

Father Gregory hurried back to the light of his room and anxiously turned the pages over. To his great distress he found that it was already too late for him to catch the night train to Cairo, and that if he took the day express the following morning he would arrive in the capital too late to proceed to Port Said the same evening. He was therefore obliged to content himself with the determination to go down to Cairo by the *train de luxe* the following evening, although it would be Christmas Eve, and to travel on to Port Said by the morning express. "That means," he muttered, "I can't get there until the day after to-morrow—Christmas Day. It may be too late—it may be too late!"

She had written her letter from a well-known hotel in Cairo. He would have time between the trains to call there and make inquiries, and at Port Said she would no doubt stay at one of the larger hotels. He realized that his chances of missing her were great, but not greater than those of finding her, if she had not already taken the fatal step. It was a long journey for him to take with so uncertain an object; but the spirit of activity was upon him, and for the time being the serenity of his life in the Theban desert was disjointed beyond immediate repair.

His plans being fixed, he went across to the common room, where presently the evening meal was served; but when he bent his head to ask a silent blessing upon it, the astonishment of the men assembled around the long table would have been great could they have known that there went up from his anxious mind no thanksgiving for his daily bread, but only a prayer for the safety of the soul of a daughter of sin in Port Said.