

Things

As They Are!



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The tom-toms thumped on all night, and the darkness shuddered round me like a living, feeling thing. I could not go to sleep, so I lay awake and looked; and I saw, and it seemed like this:

That I stood on a grassy plateau, and at my feet a precipice broke sheer down into infinite space. I looked, but saw no bottom; only cloud shapes, black and furiously coiled, and great shadow-shrouded hollows and unfathomable depths. Back I drew, dizzy at the depth.

Then I saw forms of people moving single-file along the grass. They were making for the edge. There was a woman with a baby in her arms and another little child holding on to her dress. She was on the very verge. Then I saw that she was blind. She lifted her foot for the next step.... it trod air. She was over, and the children over with her. Oh, the cry as they went over!

Then I saw more streams of people flowing from all quarters. All were blind, stone blind; all made straight for the precipice edge. There were shrieks as they suddenly knew themselves falling, and a tossing up of helpless arms, catching, clutching at empty air. But some went over quietly and fell without a sound.

Then I wondered, with a wonder that was simply agony, why no one stopped them at the edge. I could not. I was glued to the ground, and I could not call. Though I strained and tried, only a whisper came.

Then I saw that along the edge there were sentries set at intervals. But the intervals were far too great; there were wide, unguarded gaps between. And over these gaps the people fell in their blindness, quite unwarned; and the green grass seemed blood-red to me, and the gulf yawned like the mouth of Hell.

Then I saw, like the picture of peace,

a group of people under some trees, with their backs toward the gulf. They were making daisy chains. Sometimes when a piercing shriek cut the quiet air and reached them, it disturbed them and they thought it a rather vulgar noise. And if one of their number started up and wanted to go and do something to help, then all the others would pull that one down. "Why should you get so excited about it? You must wait for a definite 'call' to go. You haven't finished your daisy chains. It would be really selfish," they said, "to leave us to finish this work alone."

There was another group. It was made up of people whose great desire was to get some sentries out; but they found that few wanted to go, so it was that sometimes there were no sentries for miles and miles at the edge.

Once a girl stood alone in her place, waving the people back; but her mother and other relatives called and reminded

her that her furlough was due; she must not break the "rules." And, being tired and needing a change, she had to go and rest awhile; but no one was sent to guard her gap, and over and over the people fell, like a waterfall of souls.

Once a child caught at a tuft of grass that grew at the very brink of the gulf; the child clung convulsively, and it called, but nobody seemed to hear. Then the roots of the grass gave way, and with a cry the child went over, its two little hands still holding tight the torn-off bunch of grass.

And the girl who longed to be back in her gap thought she heard the little one cry, and she sprang up and wanted to go; at which her relatives reproved her, reminding her that no one is necessary anywhere - the gap would be well taken care of, they knew. And they sang a hymn.

Then through the hymn came another sound like the pain of a million

broken hearts wrung out in one full drop, one sob. And a horror of great darkness was upon ME, for I knew what it was - the cry of blood.

Where were the heralds? Where are the men of God who will sacrifice self and ease to preach Christ to a dying world? The definite call is to you beloved child of God. All that are redeemed belong to God. He has a distinct claim upon every saved soul and says to all, "As My Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John 20:21)

Then thundered a Voice, the voice of the Lord; and He said, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And He said, Go, and tell this people... (From Isaiah 6:8; Mark 16:15) The Lord Jesus said, "Go ye into All the world, and preach the gospel to every creature... and lo, I am with you always." (Matthew 28:20)

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