suggesting to the feminine mind storms at sea, a tossing ocean, and the hopeless inaccessibility of all astronomers and men on the other side of the same.

The Bishop had entered Viviette's room at ten minutes past three. The long hand of the hall clock lay level at forty-five minutes past when the knob of the door moved, and he came out. Louis met him where the passage
joined the hall.

Dr. Helmsdale was decidedly in an emotional state, his face being slightly flushed. Louis looked his anxious inquiry without speaking it.

'She accepts me,' said the Bishop in a low voice. 'And the wedding is to be soon. Her long solitude and sufferings justify haste. What you said was true. Sheer weariness and distraction have driven her to me. She was quite passive at last, and agreed to anything I proposed--such is the persuasive force of trained logical reasoning! A good and wise woman, she perceived what a true shelter from sadness was offered in me, and was not the one to despise Heaven's gift.'

XL

The silence of Swithin was to be accounted for by the circumstance that neither to the Mediterranean nor to America had he in the first place directed his steps. Feeling himself absolutely free he had, on arriving at Southampton, decided to make straight for the Cape, and hence had not gone aboard the Occidental at all. His object was to leave his heavier luggage there, examine the capabilities of the spot for his purpose, find out the necessity or otherwise of shipping over his own equatorial, and then cross to America as soon as there was a good opportunity. Here he might inquire the movements of the Transit expedition to the South Pacific, and join it at such a point as might be convenient.

Thus, though wrong in her premisses, Viviette had intuitively decided with sad precision. There was, as a matter of fact, a great possibility of her not being able to communicate with him for several months, notwithstanding that he might possibly communicate with her.

This excursive time was an awakening for Swithin. To altered circumstances inevitably followed altered views. That such changes should have a marked effect upon a young man who had made neither grand
tour nor petty one--who had, in short, scarcely been away from home in his life--was nothing more than natural. New ideas struggled to disclose themselves and with the addition of strange twinklers to his southern horizon came an absorbed attention that way, and a corresponding forgetfulness of what lay to the north behind his back, whether human or celestial. Whoever may deplore it few will wonder that Viviette, who

till then had stood high in his heaven, if she had not dominated it, sank, like the North Star, lower and lower with his retreat southward. Master of a large advance of his first year's income in circular notes, he perhaps too readily forgot that the mere act of honour, but for her self-suppression, would have rendered him penniless.

Meanwhile, to come back and claim her at the specified time, four years thence, if she should not object to be claimed, was as much a part of his programme as were the exploits abroad and elsewhere that were to prelude it. The very thoroughness of his intention for that advanced date inclined him all the more readily to shelve the subject now. Her unhappy caution to him not to write too soon was a comfortable license in his present state of tension about sublime scientific things, which knew not woman, nor her sacrifices, nor her fears. In truth he was not only too young in years, but too literal, direct, and uncompromising in nature to understand such a woman as Lady Constantine; and she suffered for that limitation in him as it had been antecedently probable that she would do.

He stayed but a little time at Cape Town on this his first reconnoitring journey; and on that account wrote to no one from the place. On leaving he found there remained some weeks on his hands before he wished to cross to America; and feeling an irrepressible desire for further studies in navigation on shipboard, and under clear skies, he took the steamer for Melbourne; returning thence in due time, and pursuing his journey to America, where he landed at Boston.

Having at last had enough of great circles and other nautical reckonings, and taking no interest in men or cities, this indefatigable scrutineer of the universe went immediately on to Cambridge; and there, by the help of an introduction he had brought from England, he revelled for a time in the glories of the gigantic refractor (which he was permitted to use on occasion), and in the pleasures of intercourse with the scientific group around. This brought him on to the time of starting with the Transit expedition, when he and his kind became lost to the eye of civilization behind the horizon of the Pacific Ocean.

To speak of their doings on this pilgrimage, of ingress and egress, of tangent and parallax, of external and internal contact, would avail nothing. Is it not all written in the chronicles of the Astronomical Society? More to the point will it be to mention that Viviette's letter to Cambridge had been returned long before he reached that place, while her missive to Marseilles was, of course, misdirected altogether. On arriving in America, uncertain of an address in that country at which he would stay long, Swithin wrote his first letter to his grandmother; and in this he ordered that all communications should be sent to await him at Cape Town, as the only safe spot for finding him, sooner or later. The equatorial he also directed to be forwarded to the same place. At this time, too, he ventured to break Viviette's commands, and address a letter to her, not knowing of the strange results that had followed his absence from home.

It was February. The Transit was over, the scientific company had broken

up, and Swithin had steamed towards the Cape to take up his permanent abode there, with a view to his great task of surveying, charting and theorizing on those exceptional features in the southern skies which had been but partially treated by the younger Herschel. Having entered Table Bay and landed on the quay, he called at once at the post-office.

Two letters were handed him, and he found from the date that they had been waiting there for some time. One of these epistles, which had a weather-worn look as regarded the ink, and was in old-fashioned penmanship, he knew to be from his grandmother. He opened it before he had as much as glanced at the superscription of the second.

Besides immaterial portions, it contained the following:--

'J reckon you know by now of our main news this fall, but lest you should not have heard of it J send the exact thing snipped out of the newspaper. Nobody expected her to do it quite so soon; but it is said hereabout that my lord bishop and my lady had been drawing nigh to an understanding before the glum tidings of Sir Blount's taking of his own life reached her; and the account of this wicked deed was so sore afflicting to her mind, and made her poor heart so timid and low, that in charity to my lady her few friends agreed on urging her to let the bishop go on paying his court as before, notwithstanding she had not been a widow-woman near so long as was thought. This, as it turned out, she was willing to do; and when my lord asked her she told him she would marry him at once or never. That's as J was told, and J had

it from those that know.'

The cutting from the newspaper was an ordinary announcement of marriage between the Bishop of Melchester and Lady Constantine.

Swithin was so astounded at the intelligence of what for the nonce seemed Viviette's wanton fickleness that he quite omitted to look at the second letter; and remembered nothing about it till an hour afterwards, when sitting in his own room at the hotel.

It was in her handwriting, but so altered that its superscription had not arrested his eye. It had no beginning, or date; but its contents soon acquainted him with her motive for the precipitate act. The few concluding sentences are all that it will be necessary to quote here:--

'There was no way out of it, even if I could have found you, without infringing one of the conditions I had previously laid down. The long desire of my heart has been not to impoverish you or mar your career. The new desire was to save myself and, still more, another yet unborn. . . . I have done a desperate thing. Yet for myself I could do no better, and for you no less. I would have sacrificed my single self to honesty, but I was not alone concerned. What woman has a right to blight a coming life to preserve her personal integrity? . . . The one bright spot is that it saves you and your endowment from further catastrophes, and preserves you to the pleasant paths of scientific fame. I no longer lie like a log across your path, which is now as

open as on the day before you saw me, and ere I encouraged you to win me. Alas, Swithin, I ought to have known better. The folly was great, and the suffering be upon my head! I ought not to have consented to that last interview: all was well till then! . . . Well, I have borne much, and am not unprepared. As for you, Swithin, by simply pressing straight on your triumph is assured. Do not communicate with me in any way--not even in answer to this. Do not think of me. Do not see me ever any more.--Your unhappy

'VIVIETTE.'

Swithin's heart swelled within him in sudden pity for her, first; then he blanched with a horrified sense of what she had done, and at his own relation to the deed. He felt like an awakened somnambulist who should find that he had been accessory to a tragedy during his unconsciousness. She had loosened the knot of her difficulties by cutting it unscrupulously through and through.

The big tidings rather dazed than crushed him, his predominant feeling being soon again one of keenest sorrow and sympathy. Yet one thing was obvious; he could do nothing--absolutely nothing. The event which he now heard of for the first time had taken place five long months ago. He reflected, and regretted--and mechanically went on with his preparations for settling down to work under the shadow of Table Mountain. He was as one who suddenly finds the world a stranger place than he thought; but is

excluded by age, temperament, and situation from being much more than an

astonished spectator of its strangeness.

* * * * *

The Royal Observatory was about a mile out of the town, and hither he repaired as soon as he had established himself in lodgings. He had decided, on his first visit to the Cape, that it would be highly advantageous to him if he could supplement the occasional use of the large instruments here by the use at his own house of his own equatorial, and had accordingly given directions that it might be sent over from England. The precious possession now arrived; and although the sight of it--of the brasses on which her hand had often rested, of the eyepiece through which her dark eyes had beamed--engendered some decidedly bitter regrets in him for a time, he could not long afford to give to the past the days that were meant for the future.

Unable to get a room convenient for a private observatory he resolved at last to fix the instrument on a solid pillar in the garden; and several days were spent in accommodating it to its new position. In this latitude there was no necessity for economizing clear nights as he had been obliged to do on the old tower at Welland. There it had happened more than once, that after waiting idle through days and nights of cloudy weather, Viviette would fix her time for meeting him at an hour when at last he had an opportunity of seeing the sky; so that in giving to her

the golden moments of cloudlessness he was losing his chance with the orbs above.

Those features which usually attract the eye of the visitor to a new latitude are the novel forms of human and vegetable life, and other such sublunary things. But the young man glanced slightingly at these; the changes overhead had all his attention. The old subject was imprinted there, but in a new type. Here was a heaven, fixed and ancient as the northern; yet it had never appeared above the Welland hills since they were heaved up from beneath. Here was an unalterable circumpolar region; but the polar patterns stereotyped in history and legend--without which it had almost seemed that a polar sky could not exist--had never been seen therein.

St. Cleeve, as was natural, began by cursory surveys, which were not likely to be of much utility to the world or to himself. He wasted several weeks--indeed above two months--in a comparatively idle survey of southern novelties; in the mere luxury of looking at stellar objects whose wonders were known, recounted, and classified, long before his own personality had been heard of. With a child's simple delight he allowed his instrument to rove, evening after evening, from the gorgeous glitter of Canopus to the hazy clouds of Magellan. Before he had well finished this optical prelude there floated over to him from the other side of the Equator the postscript to the epistle of his lost Viviette. It came in the vehicle of a common newspaper, under the head of 'Births:'--

'April 10th, 18--, at the Palace, Melchester, the wife of the Bishop of Melchester, of a son.'

XLI

Three years passed away, and Swithin still remained at the Cape, quietly pursuing the work that had brought him there. His memoranda of observations had accumulated to a wheelbarrow load, and he was beginning to shape them into a treatise which should possess some scientific utility.

He had gauged the southern skies with greater results than even he himself had anticipated. Those unfamiliar constellations which, to the casual beholder, are at most a new arrangement of ordinary points of light, were to this professed astronomer, as to his brethren, a far greater matter.

It was below the surface that his material lay. There, in regions revealed only to the instrumental observer, were suns of hybrid kind--fire-fogs, floating nuclei, globes that flew in groups like swarms of bees, and other extraordinary sights--which, when decomposed by Swithin's equatorial, turned out to be the beginning of a new series of phenomena instead of the end of an old one.