

THE HERMIT

like a heaving bosom, and, as he looked on it, the earth seemed also to heave beneath him. But presently he remembered how Christ had walked the waves, and how even Saint Mary of Egypt, a great sinner, had crossed the waters of Jordan dry-shod to receive the Sacrament from the Abbot Zosimus; and then the Hermit's heart grew still, and he sang as he went down the mountain: "The sea shall praise Thee, O Lord."

All day he kept seeing it and then losing it; but toward night he came to a cleft of the hills, and lay down in a pine-wood to sleep. He had now been six days gone, and once and again he thought anxiously of his herbs; but he said to himself: "What though my garden perish, if I see a holy man face to face and praise God in his company?" So he was never long cast down.

Before daylight he was afoot under the stars; and leaving the wood where he had slept, began climbing the face of a tall cliff, where he had to clutch the jutting ledges with his hands, and with every step he gained, a rock seemed thrust forth to hurl him back. So, footsore and bleeding, he reached a high stony plain as the sun dropped to the sea; and in the red light he saw a hollow rock, and the Saint sitting in the hollow.

The Hermit fell on his knees, praising God; then he rose and ran across the plain to the rock. As he drew near he saw that the Saint was a very old man, clad in goat-skin, with a long white beard. He sat motionless, his hands