

dark as deep water, but bright as stars. Everything about her was bright, and yet of a brightness that was as tender as dimness, — as tender as the half-lights of dusk and dawn. Though her eyes and hair were so dark that they often looked black, her skin was of a wonderful fairness. About her white neck gleamed a thin gold chain, holding just below the tender hollow of her throat a small gold cross set with pearls which Francis had given her on a birthday several years ago.

“Have you dropped from the tree-tops?” she asked.

Young Drurie did not answer immediately. He stood with his arms hanging at his sides, his forehead puckered ever so slightly, smiling, but with cross-lights of puzzled inquiry in his blue eyes.

“From the tree-tops, if you like — from thousands and thousands of miles of tree-tops — but it was harder than dropping, as Jumper, here, could tell you,” he said. “But what tricks are you up to, Isobel?” he asked anxiously. “Why don’t you laugh at me? Why don’t you kiss me? Why don’t you make fun of my shabby coat and brick-red face? You are not natural, Isobel. I heard you singing a long time ago — and I sent a voice back to you. And you heard it, I think. Then why did you turn around and run straight away from me? That was not kind, Isobel.”