

gled thicket, or from grassy hollow. They flung into the air, as might a fountain fling its spray, a shower of living music. Twittering, piping, trilling, warbling, each softly ruffling throat at fullest strain, each little eye half closed in ecstasy, they gave in praise all they had to give, then sank down in silent adoration. For moving toward us from the great highway there came a group of men. One of them, at least, walked clumsily, for he was followed by a great cloud of dust; and one shambled as he came, as might a weary, yoke-worn ox. Grave men they were, some even stern and fierce of eye, with roughened hair and beards untrimmed, and hands all swart and scarred and stained with roughest labor; while all the tones of burnished copper glowed in the hair and beard of one, and the red spark that gleamed in his quick, small eye was but partly veiled by his drooping lids.

"So far I noted. Then—ah, then the group had paused, and from the center there came forth, as from a prickly protecting outer shell the white, sweet-kerneled