

CHAPTER I

I

Oliver Brand, the new member for Croydon, sat in his study, looking out of the window over the top of his typewriter.

His house stood facing northwards at the extreme end of a spur of the Surrey Hills, now cut and tunnelled out of all recognition; only to a Communist the view was an inspiring one. Immediately below the wide windows, the embanked ground fell away rapidly for perhaps a hundred feet, ending in a high wall, and beyond that the world and works of men were triumphant as far as eye could see. Two vast tracks like streaked racecourses, each not less than a quarter of a mile in width, and sunk twenty feet below the surface of the ground, swept up to a meeting a mile ahead at the huge junction. Of those, that on his left was the First Trunk road to Brighton, inscribed in capital letters in the Railroad Guide, that to the right the Second Trunk to the Tunbridge and Hastings district. Each was divided lengthways by a cement wall, on one side of which, on steel rails, ran the electric trams, and on the other lay the motor track itself again divided into three, on which ran, first the Government coaches at a speed of one hundred and fifty miles an hour, second the private motors at not more than sixty, third the cheap Government line at thirty, with stations every five miles. This was further bordered by a road confined to pedestrians, cyclists, and ordinary cars on which no vehicle was allowed to move at more than twelve miles an hour.

Beyond these great tracks lay an immense plain of house roofs, with short towers here and there marking public buildings, from the Caterham district on the left to Croydon in front, all clear and bright

in smokeless air; and far away to the west and north showed the low suburban hills against the April sky.

There was surprisingly little sound, considering the pressure of the population; and, with the exception of the buzz of the steel rails as a train fled north or south, and the occasional sweet chord of the great motors as they neared or left the junction, there was little to be heard in this study except a smooth, soothing murmur that filled the air like the murmur of bees in a garden.

Oliver loved every hint of human life—all busy sights and sounds—and was listening now, smiling faintly to himself as he stared out into the clear air. Then he set his lips, laid his fingers on the keys once more, and went on speech-constructing.

He was very fortunate in the situation of his house. It stood in an angle of one of those huge spiderwebs with which the country was covered, and for his purposes was all that he could expect. It was close enough to London to be extremely cheap, for all wealthy persons had retired at least a hundred miles from the throbbing heart of England; and yet it was as quiet as he could wish. He was within ten minutes of Westminster on the one side and twenty minutes of the sea on the other, and his constituency lay before him like a raised map. Further, since the great London termini were but ten minutes away, there were at his disposal the First Trunk lines to every big town in England. For a politician of no great means, who was asked to speak at Edinburgh on one evening and in Marseilles on the next, he was as well placed as any man in Europe.

He was a pleasant-looking man, not much over thirty years old; black wire-haired, clean-shaven, thin, virile, magnetic, blue-eyed and white-skinned; and he appeared this day extremely content with himself and the world. His lips moved slightly as he worked, his eyes enlarged and diminished with excitement, and more than once he paused and stared out again, smiling and flushed.

Then a door opened; a middle-aged man came nervously in with a bundle of papers, laid them down on the table without a word, and turned to go out. Oliver lifted his hand for attention, snapped a lever, and spoke.

“Well, Mr. Phillips?” he said.

“There is news from the East, sir,” said the secretary.

Oliver shot a glance sideways and laid his hand on the bundle.

“Any complete message?” he asked.

“No, sir; it is interrupted again. Mr. Felsenburgh’s name is mentioned.”

Oliver did not seem to hear; he lifted the flimsy printed sheets with a sudden movement and began turning them.

“The fourth from the top, Mr. Brand,” said the secretary.

Oliver jerked his head impatiently, and the other went out as if at a signal.

The fourth sheet from the top, printed in red on green, seemed to absorb Oliver’s attention altogether, for he read it through two or three times, leaning back motionless in his chair. Then he sighed and stared again through the window.

Then once more the door opened, and a tall girl came in.

“Well, my dear?” she observed.

Oliver shook his head, with compressed lips.

“Nothing definite,” he said. “Even less than usual. Listen.”

He took up the green sheet and began to read aloud as the girl sat down in a window seat on his left.

She was a very charming-looking creature, tall and slender, with serious, ardent grey eyes, firm red lips, and a beautiful carriage of head and shoulders. She had walked slowly across the room as Oliver took up the paper, and now sat back in her brown dress in a very graceful and stately attitude. She seemed to listen with a deliberate kind of patience; but her eyes flickered with interest.

“Irkutsk—April fourteen—Yesterday—as—usual—But—rumoured—defection—from—Sufi—party—Troops—continue—

gathering—Felsenburgh—addressed—Buddhist—crowd—Attempt—on—Llama—last—Friday—work—of—Anarchists—Felsenburgh—leaving—for—Moscow—as —arranged—he. . . .’ There—that is absolutely all,” ended Oliver dispiritedly. “It’s interrupted as usual.”

The girl began to swing a foot.

“I don’t understand in the least,” she said. “Who is Felsenburgh, after all?”

“My dear child, that is what all the world is asking. Nothing is known except that he was included in the American deputation at the last moment. The *Herald* published his life last week; but it has been contradicted. It is certain that he is quite a young man, and that he has been quite obscure until now.”

“Well, he is not obscure now,” observed the girl.

“I know; it seems as if he were running the whole thing. One never hears a word of the others. It’s lucky he’s on the right side.”

“And what do you think?”

Oliver turned vacant eyes again out of the window.

“I think it is touch and go,” he said. “The only remarkable thing is that here hardly anybody seems to realise it. It’s too big for the imagination, I suppose. There is no doubt that the East has been preparing for a descent on Europe for these last five years. They have only been checked by America; and this is one last attempt to stop them. But why Felsenburgh should come to the front—” he broke off. “He must be a good linguist, at any rate. This is at least the fifth crowd he has addressed; perhaps he is just the American interpreter. Christ! I wonder who he is.”

“Has he any other name?”

“Julian, I believe. One message said so.”

“How did this come through?”

Oliver shook his head.

“Private enterprise,” he said. “The European agencies have stopped work. Every telegraph station is guarded night and day. There are lines

of volors strung out on every frontier. The Empire means to settle this business without us.”

“And if it goes wrong?”

“My dear Mabel—if hell breaks loose—” he threw out his hands deprecatingly.

“And what is the Government doing?”

“Working night and day; so is the rest of Europe. It’ll be Armageddon with a vengeance if it comes to war.”

“What chance do you see?”

“I see two chances,” said Oliver slowly: “one, that they may be afraid of America, and may hold their hands from sheer fear; the other that they may be induced to hold their hands from charity; if only they can be made to understand that co-operation is the one hope of the world. But those damned religions of theirs—”

The girl sighed and looked out again on to the wide plain of house roofs below the window.

The situation was indeed as serious as it could be. That huge Empire, consisting of a federalism of States under the Son of Heaven (made possible by the merging of the Japanese and Chinese dynasties and the fall of Russia), had been consolidating its forces and learning its own power during the last thirty-five years, ever since, in fact, it had laid its lean yellow hands upon Australia and India. While the rest of the world had learned the folly of war, ever since the fall of the Russian republic under the combined attack of the yellow races, the last had grasped its possibilities. It seemed now as if the civilisation of the last century was to be swept back once more into chaos. It was not that the mob of the East cared very greatly; it was their rulers who had begun to stretch themselves after an almost eternal lethargy, and it was hard to imagine how they could be checked at this point. There was a touch of grimness too in the rumour that religious fanaticism was behind the movement, and that the patient East proposed at last to proselytise by the modern equivalents of fire and sword those who had laid aside for the most part all religious beliefs except that in Humanity. To

Oliver, it was simply maddening. As he looked from his window and saw that vast limit of London laid peaceably before him, as his imagination ran out over Europe and saw everywhere that steady triumph of common sense and fact over the wild fairy-stories of Christianity, it seemed intolerable that there should be even a possibility that all this should be swept back again into the barbarous turmoil of sects and dogmas; for no less than this would be the result if the East laid hands on Europe. Even Catholicism would revive, he told himself, that strange faith that had blazed so often as persecution had been dashed to quench it; and, of all forms of faith, to Oliver's mind Catholicism was the most grotesque and enslaving. And the prospect of all this honestly troubled him, far more than the thought of the physical catastrophe and bloodshed that would fall on Europe with the advent of the East. There was but one hope on the religious side, as he had told Mabel a dozen times, and that was that the Quietistic Pantheism which for the last century had made such giant strides in East and West alike, among Mohammedans, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucianists, and the rest, should avail to check the supernatural frenzy that inspired their exoteric brethren. Pantheism, he understood, was what he held himself; for him "God" was the developing sum of created life, and impersonal Unity was the essence of His being; competition then was the great heresy that set men one against another and delayed all progress; for, to his mind, progress lay in the merging of the individual in the family, of the family in the commonwealth, of the commonwealth in the continent, and of the continent in the world. Finally, the world itself at any moment was no more than the mood of impersonal life. It was, in fact, the Catholic idea with the supernatural left out, a union of earthly fortunes, an abandonment of individualism on the one side, and of supernaturalism on the other. It was treason to appeal from God Immanent to God Transcendent; there was no God transcendent; God, so far as He could be known, was man.

Yet these two, husband and wife after a fashion—for they had entered into that terminable contract now recognised explicitly by the

State—these two were very far from sharing in the usual heavy dulness of mere materialists. The world, for them, beat with one ardent life blossoming in flower and beast and man, a torrent of beautiful vigour flowing from a deep source and irrigating all that moved or felt. Its romance was the more appreciable because it was comprehensible to the minds that sprang from it; there were mysteries in it, but mysteries that enticed rather than baffled, for they unfolded new glories with every discovery that man could make; even inanimate objects, the fossil, the electric current, the far-off stars, these were dust thrown off by the Spirit of the World—fragrant with His Presence and eloquent of His Nature. For example, the announcement made by Klein, the astronomer, twenty years before, that the inhabitation of certain planets had become a certified fact—how vastly this had altered men's views of themselves. But the one condition of progress and the building of Jerusalem, on the planet that happened to be men's dwelling place, was peace, not the sword which Christ brought or that which Mahomet wielded; but peace that arose from, not passed, understanding; the peace that sprang from a knowledge that man was all and was able to develop himself only by sympathy with his fellows. To Oliver and his wife, then, the last century seemed like a revelation; little by little the old superstitions had died, and the new light broadened; the Spirit of the World had roused Himself, the sun had dawned in the west; and now with horror and loathing they had seen the clouds gather once more in the quarter whence all superstition had had its birth.

Mabel got up presently and came across to her husband.

“My dear,” she said, “you must not be downhearted. It all may pass as it passed before. It is a great thing that they are listening to America at all. And this Mr. Felsenburgh seems to be on the right side.”

Oliver took her hand and kissed it.

II

Oliver seemed altogether depressed at breakfast, half-an-hour later. His mother, an old lady of nearly eighty, who never appeared till noon, seemed to see it at once, for after a look or two at him and a word, she subsided into silence behind her plate.

It was a pleasant little room in which they sat, immediately behind Oliver's own, and was furnished, according to universal custom, in light green. Its windows looked out upon a strip of garden at the back, and the high creeper-grown wall that separated that domain from the next. The furniture, too, was of the usual sort; a sensible round table stood in the middle, with three tall armchairs, with the proper angles and rests, drawn up to it; and the centre of it, resting apparently on a broad round column, held the dishes. It was thirty years now since the practice of placing the dining room above the kitchen, and of raising and lowering the courses by hydraulic power into the centre of the dining table, had become universal in the houses of the well-to-do. The floor consisted entirely of the asbestos cork preparation invented in America, noiseless, clean, and pleasant to both foot and eye.

Mabel broke the silence.

"And your speech tomorrow?" she asked, taking up her fork.

Oliver brightened a little and began to discourse.

It seemed that Birmingham was beginning to fret. They were crying out once more for free trade with America: European facilities were not enough, and it was Oliver's business to keep them quiet. It was useless, he proposed to tell them, to agitate until the Eastern business was settled: they must not bother the Government with such details just now. He was to tell them, too, that the Government was wholly on their side; that it was bound to come soon.

"They are pig-headed," he added fiercely, "pig-headed and selfish; they are like children who cry for food ten minutes before dinner-time: it is bound to come if they will wait a little."

"And you will tell them so?"

“That they are pig-headed? Certainly.”

Mabel looked at her husband with a pleased twinkle in her eyes. She knew perfectly well that his popularity rested largely on his outspokenness: folks liked to be scolded and abused by a genial bold man who danced and gesticulated in a magnetic fury; she liked it herself.

“How shall you go?” she asked.

“Volor. I shall catch the eighteen o’clock at Blackfriars; the meeting is at nineteen, and I shall be back at twenty-one.”

He addressed himself vigorously to his *entrée*, and his mother looked up with a patient, old-woman smile.

Mabel began to drum her fingers softly on the damask.

“Please make haste, my dear,” she said. “I have to be at Brighton at three.”

Oliver gulped his last mouthful, pushed his plate over the line, glanced to see if all plates were there, and then put his hand beneath the table.

Instantly, without a sound, the centre-piece vanished, and the three waited unconcernedly while the clink of dishes came from beneath.

Old Mrs. Brand was a hale-looking old lady, rosy and wrinkled, with the mantilla headdress of fifty years ago; but she, too, looked a little depressed this morning. The *entrée* was not very successful, she thought; the new food-stuff was not up to the old, it was a trifle gritty: she would see about it afterwards. There was a clink, a soft sound like a push, and the centre-piece snapped into its place, bearing an admirable imitation of a roasted fowl.

Oliver and his wife were alone again for a minute or two after breakfast before Mabel started down the path to catch the 14½ o’clock 4th grade sub-trunk line to the junction.

“What’s the matter with Mother?” he said.

“Oh! it’s the food-stuff again: she’s never got accustomed to it; she says it doesn’t suit her.”

“Nothing else?”

“No, my dear, I am sure of it. She hasn’t said a word lately.”

Oliver watched his wife go down the path, reassured. He had been a little troubled once or twice lately by an odd word or two that his mother had let fall. She had been brought up a Christian for a few years, and it seemed to him sometimes as if it had left a taint. There was an old *Garden of the Soul* that she liked to keep by her, though she always protested with an appearance of scorn that it was nothing but nonsense. Still, Oliver would have preferred that she had burned it: superstition was a desperate thing for retaining life, and, as the brain weakened, might conceivably reassert itself. Christianity was both wild and dull, he told himself, wild because of its obvious grotesqueness and impossibility, and dull because it was so utterly apart from the exhilarating stream of human life; it crept dustily about still, he knew, in little dark churches here and there; it screamed with hysterical sentimentality in Westminster Cathedral which he had once entered and looked upon with a kind of disgusted fury; it gabbled strange, false words to the incompetent and the old and the half-witted. But it would be too dreadful if his own mother ever looked upon it again with favour.

Oliver himself, ever since he could remember, had been violently opposed to the concessions to Rome and Ireland. It was intolerable that these two places should be definitely yielded up to this foolish, treacherous nonsense: they were hot beds of sedition; plague spots on the face of humanity. He had never agreed with those who said that it was better that all the poison of the West should be gathered rather than dispersed. But, at any rate, there it was. Rome had been given up wholly to that old man in white in exchange for all the parish churches and cathedrals of Italy, and it was understood that mediæval darkness reigned there supreme; and Ireland, after receiving Home Rule thirty years before, had declared for Catholicism and opened her arms to Individualism in its most virulent form. England had laughed and assented, for she was saved from a quantity of agitation by the immediate departure of half her Catholic population for that island,

and had, consistently with her Communist-colonial policy, granted every facility for Individualism to reduce itself there *ad absurdum*. All kinds of funny things were happening there: Oliver had read with a bitter amusement of new appearances there, of a Woman in Blue and shrines raised where her feet had rested; but he was scarcely amused at Rome, for the movement to Turin of the Italian Government had deprived the Republic of quite a quantity of sentimental prestige and had haloed the old religious nonsense with all the meretriciousness of historical association. However, it obviously could not last much longer: the world was beginning to understand at last.

He stood a moment or two at the door after his wife had gone, drinking in reassurance from that glorious vision of solid sense that spread itself before his eyes: the endless house roofs; the high glass vaults of the public baths and gymnasiums; the pinnacled schools where Citizenship was taught each morning; the spider-like cranes and scaffoldings that rose here and there; and even the few pricking spires did not disconcert him. There it stretched away into the grey haze of London, really beautiful, this vast hive of men and women who had learned at least the primary lesson of the gospel that there was no God but man, no priest but the politician, no prophet but the schoolmaster.

Then he went back once more to his speech-constructing.

Mabel, too, was a little thoughtful as she sat with her paper on her lap, spinning down the broad line to Brighton. This Eastern news was more disconcerting to her than she allowed her husband to see; yet it seemed incredible that there could be any real danger of invasion. This Western life was so sensible and peaceful; folks had their feet at last upon the rock, and it was unthinkable that they could ever be forced back on to the mud-flats: it was contrary to the whole law of development. Yet she could not but recognise that catastrophe seemed one of nature's methods. . . .

She sat very quiet, glancing once or twice at the meagre little scrap of news, and read the leading article upon it: that too seemed significant of dismay. A couple of men were talking in the half-compartment beyond on the same subject; one described the Government engineering works that he had visited, the breathless haste that dominated them; the other put in interrogations and questions. There was not much comfort there. There were no windows through which she could look; on the main lines the speed was too great for the eyes; the long compartment flooded with soft light bounded her horizon. She stared at the moulded white ceiling, the delicious oak-framed paintings, the deep spring seats, the mellow globes overhead that poured out radiance, at a mother and child diagonally opposite her. Then the great chord sounded; the faint vibration increased ever so slightly; and an instant later the automatic doors ran back, and she stepped out on to the platform of Brighton station.

As she went down the steps leading to the station square, she noticed a priest going before her. He seemed a very upright and sturdy old man, for though his hair was white he walked steadily and strongly. At the foot of the steps, he stopped and half turned, and then, to her surprise, she saw that his face was that of a young man, fine-featured and strong, with black eyebrows and very bright grey eyes. Then she passed on and began to cross the square in the direction of her aunt's house.

Then without the slightest warning, except one shrill hoot from overhead, a number of things happened.

A great shadow whirled across the sunlight at her feet, a sound of rending tore the air, and a noise like a giant's sigh; and, as she stopped bewildered, with a noise like ten thousand smashed kettles, a huge thing crashed on the rubber pavement before her, where it lay, filling half the square, writhing long wings on its upper side that beat and whirled like the flappers of some ghastly extinct monster, pouring out human screams, and beginning almost instantly to crawl with broken life.

Mabel scarcely knew what happened next; but she found herself a moment later forced forward by some violent pressure from behind, till she stood shaking from head to foot, with some kind of smashed body of a man moaning and stretching at her feet. There was a sort of articulate language coming from it; she caught distinctly the names of Jesus and Mary; then a voice hissed suddenly in her ears:

“Let me through. I am a priest.”

She stood there a moment longer, dazed by the suddenness of the whole affair, and watched almost unintelligently the grey-haired young priest on his knees, with his coat torn open, and a crucifix out; she saw him bend close, wave his hand in a swift sign, and heard a murmur of a language she did not know. Then he was up again, holding the crucifix before him, and she saw him begin to move forward into the midst of the red-flooded pavement, looking this way and that as if for a signal. Down the steps of the great hospital on her right came figures running now, hatless, each carrying what looked like an old-fashioned camera. She knew what those men were, and her heart leaped in relief. They were the ministers of euthanasia. Then she felt herself taken by the shoulder and pulled back, and immediately found herself in the front rank of a crowd that was swaying and crying out and behind a line of police and civilians who had formed themselves into a cordon to keep the pressure back.

III

Oliver was in a panic of terror as his mother, half-an-hour later, ran in with the news that one of the Government volors had fallen in the station square at Brighton just after the 14½ train had discharged its passengers. He knew quite well what that meant, for he remembered one such accident ten years before, just after the law forbidding private volors had been passed. It meant that every living creature in it was killed and probably many more in the place where it fell—and what

then? The message was clear enough; she would certainly be in the square at that time.

He sent a desperate wire to her aunt asking for news; and sat, shaking in his chair, awaiting the answer. His mother sat by him.

“Please God—” she sobbed out once and stopped confounded as he turned on her.

But Fate was merciful, and three minutes before Mr. Phillips toiled up the path with the answer, Mabel herself came into the room, rather pale and smiling.

“Christ!” cried Oliver and gave one huge sob as he sprang up.

She had not a great deal to tell him. There was no explanation of the disaster published as yet; it seemed that the wings on one side had simply ceased to work.

She described the shadow, the hiss of sound, and the crash.

Then she stopped.

“Well, my dear?” said her husband, still rather white beneath the eyes as he sat close to her patting her hand.

“There was a priest there,” said Mabel. “I saw him before, at the station.”

Oliver gave a little hysterical snort of laughter.

“He was on his knees at once,” she said, “with his crucifix, even before the doctors came. My dear, do people really believe all that?”

“Why, they think they do,” said her husband.

“It was all so—so sudden; and there he was, just as if he had been expecting it all. Oliver, how can they?”

“Why, people will believe anything if they begin early enough.”

“And the man seemed to believe it, too—the dying man, I mean. I saw his eyes.”

She stopped.

“Well, my dear?”

“Oliver, what do you say to people when they are dying?”

“Say! Why, nothing! What can I say? But I don’t think I’ve ever seen any one die.”

“Nor have I till today,” said the girl and shivered a little. “The euthanasia people were soon at work.”

Oliver took her hand gently.

“My darling, it must have been frightful. Why, you’re trembling still.”

“No; but listen. . . . You know, if I had had anything to say I could have said it, too. They were all just in front of me: I wondered; then I knew I hadn’t. I couldn’t possibly have talked about Humanity.”

“My dear, it’s all very sad; but you know it doesn’t really matter. It’s all over.”

“And—and they’ve just stopped?”

“Why, yes.”

Mabel compressed her lips a little; then she sighed. She had an agitated sort of meditation in the train. She knew perfectly that it was sheer nerves; but she could not just yet shake them off. As she had said, it was the first time she had seen death.

“And that priest—that priest doesn’t think so?”

“My dear, I’ll tell you what he believes. He believes that that man whom he showed the crucifix to, and said those words over, is alive somewhere, in spite of his brain being dead: he is not quite sure where; but he is either in a kind of smelting works being slowly burned; or, if he is very lucky, and that piece of wood took effect, he is somewhere beyond the clouds, before Three Persons who are only One although They are Three; that there are quantities of other people there, a Woman in Blue, a great many others in white with their heads under their arms, and still more with their heads on one side; and that they’ve all got harps and go on singing for ever and ever, and walking about on the clouds, and liking it very much indeed. He thinks, too, that all these nice people are perpetually looking down upon the aforesaid smelting-works and praising the Three Great Persons for making them. That’s what the priest believes. Now you know it’s not likely; that kind of thing may be very nice, but it isn’t true.”

Mabel smiled pleasantly. She had never heard it put so well.

“No, my dear, you’re quite right. That sort of thing isn’t true. How can he believe it? He looked quite intelligent!”

“My dear girl, if I had told you in your cradle that the moon was green cheese, and had hammered at you ever since, every day and all day, that it was, you’d very nearly believe it by now. Why, you know in your heart that the euthanatisers are the real priests. Of course you do.”

Mabel sighed with satisfaction and stood up.

“Oliver, you’re a most comforting person. I do like you! There! I must go to my room: I’m all shaky still.”

Half across the room she stopped and put out a shoe.

“Why—” she began faintly.

There was a curious rusty-looking splash upon it; and her husband saw her turn white. He rose abruptly.

“My dear,” he said, “don’t be foolish.”

She looked at him, smiled bravely, and went out.

When she was gone, he still sat on a moment where she had left him. Dear me! how pleased he was! He did not like to think of what life would have been without her. He had known her since she was twelve—that was seven years ago—and last year they had gone together to the district official to make their contract. She had really become very necessary to him. Of course, the world could get on without her, and he supposed that he could, too; but he did not want to have to try. He knew perfectly well, for it was his creed of human love, that there was between them a double affection, of mind as well as body; and there was absolutely nothing else: but he loved her quick intuitions and to hear his own thought echoed so perfectly. It was like two flames added together to make a third taller than either: of course one flame could burn without the other—in fact, one would have to, one day—but meantime the warmth and light were exhilarating. Yes, he was delighted that she happened to be clear of the falling vapor.

He gave no more thought to his exposition of the Christian creed; it was a mere commonplace to him that Catholics believed that kind of thing; it was no more blasphemous to his mind so to describe it, than it would be to laugh at a Fijian idol with mother-of-pearl eyes, and a horse-hair wig; it was simply impossible to treat it seriously. He, too, had wondered once or twice in his life how human beings could believe such rubbish; but psychology had helped him, and he knew now well enough that suggestion will do almost anything. And it was this hateful thing that had so long restrained the euthanasia movement with all its splendid mercy.

His brows wrinkled a little as he remembered his mother's exclamation, "Please God"; then he smiled at the poor old thing and her pathetic childishness, and turned once more to his table, thinking in spite of himself of his wife's hesitation as she had seen the splash of blood on her shoe. Blood! Yes; that was as much a fact as anything else. How was it to be dealt with? Why, by the glorious creed of Humanity—that splendid God who died and rose again ten thousand times a day, who had died daily like the old cracked fanatic Saul of Tarsus, ever since the world began, and who rose again, not once like the Carpenter's Son, but with every child that came into the world. That was the answer; and was it not overwhelmingly sufficient?

Mr. Phillips came in an hour later with another bundle of papers.

"No more news from the East, sir," he said.