

that had furtively followed him throughout their later wanderings with a look of secret yearning; those eyes that had gazed upon him in pity throughout his suffering and that he now surprised filled with an ineffable tenderness. And in his look she read the meaning of his words; knew that in some way the barrier had been broken down. He seized her unresisting hand, and at the touch his speech found utterance.

"Renée, my beloved," he whispered gently, "I am free at last to speak and show you all that is in my heart: the hopes, the yearnings, the striving for better things, the struggle against unworthy deeds, and, best and greatest of all, invading and surrounding aught else, filling my heart and brain and life — my love for you. To tell you of its beginning, kindled by the sight of your beauty, the touch of your trembling hand, of its growth and persistence despite my efforts to forget when I found I could not proceed further without dishonor. How greatly it was intensified when I discovered you in this wild land, alone, helpless, and in danger; when I saw your courage and strength mount to meet occasion; when I beheld you, a gentle ministering spirit, and felt the sweet comfort of your tender pitying service. To tell you all will take a lifetime. Ah! *mia cara*, let me hear from your lips