

the power and resolution to readily take a decision under difficult circumstances, and to abide by it once taken. so it was that reason made a shuttlecock of his present resolve, and half a dozen times he stopped in the road meaning to abandon his purpose, and turn back to cullerne. yet half a dozen times he went on, though with slow feet, thinking always, was he right in what he was doing, was he right and the fog grew thicker; it seemed almost to be stifling him; he could not see his hand if he held it at arms length before his face. was he right, was there any right or any wrong, was anything real, was not everything subjective the creation of his own brain did he exist, was he himself, was he in the body or out of the body and then a wild dismay, a horror of the darkness and the fog, seized hold of him. he stretched out his arms, and groped in the mist as if he hoped to lay hold of someone, or something, to reassure him as to his own identity, and at last a mind panic got the better of him; he turned and started back to cullerne. it was only for a moment, and then reason began to recover her sway; he stopped, and sat down on the heather at the side of the road, careless that every spray was wet and dripping, and collected his thoughts. his heart was beating madly as in one that wakes from a nightmare, but he was now ashamed of his weakness and of the mental debacle, though there had been none to see it. what could have possessed him, what madness was this after a few minutes he was able to turn round once more, and resumed his walk towards the railway with a firm, quick step, which to carry a letter over to you, although that is strictly contrary to our orders. i expressed a desire to know what he meant by a warm piece; he kicked his foot against the stock of a gun i had at the time in my hand; and, looking at me with an expression of the greatest contempt, said, it is what you worldly folks call a musket they were making considerable preparations to repair to the great meeting of the chiefs, to which rivers was journeying. this was a wise and politic measure for them to pursue; and they were highly delighted to have such an addition to their party as this well known chief; and though they would not acknowledge it, their satisfaction was very visible. i earnestly requested them to inform me candidly, from all they had heard, whether they thought i might, with safety, venture across the country; but i could get nothing from them but vague and mysterious answers: one thing, however, they made me very clearly understand; which was, that they neither cared for me nor for my drawings; that their own safety engrossed all their thoughts; and that a worldly minded, misguided creature like me was but as dust in the balance, compared to such godly people as themselves, who were now placed in jeopardy. they, without scruple, applied quotations from the scriptures to themselves, such as, why do the heathen so furiously rage, etc., etc. my necessities compelled me to request a favour from them, which was, that they would allow one of their boys, who could speak english, to accompany me, as our loads were heavy; and his being known to belong to their establishment i thought might be some protection; but the short answer of the monosyllable no soon made me repent having asked it. i spread my bed in one of their empty rooms; and started at daybreak next morning, with my two native slaves. her down to a secure footing on the plateau. so long as she followed him unresistingly he led her on towards the mountain without aim or fixed destination but away, away from the abyss. she paused by a square block of diorite, and paulus, who had not failed to observe how heavy her steps were, desired her to sit down; he pushed up a flag of stone, which he propped with smaller ones, so that sirona might not lack a support for her weary back. when he had accomplished this, sirona leaned back against the stone, and something of dawning satisfaction was audible in the soft sigh, which was the first sound that had escaped her tightly closed lips since her rescue. paulus smiled at her encouragingly, and said, now rest a little, i see what you want; one cannot defy the heat of the sun for a whole day with impunity. sirona nodded, pointed to her mouth, and implored wearily and very softly for water, a little water. paulus struck his hand against his forehead, and cried eagerly, directly i will bring you a fresh draught. in a few minutes i will be back again. sirona looked after him as he hastened away. her gaze became more and more staring and glazed, and she felt as if the rock, on which she was sitting, were changing into the ship which had brought her from massilia to ostia. Every