

a practical man of affairs, and his uncle was to a large extent a visionary and dreamer; but both were gifted with imagination and sympathy, and both displayed wide interests in many and divergent subjects. Robin was more typically English than his uncle, and had the faults and the virtues of the national character more clearly defined in his nature; but his sobriety and high sense of honour, his bravery and tough endurance, had a sympathetic counterpart in his uncle's purity of mind and the courage of his convictions. There was thus a close attachment between them, which made the reception of this letter a matter of warm and pleasurable interest.

Amongst the letters there was one which bore an Egyptian stamp and the postmark of Cairo; and this he had placed at the bottom of the packet as being, on the face of it, the least interesting. But his close attention was at once secured when, on opening it, he saw the signature of Madeline Rorke. He drew the candle nearer to him, bent down over the sheets, and did not raise his head again until he had twice read through them.

"You will perhaps not be surprised to hear from me," the letter ran, "for I think you will have expected some better explanation of my intrusion upon you last week than I was able to give you at the time. As I told you, I had wished to ride over, partly because I wanted to make the near acquaintance of one who had interested me so much from afar, but that wish was changed into a resolve because I was feeling very unhappy and I thought that I should burst unless I talked to somebody. Perhaps I should have explained to you that Paolo and I were already out of sympathy with one another, and that our once happy relationship was drifting rapidly to its inevitable conclusion; but an absurd sort of pride kept me silent on that all-important

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