

Bastian have given their lives—" Then he halted at the sound of a loud cry.

"Bishop!" The bishop looked down. Bastian was struggling to his feet. "You mean that Roberts cabled that! That Roberts let it happen! That it is all gone! Gone, Bishop Jacoby?"

"I thought you knew, Bastian." The bishop's voice faltered. "I thought Forster went to meet you to tell you."

"No," answered Bastian thickly. "He did not tell me. I suppose he missed me in the crowd. I—I—" Bastian hesitated. The ague came upon him again. "Let me speak now, Jacoby. I will not be long." "I—will not be long."

For a moment after he was in the pulpit Bastian could not speak. His eyes, however, held his audience until the shaking fit was past. Then, when he had begun, he hesitated, as though it were difficult properly to frame his sentences. Occasionally he used a word they did not know. It was many years since he had spoken to people of his kind.

"I do not agree with Bishop Jacoby when he says Africa should be given up. I think the reasons he gives are reasons why it should not be given up. Shall we leave the bones of Lambert and Dana alone there, uncared for, their work abandoned, their names forgotten because their work is forgotten? If they failed, it was partly because they had no help. I have come home to get some one to go back. We have about sixty girls and boys gathered together. We have never been so prosperous. We are not failing, we are succeeding." His hand stirred on the pulpit before him, and touched the yellow paper of the telegram. "I know what Roberts says. But I can build it up again in a month. He—he had no judgment. I warned him to be careful till I got back. They have to be treated like children." He spoke as tenderly as though they were his own. "You have to be there years before you can understand. They did that before once when I was sick. But they will come back. Because—because—"

He seemed to be struggling with inability to grasp his own thought, and the bishop helped with a gentle question.

"Why will they come back?"

"Because I can compel them."

"How?"

Bastian did not answer at once. Then he drew a long breath.

"I own them," he said simply.

"Own them!" The bishop expressed the horror on the faces of the eager listeners. Did the church hold slaves?

"Yes, I own them," answered Bastian steadily. "Not the church. I bought them with my salary. You don't understand how it is in Africa. I tried to explain once in a letter, but the board wouldn't listen. You can't get the free ones, but you can buy little

girls that are—that are going to be—to be sold. They're very little girls, and you can teach them." He saw one man turn and whisper to another and answered him aloud. "I know all about Mary. But her children are there now. A generation doesn't count. We've only been there sixty years. And what are sixty years? or a hundred? or a thousand?"

"But the fever," reminded the bishop. The question of Africa had been decided, and the decision was not to be changed by Bastian's emotional appeal. "Is it worth while to train a man for years and then to send him where he will die in a week? You have a marvelous constitution. But Lambert only lived a year, and Dana two, and Roe one."

"They didn't take care of themselves properly. They didn't know then that native remedies are best."

"Roe used native remedies."

"Roe did not die of fever." Bastian put his hand to his lips when he had spoken.

"Roe did not die of fever! But when you went out you found him—"

"Roe did not die of fever. He—he—" the ghastly secret he had kept for twenty years, for fear they should demand his return, was out at last. "Roe was murdered."

"By the natives?" It was a long time before the bishop asked the question.

"Yes. It was—before I got there. I found him. They said here they would waste no more lives in Africa. I knew they would think it was worse if he was murdered. It was—it happened days—before—I got there." His mouth seemed to stiffen so that he could not go on.

"Are they ever unruly now?" asked Dr. Meynell slowly. "Is your life ever in danger?"

"It—it has been." He would have given almost his hope of heaven to say no.

"Would it be if you went back?"

"Possibly."

"And you would go?" the bishop asked.

"I am going."

"There would be plenty of work here."

Bastian shook his head wearily. "This is not my work. It is not my home. I tell you,"—he lifted his arms,— "whether the board sends me or not, I am going back. I came to get men because I am growing old, but I am going alone if no one will go with me. I am going back."

The bishop shook his head.

"But we can't ask any one to go there. It is the most dangerous spot along the coast. Let us try inland, perhaps, or farther south. We cannot ask any one to go there." He spoke impatiently. He was as sincerely interested in the church as Bastian. "Think of the lives and deaths of Lambert and Dana and Roe. Think of your own life."

Bastian stared at him dully. His own life! He did not like to remember it, the high hopes with which he had gone out, the finding of Roe's body, the terrors by night, the hard work by day, the loneliness, the mad longing for companionship, the evil desires which he had not known before, bred now by the jungle, desires which he cursed. Thank God he had conquered himself! Was the reward to be forbidden him?

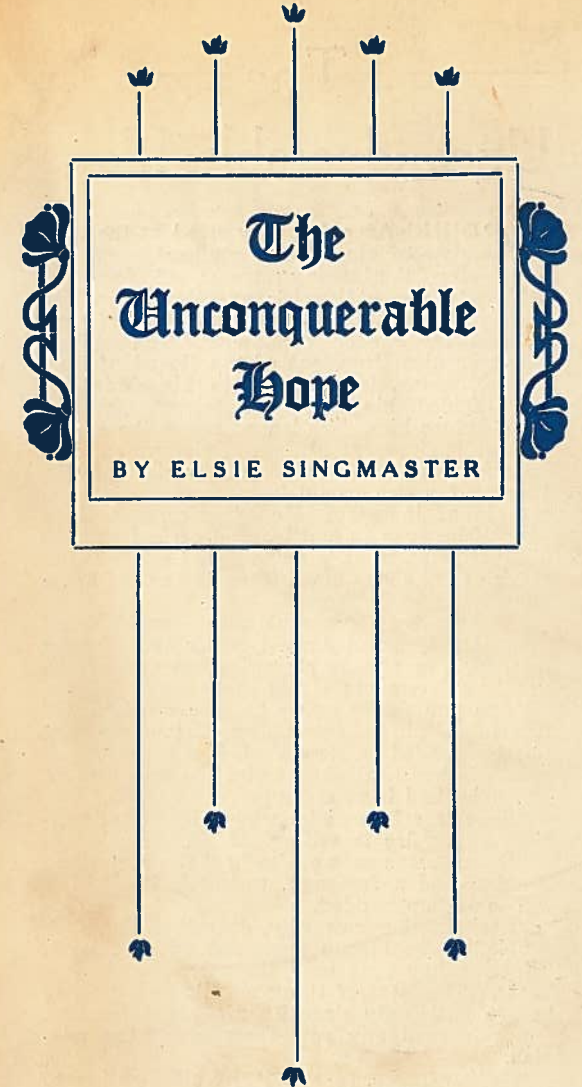
His gaze swept the faces before him. Some of them showed agreement with the bishop, some of them a wavering between two opinions, and all, pity for him.

"I am going back," he said slowly. "Is there no one who will go with me?"

The bishop started to rise, then sank back. For an instant Bastian held the eyes of the young home missionary who had recognized him when he came in. Beyond, his burning gaze searched in vain. He bent his head, defeated, ashamed. In his youth such an appeal would have brought a score of responses. To him now, this silence meant spiritual atrophy. To the bishop it meant that these people were at last sane. The bishop bit his lips. The scene was becoming a nightmare. He half hoped that some one would offer to go, if only to put an end to the agony. Then the bishop cursed himself for the meanness of the thought. A vast pity came over him for this zealot who was so anxious to throw away his life, and a feeling of thankfulness that he, the bishop, had sternly put down the fanatic enthusiasms of his own youth.

Then suddenly, a change came into Bastian's haggard face. Light gleamed in his eyes, and into his cheeks came a redder flush. Bastian lifted his head, he put his hand to his trembling throat, and he smiled, the old radiant smile which was his one beauty. The bishop followed the direction of his gaze. To his amazement, then to his dismay and terror, he saw that Arnold had risen and was speaking. If it had been possible, the bishop would have silenced the words upon the boy's lips; he would almost rather he had died. He was not aware that another young man and another and another sprang up; he knew only that the impressions of the moment would remain with him, overshadowing all other impressions of life, until he died. There came, first of all, in one pang, the bitter loneliness of the coming years, accompanied by the knowledge that he had never been really acquainted with his boy; then a sharper stab of intolerable envy of these two men, Bastian and Arnold, one old, the other young, who whenever they died, would die young, their lives "pouring in full torrent over a precipice," because of their mad devotion to an idea. He could not understand them, these nurses of unconquerable hope, Lambert, Dana, Roe, Bastian, even though there was added to them his own son, who said slowly,

"I will go back with you to Africa."



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# The Unconquerable Hope

YOUNG Arnold Jacoby stood at the window of his father's study, idly watching the steady stream of delegates to the national convention, of which Bishop Jacoby was president, as they entered the church next door. The bishop, who was also President of the Board of Foreign Missions, leaned back in his chair, his arms folded, his eyes on a telegram on the table before him. He looked more like a successful business man than a clergyman, and he conducted the business of the church with judgment which would have done credit to a captain of industry. He often congratulated himself because he had learned early in life to distrust impulse as a principle of action. Because of it he was now bishop instead of home missionary in Montana.

He looked up pleasantly as Arnold faced him. He regarded Arnold, cultivated, already learned, and always charming, as one of the great achievements of his life.

"Are you really going to give up Africa?" Arnold asked. "Doctor Meynell told me that Bastian landed in New York last night."

His father held out to him the telegram at which he had been staring. It read:

"Roberts cables girls' school disbanded mission set on fire is sailing. J. FORSTER."

"Roberts was sent out to hold the fort while Bastian had a furlough, wasn't he?"

The bishop nodded.

"Looks rather cowardly, doesn't it?"

"No." The bishop answered with decision. "Bastian has sent only the most meagre reports. This sort of thing may have happened before. It's only since Roberts went out that we've learned any real facts about the mission."

"Rather game, wasn't it, of old Bastian to hold his tongue about it? How did he stick it out?"

"He has some theories like Roe had about native remedies for fever, and he's lived through Roe died. But it wasn't fair to the church. We supposed we had a prosperous mission, and it was disturbing to find that it consisted of one miserable building and that the devoted converts were likely at any time to burn that and revert to the bush." The bishop rose and gathered his books together. "There was an understanding twenty years ago that if Bastian failed we would not try again. It is madness."

"Does Bastian know you're going to retreat?"

"Yes, by this time. Secretary Forster was to meet him in New York. But it isn't a retreat." The bishop was annoyed at his son's choice of words. "Are you coming over?"

"Presently. Bastian was in your class, wasn't he?"

"Yes." The bishop's eyes narrowed a little as he went out. Bastian had won from him the oratorical prize of their senior year in the seminary. It was one of the few great defeats of the bishop's life. He had prepared the speech weeks before, carefully selecting a subject in which he knew the judges were interested, and writing it with a view to their prejudices. It had never occurred to him that he would not win. Then Bastian, with a fervid, ill-prepared address on foreign missions, had swept his prize away. The bishop could see the judges, crowding around Bastian and congratulating him. He was a big, homely fellow, whose face was occasionally made beautiful by a radiant smile.

Now the bishop looked down at the convention from the high pulpit. Sometimes he felt that these were pawns in a great, wise, and interesting game which he was playing. He had intimate knowledge of men; he was by turns a leader and an opportunist. He knew the clear-eyed, fanatic student fitted to work in the loneliness of a Western border mission; he knew the carefully dressed, clever youngster who would be popular in a city church.

They were all before him, these frontier preachers, tanned, eager, a little impatient of the long service, silent for the most part, but flaming occasionally into eloquence over the necessity for more men and more funds, or the desirability of church extension. The West was very different from hopeless Africa. Beside these men were the cultivated preachers from the Eastern churches—Barnes, of Philadelphia; Bland, of New York; Mellen, of Baltimore; broad-minded, able, alive.

The business of the morning, the first portion of which was left over from the day before, went on smoothly, the bishop appointing committees and settling disputes with the perfect judgment and tact which always marked his presiding. At half past ten there was a recess, then the delegates settled back into their seats. The bishop saw Arnold come in and smiled a greeting.

When the bishop rose there was still a slight stir. In the corner of the church a committee which had utilized the short recess for a meeting was hastily separating, and the doors leading into the hall were just being closed. The bishop did not seem to notice the slight confusion.

"Brethren," he began slowly, "it is necessary to reopen the question of Africa." Dr. Meynell broke off suddenly in the midst of his sentence, the committee slipped hastily to their seats, and men sat upright or leaned forward as was most natural to each in

moments of excitement. The memory of the last discussion of Africa lingered in their minds. Not all of them had heard it, but they knew it almost word for word: the bitter quarrel, the demands of the friends of Dana and Roe and Lambert, who had died in the field, that the work go on, the harsh reproaches of the men from the West. In return, the advocates of abandonment, of whom the bishop had been one, had pointed bitterly to the expenditure of men and money, and the weary failures. But Bastian had gone out, and for twenty years there had been only good reports, meagre as they were. He had dosed himself against the fever with native remedies; he had refused doggedly to come home since there was no one to take his place; he had made it, they believed, succeed. Or, had it not succeeded? The bishop's voice was ominous with important news.

He reminded them at first of Lambert and Dana and Roe, suggesting to their minds stories, incidents, descriptions, they had forgotten. These three great pioneers had died in loneliness. Roe had been found by Bastian when he went out, his body lying unburied in the mission house. They knew the insidious fever which did its work in a night, the still greater treachery of the natives, and the unknown and hidden terrors of the jungle. They remembered Mary, dark-skinned child of hope, brought to America to be trained as a nurse, and then reverting to savagery. There was no variety of missionary experiment which they had not tried and in which they had not failed.

"We believed, however, during all this time," the bishop went on, "that Bastian was succeeding. Of his bravery for twenty years we know. When we realize, now, however, that it has been a losing fight, our admiration becomes awe. His life is an appropriate seal upon a faithfully performed experiment."

The bishop's eyes swept his attentive audience. At last the church realized with him what he might have expressed as Africa's unreadiness for the altruistic principle. It was folly to try to hurry nature. He looked for an instant into Arnold's earnest face; then, attracted by a movement in the back of the church, glanced in that direction, and became suddenly silent.

How long the man had been standing there the bishop did not know. He was tall and thin to emaciation, dark-skinned, and long-bearded. The bishop was reminded of an aged beggar he had seen on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa. There was the same dark skin, the same white beard, the same brilliant eye. As if to complete the resemblance, the stranger shook with sudden chill, as the beggar had shaken with palsy. He was well dressed, though strangely. His heavy black suit was unworn, but it had been bought twenty years before.

He looked straight into the bishop's eyes for an instant, then swayed suddenly and some one sprang up to show him to a pew. The old man—he seemed ages old—smiled, and suddenly the bishop knew. This was Bastian come home.

A hundred thoughts went through the bishop's mind as he went down the aisle: a keen remembrance of his defeat at Bastian's hands—thank God, Bastian had had that small success!—a vision of the mission as Roberts had pictured it, its desolation, its danger, the loneliness of this man's soul, shut off from his kind. A hot pity for him almost blinded the bishop's eyes. The church would accept no more such sacrifices. Bastian might have been of vast use in America. Now his life was nearly over, and he had accomplished nothing, nothing.

The bishop was aware of Arnold's eager eyes as he led Bastian up the aisle. They were like his mother's, who had died when he was born. The old man—Bastian was, after all, only as old as the bishop himself—would have held back, but the bishop's arm around him compelled him. The audience stared, uncomprehending, until a deep-eyed young zealot, who, in his lonely house in Montana, had thought often of that other lonely house in Liberia, sprang to his feet.

"It is Bastian come home," he cried. In a second they were all upon their feet. They did not speak. Dr. Meynell was tempted to call for a triumphal hymn, but refrained, and the bishop led Bastian quietly to a seat. There Bastian bowed his head on his hands, and after an instant lifted it and looked into the bishop's eyes.

"May I speak when you are finished?" he asked.

"You may speak now," said the bishop.

"No, I want to hear what else you have to say. I'll wait till you're through."

"Very well," said the bishop. He was thankful that there had been no emotional exhibition. He remembered how returning missionaries were greeted with shouts and song when he was a boy. Perhaps the world was growing less emotional and more sane. He was thankful also that Bastian knew that things were gone to pieces in Liberia. He should not have liked Forster's task of telling him. The bishop went slowly up the pulpit stairs. He could not remember just where he was when Bastian had interrupted him. Ah, yes, he was about to tell them that Roberts, too, was coming home.

"The cablegram from Mr. Roberts came yesterday to Secretary Forster, who forwarded it to me." The bishop took the telegram from his pocket and read it aloud. "Roberts cables that the girls' school is disbanded and the mission set on fire. We have done our best," he went on. "Lambert, Dana, Roe,