

Oriental like Clara the words were mere foolishness—'the service and the obedience of her lover.'

A week later the same group were gathered together again in that little room. Francesca was in travelling costume, and her boxes were in the narrow passage outside. Emanuel's travelling costume remained the same as he had always worn, and his luggage consisted of a bag in which were his carving tools and a few necessities.

'Everything is ready, Francesca?' asked Harold. 'Can I do nothing for you?'

'Nothing more, Harold, thank you. We are going right through to Beirut—from there I will write to you—and to Damascus next. There I will write again. After that we are going to join some Arab tribe and live awhile in the Desert.'

'Have you seen your mother?'

'Yes, she is hard and bitter. She cannot forgive me though she tried to say kind things. I have deserted her—and the Cause—oh! the Cause!' She shuddered. 'She has lost her friends with her fortune. Except for Melkah, she is alone. Go and see her often, Harold. She will be very lonely.'

'And you—you are happy, Francesca?'

'I am happier than I have ever been in all my life before. There is nothing in the world to live for, but the life of nature and God's law. I have my father to study and to obey. It is such happiness as I never imagined. And all the world has grown so real—and I am in it, not outside it. The Passing Show has become part of the Eternal Drama in which I, too, play my humble part. I have my father and my cousins. I am no longer without kith and kin.'

'Will you not acknowledge your lover as well?' he whispered.

'Yes—I have—you. What more can I want, or look to have? Let me, like Anthony, have the Common Lot! What better can there be than the Lot intended by the Lord for all?'

Harold started. Who had ever before heard from Francesca's lips a single word in the spirit of Faith?

'The Common Lot,' said the Earl, who was with them. 'I chose it and would not give it up, though the Countess has again been fined twenty shillings and costs—for the usual offence. The Common Lot is best.'

'We leave you. Emanuel looked about him. 'I take my