

The Isles of Sunset

By A. C. Benson

About midway between the two horns of the bay, the Isles of Sunset pierced the sea. There was deep blue water all around them, and the sharp and fretted pinnacles of rock rose steeply up to heaven. The top of the largest was blunt, and covered with a little carpet of grass and sea-herbs. The rest were nought but cruel spires, on which no foot but that of sea-birds could go. At one place there was a small creek, into which a boat might be thrust, but only when the sea was calm; and near the top of the rock, just over this, was the dark mouth of a little cave.

The bay in which the Isles lay was quite deserted the moorland came to the edge of the cliffs, and through a steep and rocky ravine, the sides of which were overgrown with ferns and low trees, all brushed landward by the fierce winds, a stream fell hoarsely to the sea, through deep rock-pools. The only living things there were the wild birds, the moorfowl in the heather, hawks that built in the rock face, and pigeons that made their nest in hollow places. Sometimes a stag pacing slowly on the cliff-top would look over, but that was seldom.

Yet on these desolate and fearful rocks there dwelt a man, a hermit named David. He had grown up as a fisher-boy in the neighbouring village—an awkward silent boy with large eyes which looked as though they were full of inward dreams. The people of the place were Christians after a sort, though it was but seldom that a priest came near them; and then only by sea, for there was no road to the place. But David as a boy had heard a little of the Lord Christ, and of the bitter sacrifice He made for men; and there grew up in his heart a great desire to serve Him, and he prayed much in his heart to the Lord, that He would show him what he might do. He had no parents living. His mother was long dead, and his father had been drowned at sea. He lived in the house of his uncle, a poor fisherman with an angry temper, where he fared very hardly; for there were many mouths to feed, and the worst fell to the least akin. But he grew up handy and active, with strong limbs and a sure head; and he was well worth his victual, for he was a good fisherman, patient of wind and rain; and he could scale the cliff in places where none other dared go, and bring down the eggs and feathers of the sea-birds. So they had much use of him, and gave him but little love in return. When he was free of work, the boy loved to wander alone, and he would lie on the heather in the warm sun, with his face to the ground, drinking in the fragrant breath of the earth, and praying earnestly in his heart to the Lord, who had made the earth so fair and the sea so terrible. When he came to man's estate, he had thoughts of making a home of his own, but his uncle seemed to need him—so he lingered on, doing as he was bid, very silent, but full of his own thoughts, and sure that the Lord would call him when He had need of him; one by one the children of the family grew up and went their ways; then his uncle's wife died, and then at last one day, when he was out fishing with his uncle, there came a squall and they beat for home. But the boat was overset and his uncle was drowned; and David himself was cast ashore in a wonderful manner, and found himself all alone.

Now while he doubted what he should do, he dreamed a dream that wrought powerfully in his mind. He thought that he was walking in the dusk beside the sea, which was running very high, when he saw a light drawing near to him over the waves. It was not like the light of a lantern, but a diffused and pale light, like the moon labouring in a cloud. The sea began to abate its violence, and then David saw a figure coming to him, walking, it seemed, upon the water as upon dry land, sometimes lower, sometimes higher, as the waves ran high or low. He stopped in a great wonder

to watch the approach of the figure, and he saw that it was that of a young man, going very slowly and tranquilly, and looking about him with a gentle and smiling air of command. All about him was a light, the source of which David could not see, but he seemed like a man walking in the light of an open window, when all around is dark. As he came near, David saw that he was clad in a rough tunic of some dark stuff, which was girt up with a girdle at the waist. His head and his feet were bare. Yet though he seemed but poorly clad, he had the carriage of a great prince, whose power none would willingly question. But the strangest thing was that the sea grew calm before his feet, and though the wind was blowing fiercely, yet it did not stir the hair, which fell somewhat long on his shoulders, or so much as ruffle his robe. And then there came into David's head a verse of Scripture where it says, "*What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?*" And then the answer came suddenly into David's mind, and he knelt down where he was upon the beach, and waited in a great and silent awe; and presently that One drew near, and in some way that David did not understand, for he used no form of speech, his eyes made question of David's soul, and seemed to read its depths. And then at last He spoke in words that He had before used to a fisherman beside another sea, and said very softly, "Follow Me." But He said not how He should be followed; and presently He seemed to depart in a shining track across the sea, till the light that went with Him sank like a star upon the verge. Then in his dream David was troubled, and knew not how to follow; till he thought that it might be given him, as it was given once to Peter, to walk dry-shod over the depth; but when he set foot upon the water there broke so furious a wave at him, that he knew not how to follow. So he went back and kneeled upon the sand, and said aloud in his doubt, "What shall I do, Lord?" and as the words sounded on his tongue he awoke.

Then all that day he pondered how he should find the Lord; for he knew that though he had a hope in his heart, and though he leaned much upon God, yet he had not wholly found Him yet. God was sometimes with him and near to him, but sometimes far withdrawn; and then, for he was a very simple man, he said to himself, "I will give myself wholly to the search for my Lord. I will live solitary, and I will fix my mind upon Him"; for he thought within himself that his hard life, and the cares of the household in which he had dwelt, had been what had perhaps kept him outside; and therefore he thought that God had taken these cares away from him. And so he made up his mind.

Then he cast about where he had best dwell; and he thought of the Isles of Sunset as a lonely place, where he might live and not be disturbed. There was the little cave high up in the rock-face, looking towards the land, to which he had once scrambled up. This would give him shelter; and there were moreover some small patches of earth, near the base of the rock, where he could grow a few herbs and a little corn. He had some money of his own, which would keep him until his garden was grown up; and he could fish, he thought, from the rocks, and find shell-fish and other creatures of the sea, which would give him meat.

So the next day he bought a few tools that he thought he would need, and rowed all over when it was dusk. He put his small stores in a cave by the water's edge. The day after, he went and made a few farewells; he told no one where he was going; but it pleased him to find a little love for him in the hearts of some. One parting was a strangely sore one: there was an old and poor woman that lived very meanly in the place, who had an only granddaughter, a little maid. These two he loved very much, and had often done them small kindnesses. He kept this good-bye to the last, and went to the house after sundown. The old woman bade him sit down, and asked him what he meant to do, now that he was alone. "I am going away, mother," he said gently. The child, hearing this, came over the room from where she sate, and said to him, "No, David, do not

go away.” “Yes, dear child,” he said, “I must even go.” Then she said, “But where will you go? May I not come to see you sometimes?” and she put her small arms round his neck, and laid her cheek to his. Then David’s heart was very full of love, and he said, smiling, and with his arm round the child, “Dear one, I must not say where I am going—and it is a rough place, too, not fit for such tender little folk as you; but, if I can, I will come again and see you.” Then the old grandmother, looking upon him very gravely, said, “Tell me what is in your mind.” But he said, “Nay, mother, do not ask me; I am going to a place that is near and yet far; and I am going to seek for one whom I know not and yet know; and the way is long and dark.” Then she forbore to ask him more, and fell to pondering sadly; so after they had sate awhile, he rose up and loosed the child’s arms from him, kissing her; and the tears stood in his eyes; and he thought in himself that God was very wise; for if he had had a home of his own, and children whom he loved, he could never have found it in his heart to leave them. So he went out.

Then he climbed up the steep path that led to the downs, and so to the bay where the Isles lay. And just as he reached the top, the moon ran out from a long bank of cloud; and he saw the village lie beneath him, very peaceful in the moonlight; there were lights in some of the windows; the roofs were silvered in the clear radiance of the moon, and the shadows lay dark between. He could see the little streets, every inch of which he knew, and the port below. He could see the coast stretch away to the east, headland after headland, growing fainter; and the great spaces of the sea, with the moon glittering on the waves. There was a holy and solemn peace about it all; and though his life had not been a happy one there, he knew in a flash that the place was very dear to his heart, and he said a prayer to God, that He would guard and cherish the village and those that dwelt there. Then he turned, and went on to the downs; and presently descended by a steep path to the sea, through the thickets. He took off his clothes, and tied them in a pack on his back; and then he stepped quietly into the bright water, which lapped very softly against the shore, a little wave every now and then falling gently, followed by a long rustling of the water on the sand, and a silence till the next wave fell. He waded on till he could swim, and then struck out to where the Isles stood, all sharp and bright in the moon. He swam with long quiet strokes, hearing the water ripple past; and soon the great crags loomed out above him, and he heard the waves fall among their rocky coves. At last he felt the ground beneath his feet; and coming out of the water he dressed himself, and then—for he would not venture on the cliffs in the uncertain light—gathering up some dried weeds of the sea, he made a pillow for his head and slept, in a wonderful peace of mind, until the moon set; and not long after there came a pale light over the sea in the east, brightening slowly, until at last the sun, like a fiery ball, broke upwards from the sea; and it was day.

Now when David awoke in the broad daylight, he found himself full of a great joy and peace. He seemed, as it were, to have leaped over a wide ditch, and to see the world across it. Now he was alone with God, and he had put all the old, mean, hateful life away from him. It did not even so much as peep into his mind that he would have to endure many hardships of body, rain, and chilly winds, a bed of rock, and fare both hard and scanty. This was not what had troubled him in the old days. What had vexed his heart had been unclean words and deeds, greediness, hardness, cruel taunts, the lack of love, and the meanness and baseness of the petty life. All that was behind him now; he felt free and strong, and while he moved about to spy out his new kingdom, he sang loudly to himself a song of praise. The place pleased him mightily; over his head ran up the cliff with its stony precipices and dizzy ledges. The lower rocks all fringed with weeds, like sea-beasts with rough hair, stood out black from the deep blue water that lay round the rocks. He loved to hear the heavy plunge of the great waves around his bastions, the thin cries of the sea-

birds that sailed about the precipice, or that lit on their airy perches. Everywhere was a brisk sharp scent of the sea, and the fresh breeze, most unlike the close sour smell of the little houses. He felt himself free and strong and clean, and he thought of all the things he would say to God in the pleasant solitude, and how he would hear the low and far-off voice of the Father speaking gently with his soul.

His first care was to find the cave that was to shelter him. He spent the day in climbing very carefully and lightly all over the face of the rock. Never had he known his hand so strong, or his head so sure. He sate for a time on a little ledge, to which he had climbed on the crag face, and he feasted his eyes upon the sight of the great cliffs of the mainland that ran opposite him, to left and right, in a wide half-circle. His eyes dwelt with pleasure upon the high sloping shoulders of rock, on which the sun now shone very peacefully, the strip of moorland at the top, the brushwood growing in the sloping coves, the clean shingle at the base of the rocks, and the blue sky over all. That was the world as God had made it, and as He intended it to be; it was only men who made it evil, huddling together in their small and filthy dens, so intent on their little ugly lives, their food and drink and wicked ways.

Presently he found the cave-mouth, and noted in his mind the best way thither. The cave seemed to him a very sweet place; the mouth was all fringed with little ferns; inside it was dry and clean; and in a few hours he had disposed all his small goods within it. There was a low slope, on one side of the rocks, where the fern grew plentifully. He gathered great armfuls of the dry red stalks, and made himself a rustling bed. So the day wore pleasantly away. One of his cares was to find water; but here it seemed that God blessed him very instantly, for he found a place near the sea, where a little spring soaked cool out of the rock, with a pleasant carpet of moss and yellow flowers. He found, too, some beds of shell-fish, which he saw would give him food and bait for his fishing. So about sundown he cast a line from the end of the rocks and presently caught a fish, a ling, which lives round rocky shores. This he broiled at a small fire of driftwood, for he had brought tinder with him; and it pleased him to think of the meal that the Apostles took with the risen Christ, a meal which He had made for them, and to which He Himself called them; for that, too, was a broiled fish, and eaten by the edge of the sea. Also he ate a little of the bread he had brought with him; and with it some of a brisk juicy herb, called samphire, that sprouted richly in the cliff, which gave his meat an aromatic savour; and with a drink of fresh spring water he dined well, and was content; then he climbed within the cave, and fell asleep to the sound of the wind buffeting in the cliff, and the fall of great waves on the sea beaches.

Now I might make a book of all the things that David saw and did on the islands, but they were mostly simple and humble things. He fared very hard, but though he often wondered how he would find food for the next day, it always came to him; and he kept his health in a way which seemed to him to be marvellous; indeed he seemed to himself to be both stronger in body and lighter in spirit than he had ever been before. He both saw and heard things that he could not explain. There were sounds the nature of which he could not divine; on certain days there was a far-off booming, even when the waves seemed still; at times, too, there was a low musical note in the air, like the throbbing of a tense string of metal; once or twice he heard a sound like soft singing, and wondered in his heart what creature of the sea it might be that uttered it. On stormy nights there were sad moans and cries, and he often thought that there were strange and unseen creatures about him, who hid themselves from sight, but whose voices he certainly heard; but he was never afraid. One night he saw a very beautiful thing; it had been a still day, but there was an anxious sound in the wind which he knew portended a storm; he was strangely restless on such

days, and woke many times in the night: at last he could bear the silence of the cave no more, and went out, descending swiftly by the rocks, the path over which he could have now followed blindfold, down to the edge of the sea. Then he saw that the waves that beat against the rock were all luminous, as though lit with an inner light; suddenly, far below, how deep he knew not, he saw a great shoal of fish, some of them very large, coming softly round the rocks; the water, as it touched their blunt snouts, burst as it were into soft flame, and showed every twinkle of their fins and every beat of their tails. The shoal came swiftly round the rocks, swimming intently, and it seemed as though there was no end of them. But at last the crowd grew thinner and then ceased; but he could still see the water rippling all radiant in the great sea-pools, showing the motion of broad ribbons of seaweed that swayed to and fro, and lighting up odd horned beasts that stirred upon the ledges. From that day forth he was often filled with a silent wonder at all the sleepless life that moved beneath the vast waters, and that knew nothing of the little human lives that fretted themselves out in the thin air above. That day was to him like the opening of a door into the vast heart of God.

But for all his happiness, the thought weighed upon him, day after day, of all the grief and unhappiness that there was about him. A dying bird that he found in a pool, and that rolled its filmy eye upon him in fear, as if to ask why he must disturb it in its last sad languid hour, the terror in which so many of the small fish abode—he saw once, when the sea was clear, a big fish dart like a dark shadow, with open mouth and gleaming eye, on a little shoal of fishes that sported joyfully in the sun; they scattered in haste, but they had lost their fellows—all this made him ponder; but most of all there weighed on his heart the thought of the world he had left, of how men spoke evil of each other, and did each other hurt; of children whose lot was to be beaten and cursed for no fault, but to please the cruel temper of a master; of patient women, who had so much to bear—so that sometimes he had dark thoughts of why God made the world so fair, and then left so much that was amiss, like a foul stream that makes a clear pool turbid. And there came into his head a horror of taking the lives of creatures for his own use—the shell-worm that writhed as he pulled it from the shell; the bright fish that came up struggling and gasping from the water, and that fought under his hand—and at last he made up his mind that he would take no more life, though how he would live he knew not; and as for the world of men, he became very desirous to help a little as best he could; and there being at this time a wreck in the bay, when a boat and all on board were lost, he thought that he would wish, if he could, to keep a fire lit on dark nights, so that ships that passed should see that there was a dwelling there, and so keep farther away from the dangerous rocks.

By this time it had become known in the country where he was—his figure had been seen several times from the cliffs; and one day there had come a boat, with some of those that knew him, to the island. He had no wish to mix again with men; but neither did he desire to avoid them, if it was God's will that they should come. So he came down courteously, and spoke with the master of the boat, who asked him very curiously of his life and all that he did. David told him all; and when the master asked him why he had thus fled away from the world, David said simply that he had done so that he might pray to God in peace. Then the master said that there were many waking hours in the day, and he knew not what there might be to say prayers about, "for," he said, "you have no book to make prayers out of, like the priests, and you have no store of good-sounding words with which to catch the ear of God." Then David said that he prayed to God to guard all things great and small, and to help himself along the steep road to heaven. Then the master wondered very much, and said that a man must please himself, and no doubt it was a holy work. Then he asked a little shamefacedly for David to pray for him, that he might be kept

safe from shipwreck, and have good fortune for fishing, to which David replied, "Oh, I do that already."

Before the master went away, and he stayed not long, he asked David how he lived, and offered him food. And David being then in a strait—for he had lately vowed to take no life, said gladly that he would have anything they could give him. So the master gave him some victual. And it happened, just at this time, that some of the boats from the village had a wonderful escape from a storm, and through that season they caught fish in abundance; so it was soon noised abroad that this was all because of David's prayers; and after that he never had need of food, for they brought him many little presents, such as eggs, fruit, and bread—for he would take no meat—giving them into his hands when he was on the lower rocks, or leaving them on a ledge in the cove when he was aloft. And as, when the fish were plenteous, they gave him food in gratitude, and when fish were scarce, they gave it him even more abundantly than they might have his prayers, David was never in lack; in all of which he saw the wonderful hand of God working for him.

Now David pondered very much how he might keep a light aloft on dangerous nights.

His first thought was to find a sheltered place among the rocks to seaward, where his fire could burn and not be extinguished by the wind; but, though he climbed all about the rocks, he could find no place to his mind. One day, however, he was in the furthest recess of his cave, when he felt that among the rocks a little thin wind blew constantly from one corner; and feeling about with his hands, he found that it came out of a small crack in the rocks. The stone above it seemed to be loose; and he perceived after a while that the end of the cave must be very near to the seaward face of the crag, and that the cave ran right through the rock, and was only kept from opening on the outer side by a thin barrier of stone; so after several attempts, using all his strength, he worked the stone loose; and then with a great effort, he thrust the stone out; it fell with a great noise, leaping among the crags, and at last plunging into the sea. The wind rushed in through the gap; then he saw that he had, as it were, a small window looking out to sea, so small that he could not pass through it, but large enough to let a light shine forth, if there were a light set there; but though it seemed again to him like the guiding hand of God, he could not devise how he should shelter the light within from the wind. Indeed the hole made the cave a far less habitable place for himself, for the wind whistled very shrewdly through; he found it easy enough to stop the gap with an old fisherman's coat—but then the light was hidden from view. So he tried a further plan; he dug a hole in the earth at the top of the cliff, and then made a bed of dry sand at the bottom of it; and he piled up dry seaweed and wood within, thinking that if he lit his beacon there, it might be sheltered from the wind, and would burn fiercely enough to throw up the flame above the top of the pit. He saw that heavy rain would extinguish his fire; but the nights were most dangerous when it blew too strongly for rain to fall. So one night, when the wind blew strongly from the sea, he laid wood in order, which he had gathered on the land, and conveyed with many toilsome journeys over to the island. Then he lighted the pile, but it was as he feared; the wind blew fiercely over the top, and drove the flames downward, so that the pit glowed with a fierce heat; and sometimes a lighted brand was caught up and whirled over the cliffs; but he saw plainly enough that the light would not show out at sea. He was very sad at this, and at last went heavily down to his cave, not knowing what he should do; and pondering long before he slept, he could see no way out.

In the morning he went up to the cliff-top again, and turned his steps to the pit. The fire had burned itself out, but the sides were still warm to the touch; all the ashes had been blown by the force of the wind out of the hole; but he saw some bright things lie in the sand, which he could

not wholly understand, till he pulled them out and examined them carefully. They were like smooth tubes and lumps of a clear stuff, like molten crystal or frozen honey, full of bubbles and stains, but still strangely transparent; and then, though he saw that these must in some way have proceeded from the burning of the fire, he felt as though they must have been sent to him for some wise reason. He turned them over and over, and held them up to the light. It came suddenly into his mind how he would use these heavenly crystals; he would make, he thought, a frame of wood, and set these jewels in the frame. Then he would set this in the hole of his cave, and burn a light behind; and the light would thus show over the sea, and not be extinguished.

So this after much labour he did; he fitted all the clear pieces into the frame, and he fixed the frame very firm in the hole with wooden wedges. Then he pushed clay into the cracks between the edges of the frame and the stone. Then he told some of those who came to him that he had need of oil for a purpose, and they brought it him in abundance, and wicks for a lamp; and these he set in an earthen bowl filled with oil, and on a dark night, when all was finished, he lit his lamp; and then clambered out on the furthest rocks of the island, and saw his light burn in the rocks, not clearly, indeed, but like an eye of glimmering fire. Then he was very glad at heart, and he told the fishermen how he had found means to set a light among the cliffs, and that he would burn it on dark and stormy nights, so that they might see the light and avoid the danger. The tidings soon spread, and they thought it a very magical and holy device; but did not doubt that the knowledge of it was given to David by God.

So David was in great happiness. For he knew that the Father had answered his prayer, and allowed him, however little, to help the seafaring folk.

He made other things after that; he put up a doorway with a door of wood in the entering of the cave; he made, too, a little boat that he might go to and fro to the land without swimming. And now, having no care to provide food, for they brought it him in abundance, he turned his mind to many small things. He made a holy carving in the cave, of Christ upon the Cross—and he carved around it a number of creatures, not men only, but birds and beasts, looking to the Cross, for he thought that the beasts also should have their joy in the great offering. His fame spread abroad; and there came a priest to see him, who abode with him for some days, prayed with him, and taught him much of the faith. The priest gave him a book, and showed him the letters; but David, though he longed to read what was within, could not hold the letters in his head.

He tamed, too, the wild birds of the rock, so that they came to his call; one was a gull, which became so fearless that it would come to his cave, and sit silent on a rock, watching him while he worked. He kept a fish, too, in a pool of the rocks, that would rise to the edge when he approached.

But all this time he went not near to the village; for his solitude had become very dear to him, and he prayed continually; and at evening and morning and midday he would sing praises to God, simple words that he had made.

One morning he awoke in the cave, and as he bestirred himself he thought in his heart of all his happiness. It was a still morning, but the sky was overcast. Suddenly he heard voices below him; and thinking that he was needed, he descended the rocks quickly, and came down a little way from a group of sailors who were standing on the shore; there was a boat drawn up on the sand, and near at hand there lay at anchor a small ship, that seemed to be of a foreign gear, and larger than he was wont to see. He came somewhat suddenly upon the group, and they seemed, as it were, to be amazed to see a man there. He went smilingly towards them, but as he did so there came into his heart a feeling of danger, he knew not what; and he thought that it would be better to retire up the rocks to his cave, and wait till the men had withdrawn—for it was not likely that

they would visit him there, or that even if they saw the way thither, they would adventure it, as it was steep and dangerous. But he put the thought away and came up to them. They seemed to be conferring together in low voices, and the nearer that he drew, the less he liked their look. He spoke to them, but they seemed not to understand, and answered him back very roughly in a tongue he did not understand. But presently they put one forward, an old man, who had some words of English, who asked him what he did there. He tried to explain that he lived on the island, but the old man shook his head, evidently not believing that there could be one living in so bare a place. Then the men conferred again together, and presently the old man asked him, in his broken speech, whether he would take service on the ship with them. David said, smiling, that he would not, for he had other work to do; and the old man seemed to try and persuade him, saying that it was a good service; that they lived a free life, wandering where they would; but that they had lost men lately, and were hardly enough to sail the ship.

Then it came into David's mind that he had fallen in with pirates. They were not often seen in these parts, for there was little enough that they could get, the folk being all poor, and small traffic passing that way. And then, for he saw the group beginning to gather round him, he made a prayer in his heart that he should be delivered from the evil, and made proffer to the men of the little stores that he had. The old man shook his head, and spoke with the others, who now seemed to be growing angry and impatient; and then he said to David that they had need of him to help to sail the ship, and that he must come whether he would or no. David cast a glance round to see if he could escape up the rocks; but the men were all about him, and seeing in his eye that he thought of flight, they laid hands upon him. David resisted with all his might, but they overpowered him in a moment, bound his hands and feet, and cast him with much force into their boat. Then David was sorely disheartened; but he waited, committing his soul to God. While he waited, he saw a strange thing; on the beach there lay a box, tightly corded; the men raised this up very gently, and with difficulty, as it seemed to be heavy. Then they carried it up above the tide-mark; and, making a hole among the loose stones, they buried it very carefully, casting stones over it. Then one of them with a chisel made a mark on the cliff behind, to show where the box lay—and then, first looking carefully out to sea, they came into the boat, and rowed off to the ship, which seemed almost deserted; paying no more heed to David than if he had been a log of wood.

The old man who understood English steered the boat; and David tried to say some words to him, to ask that he should be released; but the old man only shook his head; and at last bade David be silent with great anger. They rowed slowly out, and David could see the great rocks, that had now been his home so long, rising, still and peaceful, in the morning light. Every rock and cranny was known to him. There was the place where, when he first came, he was used to fish. There was the cliff-top where he had made his fire; he could even see his little window in the front of the rocks, and he thought with grief that it would be dark and silent henceforth. But he thought that he was somehow in the hand of God; and that though to be dragged away from his home seemed grievous, there must be some task to which the Father would presently set him, even if it were to go down to death; and though the cords that bound him were now very painful, and his heart was full of sorrow, yet David felt a kind of peace in his spirit which showed him that God was still with him.

When they got to the ship, there arose a dispute among the men as to whether they should run out to sea before it was dark, or whether they should lie where they were; there was but little wind, so they made up their minds to stay. David himself thought from the look of the sky that there was strong weather brewing. The old man who spoke English asked him what he thought,

and he told him that there would be wind. He seemed to be disposed to believe David; but the men were tired, and it was decided to stay.

They had unbound David that he might go on board; and the pain in his hands and feet was very great when the bonds were unloosed; and when he was on board they bound him again, but not so tightly, and led him down into a cabin, close and dirty, where a foul and smoky lamp burnt. They bade him sit in a corner. The low ill-smelling place was very grievous to David, and he thought with a sore heart of his clean cold cave, and his bed of fern. The men seemed to take no further heed of him, and went about preparing a meal. There seemed to be little friendliness among them they spoke shortly and scowled upon each other; and David divined that there had been some dispute aboard, and that they were ill-content. There was little discipline, the men going and coming when they would.

Before long a meal was prepared; some sort of a stew with a rich strong smell, that seemed very gross and foul to David, who had been used so long to his simple fare. The men came in and took from the dish what they desired; and a large jar was opened, which from its fierce smell seemed to contain a hot and fiery spirit; and that it was so David could easily discern, from the flushed faces and louder talk of the men, which soon became mingled with a gross merriment. The old man brought a mess of the food to David, who shook his head smiling. Then the other, with more kindness than David had expected, asked if he would have bread; and fetched him a large piece, unbinding his hands for a little, that he might eat. Then he offered him some of the spirit; but David asked for water, which the old man gave him, binding his hands after he had drunk, with a certain gentleness.

Presently the old man, after he too had eaten, came and sat down beside David; and in his broken talk seemed to wish to win him, if he could, to join them more willingly. He spoke of the pleasant life they lived, and of the wealth that they made, though he said not how they came by it. He told him that he had seen some of it hidden that day, which they had done for greater security, so that, if the ship should be cast away, the men might have some of their spoil waiting for them; and David understood from him, though he had but few words to explain it, that it had been that which had caused a strife among them. For they had come by the treasure very hardly, and they had lost some of the crew in so doing it—and some of the men had desired to share it, and have done with the sea for ever; but that it had been decided to make another voyage first.

Then David said very gently that he did not desire to join them, for he was a man of peace and he told him of his lonely life, and how he made a light to keep ships off the dangerous coast; and at that the old man looked at him with a fixed air, and nodded his head as though he had himself heard of the matter, or at least seen the light—all this David told him, speaking slowly as to a child; but it seemed as though every minute the remembrance of the language came more and more back to the old man.

But at last the man shook his head, and said that he was sorry so peaceful a life must come to an end. But, indeed, David must go with them whether he would or no; and that they would be good comrades yet; and he should have his share of whatever they got. And then he left David and went on to the deck.

Then there fell a great despair upon David; and at the same time the crew, excited by the drink they had taken, for they drained the jar, began to dispute among themselves, and to struggle and fight; and one of them espied David, and they gathered round and mocked him. They mocked at his dress, his face, his hair, which had grown somewhat long. And one of them in particular seemed most urgent, speaking long to the others, and pointing at David from time to time, while the others fell into a great laughter. Then they fell to plucking his hair, and even to beating him

—and they tried to force the spirit into his mouth, but he kept his teeth clenched; and the very smell of the fiery stuff made his brain sick. But he could not stir hand or foot; and presently there came into his mind a great blackness of anger, so that he seemed to be in the very grip of the evil one; and he knew in his heart that if he had been unbound, he would have slain one or more of them; for his heart beat thick, and there came a strange redness into his sight, and he gnashed his teeth for rage; at which they mocked him the more. But at last the old man came down into the cabin, and when he saw what they were at, he spoke very angrily to them, stamping his foot; and it seemed as though he alone had any authority, for they left off ill-using David, and went from him one by one.

Then, after a while they began, to nod in their places; one or two of them cast themselves into beds made in the wall; others fell on the floor, and slept like beasts; and at last they all slept; and last of all the old man came in again, bearing a lamp, and looked round the room in a sort of angry disgust. Then he said a word to David, and opening a door went on into a cabin beyond, closing the door behind him.

Then, in the low light of the smoking lamp, and in the hot and reeking room, with the foul breathing of the sleepers round him, David spent a very dreadful hour. He had never in the old days seen so ill a scene; and it was to him, exhausted by pain and by rage, as if a dark thing came behind him, and whispered in his secret ear that God regarded not men at all, and that the evil was stronger than the good, and prevailed. He tried to put the thought away; but it came all the more instantly, that what he had seen could not be, if God had indeed power to rule. It was not only the scene itself, but the thought of what these men were, and the black things they had doubtless done, the deeds of murder, cruelty, and lust that were written plainly on all their faces; all these came like dark shadows and gathered about him.

David stirred a little to ease himself of his pain and stiffness; and his foot struck against a thing.

He looked down, and saw in the shadow of the table a knife lying, which had fallen from some man's belt. A thought of desperate joy came into his mind. He bent himself down with his bound hands, and he contrived to gather up the knife. Then, very swiftly and deftly, he thrust the hilt between his knees; then he worked the rope that bound his hands to and fro over the blade; the rope parted, and the blood came back into his numbed fingers with a terrible pain. But David heeded it not, and stooping down, he cut the cord that bound his feet; then he rose softly, and sate down again; for the blood, returning to his limbs, made him feel he could not stand yet awhile. All was still in the cabin, except for the slow breathing of those that slept; save that every now and then one of the sleepers broke into a stifled cry, and muttered words, or stirred in his sleep.

Presently David felt that he could walk. He pondered for a moment whether he should take the knife, if he were suddenly attacked; but he resisted the thought, and left the knife lying on the ground.

Then stepping lightly among the sleepers, he moved like a shadow to the door; very carefully he stepped; and at each movement or muttered word he stopped and caught his breath. Suddenly one of the men rose up, leaning on his arm, and looked at him with a stupid stare; but David stood still, waiting, with his heart fit to break within his breast, till the man lay down again. Then David was at the door. The cabin occupied half the ship to the bows; the rest was undecked, with high bulwarks; a rough ladder of steps led to the gangway. David stood for a moment in the shadow of the door; but there seemed no one on the watch without. The pure air and the fresh smell of the sea came to his senses like a breath of heaven. He stepped swiftly over a coil of rope; then up the ladder, and plunged noiselessly into the sea.

He swam a few strokes very strongly; and then he looked about him. The night was as dark as pitch. He could see a dim light from the ship behind him; the water rose and fell in a slow heavy swell; but which way the land lay he could not tell. But he said to himself that it was better to drown and be certainly with God, than in the den of robbers he had left. So he turned himself round in the water, trying to remember where the shore lay, but it was all dark, both the sky and sea, with a pitchy blackness; only the lights of the ship glimmered towards him like little bright paths across the heaving tide.

Suddenly there came a thing so wonderful that David could hardly believe he saw truly; a bright eye of light, as it were, opened upon him in the dark, far off, and hung high in the heavens, like a quiet star. The radiance of it was like the moon, cold and clear. And though David could not at first divine whence it came, he did not doubt in his heart that it was there to guide him; so he struck out towards it, with long silent strokes. He swam for a long time, the light shining softly over the water, and seeming to rise higher over his head, while the glimmering of the ship's lights grew fainter and more murky behind him. Then he became aware that he was drawing near to the land; great dark shapes loomed up over his head, and he heard the soft beating of waves before him. Then he could see too, as he looked upon the light, that there was a glimmer around it; and he saw that it came from the edges and faces of rocks that were lit up by the radiance. So he swam more softly; and presently his foot struck a rock covered with weed; so he put his feet down, waded in cautiously, and pulling himself up by the hands found himself on a rocky shore, and knew that it was his own island.

Then the light above him, as though it had but waited for his safety to be secured, died softly away, like the moon gliding into a cloud. David wondered very much at this, and cast about in his mind how it might be; but his heart seemed to tell him that there was some holy and beautiful thing on the island very near to him. He could hardly contain himself for gladness; and he thought that God had doubtless given him this day of misery and terror, partly that he might value his peace truly, and partly that he might feel that he had it not of right, but by the gracious disposition of the Father.

So he climbed very softly and swiftly to the cave; and entered it with a great gladness; and then he became aware of a great awe in his mind. There was somewhat there, that he could not see with his eyes, but which was more real and present than anything he had ever known; the cave seemed to shine with a faint and tender gleam that was dying away by slow degrees; as though the roof and walls had been charged with a peaceful light, which still rayed about them, though the radiance that had fed it was withdrawn. He took off his dripping clothes, and wrapped himself in his old sea-cloak. But he did not think of sleep, or even of prayer; he only sate still on his bed of fern, with his eyes open in the darkness, drinking in the strong and solemn peace which seemed to abide there. David never had known such a feeling, and he was never to know it again so fully; but for the time he seemed to sit at the foot of God, satisfied. While he thus sate, a great wind sprang up outside and thundered in the rocks; fiercer and fiercer it blew, and soon there followed it the loud crying of the sea, as the great waters began to heave and rage. Then David bestirred himself to light and trim his lamp, and set it in the window as a warning to ships. And when he had done this he felt a great and sudden weariness, and he laid himself down; and sleep closed over him at once, as the sea closes over a stone that is flung into it.

Once in the night he woke, with the roar of the storm in his ears, and wondered that he had slept through it. He had been through many stormy nights, but he had never heard the like of this. The wind blew with a steady roar, like a flood of thunder outpoured; in the midst of it, the great waves, hurled upon the rocks, uttered their voices; and between he heard the hiss of the water, as

it rushed downwards from the cliff face. In the midst of all came a sharp and sudden wailing cry; and then he began to wonder what the poor ship was doing, which he thought of as riding furiously at her anchor, with the drunken crew, and the old man with his sad and solemn face, who seemed so different from his unruly followers, and yet was not ashamed to rule over them and draw profit from their evil deeds. In spite of the ill they had tried to do him, he felt a great pity for them in his heart; but this was but for a moment, for sleep closed over him again, and drew him down into forgetfulness.

When David woke in the morning, the gale had died away, but the sky wept from low and ragged clouds, as if ashamed and sullen at the wrath of the day before. Water trickled in the cracks of the rock; and when David peered abroad, he looked into the thin drifting clouds. He had a great content in his heart, but the awe and the strange peace of the night had somehow diminished.

He began to reflect upon the light that he had seen from the sea. It was not his lamp that had given out such light, for it was clear and thin, while the light his own lamp gave was angry and red. Moreover, when he had lighted the lamp before the storm, it was standing idle, not in the window-place, but on the rock-shelf where he had set it. Then he knew that some great and holy mystery had been wrought for him that night, and that he had been very tenderly used.

Presently he descended the cliff, and went out upon the seaward side. The waves still rose angrily under the grey sky, but were fast abating. He saw in a moment that the shore was full of wreckage; there were spars and timbers everywhere, and all the litter of a ship. Some of the timbers were flung so high upon the rocks that he saw how great the violence of the storm had been. He walked along, and in a minute he came upon the body of a man lying on his face, strangely battered.

Then he saw another body, and yet another. He lifted them up, but there was no sign of life in them; and he recognised with a great sadness that they were the pirates who had dragged him from his home. He had for a moment one evil thought in his mind, a kind of triumph in his heart that God had saved him from his enemies, and delivered them over to death; but he knew that it was a wicked thought, and thrust it from him. At last at the end of the rocks he found the old captain himself. There was a kind of majesty about him, even in death, as he lay looking up at the sky, with one arm flung across his breast, and the other arm outstretched beside him. Then he saw the ribs of the ship itself stick up among the rocks, and he wondered to find the hull so broken and ruinous.

His next care was that the poor bodies should have burial. So about midday he took his boat from its shelter, and rowed across to the land; and then, with a strange fear of the heart, he climbed the cliff, and walked down slowly to the village, which he had thought in his heart he would never have seen again.

The wind had now driven the clouds out of the sky, and the sun came out with a strong white light, the light that shines from the sky when the earth has been washed clean by rain. It sparkled brightly in the little drops that hung like jewels in the grass and bushes. It was with a great throb of the heart that David came out upon the end of the down, and saw the village beneath him. It looked as though no change had passed over it, but as though its life must have stood still, since he left it; then there came tears into David's eyes at the thought of the old hard life he had lived there, and how God had since filled his cup so full of peace; so with many thoughts in his heart he came slowly down the path to the town. He first met two children whom he did not know; he spoke to them, but they looked for a moment in terror at his face; his hair and beard were long, and he was all tanned by the sun; but he spoke softly to them, and presently they came to him

and were persuaded to tell their names. They were the children, David thought, of a young lad whom he had known as a boy; and presently, as the manner of children is when they have laid aside fear, they told him many small things, their ages and their doings, and other little affairs which seem so big to a child; and then they would take his hands and lead him to the village, while David smiled to be so lovingly attended. He was surprised, when he entered the street, to see how curiously he was regarded. Even men and women, that he had known, would hardly speak with him, but did him reverence. The children would lead him to their house first; and so he went thither, not unwilling. When they were at the place, he found with a gentle wonder that it was even the house where he had himself dwelt. He went in, and found the mother of the children within, one whom he had known as a girl. She greeted him with the same reverence as the rest; so that he at last took courage, and asked her why it should not be as it had been before. And then he learned from her talk, with a strange surprise, that it was thought that he was a very holy man, much visited by God, who not only had been shown how, by a kind of magical secret, to save ships from falling on that deadly coast, but as one whose prayers availed to guard and keep the whole place safe. He tried to show her that this was not so, and that he was a simple person in great need of holiness; but he saw that she only thought him the holier for his humility, so he was ashamed to say more.

Then he went to the chief man in the village, and told him wherefore he had come—that there was a wreck on the shore of the islands, and that there were bodies that must be buried. One more visit he paid, and that was to the little maiden whom he had seen the last when he went away. She was now nearly grown to a woman, and her grandmother was very old and weak, and near her end. David went there alone, and said that he had returned as he had promised; but he found that the child had much lost her remembrance of him, and could hardly see the friend she had known in the strong and wild-looking figure that he had become. He talked a little quietly; the old grandmother, who could not move from her chair, was easier with him, and asked him, looking curiously upon him, whether he had found that of which he went in search. “Nay, mother,” he said, “not found; but I am like a man whose feet are set in the way, and who sees the city gate across the fields.” Then she smiled at him and said, “But I am near the gate.” Then he told her that he often thought of her, and made mention of her in his prayers; and so rose to go; but she asked him to bless her, which David did very tenderly, and kissed her and departed; but he went heavily; because he feared to be regarded as he was now regarded; and he thought in his heart that he would never return again, but dwell alone in his cave with God. For the world troubled him; and the voices of the children, and the looks of those that he had known before seemed to lay soft hands about his heart, and draw him back into the world.

The same day he returned to the cave; and the boats came out and took the bodies away, and they were laid in the burying-ground.

Then the next day many returned to clear away the wreck; and David came not out of his cave while they did this; for it went to his heart to see the joy with which they gathered what had meant the death of so many men. They asked him what they should leave for him, and he answered, “Nothing—only a piece of plain wood, for a purpose.” So when evening came they had removed all; and the island, that had rung all day with shouts and talk and the feet of men, was silent again; but before they went, David said that he had a great desire to see a priest, if a message could be sent; and this they undertook to do. But David was very heavy-hearted for many days, for it seemed to him that the sight of the world had put all the peace out of his heart; and his prayers came hollow and dry.

A few days after there came a boat to the rock; the sea was running somewhat high, and they had much ado to make a landing. David went down to the water's edge, and saw that besides the fishermen, whom he knew, there was a little wizened man in a priest's dress, that seemed bewildered by the moving of the boat and the tossing of the big waves with their heaving crests, that broke upon the rocks with a heavy sound. At last they got the boat into the creek, and the little priest came nimbly ashore, but not without a wetting. The fishermen said that they would return in the evening, and fetch the priest away.

He looked a frail man, and David could not discern whether he were young or old; and he felt a pity for a man who was so unhandy, and who seemed to be so scared of the sea. But the priest came up to him and took his hand. "I have heard much of you, my brother," he said, "and I have desired to see you—but this sea of yours is a strange and wild monster, and I trust it not,—though indeed it is God's handiwork. Yet King David, your patron, was of the same mind, I think, and wrote in one of his wise psalms how it made the heart to melt within him." David looked at him with much attention as he spoke, and there was something in the priest's eye, a kind of hidden fire, joined with a wise mirth, that made him, all of a sudden, feel like a child before him. So he said, "Where will your holiness sit? It is cold here in the wind; I have a dwelling in the rocks, but it is hard to come by except for winged fowl, and for men like myself who have been used to the precipices."

"Well, show the way, brother," said the priest cheerfully, "and I will adventure my best." So David showed him the way up the crags, and went slowly in front of him, that he might help him up; but the priest climbed like a cat, looking blithely about him, and had no need of help, though he was encumbered with his robe.

When they were got there, the priest looked curiously about him, and presently knelt down before the carving, and said a little prayer to himself.

Then he questioned David about his life, asking questions briskly, as though he were accustomed to command; and David felt more and more every moment that he was as a child before this masterful and wary man. He told him of his early life, and of his visions, and of his desire to know God, and of the light that he set in the rocks; and then he told him of his adventure with the pirates, not forgetting the treasure. The priest heard him with great attention, and said presently that he had done well, and that God was with him. Then he asked him how he would have the treasure bestowed, and David said that he had no design in his mind. "Then that shall be my care," said the priest, "and I doubt not that the Lord hath sent it us, that there may be a church in this lonely place."

And then, turning to David with a wonderful and piercing look, he said, "And this peace of spirit that you speak of, that you came here to seek, tell me truly, brother, have you found it?"

Then David looked upon the ground a little and said, "Dear sir, I know not; I am indeed strangely happy in this lonely place; but to speak all the truth, I feel like a man who lingers at a gate, and who hears the sound of joy and melody within, which rejoices his heart, but he is not yet admitted. No," he went on, "I have not found the way. The Father is indeed very near me, and I am certain of His love—but there is still a barrier between me and His Heart."

Then the priest bowed his head awhile in thought, but said nothing for a long space; and then David said, "Dear sir, advise me." Then the priest looked at him with a clear gaze, and said, "Shall I advise you, O my brother?" And David said, "Yes, dear sir." Then the priest said, "Indeed, my brother, I see in your life the gracious hand of God. He did redeem you, and He planted in your heart a true seed of peace. You have lived here a holy and an innocent life; but He withholds from you His best gift, because you are not willing to be utterly led by Him. There

have been in ancient days many such souls, who have fled from the wickedness of the world, and have spent themselves in prayer and penance, and have done a holy work—for indeed there are many victories that may be won by prayer. But indeed, dear brother, I think that God's will for you is that this lonely life of yours should have an end. I think that you have herein followed your own pleasure overmuch; and I believe that God would now have you go back to the world, and work for Him therein. You have a great power with this simple folk; but they are as sheep without a shepherd, and must be fed, and none but you can now feed them. You will bethink you of the visit that the Lord Christ paid to the Sisters of Bethany; Martha laboured much to please Him, but she laboured for her own pleasing too; and Mary it was that had the good part, because she thought not of herself, but of the Lord. And now, dear brother, I would have you do what will be very grievous to you. I would have you go back to your native place, and there abide to labour for God; you may come hither at seasons, and be alone with God, and that will refresh you; but you are now, methinks, hike a man who has found a great treasure, and who speaks no word of it to others, and neither uses it himself, but only looks upon it and is glad."

Then David was very sad at the priest's words, knowing that he spoke the truth. But the priest said, "Now we will speak no more of this awhile; and I would not have you do it, unless your heart consents thereto; only be strong." And then he asked if he might have somewhat to eat; and David brought him his simple fare; so they ate together, and while they ate, it came into David's mind that this was certainly the way. All that afternoon they sate, while the wind rustled without, and the sea made a noise; and then the priest said they would go and look at the treasure, because it was near evening, and he must return. So they went down together, and drew the rocks off from the box. It was a box of wood, tightly corded, and they undid it, and found within a great store of gold and silver pieces, which the priest reckoned up, and said that it would be abundant for a church.

Then they saw the boat approach; and the priest blessed David, and David thanked him with tears, for showing him the truth; and the priest said, "Not so, my brother; I did but show you what is in your own heart, for God puts such truth in the heart of all of us as we can bear; but sometimes we keep it like a sword in its scabbard, until the bright and sharp thing, that might have wrought great deeds, be all rusted and blunted."

And then the priest departed, taking with him the box of gold, and David was left alone.

David was very heavy-hearted when he was left alone on the island. He knew that the priest had spoken the truth, but he loved his solitary life, and the silence of the cave, the free air and the sun, and the lonely current of his own thoughts. The sun went slowly down over the waters in a great splendour of light and colour, so that the clouds in the sky seemed like purple islands floating in a golden sea; David sitting in his cave thought with a kind of terror of the small and close houses of the village, the sound of feet, and talk of men and women. At last he fell asleep; and in his sleep he dreamed that he was in a great garden. He looked about him with pleasure, and he presently saw a gardener moving about at his work. He went in that direction, and he saw that the man, who was old and had a very wise and tender face, was setting out some young trees in a piece of ground. He planted them carefully with deft hands, and he smiled to himself as he worked, as though he was full of joyful thoughts. David wished in his heart to go and speak with him, but something held him back. Presently the gardener went away, and while he was absent, another man, of a secret aspect, came swiftly into the place, peering about him. His glance passed David by, and David knew that he was in some way unseen. The man looked all about him in a furtive haste, and then plucked up one of the trees, which seemed to David to be already growing and shooting out small leaves and buds. The man smoothed down the ground where he

drew it out, and then went very quickly away. David would have wished to stop him, but he could not. Then the old gardener came back, and looked long at the place whence the tree had been drawn. Then he sighed to himself, and cast a swift look in the direction in which the man had fled. He had brought other trees with him, but he did not plant one in the empty space, but left it bare. Then David felt that he must follow the other, and so he did. He found him very speedily, but it was outside the garden, in a rough place, where thorny bushes and wild plants grew thickly. The other had cleared a little space among them, and here he set the tree; but he planted it ill and hastily, as though he was afraid of being disturbed; and then he departed secretly. David stood and watched the tree a little. It seemed at first to begin to grow again as it had done before, but presently something ailed it and it drooped. Then David saw the thorny bushes near it begin to stretch out their arms about it, and the wild herbs round about sprang up swiftly, and soon the tree was choked by them, and hardly appeared above the brake. David began to be sorry for the tree, which still kept some life in it, and struggled as it were feebly to put out its boughs above the thicket. While he stood he saw the old gardener approaching, and as he approached he carefully considered the ground. When he saw the tree, he smiled, and drew it out carefully, and went back to the garden, and David followed him; he planted it again tenderly in the ground; and the tree which had looked so drooping and feeble began at once to put forth leaves and flowers. The gardener smiled again, and then for the first time looked upon David. His eyes were deep and grave like a still water; and he smiled as one might who shares a secret with another. And then of a sudden David awoke, and found the light of dawn creeping into the cave; and he fell to considering the dream, and in a moment knew that it was sent for his learning. So he hesitated no longer, but gave up his will to God.

It was a sad hour for David nevertheless; he walked softly about the cave, and he put aside what he would take with him, and it seemed to him that he was, as it were, uprooting a tree that had grown deep; he tied up what he would take with him, but he left some things behind, for he thought that he might return. And then he knelt down and prayed, the tears running over his face; and lastly he rose and kissed the cold wall of the cave; at the door he saw the gull, that had been with him so oft, and he scattered some crumbs for it, and while the bird fell to picking the crumbs, David descended the rock swiftly, not having the heart to look about him; and then he put his things in the boat, and rowed swiftly and silently to the shore, looking back at the great rocks which stood up all bright and clear in the fresh light of the dawn, with the waves breaking softly at their feet.

David had no fixed plan in his mind, as he rowed across to the land. He only thought that it was right for him to return, and to take up his part in the old life again. He did not dare to look before him, but simply put, as it were, his hand in the hand of God, and hoped to be led forward. He was soon at the shore, and he pulled his boat up on time land, and left it lying in a little cave that opened upon the beach; then he shouldered his pack, and went slowly, with even strides, across the hill and down to the village. He met no one on the way, and the street seemed deserted. He made his way to the house of the old woman who was his friend; he put his small pack at the door and entered. The little house was quite silent. But he heard a sound of weeping; when he came into the outer room, he saw the maiden sitting in a chair with her face bowed on the table. He called to her by name; she lifted her head and looked at him for a moment and then rose up and came to him, as a child comes to be comforted. He saw at once that some grievous thing had happened; and presently with sobs and tears she told him that her grandmother had died a few days before, that she had been that day buried, and that she knew not what she was to do. There seemed more behind; and David at last made out that she was asked in marriage by a

young fisherman whom she did not love, and she knew not how else to live. And then he said that he was come back and would not depart from her, and that she should be a daughter to him.

Now of the rest of the life of David I must not here speak; he lived in the village, and he did his part; a little chapel was built in the place with the money of the pirates; and David went in and out among the folk of the place, and drew many to the love of God; he went once back to the cave, but he abode not long there; but of one thing I will tell, and that is of a piece of carving that David did, working little by little in the long winter nights at the piece of wood that came from the pirate ship. The carving is of a man standing on the shore of the sea, and holding up a lantern in his hand, and on the sea is carved a ship. And David calls his carving "The Light of the World." At the top of it is a scroll, with the words thereon, "He shall send down from on high to fetch me, and shall take me out of many waters." And beneath is another scroll on which is graven, "Thou also shalt light my candle; the Lord my God shall make my darkness to be light."