating in it. Perhaps a little lake to woo the brook; and then, in years, of course, a tower and a secret garden! Yes, I should like to see a tower, where Muezzins call to God and His world.

"And this world is really much nearer to our world than I had thought. This brook dances on to a river fifty miles away—next door only for a little Ford truck. And the river winds in stately curve down Jamestown-of-the-Slaves. We went down the other day, walking part of the way through woods and dells, toward the great highway of the Atlantic. Think, Matthew, take your geography and trace it: from Hampton Roads to Guiana is a world of colored folk, and a world, men tell me, physically beautiful beyond conception; socially enslaved, industrially ruined, spiritually dead; but ready for the breath of Life and Resurrection. South is Latin America, east is Africa, and east of east lies my own Asia. Oh, Matthew, think this thing through. Your mother prophesies. We sense a new age.

"This is the age of commerce and industry—of making, shaping, carrying, buying and selling. We have made manufacturers, railroad men, and merchants rich because we ranked them highest, and we have helped them in cities for conveni-

ence, and they are white and in white cities. Just suppose we change our ranking. Suppose in our hearts we rate the colored farmers and all discoverers, poets, and dreamers high and even higher and give them space outside of white cities? We would widen the world. It is simply a matter of wanting to. We have bribed white factories with tariffs and monopoly. We are going to bribe black agriculture and poetry. And, Matthew, Work is not God—Love is God and Work is His Prophet."

Hurriedly Matthew wrote back: "No, no, Kautilya of the World, no, no! Think not of home in that breeder of slaves and hate, Virginia. I shudder to find you there even for a season. There is horror there which your dear eyes are not yet focused to see and which the old blindness of my mother forgets. There is evil all about you. Oh, sister, you do not know—you do not dream. Down yonder lurk mob and rape and rope and faggot. Ignorance is King and Hate is High Prime Minister. Men are tyrants or slaves. Women are dolls or sluts. Industry is lying, and government stealing.

"The land is literally accursed with the blood and pain of three hundred years of slavery. Ask mother. Ask her to tell you how many years she has fought and clawed for the honor of her own body. There is a little weal on her breast, a jagged scar upon her knee, a broken finger on one hand. Ask her whence these came. Ask her who imprisoned and killed my father and why and where her other children are buried. Come away, come away, my crumpled bird, as soon as may be, lest they despoil you. You may hide there until our wounds are healed, but then come away to the midst of life. Only in the center of the world can our work be done. We must stand, you and I, even if apart, where beats down the fiercest blaze of Western civilization, and pushing back this hell, raise a black world upon it.

"I ought not to write tonight, for I am in the depths; the sudden change of Chicago's Fall has dropped upon me. I caught cold and was ill a day, and then I arose and did not go to work. Instead, I went down to the art gallery. There was a new exhibit of borrowed paintings from all ends of the world. After mud and filth and grayness, my soul was starving for color and curve and form. I went. And then went back again, day after day. I literally forgot my work for a week and bathed myself in a new world of beauty.



"I saw in Claude Monet what sunrise and sunset on the old cathedral at Rouen might say to a human soul, in pale gold, white, and purple, and in purple, yellow, and gold. I felt the mists of London hiding Big Ben. Rich somber peace and silence fell on me and on the picnic party beneath spreading branches. I walked with that lady about the red flowers of her garden. I reveled in blue seas, faint color-swept fields, riot of sweet flowers, poppies and grain, brooks and villages.

"I saw Pisano's Paris; the colors of Matisse raged in my soul, deluging all form, unbeautiful with rhythm. I delighted in the luscious dark folk of Paul Gauguin, in sun and shade, fruit and sea, palm and totem, and in the color that melts and flows and cries. Then there were the mad brown-gray-green lines of Picasso which swerved and melted into strange faces, forms, and figures, haunting things like their African prototypes; there was a dark little girl by Derain floating in a field of blue with a yellow castle, square and old.

"As from a far fight into the unknown I came back to the lovely coloring of Brangwyn and Cottet. I discovered the lucent blue water of Cézanne, his plunging landscapes and the hard truth of his faces. I saw how lovely Mrs. Samari looked to Renoir and vineyards to Van Gogh.

"At the end of the week I emerged half-ashamed, uncertain in judgment, and yet with added width to my world. I dimly remembered how you all talked of painting there in Berlin; then I knew nothing, nothing. Or rather now I know nothing, and then I did not know how ignorant I was. And, withal, mentally breathless, I returned with a certain peace and slept to dreams of clouds of light. I rose the next morning light-headed, rested and strong, and went down blithely to that hole in the ground, to the grim, gigantic task. I was a more complete man—a unit of a real democracy.

"Even as I reached for my shovel the boss yelled at me. 'Away a week. You're fired!' Well, somehow I got back again after a few days. After all, I reckon, I am a good worker. But there was still trouble, and the boss had taken a dislike to me. It was like a groom incurring the displeasure of some high lackey in the court of Louis XIV. As I have said, we subway laborers were not yet organized, and emissaries from the trade unions were working among us. I never knew what unions meant before. I think I was a bit prejudiced against them.

They were organizations, to my mind, which took food from the mouths of black men.

"Now suddenly I saw the thing from the other side. Unless we banded ourselves together and as one body against this Leviathan which 'hires and fires,' we were helpless, crushed piecemeal, having no voice as to ourselves and our work. And so I went in for the union. We struck: our hours of work were too long; the overtime was too poorly paid; we were being maimed by accidents and cheated of our insurance; we had no decent luncheon time or place. Well, we struck and we were roundly beaten. There were five hungry men eager to take every place we left vacant; mostly black men—they were hungriest. There were the police and politics against us.

"Again I was 'fired,' and this time for good. It was strange in this great, busy, and rich city, actually to be among the unemployed, and so much work to be done! I never believed in the unemployed before. To me the unemployed were the lazy, the shiftless, the debauched. But I am not lazy. I am eager for work; I am strong and willing and for a week I actually did not know how I was going to earn my bread.

"Several times and in several places I applied for work, and then at last I found a new reason staring in my face. It was Sammy. He strutted over to me as I came out of one employment office, and stood with his legs apart, scowling at me. He had neither smile nor handshake. 'Say, bo,' he blustered, 'why didn't you come around and fix up them divorce papers? See here, I'm tired of your damned stallin'! Think you're going to crawl back to Sara one of these days because your fancy woman has jilted you? Well, by God, you ain't. You're going ahead with this divorce, or I'll damn well drive you out of Chicago.'

"I made no answer. I think I smiled at him a little because he did appear to me pathetically funny; and then I went and got a job. I knew one place where workers were scarce, but I had always shrunk from going there. But that morning I went out to the stockyards and got a job. The world stinks about me. I am lifting rotten food. I am helping to murder things that live. The continual bleating of death beats on my ears and heart. I am drugged with weariness and ugliness. I seem to know as never before what pain and poverty mean. In the



world there is only you—only you and that halo about your head which is the world-wide Cause.

"But Sammy's command set me thinking. I dimly see what must be done to restore the balance and coöperation of the white and black worlds: Brain and Brawn must unite in one body. But where shall the work begin? I begin to believe right here in Chicago, crossroads of the world—midway between Atlantic and Pacific, North and South Poles. This is the place. How shall I begin?"

#### XIII

There had been a long silence. Matthew had set his teeth and written regularly and methodically, words that did not say or reveal much. And then at last out of the South there came one morning a long, clear cry from Kautilya.

"Oh, Matthew, Matthew. The earth here in this October is full with fruit and harvest. The cotton lies dark green, dim crimson, with silver stars above the gray earth; my own hand has carried the cotton basket, and now I sit and know that everywhere seed that is hidden dark, inert, dead, will one day be alive, and here, here! And Matthew, my soul doth magnify the Lord. Within the new twin cabin above the old (for I have built it already, dear—I *had* to) sitting aloft, apart, a bit remote, is a low, dark, and beautiful room of Life, with music and with wide windows toward the rising and the setting of the sun. Outside the sun today is beaten shimmering copper-gold. The corn shocks and the fields are dull yellow; the bare cotton stalks are burning brown. But the earth is rich and full, and Love sits wild and glorious on the world. I have been reading to dear mother. She sits beside me, silent, like some ancient priestess. I read out of the Hebrew scriptures words of cruelty and war, and then in the full happiness of my heart I found that passage in Luke: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord!' And now my spirit is rejoicing, and the ineffable Buddha, blood of the blood of my fathers, seems bowing down to his low and doubting handmaiden. Well-beloved, shall not all generations call us Blessed and do great things for us, and we for them? All children, all mothers, all fathers; all women and all men? Thus do I bend and kiss all the lowly in the name of Him who 'hath put down the Mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree'!

"We will build a world, Matthew, you and I, where the Hungry shall be fed, and only the Lazy shall be empty. Oh, I am mad, mad, Matthew, this day when the golden earth bows and falls into the death of Winter toward the resurrection of Spring! Life seems suddenly clear to me. I see the Way. Matthew, I am not afraid of Virginia or the white South. I know more of it than you think and mother has told me. It is crude and cruel, but, too, it is warm and beautiful. It is strangely, appealingly human. Nothing so beautiful as Virginia can be wholly hellish. I have my troubles here, mother and I, but we have faced it all and beaten them back with high and steady glance. I see the glory that may come yet to this Mother of Slavery.

"I will not, I can not, be sorry for you, Matthew, for your poor bruised soul and for the awful pit in which your tired feet stand. Courage, my man. Drain the cup. Drain it to the dregs, and, out of this crucifixion, ascend with me to heaven."

#### XIV

"I am glad, dear Kautilya," wrote Matthew at Christmas time, "that you are happy and content. But I am curious to understand that Way which you see so clearly. As for me, I am sorely puzzled. I believe in democracy. Hitherto I have seen democracy as the corner stone of my new world. But today and with the world, I see myself drifting logically and inevitably toward oligarchy. Baseball, movies, Spain, and Italy are ruled by Tyrants. Russia, England, France, and the Trusts are ruled by oligarchies. And how else? We Common People are so stupid, so forgetful, so selfish. How can we make life good but by compulsion? We cannot choose between monarchy and oligarchy or democracy—no—we can only choose the objects for which we will enthroned tyrannical dictators; it may be dictators for the sake of aristocrats as in Czarist Russia, or dictators for the sake of millionaires as in America, or dictatorship for the factory workers and peasants as in Soviet Russia; but always, everywhere, massed and concentrated power is necessary to accomplish anything worth while doing in this muddled world, hoping for divine Anarchy in some faraway heaven.

"Whether we will or not, some must rule and do for the

people what they are too weak and silly to do for themselves. They must be made to know and feel. It is knowledge and caring that are missing. Some know not and care not. Some know and care not. Some care not and know. We know and care, but, oh! how and where? I am afraid that only great strokes of force—clubs, guns, dynamite in the hands of fanatics—that only such Revolution can bring the Day.

"I wish I could see the solution of world misery in a little Virginia cottage with vines and flowers. I wish I could share the surging happiness which you find there; but I cannot, I am too far from there. I am far in miles, and somehow I seem insensibly to grow farther in spirit. I agree that America is the place for my work, and if America, then Chicago; for Chicago is the epitome of America. New York is a province of England. Virginia, Charleston, and New Orleans are memories, farming and industrial hinterlands. California is just beyond the world. Chicago is the American world and the modern world, and the worst of it. We Americans are caught here in our own machinery; our machines make things and compel us to sell them. We are rich in food and clothes and starved in culture. That fine old accumulation of the courtesies of life with its gracious delicacy which has flowered now and again in other lands is gone—gone and forgotten. We push and shoulder each other on the streets, yell, instead of bowing; we have forgotten 'Please,' 'Excuse me,' 'I beg your pardon,' and 'By your leave' in one vast comprehensive 'Hello!' and 'Sa-ay!'

"Courtesy is dead—and Justice? We strike, steal, curse, mob, and murder, all in the day's work. All delicate feeling sinks beneath floods of mediocrity. The finer culture is lost, lost; maybe lost forever. Is there beauty? Is there God? Is there salvation? Where are the workers so rich and powerful as here in America, and where so arid, artificial, vapid, so charmed and distracted by the low, crude, gawdy, and vulgar? I can only hope that after America has raped this land of its abundant wealth, after Africa breaks its chains and Asia awakes from its long sleep, in the day when Europe is too weak to fight and scheme and make others work for her and not for themselves—that then the world may disintegrate and fall apart and thus from its manure, something new and fair may sprout and slowly begin to grow. If then in Chicago we

can kill the thing that America stands for, we emancipate the world.

"Yes, Kautilya, I believe that with fire and sword, blood and whips, we must fight this thing out physically, and literally beat the world into submission and a real civilization. The center of this fight must be America, because in America is the center of the world's sin. There must be developed here that world-tyranny which will impose by brute force a new heaven on this old and rotten earth."

It was almost mid-January when Kautilya's reply to this letter came. It was as ever full of sympathy and love, and yet Matthew thought he saw some beginnings of change.

"If the world is aflame," said Kautilya, "and I feel it flaming—the place of those who would ride the conflagration is truly within and not behind or in front of the Holocaust. Where then is this center, and what shall we who stand there do? Here are my two disagreements with you, dear Matthew. America is not the center of the world's evil. That center today is Asia and Africa. In America is Power. Yonder is Culture, but Culture gone to seed, disintegrated, debased. Yet its re-birth is imminent. America and Europe must not prevent it. Only Asia and Africa, in Asia and Africa, can break the power of America and Europe to throttle the world.

"And, oh, my Matthew, your oligarchy as you conceive it is not the antithesis of democracy—it is democracy, if only the selection of the oligarchs is just and true. Birth is the method of blind fools. Wealth is the gambler's method. Only Talent served from the great Reservoir of All Men of All Races, of All Classes, of All Ages, of Both Sexes—this is real Aristocracy, real Democracy—the only path to that great and final Freedom which you so well call Divine Anarchy.

"And yet this, dear Matthew, you yourself taught me—you and your struggling people here. In Africa and Asia we must work, and yet in Africa and Asia we are outside the world. That is the thing I always felt at home. Outside, and kept outside, the centers of power. Even to us in Europe, the closed circle of power is narrow and straitly entrenched; the stranger can scarce get foothold, and when he gets in, Power is no longer there. It is flown. In America your feet are further within the secret circle of that power that half-consciously rules the world. That is the advantage of America. That is the ad-

vantage that your people have had. You are working within. They are standing here in this technical triumph of human power and can use it as a fulcrum to lift earth and seas and stars.

"But to be in the center of power is not enough. You must be free and able to act. You are not free in Chicago nor New York. But here in Virginia you are at the edge of a black world. The black belt of the Congo, the Nile, and the Ganges reaches by way of Guiana, Haiti, and Jamaica, like a red arrow, up into the heart of white America. Thus I see a mighty synthesis: you can work in Africa and Asia right here in America if you work in the Black Belt. For a long time I was puzzled, as I have written you, and hesitated; but now I know. I am exalted, and with my high heart comes illumination. I have been sore bewildered by this mighty America, this ruthless, terrible, intriguing Thing. My home and heart is India. Your heart of hearts is Africa. And now I see through the cloud. You may stand here, Matthew—here, halfway between Maine and Florida, between the Atlantic and the Pacific, with Europe in your face and China at your back; with industry in your right hand and commerce in your left and the Farm beneath your steady feet; and yet be in the Land of the Blacks.

"Dearest, in spite of all you say, I believe, I believe in men; I believe in the unlovely masses of men; I believe in that prophetic word which you spoke in Berlin and which perhaps you only half believed yourself. And why should I not believe? I have seen slaves ruling in Chicago and they did not do nearly as badly as princes in Russia. Gentle culture and the beauty and courtesies of life—they are the real end of all living. But they will not come by the dreaming of the few. Civilization cannot stand on its apex. It must stand on a broad base, supporting its inevitable and eternal apex of fools. The tyranny of which you dream is the true method which I too envisage. But choose well the Tyrants—there is Eternal Life! How truly you have put it! Workers unite, men cry, while in truth always thinkers who do not work have tried to unite workers who do not think. Only working thinkers can unite thinking workers.

"For all that we need, and need alone, Time; the alembic, Time. The slow majestic march of events, unhurried, sure. Do not be in a hurry, dear Matthew, do not be nervous, do not

fret. There is no hurry, Matthew, your mother's Bible puts it right: 'A day unto the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'"

## xv

Endless time! Matthew laughed and wept. Endless time! He was almost thirty. In a few years he would be forty, and creative life, real life, would be gone; gone forever. But he knew; he saw it all; he faced grimly and without flinching the terrible truth that for seven months he had sought to hide and veil away from himself. Kautilya did not plan for him in her life. Almost she did not want him, although perhaps this last fact she had not quite realized. She had tried him and his people and found them wanting. It was a sordid mess, sordid and mean, and she was unconsciously drawing the skirts of her high-bred soul back from it. She missed—she must miss—the beauty and wealth, the high courtesy and breath of life, which was hers by birth and heritage. And she must have searched in vain and deep disappointment in this muck of slavery, servility, and make-believe, for life. She had bidden him drain the cup. He would.

More and more was he convinced that the parting of himself and Kautilya was forever; that he must look this eventuality squarely in the face. And looking, he was sure that he had found himself. With his new physical strength had come a certain other strength of soul and purpose. Once he had sought knowledge and fame; once he had sought wealth; once he had sought comfort. Now he would seek nothing but work, and work for work's own sake. That work must be in large degree physical, because it was the physical work of the world that had to be done as prelude to its thought and beauty. And then beyond and above all this was the ultimate emancipation of the world by the uplift of the darker races. He knew what that uplift involved. He knew where he proposed to work, despite the ingenuity of Kautilya's argument. He did not yet see how physical toil would bring the spiritual end he sought, save only in his own soul. Perhaps—perhaps that would be enough. No, not he still rejected such metaphysics.

Meantime one step loomed closer and clearer. He would follow the word of Kautilya, because there was a certain beauty

and completeness in her desire that he offer himself back to Sara. He saw that it would not be a real offer if it were not really meant. First, of course, Sara must see him as he was and realize him; a man who worked with his hands; a man who did his own thinking, clear and straight, even to his own hurt and poverty. A man working to emancipate the lowest millions. And, because of this and for his own salvation, certain cravings for beauty must be satisfied: simple, clear beauty, without tawdriness, without noise and meaningless imitation. Seeing him thus, perhaps, after all, in her way, in her singular, narrow way, Sara might realize that she had need of him. It was barely possible that, with such love as still oozed thinly in the hard crevices of her efficient soul, she loved him. Very well. If she wanted him as he was, realizing that he had loved some one else as he never could love her, well and good. He would go back to her; he would be a good husband; he would be, in the patois of the respectable, "true," but in a higher and better sense, good.

Matthew saw, too, with increasing clearness, something that Kautilya, he thought, must begin to realize, and that was that her freedom from him and his people—her freedom from this entanglement from which the thoughtful Japanese and Indians had tried to save her—would mean an increased and broader chance for her own work in her own world. And she had a work if she could return to it untrammelled by the trademark of slavery and degradation. She had tried to see a way in America for herself and Matthew to tread together. But all this was self-deception.

Matthew saw clearly, however, that he must give Kautilya no inkling of his own understanding and interpretation of herself. He knew that in her high soul there was that spirit of martyrs which might never let her surrender him voluntarily, that she would seek to stand by him just as long as it seemed the honorable thing to do. And so he would not "wince nor cry aloud," but he would "drain the cup."

That night he telephoned the maid at Sara's house, and learning that Sara was in, went down to see her. It was a hard journey. It was like walking back in time. He went through all the writhings of that period of groping revolt and yearning. He walked up the steps with the same feeling of revulsion and entered that prim and cold atmosphere, that hard, sharp grind-

ing of life. He rang the bell. The maid stared, grinned, and fidgeted.

"Yes—she's in—but I don't think—she said never to—"

She wanted Matthew to push past and go in unannounced, and he meant to, but he couldn't. He stood hesitating.

Sara's clear voice came from within:

"Who is it, Eliza?"

"It is Matthew Towns," said Matthew. "I would like—"

There were quick steps. The maid withdrew. The door banged in his face.

Matthew wrote to Kautilya nothing of this, but only to continue that argument about work and wealth and race. He said:

"Art is long, but industry is longer. Revolution must come, but it must start from within. We must strip to the ground and fight up. Not the colored Farm but the white Factory is the beginning; and the white Office and the Street stand next. The white artisan must teach technique to the colored farmer. White business men must teach him organization; the scholar must teach him how to think, and the banker how to rule. Then, and not till then, will the farmer, colored or white, be the salt of the earth and the beginning of life."

Then in a postscript he added:

"I have had notice of Sara's action for divorce. I shall go in person to the hearing and answer, and I shall assent to whatever she may wish. I hope sincerely you are well. I have feared you might be sick and keep it from me. But even in sickness there is one consolation. Life at its strongest and longest is short. Bad as it is and beautiful as it has been for us, it is soon over. I kiss the little fingers of your hand."

Kautilya replied with a little note that came in early March, scribbled on wrapping-paper, with uncertain curves:

"Matthew, I am afraid. Suddenly I am desperately afraid. Just what I fear I do not know—I cannot say. Perhaps I am ill. I know I am ill. Oh, Matthew, I am afraid. Life is a terrible thing. It looms in dark silence and threatens. It has no bowels of compassion. Its hidden soul neither laughs nor cries—it just is, is, is! I am afraid, Matthew—I am in deadly fear. The terror of eternal life is upon me—the Curse of Siva! Come to me, Matthew, come! No, no—do not come until I send. I shall be all right."

Matthew's heart paused in sudden hurt. He knew what must have happened: the Great Decision must be made. She had been summoned to India and must go. He started to pack his suitcase. He telephoned about trains. Then he hesitated. "No, no—do not come until I send." That was her decision. Against her will he must not go. But perhaps already she had changed her mind. Perhaps she was physically ill. Perhaps already Death, cloaked in black, stood in the shadows behind her writhing bed! Or, worse, perhaps she was going away and could not pause to say good-by.

He telegraphed—"May I—" No, he tore that up: "Shall I come?"

The answer came in a few hours.

"No, all is well. I have been very ill, but I am better and I shall be out soon in the sweet springtime. I am going to walk and sew; I am going to be happy: infinitely happy. I want to see the heavy earth curling up before the shining of my plowshare. I want to feel the gray mule dragging off my arms, with the sky for heaven and the earth for love. I want to see seed sink in the dead earth. How can you say that life is short? Life is not short, my darling Matthew, it is endless. You and I will live for a thousand years and then a thousand years more; and then ten thousand years shall be added to that. Oh, man of little faith! Do you not see, heart of me, that without infinite life, life is a joke and a contradiction? Wish and Will are prisoned and manacled in Fact, whatever that fact may be; but with life built on life here on earth, now and not in your silly Christian parlor heaven, the tiny spark that is God thrills through, thrills through to triumph in a billion years; so vast, and vaster, is the Plan."

Matthew humored her mood. She saw the end of their earthly happiness here in time, and she was straining toward eternity. He could not deceive himself or her, and he wrote with a certain sad smile in his heart:

"Infinite and Eternal? Yes, dear Princess of the Winds; the Moonlight Sonata, snow on a high hill, the twitter of birds on boughs in sunlight after rain, health after sickness—God! are not these real, true, good, beautiful, infinite, eternal? Whether Immortal Life, dearest and best, is literal truth or not, I do not care. No one knows whether anything in life or larger than life bursts through to some inconceivable triumph over

death. None knows, none can know. But, ah, dear heart, what difference? There is, after all, sunrise and rain, starlight, color, and the surge and beat of sound. And on that night when my body kissed yours, a billion years lived in one heartbeat. What more can I ask? What more have I asked or dreamed, Queen of the World, than that? Already I am Eternal. In thy flesh I have seen God."

And Kautilya answered:

"I know, I know, heart's-ease, but that is not enough: back of it all, back of the flesh, the mold, the dust, there must be Reality; it must be there; and what can reality be but Life, Life Everlasting? If we, we our very selves, do not live forever, Life is a cruel joke."

Yes, Life *was* a cruel joke, and Matthew turned to write of everyday things:

"As I sat last night huddled over my supper—a very greasy pork chop, sodden potatoes, oleomargarine, soggy cornbread, partly cooked cabbage, and weak, cold coffee—as I sat in my grimy overalls and guzzled this mess, some one came and sat at my table with its dirty oil-cloth cover. I did not look up, but a voice, a rather flat, unusual voice, ordered rice. 'Just rice.' Then I looked up at a Chinese woman, and she smiled wanly back.

"'I prefer,' she said, 'don't you, the cuisine of the Lützower Ufer?'"

"It was one of our Chinese friends. I was glad and ashamed to see her. She seemed to notice nothing—made no comment, asked no awkward questions. Principally she talked of China.

"'Oh, China, China, where shall we find leaders! They rise, they fall, they die, they desert. The men who can do, the men of thought and knowledge, the men who know technique, the unselfish and farseeing—how shall we harness these to the greatest chariot in the world and not have them seduced and stolen by Power, Pleasure, Display, Gluttony? Oh, I know it is the old story of human weakness, but if only we had a little more strength and unity now and then at critical moments, we could climb a step and lift the sodden, smitten mass.

"'There was Chiang Kai-Shek, so fine and young a warrior! I knew him well. I saw once his golden face alight with the highest ideals, his eyes a Heaven-in-Earth. Today, what is he?

I do not know. Perhaps he does not. Oh, why was it that Sun Yat Sen must die-so soon? But'—she rose from the half-eaten, mushy rice—"we must push on always—on!" And then pausing she said, timidly, "And you, my friend. Are you pushing—on?"

"I hesitated and then arose and stood before her: 'I am pushing—on!' I said. She looked at me with glad eyes, and touching her forehead, was gone. And I was right, Kautilya, I am pushing on."

And turning from Kautilya's sealed letter, he took another sheet and laboriously wrote a long letter to Sara, saying all there was to be said; explaining, confessing, offering to return to her if she wanted him, but on the conditions which she must already know. He received no answer. Yet once again he wrote and almost pleaded. Again he had no word.

#### XVI

There was a little court scene on State Street in April, 1927. It looked more like an intimate family party, and everybody seemed in high good humor. The white judge was smiling affably and joking with the Honorable Sammy Scott. Two or three attorneys were grouped about. Hats, canes, and brief-cases were handy, as though no one expected to tarry long. Mrs. Sara Towns came in. Mrs. Towns was a quiet and thoroughly adequate symphony in gray. She had on a gray tailor-made suit, with plain sheath skirt dropping below, but just below, her round knees. There was soft gray silk within and beneath the coat. There were gray stockings and gray suede shoes and gray chamoisette gloves. The tiny hat was gray, and pulled down just a trifle sideways so as to show sometimes one and sometimes two of her cool gray eyes. She looked very competent and very desirable. The Honorable Sammy's eyes sparkled. He liked the way Sara looked. He did not remember ever seeing her look better.

He felt happy, rich, and competent. He just had to tell Corruthers, aside:

"Yes, sir! She just got up of her own accord and gave me a kiss square on the beazer. You could 'a' bowled me over with a feather."

"Oh, she always liked you. She just married Towns for spite."

Sammy expanded. Things were coming very nicely to a head. The new Mayor had just been elected by a landslide; at the same time the Mayor's enemy, the Governor, knew that while Sammy had fought the Mayor in the primaries according to orders, he had nevertheless come out of the election with a machine which was not to be ignored. The pending presidential election was bound to set things going Sammy's way. The Mayor's popularity was probably local and temporary. The Governor had his long fingers on the powerful persons who pull the automata which rule the nation. These automata had been, in Sammy's opinion, quite convinced that no one would do their will in Congress better than the Honorable Sammy Scott. Moreover, the Governor and Mayor were not going to be enemies long. They could not afford it.

In other words, to put it plainly, the slate was being arranged so that after the presidential election of 1928, the succeeding congressional election would put the first colored man from the North in Congress, and it was on the boards that this man was to be Sammy. Meantime and in the three years ensuing, the prospective Mrs. Sara Scott and her husband were going to have a chance to play one of the slickest political games ever played in Chicago. Above all, Sammy was more than well-to-do, and Sara was no pauper. He wasn't merely asking political favors. He was demanding, and he had the cash to pay. Sammy rubbed his hands and gloated over Sara.

A clerk hurried in with a document. The judge, poising his pen, smiled benevolently at Sara. Sara had seated herself in a comfortable-looking chair, holding her knees very close together and yet exhibiting quite a sufficient length of silk stocking of excellent quality.

"Does the defendant make any reply?" asked the judge. And then, without pausing for an answer, he started to write his name. He had finished the first capital when some one walked out of the gloom at the back of the room and came into the circle of the electric light which had to shine in the office even at noontime.

Matthew came forward. He was in overalls and wore a sweater. Yet he was clean, well shaven, and stood upright. He was perhaps not as handsome as he used to be. His face seemed a bit weather-beaten, and his hair was certainly thinner. But he had an extraordinarily strong face, interest-



ing, intriguing. He spoke with some hesitancy, looking first at the judge, then at Sara, to whom he bowed gravely in spite of the fact that after a startled glance, she ignored him. He only glanced at Sammy. Sammy was literally snarling with his long upper lip drawn back from his tobacco-stained teeth. He almost bit through his cigar, threw it away, and brought out another, long, black, and fresh. His hand trembled as he lit it, and he blew a furious cloud of smoke.

"I did not come to answer," said Matthew, "but simply to state my position."

"(My God!)" thought Sammy. "I'll bet he's got that bag of diamonds!"

"Have you got a lawyer?" asked the judge, gruffly.

"No, and I do not need one. I merely want to say—"

"What's all this about, anyway?" snapped Sammy.

Sara sat stiff and white and looked straight past Matthew to the wall. On the wall was a smirking picture of the late President Harding. An attorney came forward.

"We are willing that the defendant make any statement he wants to. Is there a stenographer here?"

The judge hesitated and then rang impatiently. A white girl walked in languidly and sat down. She stared at the group, took note of Sara's costume, and then turned her shoulder.

"I merely wanted to say," said Matthew, "that the allegations in the petition are true."

"Well, then, what are we waitin' for?" growled Sammy.

"I ran away from my wife and lived with another woman. I did this because I loved that woman and because I hated the life I was living. I shall never go back to that life; but if by any chance Mrs. Towns—my wife needs me or anything I can give or do, I am ready to be her husband again and to—"

He got no further. Sara had risen from her chair.

"This is intolerable," she said. "It is an insult, a low insult. I never want to see this, this—scoundrel, again."

"Very well, very well," said the judge, as he proceeded to sign the decree for absolute divorce. Sara and Sammy disappeared rapidly out the door.

Matthew walked slowly home, and as he walked he read now and then bits of his last letter from Kautilya. He read almost absent-mindedly, for he was meditating on that singularly contradictory feeling of disappointment which he had.

One has a terrible plunge to make into some lurking pool of life. The pool disappears and leaves one dizzy upon a bank which is no longer a bank, but just arid sand.

In the midst of this inchoate feeling of disappointment, he read:

"Are we so far apart, man of God? Are we not veiling the same truth with words? All you say, I say, heaven's darling. Say and feel, want, and want with a want fiercer than death; but, oh, Love, our bodies will fade and grow old and older, and our eyes dim, and our ears deaf, and we shall grope and totter, the shades of shadows, if we cannot survive and surmount and leave decay and death. No, no! Matthew, we live, we shall always live. Our children's children living after us will live with us as living parts of us, as we are parts of God. God lives forever—Brahma, Buddha, Mohammed, Christ—all His infinite incarnations. From God we came, to God we shall return. We are eternal because we are God."

Matthew sat down on the curb, while he waited for the car, and put his back against the hydrant, still reading:

"My beloved, 'Love is God, Love is God and Work is His Prophet'; thus the Lord Buddha spoke."

The street car came by. He climbed aboard and rode wearily home. He could not answer the letter. The revulsion of feeling and long thought-out decision was too great. He had drained the cup. It was not even bitter. It was nauseating. Instead of rising to a great unselfish deed of sacrifice, he had been cast out like a dog on this side and on that. He stared at Kautilya's letter. What had she really wanted? Had she wanted Sara to take him back? Would it not have eased her own hard path and compensated for that wild deed by which she had rescued his soul? Did not her deed rightly end there with that week in heaven? Was not his day of utter renunciation at hand? And if one path had failed, were there not a thousand others? What would be more simple than walking away alone into the world of men, and working silently for the things of which he and Kautilya had dreamed?

## XVII

As Matthew reached the landing of his room, four long flights up, he saw a stranger standing in the gloom. Then he

noted that it was an East Indian, richly garbed and bowing low before him. Matthew stared. Why, yes! It was the younger of the two Indians of Berlin. Matthew bowed silently and bade him enter. The room looked musty and dirty, but Matthew made no excuses, merely throwing up the window and motioning his guest to a seat. But the Indian bowed again courteously and stood.

"Sir," he said, "I bear a rescript from the Dewan and High Council of State of the Kingdom of Bwodpur, containing a command of her Royal Highness, the Maharanee, and addressed, sir, to you. Permit me to read:

"To Matthew Towns, Esquire, of Chicago,

*"Honored Sir:*

"By virtue of the Power entrusted to us and by command of our sovereign lady, H.R.H. Kautilya, the reigning Maharanee, we hereby urge and command you to present yourself in person before the Maharanee, at her court to be holden in Prince James County, Virginia, U.S.A., at sunrise, May 1, 1927, there to learn her further pleasure.

"Given at our capital of Khumandat this 31st day of March, 1927, at the Maharanee's command.

"BRABAT SINGH,  
"Dewan."

"March 31?" asked Matthew.

"Yes," returned the Indian. "It was placed in my hands this week with the command that it should be presented to you as soon as the order of divorce was entered. In accordance with these orders I now present the rescript." Again he bowed and handed the document to Matthew. Then he straightened again and said: "I bear also a personal letter from her Royal Highness which I am charged to deliver."

Matthew excused himself, and opening, read it:

"Matthew, Day has dawned. Of course a little Virginia farm cannot bound your world. Our feet are set in the path of moving millions.

"I did not—I could not tell you all, Matthew, until now. The Great Central Committee of Yellow, Brown, and Black is finally to meet. You are a member. The High Command is to be chosen. Ten years of preparation are set. Ten more years

of final planning, and then five years of intensive struggle. In 1952, the Dark World goes free—whether in Peace and fostering Friendship with all men, or in Blood and Storm—it is for Them—the Pale Masters of today—to say.

"We are, of course, in factions—that ought to be the most heartening thing in human conference—but with enemies ready to spring and spring again, it scares one.

"One group of us, of whom I am one, believes in the path of Peace and Reason, of coöperation among the best and poorest, of gradual emancipation, self-rule, and world-wide abolition of the color line, and of poverty and war.

"The strongest group among us believes only in Force. Nothing but bloody defeat in a world-wide war of dark against white will, in their opinion, ever beat sense and decency into Europe and America and Australia. They have no faith in mere reason, in alliance with oppressed labor, white and colored; in liberal thought, religion, nothing! Pound their arrogance into submission, they cry; kill them; conquer them; humiliate them.

"They may be right—that's the horror, the nightmare of it: they may be right. But surely, surely we may seek other and less costly ways. Force is not the first word. It is the last—perhaps not even that.

"But, nevertheless, we have started forward. Our chart is laid. Our teeth are set, our star is risen in the East. The 'one far-off divine event' has come to pass, and now, oh, Matthew, Matthew, as soon as both in soul and body you stand free, hurry to us and take counsel with us and see Salvation.

"Last night twenty-five messengers had a preliminary conference in this room, with ancient ceremony of wine and blood and fire. I and my Buddhist priest, a Mohammedan Mullah, and a Hindu leader of Swaraj, were India; Japan was represented by an artisan and the blood of the Shoguns; young China was there and a Lama of Thibet; Persia, Arabia, and Afghanistan; black men from the Sudan, East, West, and South Africa; Indians from Central and South America, brown men from the West Indies, and—yes, Matthew, Black America was there too. Oh, you should have heard the high song of consecration and triumph that shook these rolling hills!

"We came in every guise, at my command when around the world I sent the symbol of the rice dish; we came as laborers,



as cotton pickers, as peddlers, as fortune tellers, as travelers and tourists, as merchants, as servants. A month we have been gathering. Three days we have been awaiting you—in a single night we shall all fade away and go, on foot, by boat, by rail and airplane. The Day has dawned, Matthew—the Great Plan is on its way.”

Matthew folded the letter slowly. She had summoned him—but to what? To love and marriage? No, to work for the Great Cause. There was no word of personal reunion. He understood and slowly looked up at the Indian. The Indian spoke again:

“Sir, with your permission, I have a final word.”

“Proceed.”

“I have delivered my messages. You have been summoned to the presence of the Princess. I now ask you—beg of you, not to go. Let me explain. I am, as you know, in the service of her Royal Highness, the Maharanee of Bwodpur. Indeed my fathers have served hers many centuries.”

“Yes,” said Matthew, without much warmth.

“You will naturally ask why I linger now. I will be frank. It is to make a last appeal to you—to your honor and chivalry. To me, sir, the will of the Maharanee of Bwodpur is law. But above and beyond that law lies her happiness and welfare and the destiny of India. When her Royal Highness first evinced interest in you and your people, we of her entourage foresaw trouble. Our first efforts to forestall it were crude, I admit, and did not take into account your character and ideals. We seriously underrated you. Yet yourself must admit the subsequent events proved us right.”

“Once you were in trouble, and, as the Princess rather quixotically assumed, by her fault, it was her nature to dare anything in order to atone. She gave up everything and went down into the depths. It was only with the greatest difficulty that she was prevailed upon not to surrender the Crown itself. As it was, she gave up wealth and caste and accepted only barest rights of protection and guardianship of her person, upon which we had to insist.”

“Finally in a last wild excess of frenzy, sir, she sacrificed to you her royal person. Sir, that night I was near murder, and you stood in the presence of death. But duty is duty, and the Princess can do no wrong. To us she is always spotless and forever right. But, sir, I come tonight to make a last plea.

Has she not paid to the uttermost farthing all debts to you, however vast and fantastic they may appear to her? Can you—ought you to demand further sacrifice?”

“Sacrifice?”

“Do you realize, sir, the meaning of this summons?”

“I thought I did. It is to attend a meeting which she has called.”

“What I say is from no personal knowledge—I have not seen her Royal Highness since she left here; but the reason is indubitable. The day of the coronation of a Maharajah in Bwodpur is at hand.”

Matthew started. “Her Royal Highness is—married?”

“She is to be married.”

“And she is summoned to India?”

“She is. Three Indians of highest rank have arrived in this country, and I believe they have come to fetch her and the royal ruby.”

“And why, then, has she summoned me?”

“Perhaps—she still hesitates between—”

“Love and duty?” said Matthew, dreamily.

“Between self-indulgent phantasy and the salvation of Bwodpur,” cried the Indian passionately.

“And I,” said Matthew slowly, “can seal her choice.”

“To few it is given to make a higher, finer sacrifice. You are free. You have but to hint and you can be rich—pardon me—I know. Well, what more? Will you not, in turn, free the Princess? Do the fine and generous act; let her go back to her people.”

“Does the Princess wish this freedom?”

“She is one who would not admit it if she did. And yet her very solicitude concerning Mrs. Towns—did it not suggest to you that she saw in your reunion with Sara, on a higher and more congenial plane, a chance for her to renew her own life and work? Is it possible that she cannot yearn for something beyond anything you can offer?”

“Yes, that occurred to me, and I made the offer to my former wife—perhaps too crassly and ungraciously, but with full sincerity.”

“True—and now why not follow further and write the Princess, definitely and formally withdrawing from her life, and doing it with such decision that there shall be no doubt

in her mind?" The Indian bent forward with strained and eager face.

"You seem—anxious," said Matthew.

"I am," said the Indian. "You do not realize how our hopes for Bwodpur center on the Princess: an independent sovereignty about which a new Empire of India might gradually gather. Then, her eager and inexperienced mind, reaching out, leapt beyond to All India and All Asia; gradually there came a vision of all the Darker Races in the World—everybody who was not white, no matter what their ability or history or genius, as though color itself were merit."

"And now, now finally, God preserve us, the Princess is stooping to raise the dregs of mankind; laborers, scrubwomen, scavengers, and beggars, into some fancied democracy of the world! It is madness born of pity for you and your unfortunate people."

"With every dilution of our great original idea, the mighty mission of Bwodpur fades. The Princess is mad—mad; and you are the center of her madness. Withdraw—for God's sake and your own—go! Leave us to our destiny. What have you to do with royalty and divinity?"

The Indian was trembling with fervor and excitement, and his black eyes burned into Matthew's heart. "You will forgive me, sir. I have but done my duty as I saw it," he said.

Matthew looked at the Indian thoughtfully.

"I believe you are right," he said. "Quite right. I believe that you and your friends were right from the beginning and that I was—headstrong and blind. Now the problem is to find a way out."

"For the brave," said the Indian, slowly and distinctly, "there is always a way—out."

#### XVIII

Matthew stood awhile looking at the door where the Indian with low salaam had disappeared. Then, turning hastily, he put a few things into his handbag, and going out, closed the door. He left a note and key under the doormat and started downstairs, almost colliding with a boy who was racing up, two steps at a time.

"Looking for a man named Towns—know where he stays?"

"I'm Matthew Towns."

"Long distance wants you—quick—drugstore—corner." And he flew down, three steps at a time. Matthew stood still a long minute. He could not go away leaving her standing, waiting, listening. No. This thing must be faced, not dodged. He must talk to her. If she asked, he must even go to her. She, too, was no coward. Eye to eye and face to face, she would say the last word: she was summoned home to India. And then the final parting? He could say it—he would. They must work for the world—but she in her high sphere, and he in his, more lowly: forever parted, forever united in soul.

And more: this meeting which she had announced was of the highest importance. He must attend it and make it successful. He must show Kautilya that her return to India need not hinder nor in the slightest degree retard the Great Plan.

He descended slowly and went into the drugstore and into the little booth. How curious that he had never thought of evoking this miracle before in his heavy loneliness! Yet it was well. There was, there could be, but this ending; out of time and space he was calling a memory.

"Hello—hello! New York—hello, Richmond—go ahead."

At first the voices came strained, far-off, unnatural, interrupted with hissings and brazen echoes. Then at last, real, clear, and close, a voice came pouring over the telephone in a tumult of tone:

"Matthew, Matthew! I have heard the great good news. I am happy, very, very happy. And, Matthew, the friends are waiting. They want you here at sunrise."

"But, Kautilya—is it necessary that I come? Is it wise? I have been thinking long, Kautilya—"

"Matthew, Matthew, what is wrong? Why would you wait? Are you ill? Has something happened?"

"No, no, Kautilya, I am well—and if you wish me, I am coming—if the friends insist. But I have been wondering if I could not meet them elsewhere, a little later?"

"Later! Matthew—what do you mean?"

"I mean, Kautilya, that I have a duty to perform toward you and the world."

"Matthew, do you mean that you have changed toward me?"

"Changed? No, never. But I see more clearly—as clearly as you yourself saw when you bade me drain the cup."

"What have you feared, Matthew?"

"Nothing but myself. And now that fear is gone—I have drained the cup."

"Yes, dear one. And yet you knew that never and to no one could I give you up?"

"Rather I knew that each must surrender the other."

"To whom, Matthew?"

"To God and the Maharajah of Bwodpur."

A sound that was a sigh and a sob came over the 'phone.

"Oh, God!" it whispered—"the Maharajah of Bwodpur!"

"Listen, Kautilya—I know—all."

"All?" she gasped.

"All! A Maharajah is to be crowned in Bwodpur."

A little cry came over the wire.

"And you have been summoned to the coronation—is it not true?"

"Yes."

"And you must go. Bwodpur—the darker peoples of the world call you. Would it not be easier if—if with this far farewell you left me alone to meet the committee and draft the Plan?"

"No—no—no, Matthew—you do not—you can not understand. You must come—unless—"

"Kautilya, darling, then I will come—of course I will come. I will do anything to make the broad straight path of your duty easier to enter. Only one thing I will not do, neither for Wealth nor Power nor Love; and that is to turn your feet from this broad and terrible way. And so to bid you God-speed—to greet you with farewell and to hold you on my heart once more ere I give you up to God—I come, Kautilya."

Her voice sang over the wires:

"Oh, Matthew—my beautiful One—my Man—come—come!—and at sunrise."

"I am coming."

"And at sunrise?"

"But—impossible."

"Have you read the rescript? By sunrise, the first of May."

"But, dear, it is April 30. It takes a train—"

"Nonsense. There is an airplane fueled, oiled, and waiting for you at the Maywood flying field. Stop for nothing—go now; quickly, quickly, oh, my beloved."

Click. Silence. Slowly he let the receiver fall and turned away. He would not falter, and yet almost—almost he wished the truth otherwise. It would have been hard enough to surrender a loved one who wanted to be free, but to send away one who clung to him to her own hurt called for bitter, bitter courage; and dark and bitter courage stood staunch within him as he took out his watch. Or, perhaps, she too was full of courage and blithe and ready to part? He shivered. It was ten o'clock at night. The field was far away. He glanced up at his room, then paused no longer.

"Taxi—Maywood flying field. And quick!"

"Good Lord, boss, that's forty miles—it'll cost you near—"

"It's worth twenty-five dollars for me to get there in two hours."

The taxi leapt and roared. . . .

The pilot glanced scowling at the brown face of his lone passenger and climbed aloft. Matthew crawled into the tiny cabin. It was entirely closed in with glass save where up a few steps at the back perched the hard-faced pilot. There were seats for three other passengers, but they were empty.

There arose a roar—a roar that for seven hours never ceased, never hesitated, but crooned and sang and thundered. They moved. The lights of Chicago hurried backward. It was midnight. The lights swayed and swam, and suddenly, with a sick feeling and a shiver of instinctive fright, Matthew realized that they were in the air, off the earth, in the sky—flying, flying in the night.

Slowly and in a great circle they wheeled up and south. The earth lay dark beneath in dim and scattered brilliance. They left the great smudge of the crowded city and swept out over flat fields and sluggish rivers. Fires flew in the world beneath and dizzily marked Chicago. Fires flew in the world above and marked high heaven. Between, the gloom lay thick and heavy. It crushed in upon the plane. The plane roared and rose. Matthew could hear the beating and singing of wings rushing by in the night as though a thousand angels of evil were battling against the dawn. He shrank in his strait cabin and stared. His soul was afraid of this daring, heaven-challenging thing. He was but a tossing, disembodied spirit. There was nothing beneath him—nothing. There was nothing above him, nothing; and beside and everywhere to the earth's ends

lay nothing. He was alone in the center of the universe with one hard-faced and silent man.

Then the strange horror drew away. The stars, the "ancient and the everlasting stars," like old and trusted friends, came and stood still above him and looked silently down: the Great Bear, the Virgin, and the Centaur. East curled the Little Bear, Hercules, and Boötes; west swung the Lion, the Twins, and the Little Dog. Vega, Arcturus, and Capella gleamed in faint brilliance.

The plane rocked gently like a cradle. Above the clamor of the engine rose a soft calm. Below, the formless void of earth began to speak with the shades of shadows and flickering, changing lights. That cluster of little jewels that flushed and glowed and dimmed would be a town; that comet below was an express train tearing east; that blackness was a world of farms asleep. In an hour Indianapolis was a golden scintillating glory with shadowy threads of smoke. In another hour Cincinnati—he groped at the map—yes, Cincinnati—lay in pools of light and shade, and the Ohio flowed like ink.

Suddenly the whole thing became symbolic. He was riding Life above the world. He was triumphant over Pain and Death. He remembered death down there where once the head of Jimmie thumped, thumped, on the rails. He heard the wail of that black and beautiful widowed wife. "They didn't show me his face!" He saw Perigua lying still in death with that smile on his lips, and he heard him say, "He didn't have no face!" Then came the slippers, her white and jeweled feet that came down from heaven and opened the gates of hell. Some one touched his shoulder. He knew that touch. It was arrest; arrest and jail. But what did he care? He was flying above the world. He was flying to her.

A soft pale light grew upon the world—a halo, a radiance as of some miraculous virgin birth. Lo! in the east and beneath the glory of the morning star, pale, faintly blushing streamers pierced the dim night. Then over the whole east came a flush. The dawn paused. Mountains loomed, great crags, gashed and broken and crowned with mighty trees. The wind from the mountains shrieked and tore; the plane quivered. A moment it stood still; then it dipped and swerved, swayed and curved, dropped, and shot heavenward like a bird. It pierced the wind-wound mists and rose triumphant above the clouds. The sun

sprayed all the heavens with crimson and gold, and the morning stars sang in the vast silence above the roar, the unending roar of the airplane.

Matthew's spirit lifted itself to heaven. He rode triumphant over the universe. He was the God-man, the Everlasting Power, the eternal and undying Soul. He was above everything—Life, Death, Hate, Love. He spurned the pettiness of earth beneath his feet. He tried to sing again the Song of Emancipation—the Call of God—"Go down, Moses!"—but the roar of the pistons made his strong voice a pulsing silence.

The clouds parted, melted, and ran before the gleaming glory of the coming sun. The earth lay spread like a sailing picture—all pale blue, green, and brown; mauve, white, yellow, and gold. He faintly saw cities and their tentacles of roads, rivers like silver ribbons, railroads that shrieked and puffed in black and silent lines. Hill and valley, hut and home, tower and tree, flung them swift obeisance, and down, down, away down on the flat breast of the world, crawled men—tiny, weak, and helpless men: some men, eyes down, crept stealthily along; others, eyes aloft, waved and ran and disappeared.

Out of the golden dust of morning a city gathered itself. Its outstretched arms of roads moved swiftly, violently apart, embracing the countryside. The smudge of its foul breath darkened the bright morning. The living plane circled and spurned it, roared to its greeting thousands, swooped, whirled to a mighty curve, rose, and swooped again. Matthew's heart fell. He grew sick and suddenly tired with the swift careening of the plane. The sorrows of earth seemed to rise and greet him. He was no longer bird or superman; he was only a helpless falling atom—a deaf and weary man. They circled a bare field and fell sickeningly toward it. They dropped. His heart, his courage, his hopes, dropped too. They swooped again and circled, rose, and swooped, until dizzy and deaf they landed on an almost empty field and taxied lightly and unsteadily to a standstill. The engine ceased, and the roar of utter silence arose.

Matthew was on earth again, and on the earth where all its pettiest annoyances rose up to plague him. A half-dozen white men ran out, eager, curious. They greeted the pilot vociferously. Then they stared. Matthew climbed wearily down and stood dizzy, dirty, and deaf. They whispered, laughed, and



swore, and turning, took the pilot to his steaming bath and breakfast and left Matthew alone.

Matthew stood irresolute, hatless, coatless in the crisp air, clad only in his jersey and overalls. Then he took a deep breath and walked away. In a wayside brook he bathed. He walked three miles to Richmond and boarded a train at six for his home. He found the Jim Crow car, up by the engine, small, crowded, and dirty. The white baggage men were washing up in it, clad in dirty undershirts. The newsboy was disposing two couples of a double seat and piling in his wares, swearing nobly. Matthew found a seat backward by a window. Leaning out, he spied a boy with lunches hurrying up to the white folks' car, and he induced him to pause and bought a piece of fried chicken and some cornbread that tasted delicious. Then he looked out.

The Spring sang in his ears; flowers and leaves, sunshine and shade, young cotton and corn. He could not think. He could not reason. He just sat and saw and felt in a tangled jumble of thoughts and words, feelings and desires, dreams and fears. And above it all lay the high heart of determination.

They rolled and bumped along. He sat seeing nothing and yet acutely conscious of every sound, every movement, every quiver of light, the clamor of hail and farewell, the loud, soft, sweet, and raucous voices. The movement and stopping, the voices and silence, grew to a point so acute that he wanted to cry and sing, walk and rage, scream and dance. He sat tense with half-closed eyes and saw the little old depot dance up from the far horizon, slip near and nearer, and slowly pause with a sighing groan. No one was there. Yes—one old black man who smiled and said:

"Mornin', Matthew, mornin'. How you comin' on?"

But Matthew with a hurried word had stridden on, his satchel in hand, his eyes on the wooded hill beyond. He passed through the village. Few people were astir:

"Hello, Matthew!"

"By God, it's Mat!"

The sounds fell away and died, and his feet were on the path—his feet were on the Path! and the surge of his soul stifled his breath. He saw the wood, the brook, the gate. Beyond was the blur of the dim old cabin looking wider and larger.

## XXX

He saw her afar; standing at the gate there at the end of the long path home, and by the old black tree—her tall and slender form like a swaying willow. She was dressed in eastern style, royal in coloring, with no concession to Europe. As he neared, he sensed the flash of great jewels nestling on her neck and arms; a king's ransom lay between the naked beauty of her breasts; blood rubies weighed down her ears, and about the slim brown gold of her waist ran a girdle such as emperors fight for. Slowly all the wealth of silk, gold, and jewels revealed itself as he came near and hesitated for words; then suddenly he sensed a little bundle on her outstretched arms. He dragged his startled eyes down from her face and saw a child—a naked baby that lay upon her hands like a palpitating bubble of gold, asleep.

He swayed against the tall black tree and stood still.

"Thy son and mine!" she whispered. "Oh, my beloved!"

With strangled throat and streaming eyes, he went down upon his knees before her and kissed the sandals of her feet and sobbed:

"Princess—oh, Princess of the wide, wide world!"

Then he arose and took her gently to his breast and folded his arms about her and looked at her long. Through the soft and high-bred comeliness of her lovely face had pierced the sharpness of suffering, and Life had carved deeper strong, set lines of character. An inner spirit, immutable, eternal, glorious, was shadowed behind the pools of her great eyes. The high haughtiness of her mien was still there, but it lay loose like some unlaced garment, and through it shone the flesh of a new humility, of some half-frightened appeal leaping forth to know and prove and beg a self-forgetting love equal to that which she was offering.

He kissed the tendrils of her hair and saw silver threads lurking there; he kissed her forehead and her eyes and lingered on her lips. He hid his head in the hollow of her neck and then lifted his face to the treetops and strained her bosom to his, until she thrilled and gasped and held the child away from harm.

And the child awoke; naked, it cooed and crowed with joy on her soft arm and threw its golden limbs up to the golden

sun. Matthew shrank a little and trembled to touch it and only whispered:

"Sweetheart! More than wife! Mother of God and my son!" At last fearfully he took it in his hands, as slowly, with twined arms, they began to walk toward the cabin, their long bodies and limbs touching in rhythm. At first she said no word, but always in grave and silent happiness looked up into his face. Then as they walked they began to speak in whispers.

"Kautilya, why were you silent? This changes the world!"

"Matthew, the Seal was on my lips. We were parted for all time except your son was born of me. That was my fateful secret."

"Yet when first the babe leapt beneath your heart, still you wrote no word!"

"Still was the Silence sealed, for had it been a girl child, I must have left both babe and you. Bwodpur needs not a princess, but a King."

"And yet even with this our Love Incarnate, you waited an endless month!"

"Oh, silly darling, I waited for all—all; for his birth, for news to India, for your freedom. Do you not see? There had to be a Maharajah in Bwodpur of the blood royal; else brown reaction and white intrigue had made it a footstool of England. If I had not borne your son, I must have gone to prostitute my body to a stranger or lose Bwodpur and Sindrabad; India; and all the Darker World. Oh, Matthew—Matthew, I know the tortures of the damned!"

"And without me and alone you went down into the Valley of the Shadow."

"I arose from the dead. I ascended into heaven with the angel of your child at my breast."

"And now Eternal Life makes us One forever."

"Immortal Mission of the Son of Man."

"And its name?" he asked.

"'Madhu,' of course; which is 'Matthew' in our softer tongue."

Crimson climbing roses, bursting with radiant bloom, almost covered the black logs of wide twin cabins, one rising higher than the other; the darkness of the low and vine-draped hall between caught and reflected the leaping flames of the kitchen within and beyond. Above and behind the roofs, rose a new

round tower and a high hedge; the fields were green and white with cotton and corn; the tall trees were softly singing.

Old stone steps worn to ancient hollows led up to the hall and on them loomed slowly Matthew's mother, straight, immense, white-haired, and darkly brown. She took the baby in one great arm, infinite with tenderness, while the child shivered with delight. She kissed Matthew once and then said slowly with a voice that sternly held back its tears:

"And now, son, we've givine to make dis little man an bones' chile.—Preacher!"

A short black man appeared in the door and paused. He looked like incarnate Age; a dish of shining water lay in one hand and a worn book in the other. He was clad in rusty black with snowy linen, and his face was rough and hewn in angry lineaments around the deep and sunken islands of his eyes.

The preacher read in the worn book from the seventh chapter of Revelation:

"After these things I saw four Angels standing on the four corners of the earth"—stumbling over the mighty words with strange accent and pronunciation—"and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!"

Then in curious short staccato phrases, with pauses in between, he lined out a hymn. His voice was harsh and strong, and his breath whistled; but the voice of the old mother rose clear and singularly sweet an octave above, while at last the baritone of Matthew and the deep contralto of Kautilya joined to make music under the trees:

"Shall I—be car—  
ried to—oo—the skies  
on flow-ry be-eds  
of ease!"

Thus in the morning they were married, looking at neither mother nor son, preacher nor shining morning, but deep into each other's hungry eyes. The voice of the child rose in shrill sweet obbligato and drowned here and again the rolling periods:

"—you, Kautilya, take this man . . . love, honor and obey—"  
"Yes."

"—Towns, take this woman . . . until death do you part?"  
 "Yes—yes."

"—God hath joined together; let no man put asunder!"

Then the ancient woman stiffened, closed her eyes, and chanted to her God:

"Jesus, take this child. Make him a man! Make him a man, Lord Jesus—a leader of his people and a lover of his God!

"Gin him a high heart, God, a strong arm and an under-standin' mind. Breathe the holy sperrit on his lips and fill his soul with lovin' kindness. Set his feet on the beautiful mountings of Good Tidings and let my heart sing Hallelujah to the Lamb when he brings my lost and stolen people home to heaven; home to you, my little Jesus and my God!"

She paused abruptly, stiffened, and with rapt face whispered the first words of the old slave song of world revolution:

"I am seekin' for a City—for a City into de Kingdom!"

Then with closed and streaming eyes, she danced with slow and stately step before the Lord. Her voice lifted higher and higher, outstripping her upstretched arms, shrilled the strophe, while the antistrophe rolled in the thick throat of the preacher:

The Woman: "Lord, I don't feel no-ways tired—"

The Man: "*Children!* Fight Christ's fury, Halleluiah!"

The Woman: "*I'm*—a gonta shout glory when this world's on fire!"

The Man: "*Children!* Shout God's glory, Halleluia!"

There fell a silence, and then out of the gloom of the wood moved a pageant. A score of men clothed in white with shining swords walked slowly forward a space, and from their midst came three old men: one black and shaven and magnificent in raiment; one yellow and turbaned, with a white beard that swept his burning flesh; and the last naked save for a scarf about his loins. They carried dishes of rice and sweetmeats, and they chanted as they came.

One voice said, solemn and low:

"Oh, thou that playest on the flute, standing by the water-ghats on the road to Brindaban."

A second voice, still lower, sang:

"Oh, flower of eastern silence, walking in the path of stars, divine, beautiful, whom nothing human makes unclean: bring

sunrise, noon and golden night and wordless intercession before the wordless God."

And a third voice rose shrill and clear:

"Oh, Allah, the compassionate, the merciful! who sends his blessing on the Prophet, Our Lord, and on his family and companions and on all to whom he grants salvation."

They gave rice to Matthew and Kautilya, and sweetmeats, and all blessed them as they knelt. Then the Brahmin took the baby from his grandmother and wound a silken turban on its little protesting head—a turban with that mighty ruby that looked like frozen blood. Swaying the babe up and down and east and west, he placed it gently upon Kautilya's outstretched arms. It lay there, a thrill of delight; its little feet, curled petals; its mouth a kiss; its hands like waving prayers. Slowly Kautilya stepped forward and turned her face eastward. She raised her son toward heaven and cried:

"Brahma, Vishnu, and Sival Lords of Sky and Light and Love! Receive from me, daughter of my fathers back to the hundredth name, his Majesty, Madhu Chandragupta Singh, by the will of God, Maharajah of Bwodpur and Maharajah-dhirajah of Sindrabad."

Then from the forest, with faint and silver applause of trumpets:

"King of the Snows of Gaurisankar!"

"Protector of Ganga the Holy!"

"Incarnate Son of the Buddha!"

"Grand Mughal of Utter India!"  
 "Messenger and Messiah to all the Darker Worlds!"

### *Envoy*

*The tale is done and night is come. Now may all the sprites who, with curled wing and starry eyes, have clustered around my hands and helped me weave this story, lift with delft delicacy from out the crevice where it lies my heavy flesh of fact, that rich and colored gossamer of dream which the Queen of Faërie lent to me for a season. Pleat it to a shining bundle and return it, sweet elves, beneath the moon, to her Marve Majesty with my low and fond obeisance. Beg her, sometime, somewhere, of her abundant leisure, to tell to us hard humans: Which is really Truth—Fact or Fancy? the Dream of the Spirit or the Pain of the Bone?*