

side, and I observed the blood from each body trickling into a furrow of sloping ground, where, after mingling, the two streams ran on as one. It was their second union. I managed to catch his last words, and remember them particularly because he had the good sense to mention us. They were something like this:

"I have learnt the lesson now. The raindrops fall upon the ground and, when their work is accomplished, pass upward as vapour. In the same way we come, and work, and go. The truth is in us, but we don't like to recognize it, and are afraid of confessing our knowledge. We shrink even from asking ourselves whether we have done the work when the time comes to be changed. It is all clear to me now. Space is so vast that a body may speed through its depths for ever without visiting this system more than once; and in all parts are mighty worlds waiting to be occupied by men and women as emigrants, by animals, birds, fishes, insects, trees, and plants; millions of worlds that must be peopled and made beautiful and finished one by one. And set about in various parts of space are little worlds, used as nurseries where the raindrops fall, where men and women are produced, where animals and insects are tested, and plants are tried. This world is one of the trying-grounds; that is why it is so small; it is nothing more than a nursery. The best of us are transplanted, the worthless are thrown away. The good are taken into one of the royal worlds, and the bad thrown upon some rubbish heap. And when we have grown in some big world, we may be moved to one still higher. My body must be changed to suit the new world, but I shall be always Ernest Southcombe, even if I reach the land of the best men and women, the most faithful horses and dogs, the fairest birds and insects, the loveliest trees and plants."

"If that sounds to us nonsense," concluded the Flanders raindrop, "we must remember the poor fellow was dying, and didn't know what he was talking about."

"Is Barnabas alive?" asked the drop upon the altar.

"He was captured, and crucified to make sport for drunken soldiers."

The composite cloud passed on, to dissolve before morning, and the rain ceased. There was no silence upon