

some, failure had left upon the rocks, and a few lay in their graves.

But as the evening wore on, I began to wish that I had left out the wines, for the men began to drop an occasional oath, though I had let them know during the summer that Graeme was not the man he had been. But Graeme smoked and talked and heeded not, till Rattray swore by that name most sacred of all ever borne by man. Then Graeme opened upon him in a cool, slow way:

"What an awful fool a man is, to damn things as you do, Rat. Things are not damned. It is men who are; and that is too bad to be talked much about. But when a man flings out of his foul mouth the name of Jesus Christ"—here he lowered his voice—"it's a shame—it's more, it's a crime."

There was dead silence, then Rattray replied:

"I suppose you're right enough, it is bad form; but crime is rather strong, I think."

"Not if you consider who it is," said Graeme with emphasis.

"Oh, come now," broke in Beetles. "Religion is all right, is a good thing, and I believe a necessary thing for the race, but no one takes seriously any longer the Christ myth."

"What about your mother, Beetles?" put in Wig Martin.

Beetles consigned him to the pit and was silent, for his father was an Episcopal clergyman, and his mother a saintly woman.

"I fooled with that for some time, Beetles, but it won't do. You can't build a religion that will take the devil out of a man on a myth. That won't do the trick. I don't want to argue about it, but I am quite convinced.