

fell a long robe heavily fringed, and over it a mantle clasped on the breast with precious stones. These vestments were carved exquisitely with delicate patterns to represent embroidery. On his neck hung a chain, and on his wrist a bracelet. Ebal had caught the noble and determined expression of the great king; while he adored the god, it was as an equal; no servility or fear could dwell in that face with its hawk-nose and its fierce calm eye. El-gebel had grown his beard since the raid upon Tarsus had succeeded, and that upon Krasota failed; for she told him that a beard added dignity to a great king, and that all semblance to — to anything unpleasant — might be avoided by the use of a device brought down from heaven by a god some years previously, an implement known in Tarsus as a comb.

The king congratulated Ebal on the wonder he had wrought upon the rock; then, turning to Krasota, he said: "You too have well made good your word. It is but eight years since I conquered Tarsus." "O King," she answered, "live for ever! But you did not conquer Tarsus; Tarsus conquered you. Civilization has overflowed at last the virgin barrier of the Mountains of the Bull. See yonder!" she cried, with outstretched finger and raised voice, "beyond your city that you have raised to splendor from a heap of mud tufts, that you have embowered in oak and poplar, willow and mulberry, that you have filled with the song of nightingale and thrush, jeweled with crested hoopoe and rainbow-lovely woodpecker, while your servants, the agile swifts, clamour shrill praise of you in every sky, beyond this paradise of ours, look westward! There see the desolation of the desert, see the salt marshes, fetid and poisonous, see the dreary expanse of the vast Lycaonian plain, sweeping treeless and barren, solitary as death itself, nay, see beyond it — what are those jagged and abrupt cliffs of fire-scarred mountains, under the purple velvet of their clouds, pregnant with storm? There lies the road to Europe, that continent vast almost as our own, smothered in hideous forests, where roam more hideous savages than they. There lies our path of conquest; we are the outpost of Asia, of civilization and of learning, of liberty in thought, and of mastery in action; we are the tip of the spear that the great God that is above all the gods extends towards the setting sun. I have spoken. O King, live for ever!"

The king El-gebel, surnamed The Great and Terrible, put his hands upon his eyes; for he was weeping. Silently he passed away from that stern prophetess, who dwelt in the body of a painted doll wrapped round in scarlet tissue.

She and the young sculptor followed the king at a great distance. He did not halt at the village; he did not seem to see the stallion that two grooms held in waiting; he pressed on through the long lanes, and shut himself up into his palace.

V.

Ebal remained with Krasota; they dined together in the open beneath the walnuts.

They sat in silence. Presently the rising moon touched the summit of the western precipice with her light; next, through a gap, a thin ray fell upon the river as it spouted from the rock, kindling it to a luminous and unearthly blue.

Krasota murmured under her breath: "Half a woman made with half a god." Ebal still waited. "I am going to talk to you," she said at last, "because you will understand. You are an artist, and you have not made love to me." "I am an artist, and that was my way of making love to you," he retorted with sly vigor, ready for jest or earnest. "Surely," she smiled, pleased with the

boy's quickness, "and you have won me. Therefore I can talk to you as if we were twins at the breast of the Great Mother Goddess. You know why I have never given myself to any man, why I shall never give myself to you?" "I know," he said; "I guessed it the first day I came here. But that is why I want you so much." "Then you will understand, adorable my brother! Listen! There are two kinds of people, mainly, in this world. There is the herd-mind, the goat-folk, as I should say to El-gebel if I wished to tease him, who live the easy middle life, birth, life, and death through generations stagnant as the marshes beyond Cybistra. No hope, no light, on any path of theirs! Then there are people like you and me, the eagle-people. Look at what I have done! I have made a paradise of this desert; I have raised this people from a life lower than the beasts to freedom, prosperity, and happiness; I have brought even Art herself beyond the Mountains of the Bull; I have turned the cunning savage who murdered his father and his brothers as I would shake the fruit from this branch that hangs above us into the god-like man you saw to-day, who wept because he knew he could not live to spread light and freedom over the gloomy forests of Europe; and the very same thing in me that makes me want to do that, that has taken my life in its grip, and forced me to study sayings of the wise men of every country, to explore nature, to slay myself (in a word) on the altar of humanity, that same thing is the impulse that makes me — what I am — for which you love me, and for which any one of these herd-men would take up stones and stone me! This beats my wits out on its anvil. Do you know, I find myself saying: Why did you not yield to El-gebel, rule him and his people as a courtizan would have done, lived idle and luxurious? Was it because of your aspiration to the salvation of humanity, or because of your mad lust of degradation unfathomable and unique? I gained both ends. Half a woman made with half a god!"

Ebal rejoined at once: "Whole woman in that at least! You see that the two aims have one source; then if one be divine, so must the other be! Hear also this word of a great philosopher whom I worshipped in Egypt, when I went to study art: 'That which is above is like that which is below, and that which is below is like that which is above, for the performance of the miracles of the One Substance.' Now that which you detest and desire is really in its nature identical with the other; its root is in discontent with the pettiness of things. So far as we are gods, we are children; and children cry for the moon." She smiled to recognize her own doctrine thrown back at her in the very spot where she had uttered it eight years before. He went on, not noticing. "To your savage it seems monstrous that human sacrifice should be abolished; we madmen want that one strange, blasphemous, impossible thing! So go thy way rejoicing!" She shook her head. "I might," she said, "but my fate is even now upon me. I have desired the impossible so much that having done all that my life can do, I begin to lust for the uncharted and illimitable realms of death. 'I would I had been the first that took her death out from between wet hoofs and reddened teeth, splashed horns, fierce fetlocks of the brother bull!' Ai! Ai!"

"I know," replied Ebal; "I hate my rocks not because they resist my hand, for that is battle, which I love, but because of their multitude, the infinitude of shapeless things that I must leave so. Just so the king felt this day also. But I want to dash myself to pieces from a precipice, to take my death from the enemy I have loved and fought so hard. And in my loves I seek