

of tails ; in fact, a tail which to her tail-wearied eyes was of inconceivable smallness. It was a hippopotamus. In her turn she was charmed, was won upon the spot. What happiness might be hoped for in a life with a male creature having so gigantic a body, and such an infinitesimally little tail ! What terminal transformation, what caudal beauty, might not be looked for in the progeny of such a father ! Her resolution was taken on the instant. That hippopotamus should marry her. But the accomplishment of her design proved to be far from easy. The hippopotamus came up out of the water, and she supposed that he would run directly to her. To her surprise he took no notice of her, but splashed along the sedgy margin of the great pool, thrusting his huge snout into the mud and stirring up the bottom until he and the water were alike befouled. She threw herself in his way and trod the shore with dainty, mincing steps, her tail undulating after her in graceful folds. To her disgust, he seemed unconscious of her presence. He lifted his head, indeed, and gave her a lazy look of indifference, but turned immediately again to his loafing through the mud and water. The hippopotamus is not a lively animal, not of an inquiring mind, almost without curiosity, and, I am grieved to say, utterly without sentiment. What was to be done ? She could not seize and marry him out of hand ; or, if she could have done so, she would have been no nearer her end. If she had been able to seize that vast enchanting, and exquisitely almost-tailless body, and carry it off with her to her bower, of what use to her would have been the indifferent mass of flesh ? For strong-minded as a female may be, and even strong bodied, the unalterable decrees of nature have placed a limit to the efficiency of her will, although not to that of her wiles. Our forcasting and self-sacrificing ancestress might perhaps have stood guard over her male favourite, keeping him well fed and contented within her solitary seraglio ; but she would have been thereby no nearer to her hopes of dandling in her arms a newly-found and almost tailless progeny.

She grasped the situation at a glance, and mastered it after a moment's reflection. With the readiness of her sex in such matters, she instantly formed her resolution. Her female instinct taught her that, although a hippopotamus might be