

cheering us all up, encouraging the native Christians—why, it is splendid to know such men—such heroes ! ”

She clasped her hands tightly together, a fine glow lighting up her face, nor did she look in the very least as though she had been living on half-rations for a week.

“ Mary, don’t look so happy—for God’s sake, don’t.” Anna Martheu turned a sickly grey. “ The ammunition is running short, dear, the cartridges are nearly finished. David has just confessed as much to me, so pray—pray—that the landing party from the squadron get here soon, for if they delay much longer they will be too late, and we shall be butchered—murdered in cold blood ! ”

Anna shuddered as she spoke, but Mary put her two hands on the bride’s shaking shoulders and whispered passionately into her friend’s ear.

“ I cannot help looking happy, for I’m so glad I came here—even if the end is close at hand. Oh, Anna—don’t you understand ? ”

She broke off suddenly in her speech, but Anna Martheu nodded her head comprehendingly, the head that was so sleek and brown—such a soft, dear little head.

“ Why, Mary, of course I guess. I—I felt quite certain two days ago ; but it seems so terribly sad that you, who have never fallen in love before, should lose your heart quite suddenly—just when death stares one in the face ; but I suppose it was intended by some High Power that you and Robert Waring should meet—planned by God.”

“ I wonder.” A vague look came into Mary Fielder’s eyes, then she bent her young body over the brown mud wall. “ Does he love me—oh, does he love me ? I’d give so much to know—so very much.”