

point. When you have closed a book that you have been reading, do you know what a bore it is to begin a new story? Well, I felt that the book of the romance of Madeline and Paolo had come to a tedious end, and life was a blank to me. I could not think what to do next. For some reason my mind did not leap forward to a new adventure as it used to do. I was lonely, a little out of conceit with myself, and very down on my luck; I felt that I needed something, and I thought it might be that I wanted a father on whose shoulder I could go and cry. But I hadn't got a father, and so I thought of you. Then, of course, you went and spoilt it all by telling me that it was not you I wanted but Christ. For a person like me, it was like offering a hungry beggar a lemon soufflé instead of a good bowl of Irish stew. So our interview was brief, and I came back to the boat in time to refuse my dinner and go early to bed.

"Paolo had spent his time, meanwhile, in obtaining the services of a steam-tug to pull us downstream and so shorten the boredom of our Nile trip, and the result is that we are already in Cairo, and he has decided to sail for Italy at once. Out of politeness (for he is always a perfect little gentleman) he has asked me to come as far as Rome with him, after which, he regrets, pressing affairs will take him away for some months. But I shall go no further than Port Said, and shall there contrive to give him the slip as the boat sails. You may ask what I then intend to do. Candidly, I don't know. I find it so difficult to arouse in myself any interest in plans for future wanderings over the face of the globe. I am oppressed by the feeling that the world is a place of badly concealed misery, and that one has but to probe below the surface to find the rottenness and corruption of it all. This has become quite an obsession with me; and I so fear to meet with this