

the locusts have eaten, and I've proved her bane—her undoing ; and yet it was worth while our meeting, for otherwise we should neither of us ever have known what love means—real warm, passionate love. She would have been a meek wife to Krillet till the old man died, and I—oh, I should have been content with my pretty Joan, never having met the real thing—the great thing.”

He smote his pony lightly on the neck with his bare hand, his lips set in a somewhat ironical smile.

“G-r-r—you beast you—get along—move a bit faster ; let us leave the plains behind us, old horse—we'll try and forget the plains. I'll to the East ; I've always wanted to visit the East—not the beaten track, though—the tourist round ; let me strike out my own path, and what does it matter where it leads, or how or when I come to the journey's end ? For what does anything on earth matter now ? I'm a rudderless boat, so let me drift out to sea ; and there's one way a man can always drift, and that's to hell, and it doesn't take much practice either.”

He stood up in his stirrups, his eyes burning.

“I'll have no more to do with women, but I'll drown my sorrow somewhere ; a man can always drink his grief to sleep—drug his brain, and forget—even a woman like Deborah Krillet—if he takes the trouble—yes, forget even the Shulamite herself !”

He rode away, a moving speck crossing desolate plains, and he left desolation behind him in the shape of that woman, pale and thin, who stood just where he had parted from her a full hour ago—standing on the stoep, shading her sad eyes from the glare of the pitiless sun ; a woman who was as rigid as if she had been carved out of stone—a woman whose house had been left unto her desolate.