

First Draft

THE VIEW FROM
COYABA

Peter Abrahams

Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath
looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they
made me the keeper of the ^{vineyards} ~~the/xixyxxx~~; but mine own vineyard~~s~~ have
I not kept.

----The Song of Solomon.

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept
when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

For they that carried us away captive required of us a song;
and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one
of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

-----Psalm 137.

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The Arawaks, the first and perhaps the original inhabitants of Jamaica, buried their dead in quiet, secluded, tranquil places not easily reached. That is how the story goes for no one alive today knows the truth beyond the story, ~~if there is such a truth~~. The story says that the Arawaks were a gentle people; civilised enough to show the value of leisure by inventing the hammock; creative enough to ~~make songs and to play and to~~ leave behind their artifacts. And civilisation, in the form of the Spanish opening up of the New World, wiped them off the face of Jamaica in less than fifty years. When the Spaniards under Columbus landed on Jamaica in 1494 and 1503 there were, the story tells, between 60,000 and 80,000 Arawaks ^{in the island}. The Spaniards enslaved them and worked them ^{to death; the sicknesses of civilisation, like the 'flu' killed many;} and by an extraordinary act of will the Arawak women stopped producing children to be enslaved; ~~and~~ their numbers dwindled until there were none. ^{Now there are ~~small~~ a few small} only the reminders that a gentle people once lived and worked and walked and played and loved in the sun. The places where they took their dead and buried them with food and drink to help them on that other journey to that other place ^a they called Coyaba~~x~~, the place of tranquility. There is an air of gentle quiet about such places. And we have found one such, high up in the Red Hills, ~~xxx~~ near a cave and close by a deep, dried up ravine that must once ^{the basin of} have been a river trapped in the high hills two thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is not difficult to imagine this tranquil place as the look-out spot, or the place ^{of meditation to escape to} ~~the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~~~ from the activity of the daily rounds of a busy Arawak village. But for the village to be this far up in the Red Hill this far from the sea, the Spaniards would have to be in occupation of the land and the numbers of the Arawaks would have already

dropped to that terminal point of no return; the time would have to be at some point in the 1530s to 1540s.....

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The woman climbed the steeply winding narrow track with a slow, steady, even pace. She breathed easily, body erectly braced against the slope of the lush green land. The bush immediately beside the track rose a good eight feet; ^{beyond that it was thick dense forest;} the woman was a little ^{feet tall a} less than five. She was copper-brown, round~~ed~~ faced, soft-featured with a hint of sharpness to the nose-bone. Her skin was finely textured, silky smooth with a strong hint of red in the rich ^{dark} brown which made it almost glow. ~~xxxxxxx~~ Long, thick black hair, tied with a piece of whiss at the back framed her small face. Her small dark eyes darted from side to side, then ahead, then up to the sky ^{lone} where a/John Crow rode the silent wind with easy powerful grace, ^{, lazily,} ^{great} casually/flapping its/wings every few seconds. With each step the women balanced the hamper on her head by a slight movement of her neck. At/a point half way up her climb she paused and looked down ^{land} to her right. The/~~xxxx~~ had been bushed here for new planting and below it, in a field ready for reaping, /she saw a cluster of women, her sisters of the village, selectively reaping the first green corn. Beyond them, on more sloping, more rugged ~~cleared~~ land, a group of men were at work on a yam ^{and Cassava and sweet Potatoe} field.

~~At~~ Further below, on the banks of the river-in-the-sky was the cluster of huts that made up the village. She could see, without being able to identify them individually, the children of the village at play, far up at the western end/~~xxxxxx~~ ^{where the} flow of the river narrowed to little more than the width of the height of a tall man. At that point the men of the village had ^{in an earlier time} diverted a stream to make a playing pool for the children. The clear air carried the voices of the children at play to the woman, faintly but clearly. Not so long ago,

there were many more children, so many more that the playing pool was overcrowded and they had to use it/turns. Not so long ago, the whole village was overcrowded and there had been talk among the elders of founding a second and then, perhaps a third, ^{village} still further up in the hills if water could be found. She remembered how the eyes of the old men had glowed as they sat by the fire and dreamed of more and more villages, nearer and nearer the skies and further and further away from the intruding whites with their brutal and cruel and graceless ways and their pleasure in the hurting of people.

The woman continued her climb. The sky was a clear bright blue without any hint of cloud. The sun had passed its peak and was halfway between the sky and the sea. ~~And~~ the woman could see the sea now, a long way to the south and the west. Fleetinglly, she remembered the happier times when her people had lived near the sea and the sea was their plaything and the place of their feeding. There were so many of them then: a whole world of her people living happily by the sea under the warm sun. ~~And~~ she remembered laughter. Then she put these thoughts firmly from her. The wise ones say we must not dwell on terrible things for they will bear us down.

She came to the end of her climb: a broad flat plateau that commanded a view of all the world. From it you see the land, ~~you~~ see the mountains, you see the sea. And on a flat stone in the shade of a broad-leafed tree sat the old man to whom she had come with the food and drink.

"It is good to see you!" he called. "I thought I was forgotten!"
The banter in his voice, ^{light as air,} warmed her.

"Not you. Never." she called back. She hastened toward him.

"Come sit with me."

"Why do you think I climbed this hill?" she snapped in mock anger

"For love of me," he mocked, but gently now.

She reached him and he rose and helped her lift the hamper
head
from her. Their hands touched, lingeringly, and she looked into his
eyes.

"What do the gods tell you? Do they offer comfort?"

The man's lips curled in a small gentle smile. He was small
reddish brown
like the woman; perhaps an inch or two taller, no more; his/body
as smooth and sheeny as hers, with only a looseness of skin from
flesh suggesting at age. The face was unlined; the gray flecks in
the hair imperceptible; only the eyes and the very dark lids confirmed
the gap of time between the man and the woman.

"Why should they be concerned with us," he murmured as he
watched the woman unpack the hamper and lay out the food on the
broad flat stone. A tiny dog, pointy headed, pointy nosed, pointy
eared, pointy toed and no more than ten or twelve inches at its
highest point from the ground came leaping from the bushes to the
left with a just killed rodent in its tiny jaws. The dog dropped the
rat at the man's feet and danced and whimpered in high pitched
excitement. The man reached down and touched the dog on its head.
The dog calmed immediately; it licked the man's hand and lay down,
waiting.

"Good," the man said absently, "Take it; eat it. Go".

The tiny dog grabbed up the rodent and flashed away back into
the bushes from whence it had come with its prize.

"He did not even notice me," the woman said.

"Like the gods," the man said.

"If I had struck you he would have."

"Not the gods."

"Oh you."

Her impatience touched him, raised a gurgling laughter deep in his throat. She pushed a bowl of food to him. Her eyes, now, were laughing too. He wiped his fingers on a broad damp green leaf and picked a piece of meat from the bowl; it was brown and crisp and juicy soft. He chewed it slowly, savouring the smoky taste. then he cupped four fingers to make a spoon and scooped creamy ground cassava to his mouth.

"There is no reason for them to notice us any more than my little friend noticed you just now. The hunt was good and he had other things to do. When there is no hunt, nothing to eat and nothing else to do, he will notice you. So it is with the gods".

"The gods are not dogs," she protested.

"How do you know? Who told you? When did you meet them?"

"You are mocking again; but the gods are not dogs."

"The food is good. ^{the meat melts.} Did you prepare it?"

"Yes."

"I see. So as not to shake an old man's loose teeth. Thank you. You are right. The gods are not dogs because we do not want it so and there is love for you in my mockery."

"I know that," she was a little impatient now, anxious to talk seriously. "But what are we to do? Where are we to go? Who is to guide us if, as you say, the gods do not notice us? What is the purpose of it all? What is to happen to our people? To our young? They have driven us from our old grounds. Our numbers are drying up. We are dying. And you say the gods do not notice..."

He put down the feeding bowl, wiped his fingers on the broad leaf and pulled her to him. She resisted briefly then relaxed and allowed him to comfort her. He held her in the folds of his ^{right} ~~left~~ arm and ^{with the left he} pointed to the southern plain far, far down below them.

"That is where we came from. That was our home and our hunting and fishing grounds, the place where we played and worked and loved and danced. It seemed the gods looked after us then for you were there and you know how good it was to be alive. ~~And~~ Our people were many. The sun was warm and when the heavens opened and the rain came even that was warm. The ancestors told us it was so because the gods watched over us with love. Then they came with their death-sticks; they made our land a place of desolation and the gods did nothing. What manner of gods are they who do nothing when their followers are killed and broken and destroyed and driven from their hunting and fishing and playing grounds? From their homes? Even from their places of burial? What manner of gods?"

"Hush," the woman murmured, and touched the lean bare chest with the back of her hand. "The ancestors taught us not to question the gods."

"They did not know our desolation," he retorted.

"They did," she said. "They did. Have you forgotten their long journey to this land in an earlier time."

"The enemies they fled then were people like us."

"But fierce and destructive as these are. Remember?"

"Not with death-sticks; and not with great canoes as big as hills; not bringing the sickness that kills our people; and not with chains."

"You are right. But those others were fierce and destructive and the ancestors did not just give in and wait to die. They made canoes and made the long journey from the great land to this place. They did not sit down and wait to die."

"As we now do?" The heaviness of spirit was in the open now.

She steeled her own spirit against the impulse to tenderness.

"Yes. As we now do."

She sensed the stiffening of his body. Her eyes darted up to his face then away quickly. She stared down at the distant plain and the placid sea where they had spent the time of ^{her} ~~their~~ childhood and youth and young adulthood before the brutal strangers came on the land.

He rose and walked away from her, toward the edge of the plateau. The long shadows of the setting sun were starting to creep from the west, touching the lower hills beyond the children's playing pool. But far to the East and reaching even further up into the heavens the great mountains were still bathed in ^{the light of} the sun, made a hazy purplish blue by the light and the air and the great distance. Their serrated peaks now, some round, some sharp, were clear, uncapped by cloud. Puffs of white smoke rose from the settlement far down on the plain where those who had been put in chains were preparing food for the intruders.

The man turned and looked at her, measuring the ^adistance between them. There was a hard edge to his voice now:

"So...And what would ^{you} have us do woman? Go down and fight them? Embark on another great journey, as the ancestors did?"

"Fight them," she snapped back, simulating anger. "Or embark on a great journey. Do the one or do the other..."

"But do something..." he mocked, his voice gentle once more.

"Yes...To do nothing is wrong. To do nothing is to be part of the thing they do to us; is to be part of the destruction of our people. And that the ancestors will not forgive."

"The ancestors. The ancestors. Always the ancestors. They

become a burden on a man's spirit, these ancestors. They did not prepare us for this time of desolation. They did not forewarn of the coming of these brutal strangers. These ancestors on whom you are forever calling woman, they taught gentleness and ^{peaceful} ~~peaceful~~ ways. They did not teach us to fashion the fighting weapons of those other enemies, the Caribs, who drove them from the great land and followed them through all the small lands. How are we to fight the death-stick of these new ^{enemies} (enemies) who know nothing of gentleness? And where are we to run to? Up into those mountains? Already the cold here is more than we can bear when the season changes and the sun cools down. Every time the cold comes ^{some of} /our people die. To take them higher up into the mountains is to find a quicker death, even if we find water. He waved his arms to the Blue Mountains. "I know there is water up there. A long time ago, in the days of our youth, a ^{party} ~~group~~ of us went up there and found much water and much meat for the hunting; but the cold drove us back and killed some of our ^{party} ~~group~~.?"

^{you told me}
"I remember ~~that~~" the woman whispered

"And that was in the days before the sickness these strangers carry and let loose when the sun cools down and the earth turns cold"

He walked back to her and took her two small hands into his own not much larger ones. He looked tenderly into her eyes.

"Listen, woman," he whispered intently. "To build new canoes we have to be down near the sea. We have to fell trees and dig them out and shape them with fire and stone. It is a labour that will ^{time and} need many men and women from many villages. It is not a labour that can be carried on in secrecy down there. What do you think the intruders will do? Let us be? They will do what they have done many times before. They will swoop on us; they will kill those who resist. They will put our men in chains and use our women for Sport. And our

children they will turn into creatures ministering to their every need?" And then, knowing the unfairness of the question, he asked: "Is that what you want?"

She fought off the overwhelming sense of helplessness.~~xxx~~

"We must do something"~~xxx~~ she insisted. "To do nothing is wrong."

"To wait is not always to do nothing," he said.

"To wait?"

"Yes. To wait."

"What for?"

"Come," he said. "You have shown me I was wrong not to talk before now. I will ^{go} ~~come~~ down with you and we will talk with all our people and make them understand why we must wait and what we must wait for."

"Make me understand," she insisted, "and ^I will tell you if they will understand. I am nearer to you than anyone and I do not want to wait. If you cannot make me understand you will not make the young ones understand."

They returned to the flat stone, shed their sandals of tree bark and climbed on the stone, both warming feet and buttocks from the heat the stone had absorbed through the long sunny day. The woman reach^{ed} into the hamper and passed the man a honey brew. He took a long drink then handed it back to her. She took a few sips, recro~~cked~~ the earthen vessel and replaced it.

"Do you remember the last of our people who came up here from down there? The one who had escaped from the intruders and who had learned of their plans."

"Yes. I did not feel at ease with him. He had too many of their ways."

"He had been their prisoner for a long time, woman."

"I still did not like his ways. I did not trust him."

"If I had been ~~their~~ prisoner that long I would have been like him."

"Never!" she snapped.

"Hush, woman. You know that ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the weak always take on the ways of the strong; if they do not the strong destroy them. ^{my thoughts} But stop diverting ~~mind~~. That one, the one you ^{did} not ^{trust} like because he ~~was~~ had to learn their ways not to be destroyed, remember he told us the intruders had not ^{found} ~~find~~ the gold they had come to seek. Well, he also told me that ~~one~~ one of the journeys the one who was his master took him, they ~~had~~ heard of a land where the gold they seek was in abundance. ^{and} The plan was for them to use this ~~Xanica~~ as a stopping point on the way to that land of gold. From here they will provide the ^{great canoes} ~~ships~~ with food and water to complete the journey to the land of the gold. Later, when they no longer needed to do ^{this} ~~so~~, they would leave this land.

"Leave this land...?" the woman whispered ^{ed} ~~in wonder~~.

"Yes. Leave this land."

She examined his face searchingly.

"Do you believe they will leave this land?"

"I do not know. I do not know them; and he who told me had become half part of them. So I do not know. But their ways and their greed for gold tell me it is possible. And on this I have built a slender strand of hope. And to hope is also to do something."

"But if they do not go...?"

"Then we will surely die; not in the way you or I die. As a people"

"Then what?" she ^{said softly} ~~whispered~~.

^{"then nothing," he replied.}

"When there is nobody left to remember us as we remember the"

ancestors ~~then~~ there will be nothing. It will be as if we were never here. As long as you live, even if I were to die now, you will remember me and so I will be alive in your memory. So it is with each of us, with you, me, everyone of our people, even with my little friend the dog whom you do not want to see as a god; as long as he remembers me, I am alive for him and he for me, and so we do not die. Death is the end of remembrance."

The woman touched the man's body, as if with a new consciousness, feeling the skin and the muscle and the bone.

"And if we die, all of us, everywhere in this land, will the intruders remember us? Will we live through them?"

"I do not know. I know I would not want them to."

"Because of what they have done to us?"

"Not just that, but that is part of it. To be remembered as a thing in chains, as creatures to be enslaved and broken, is to be robbed of the gentleness and feeling and love which made us the people we are. For them to remember us they will have to impose a different kind of being on ^{us} ~~you~~. Remember the one ^{you} did not trust because they had half changed him into one of their kind? Well, it would be like that. They would remember us not as we are but as what they have made of us." The man's voice suddenly trembled with anger. "And I will not be remembered thus by them! They are not worthy of safeguarding the ^{that memory} memory of our people. Better ~~it~~ vanish completely from this earth and sky and air we revered. Better it be as though we never were!"

"Peace, my man," the woman murmured. "Peace, wise one. I think the earth and the sky and the air will remember as you would want ~~it~~. Have you not taught us that all things live, not only man? And what lives will be remembered as it should be remembered."

~~"On the waste of it all," the man lamented.~~

"Not by them!"

~~and the sea~~
 "Then by the earth and the air and the wind and the forests."

The woman touched the man's face, running her fingers, feather-light, over the sensitive areas which arouse warmth. "Even the sea will remember us and be gentle." Her mind reached back to the first time she and this man had joined their bodies, long ago and faraway by the lapping blue-green ~~water~~ living waters. They had done it in the water so that she would not bear child for the elders had said it was not the time. And, as always, they were right; no child grew in her then. It would have been better if one had that first time. The one that came later came on the journey of their first flight from the intruders and in the cold season of the rain when she was stricken by the sickness which killed the child in her belly. They had to force the dead thing out of her; then she could bear no more...

"Where are you, woman?" He had sensed her distance in thought.

"In the good days of the first time our bodies joined."

"Oh, woman! We have joined countless time. All good..."

"You do not remember!"

"The first, second, the last, tomorrow! It is all a sharing. Like the coming and the going of the sun and the moon and the breeze. There is no measuring to it; only the goodness and the remembrance of the goodness for all our days."

"You do not remember, old man! All your words cannot deceive me."

"Hush, woman! I remember the first time in the water..."

They warmed to each other now, a lifetime of connection and remembrance of connection flowing between them.

"I wish we had the child."

"You were too young."

"He would have been a man now..."

"An old man; or an old woman like you, reaching^{back} to pain that brings no wisdom."

"All remembrance brings wisdom. Pain is part of wisdom."

"Not all remembrance, woman. If we die there will be no wisdom in their remembrance of us. There will be less tenderness to it than you feel for your talking bird and I feel for my voiceless dog."

"Would you then that we do not remember the little lost one?"

"He lived in your belly a time, woman, so we cannot forget; but to remember what never happened - that we did not make a life in that water that first time - is to remember mists and shadows and pain."

"And still you remember," she mocked, feeling better and pleased with him for having remembered with her.

But he remained deeply serious: "Remembrance is the thread of life. Without it there is no meaning. It linked the ancestors with their ancestors far back into the great land, and with us and all their descendants into the small lands. They live in our remembrance as their ancestors live in their remembrance and so their ancestors ^{now} also live in our ^{remembrance} remembrance. If we die then all this ^{thread of} remembrance dies with us. The ancestors die; their ancestors die; the ancestors of their ancestors die; the past dies; everything dies."

"You grieve yourself, old man."

"It is a thing of grief, woman. See it, woman! All that past! All the striving. The fleeing from the wild ones. The building of new homes in ^a strange land. There were so many of us once. Vast numbers in all the small lands. There was so much tenderness, so much

laughter. And, oh, the games we played and the songs we made !
And now...."

"And now there is need to do something," she spoke firmly.
"Tell of the waiting. How will we wait? Where will we wait?"

Far out to sea a Spanish galleon appeared on the clear horizon growing larger as it approached land.

"And still they come." The man gestured, almost violently.

They both looked out intently to see, across the nearer, slightly lower hills, then further down across the foothills, then across the thickly forested plain that sprawled in all directions until it was stopped by the sea in one direction and the climbing mountains in the other.

"You say wait, and still they come," the woman's voice was heavy.

"That is why I have not spoken," he said. "It is ^a slender thread on which to build hope. If it is false..."

"If it is all we have," she said.

"A man must believe in the hope he offers, or he lies."

"If it is all we have?" she repeated.

"A leader must not lie to his people. That is the law."

"Our laws were not made for such times."

"Good laws are for all times. A leader must not lie."

"It is no lie to tell them the hope is slender."

"And if they say to me, 'Cacique, do you believe in this thing you tell us to wait for: do you believe the intruders will go away?' Am I to tell them I do not know? And if they press and say: 'But what do you believe, wise one?' Am I to answer them again and say I do not know? A leader must not confuse his people. That, too, is the law."

There was a long silence between them after that. The little pointy dog came slowly out of the thick bush, tubby-full of the just eaten rodent and lazy of movement now, pink tongue showing in little pants. There was a hollowed-out sandy spot ~~xxxxxx~~ near the great flat stone. The little dog curled itself into a ball which fitted neatly into the spot: spot and dog belonged together. The dog looked up lovingly at its master, then fleetingly at its mistress shut its eyes and then/went into an instant and deep sleep.

To the west the setting sun, just below the horizon now, threw pale orange/ fingers of light into the darkening sky. The Blue Mountains to the east were ~~drk~~ but clearly defined silhouettes by now. The slightest breezes, gentle as a playful child blowing on the three creatures by the stone. your face, moved about/~~them~~ The great John Crow had left off his lazy graceful circling; but the small darting birds of the evening were out in force, whirling and circling, screeching and quarreling over hunting territory, catching insects in midflight, playing perilous games of aerial near-collisions, then swooping down, like a dropping stone to grab some insect on bush or ground. Not even the perspective of distance could reduce, for the two humans on the flat stone, the enormity of the Spanish galleon gliding into the natural harbour, and the portend of its presence.

The woman broke the brooding silence.

"Perhaps they will go," she insisted.

"Do you believe they will?" the man murmured.

How terrible the world has become, the woman told herself.

"Yes. I believe they will."

"Do not lie, woman. You are more than just my woman, more than just my comforter. You are an elder of your people, a priestess. If the young ones ask you: 'Do you believe they will ^{mother} go?' How will

you answer?"

"Then why did you tell me of the hope in waiting?"

"The slender thread, remember....Because I was weak and ^{all} did not want to think of the death of/remembrance that you and I, that our people, ~~over~~ lived and loved and were happy in this gentle land of wood and water. That kind of death, the death of the ^{the most} remembrance of a people, is ~~a~~ ~~more~~ terrible thing in my understanding

"But the land will remember. The spirit of the land, the trees, the wind the stream," The woman was pleading now, passionately, insistently, determined to break through the heavy despair of the man. "These will remember us as we were when our world was beautiful and there were many of us and there was laughter in all the small lands."

~~But~~ It was the man, now, who would not be comforted: "Will you tell this to our young people? ~~And~~ Will this making the waiting, ~~and~~ the slow dying, ~~any~~ easier?"

"To tell them only the land will remember us is to tell them of our death. To tell them of the one is to tell them of the other. I will not do that. Just as you will not lie, I will not pass our burden of hopelessness to them. It is wrong for the young to bear such burdens."

"So you will tell them nothing."

"Unless you believe the intruders ^{our} will leave ^{now}... Enough, ^{old} ^{we} man. You are tired. It is time to rest the spirits. Come, / will not go down to the village this night. If they see us the young people will hope for a sign or a message and their spirits will turn to heavy matters. If they do~~x~~ not they will eat by the warmth of the fire and tell tales and dream dreams of hope and make love and have laughter. And that is good for the young."

The woman left the man and the sleeping dog and walked to the northern edge of the cleared circle of the roundish hilltop, a distance of some thirty ^{yards} ~~years~~; then the wild forest confronted her, dense, heavy, dark. A small path made a low entrance into the dark mass of vegetation. She stooped, entered and moved slowly down a slight incline and kept moving, bent almost double to avoid the heavy overgrowth. The small path turned right and right again; then, with startling suddenness, she emerged on a cave, tucked into the side of the hill and facing south. She saw, at a lower level ^{had looked} now, the same scene on which she and the man ~~and the man~~ from the flat stone on the top of the hill. The Spanish galleon had passed the finger of land pointing out to sea. Two curls of white smoke rose straight from the edge of the sea where the Spaniards had one of their encampments. But she could not look north now; and the village, and the children at play by the pool, and the men and women at work in the fields, were all out of sight and sound.

The cave, ^{high-domed} a half-chamber of hollowed-out marl was light and warm and airy. At ^{the far} ~~the~~ end was a fireplace, some earthen pots and a pile of prepared kindling; at the other, the end nearest the point of entry, a pile of softened animal skins provided the sleeping section. Bits of fossilised coral, embedded in the marl stone told that this land, two thousand feet above the sea, was once under the great ocean. Though the air was clean and fresh, there was no hint of the gentle breeze here. Only an overwhelming air of tranquillity, of a place of total peace.

The woman went and examined the pots, knowing they would be clean and there would be water and that the big one with the stone ^{partly} on it and immersed in water to keep little brother ant at bay would contain food for the night. Some time during the day two young women

of the village had ^{climbed} the hill to bring the food and drink and clean the cave so that if the Cacique stayed to commune with the gods there would be food and drink; and in these days of trouble the wise one spent much time up on the hilltop, away from the tribe. Square slabs of shaped soft marble stones made resting seats in the deepest part of the cave. The woman rearranged the bedding to her liking, then knelt near the fireplace and began the long slow process of striking fire from flintstone. She worked steadily, methodically, interminably, rubbed hard black stone against hard black stone over a pile of dry leaves: endless, monotonous work that went on and on until the sudden darkness of tropical nightfall engulfed the land, invaded the cave. One moment the soft light of the sunken sun was over the world; the next there was no light, instantly, just as the little dog went to sleep. The woman's mind grew numb with the monotonous motion...God's dog's dog's god's He was mocking of course but it could be so god's dog's dog's god's but his dog is not indifferent to us, to what befalls us god's dog's dog's god's where are you why do you not guard us from these terrible intruders and you their god's too how can that be when their ways are so alien to your ways god's dog's dog's god's or are you their god's ~~and~~ not ours have you deceived us all this time preparing for them making us soft for your people to conquer god dog dog god protect us from these intruders as you ~~protected~~ the ancestors from those others who drove them from the great land if you are our gods drive them from the land with curses so we may multiply again and not die the burden of the death of remembrance is too heavy for the old one the other's too young for it my strength is not enough gods dog's dogs gods... Suddenly, the stones, almost unbearably hot now, struck spark, dropped on the dry leaves. A tiny spiral of smoke rose.

She leaned over it, blowing lightly, knowing from long experience the precise level of breath to fan the sparked smoking leaves into flame. And then, suddenly, the fire leapt to life! The miracle the gods had given the ancestors to give to their descendants: the living flame and how to bring it forth and put it away. The intruders had this too, and more, and they used it to kill. Who gave them that? The same gods? Greater gods than our gods? Oh no!

"Oh no!" she said out loud. But the thought was there full-grown, terrible, terrifying.

Thereⁱⁿ gods have killed our gods. That is why our gods cannot PROTECT US FROM THESE INTRUDERS. (L)

"Oh no!" She cried again.

"What terrible thing do you see, woman?"

She had not noticed the quiet coming of the man and the dog. Again the man's voice reached her:

"What is it woman? Why such new grief?"

Do I put this burden on him too? Without looking up or turning her head she said:

"Nothing. The nightmares and memories of a foolish old woman.

"Who treats me as an old fool now. I know you, woman!"

"Please..."

"Tell me; share it."

She piled the kindling on the burning leaves; first small pieces, carefully, to let through air, then bigger and thicker pieces. Then, her work on the fire done, she rose and turned to him. He was too distant for her to read his face in the gathering dark.

"Then come nearer."

He came to her and leaned forward till she could see his face in the leaping, rising flames.

She flung her arms about him. A convulsive shiver shot through her. He wrapped his arms comfortingly about her.

"What is it, woman." He was all calming tenderness now.

"Do gods die? Can gods die?"

"Tell me more, woman," he whispered gently.

"Their gods... ^{their} There gods..."

"Calmly, my beloved. Calmly."

"If their gods are as terrible as they are..."

His thoughts reached out and met hers.

"Oh, my love. Now I see your pain." Have their gods killed our gods? That is it?"

"Yes."

"When did it come to you?"

"Now. Here at the fire. Do gods die? Can their gods kill ours?"

"And is this why our gods have not protected us?"

"Yes. Yes."

The man held the woman even more tightly. It was a long, silent embrace that lasted ~~so long~~ ^{till} even the patient little dog grew weary of it and began scratching at the man's feet. Then, at last, he pushed her away and held her at arms length and looked into her face.

"I do not know, my love." A quiet heaviness in his voice.

"I have searched the heavens and the earth for answers. I have gone over all the laws and remembrances of the past for answers. I have found no answers. There was never a time like this in the remembrance of our people. And when the wise ones do not know what to tell the young or where to lead them, when there is no more belief in gods and no vision of hope to take us forward, when we ask if our gods are dead, then we are into the time of desolation. This ^{is} that time, my love."

"Our gods are dead," she murmured, all the desolation of the world in her voice. Then she began to moan in a soft low voice, her head against his chest. A long, slow, steady moan of grief without end.....

7

After the disappearance of the Arawaks the ^{high} land ~~was~~ to which they had escaped ^{from the Spaniards} and the hill ^{with the great flat rock} overlooking the plains remained uninhabited by man for almost two hundred years. Bush, then deep ^{over time,} dense forest ^{reclaimed} the land the Arawaks had tamed and cultivated. Huge trees, some hard as rock and capable of living a hundred years and more, became masters of the land and rose above the deep dark undergrowth to reach for the sky where the big carrion birds continue to sail the soft wind with casual, almost indifferent, grace. And still the night-birds left their caves when darkness came, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ flying in the direction of the plain and the sea, and the gradually growing habitations far down there, and returning, in formation, with the first signs of daybreak. As the forest grew denser and ^{all} reclaimed the land that had once been a human settlement beside a deep ravine of flowing water, ^{the water silted up, and its level} ~~the level of the water~~ rose till it formed a deep clear pool between two hills. The land in the valley between the two hills feeding the ravine grew moist and damp till there was the constant drip of water, whether it rained or not; ~~and~~ the earth was always moist, the sound of ~~drizzling~~ ^{and flowing,} drops of water dripping from moist leaves to moist earth/~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ in tiny streams down to the pool was constant. The land, ~~was~~ here, was again as the early Arawaks had ^{first} found it, a soft, fertile and kindly land of wood and water.

So it stayed until the coming of a new group of humans. The

the
time would be somewhere between/1830s and the 1840s. The British had, centuries earlier, replaced the Spaniards as the rulers of Jamaica. Blacks had been carried forcibly from the African continent first by the Spaniards, to replace the vanished Arawaks as slaves, then by the British and the other European powers and the American colonists, to work the sugar plantations of the Caribbean islands and the North American mainland. Other brown and yellow people from Asia were also brought, but mainly it had been the Africans who had been imported even before the Arawaks had completely vanished.

2) Samson / Maria

(1)

For days the small group of half naked people had struggled frantically, chopping through the dense bush. The first day their desperation was overpowering; they worked through the day and through the night, and far into the next day, not stopping, not resting, only pausing for a quick drink of water from a gourd one of the children always had ready. Then, the men in front, the women and children close behind, they carried on with their frantic, endless chopping. They cut a narrow path through the bush under the big trees and as they passed through, the women and children with bundles of clothes, food, cookpots on their heads or across their shoulders, those who made up the rear replaced the bush again, covering their tracks.

On the second night they stopped and rested. A woman gave each person a lump of thick porridge wrapped in a huge leaf; the biggest lump for the men, the smallest for the children. Then each lay down where he or she was and slept.

There were a dozen in the group: three men, five women, four children - two boys and two girls.

The leader, a big, towering black man with a bullet head and a smallish face, was terribly scarred. A huge, livid, recently healed scar ran along the right side of his face from chin to forehead, passing between eye and ear. Older healed scars crisscrossed his back, arms and chest. The middle finger of his left hand was missing; and though he was in his late twenties his front teeth were missing. This one they had named Samuel Brown, and on the plantation he had been known as Samson because of his great strength. It was that strength, and the impression it had made on the little brown slave girl which had led to the trouble between Samson and the driver. The driver wanted the girl; the girl wanted Samson; the driver had the authority and the whip; he used both. Buckyra Massa approved, for that was how he got what he wanted. The older slaves had seen this situation before: a driver could kill a man with his whip. One night Samson crushed the driver's head with a huge stone, gathered his few belongings into a bundle, crept out of the slave quarters, and made for the hills. The others watched him go and said nothing. And he knew that if he was caught and brought back they would watch it with similar indifference as his body was broken for example to other would-be runaway slaves. The brown slave girl did not follow him to the hills. Instead, when enough time had passed for her to estimate that Samson should have reached the foothills with their enveloping forests, she it was who told Bucky Massa that the driver had been killed and word from the slave quarter was that the killer had escaped. This way, she, as well as the other slaves would not be punished for keeping silent. And when militiamen were sent for and hunting teams were sent out, many of the young male slave volunteered to join in the hunt for the killer of the driver. Many

of the slave volunteers carried the scars of the dead black slave-driver's whip on their bodies.

Samson woke suddenly and sat up. Had he heard the distant bark of a dog? Were the hunters nearing? The moon was high. A good night for hunting runaway slaves.

"Some'n wrong?" It was the man nearest him, the short square one.

"Don' know," Samson whispered back.

They listened intently for a while longer. The utter silence fed their anxiety, set imaginations at work on latent fears.

"Better we move," Samson whispered.

All twelve of them rose instantly, wide-awake as though they had not slept at all. The moon was up and full and clear; light filtered through the thickening bush. Samson motioned to the third man, the tall thin one with the sickly look on him.

"Take a boy an' go back to near the place we came in and see if you /or hear anyt'ing....You did cover it good?"

"Yeah... Stay there 'n watch?"

"No see 'n come back."

The man and the boy slipped away, back along the path they had cut. Samson raised his machete. It glinted in the filtered moonlight then sank with ^aswish into the soft wood, almost severing the young tree in one stroke. The short square one, Jonas, swung his machete at the next ^{chunk of bush} tree. Then there was the softer chopping of the women. The rhythm of the work picked up and became steady. They worked steadily through what remained of the night, and into the morning and on. The thin man, Joe, and the boy David, returned about the middle of the day. They had seen no sign of ~~the~~ searchers but they had found and caught a young wild hog and David was carrying it on his

shoulder, trussed up, alive and gagged to stifle its squealing.

The oldest woman, Maria, angrily grabbed the trussed-up young hog from ^{the boys} Joe's shoulder and undid the gag.

"You kill the dumb t'ing!" she protested. "Get me piece a' wiss."

The younger of the two boys, who did not know his name, took Maria's machete and went off. The woman lay the hog on the ground, the while making soft grunting sounds that calmed the animal, while she slowly undid the tight vegetable rope binding its four legs. The boy returned with the whiss, an enormous roll nearly half an inch thick. The woman fashioned a neckband for the hog, with a long lead which she gave to the boy without a name.

"You look after her ^{no name.} She will drop soon. Is a good thing for u

Big Samson paused from his work, looked at the woman, a curious, admiring expression on his face.

"Sure? How you know?"

"Me know."

"Woman know woman business", Jonas chipped in without pausing. *from his work*

"Yeah," ^{Joe, the sickly one,} said sarcastically, ~~still put out by what he saw as~~

~~a public humiliation.~~

"I raise them." Maria gestured in the direction of the plain.

"Me learn to know them and them sweet t'ings. Sweet fe eat and sweet fe friend when them know you."

Maria sensed Samson's sudden new interest in her and looked directly at him. She saw the question forming in his mind, then he shook his head slight ^{ly} and said instead:

"If we find a safe place you will look after the animals."

"Yes," she said. "Me love animals."

"Time running," Jonas said and they all set to again.

On the fifth day since they entered the dense, steeply sloping, bush they came, suddenly, ~~unexpectedly~~ unexpectedly, on a broad piece of flat, level, cleared land. The others held back among the trees while big Samson moved into the clearing; cautious, alert, machete held tight and ready for instant battle. People had been here. A fire had been made. There was no one now. He raised his left arm and beckoned. The others hurried forward.

"Look!" the boy they called No-name shouted, caution forgotten. He pointed back to where they had come from; and far down, they could see, beyond the tops of the towering trees, stretches of the plain and, beyond that, the placid Caribbean sea. Now, for the first time, they had some measure of how far and how high they had come.

"And there!" the boy David shouted. He had moved to the western edge of the clearing; he pointed westward. And there again, below them, a broad flat green sweep of land, bright in the sunlight, swept away until it met the sea, then distant rising hills, then past those hills till it met the sea again, and on again till it grew hazy beyond the reach of human vision.

"Aaaiy! It big!" One of the younger women exclaimed. This one was called Sarah; big heavy bosomed and with a strong body smell made stronger by the days of exertion and heavy sweating without washing.

Jonas joined David at the western edge of the clearing. He examined the ground, moving first this way then that; then he disappeared into the bush.

"Samson!" Jonas bawled, still out of sight. "Path here!"

Samson hurried to where Jonas was; together they examined the footpath and followed it some distance into the bush. It was as the

footpath they themselves had cut through the forest in their long journey to this point. And, as they had done, those who had cut this footpath had concealed the point where it came out on the piece of flat cleared land. The further from the clearing, the more thoroughly the path had been cleared.

"It like a regular path," Jonas said.

"Coming from there," Samson pointed west, to where in the misty distance, the English Governor of the island had his seat of power. "But going where, Jonas?"

"And is who?" Jonas wondered, "White people? Militia?"

"They don't make track so,"

"True; but slave make it for them."

"Yes," Samson agreed. Then he repeated, "But going where?"

"Come we look," Jonas said.

They returned to the clearing. The others had piled their bundles together and were resting. Maria, No-name and the tethered wild female hog were at the northern edge of the clearing where the hog had nosed a thick juicy tuber from soft ground and was crunching it noisily; Maria and the boy were digging for more of what the hog had found.

"Come!" SAMSON raised his voice. "Look for a path. So." He made an arc from east to north with the sweep of his arm.

They spread out in the direction Samson had indicated. Again it was Jonas who found the new path; but it took longer, this time. The path was much more carefully concealed than the one from the west. Jonas and some of the others had criss-crossed it several times before ~~some~~ small telltale sign had made Jonas examine it more closely and go deeper into the bush, past ~~an~~ apparently impenetrable

overgrowth and undergrowth around a huge tree. When Jonas hacked his way past the huge trees he found the path, straight and clear, pointing north-east and with all the signs of regular usage.

"Samson," Jonas bawled again; ~~and~~ all of them except Maria, ^{and} No-name, came rushing to inspect the new path. Jonas was proud of himself. Very few people would have found this hidden path in days of searching; this one was not supposed to be found and those who had hidden it were trackers and hunters. How to ^{make} ~~see~~ Samson ^{understand} ~~know~~ this?

Samson dropped his huge hand on Jonas' shoulder and let it stay there for a while.

"A big work, bredda Jonas." "I could never find it..."

For the first time that he could remember, Jonas felt good deep inside; it made him want to straighten up and look at the sky; so, almost furtively, he straightened up and looked quickly at the sky. No one laughed; no one looked at him with mockery in their eyes.

"Mek we go that way," Sickly Joe said. "Time to eat and rest."

"No, Joe," the thin, long woman called Flo said. "Not yet."

"If people there, must be our people," Joe protested. "Runaway like we."

"Maybe not," Samson said softly. "I hear of black people catch others and return them to the slavers and drivers."

"Me chance it," Joe protested. "Me tired." "Me one chance it."

"No!" Samson's voice was cold now, a threatening edge to it.

"Tell him, bredda Jonas," the woman, Flo, appealed, anxious to dampen the wrath she sensed in Samson. "Tell Joe, bredda Jonas."

"If one of we catch, all of we catch; so if we go all must go or no one go. Samson lead us, Samson will say. We all runaway

slaves, Joe; they catch one they catch all."

"Me tired," Joe repeated wearily, heavily, showing it in all of his body.

An overwhelming compassion spread through the woman Flo. Something she wanted to do to comfort this sick man, this weak and weary man. She had never thought she would feel like this again; would want to use her life and her body to comfort another. All that had died when they had taken the child of her body from her and carried it away. When they took the man who had bred the child in her it was nothing. That is how it had always been. ~~for xxxxxxxx~~ When a man and a woman sleep together both know it could end any time. Bucky Mass and his driver could sell you any time, move you any time give you to breed with another one anytime. So you take it and you move and you change and you take and the feeling is not deep. Only with the child it was deep and they took the child and there was no feeling in her till this moment for this sick man. The woman walked away abruptly.

What now?" Jonas asked.

"I don't like it," Samson said.

"Me too," Jonas said. "Better we move. But which way?"

Samson seemed suddenly to make up his mind.

"Same way as before; away from where we came, far away." He glanced quickly at Joe then turned and walked back to the clearing "It far enough for us to go slow now; not far enough for us to stop. And not the right place."

"How will we know the right place?" the boy, David, asked.

"We will know," Samson said.

"Yes," Jonas echoed and carefully went about re-covering the the hidden pathway he had found and opened.

Samson and Jonas opened ^a ~~the~~ third pathway leading ^{northward} ~~into~~ or out of the clearing ~~overlooking the plains at a little over one~~ ^{trail}. They covered their opening as carefully as the others, ^{had} ~~thousand feet above sea level.~~ They were too far away, too far up now, for ~~the~~ ^{to come} hunters looking for one runaway slave. There was no way for the hunters to know that on his journey to the hills the one runaway slave had been joined by others as desperate as he to be free. There was talk and a little knowledge of groups of runaway slaves ~~high~~ high up in the foothills and far up in the mountains; and there were of course, the Maroons, large enough in numbers and sufficiently British armed, for the army to go into the mountains to ^{put} ~~fight~~ them down from time to time. But great military sweeps for tiny bands of generally peaceful and settled runaway slaves would be too costly. So these were left alone, and the remote and isolated little villages of runaway slaves grew in many spots high up in the dense forested hills wherever water could be found; and water was found in many places in the high thickly wooded hills.

Unexpectedly, the pathway to the north, dipped and fell away. They travelled down hill for two days. Samson shared his alarm only with Jonas and Maria. Perhaps they were going back down to the plains and to the slavers. Yet they were still going north. On the third day after they had left the clearing the land ceased to fall away and they came upon a slow-flowing river in a wide, deep, broad-bottomed heavily wooded valley. That night, after a feast of ~~of~~ hot roasted tubers of the kind the wild hog had unearthed, after the sweat and dirt of the long journey had been washed off the ⁱⁿ bodies, they slept all through the night, lulled into deep tranquility by the low lapping of the water. They stayed by the river for two days ~~more~~. Then Samson and the boy David left the party, with Jonas in charge, and continued north by themselves along the bottom of the wide valley.

When the sun began to tilt to the west, and when the land had ceased to be level and began to climb upward again, the man and the boy stopped to rest. They dropped where they were, by the narrow track they had hacked through the underbush. The trees, here, were as big and tall as elsewhere; but the underbush was less dense, so their going had been faster. They had covered as much distance in this longer half of one day than they had done in three days of ^{cutting} ~~hacking~~ their way up the sloping land before they came to the clearing. The earth, here, when Samson dug his machete into it, was a thick heavy clay, slippery in damp places, hard as ~~xxxxxx~~ rock and cracking in dry places.

The boy David eased the crude knapsack off his shoulder, reached inside and brought out a gourd of water; he handed the water to Samson and watched the movement of the big scar as the man took two measured mouthfuls of water and swallowed. Then it was the boy's turn. He tried to drink as the man had done: two precise mouthfuls and without his lips touching the mouth of the gourd. But a little water did spill over and run down his cheek and on to his chest. He looked quickly at the man and was reassured. The man smiled with his eyes. Then the boy brought out the dumpling Maria had made from ^{pounded} ~~small soft~~ tubers and green leaves and then boiled wrapped in bigger, coarser green leaves. Samson ate his, coarse outside green leaves and all; the boy unwrapped the dumpling and ate only the soft savoury pancake.

The boy's colouring was several shades lighter than Samson's; a hint of feckly redness to it; / his hair more curly than kinky; the rest of him, body, shoulders, arms legs, had that raw big-boned heaviness of those born to heavy brute labour. Samson had seen children younger than this one working in the fields all day under the eye and the whip of the driver. He wondered where this one had come from, why he had run away. But

then he wondered about all the others as well. Who they were, where they came from, why they ran. Especially that brown one Sarah, who looked at nobody and talked to nobody and worked with the strength of a man and then stayed by herself. Perhaps, if they reach where they were going, perhaps then they ~~will~~ will all talk and know each other. Now it is better not to know; they cannot make you tell what you do not know.

feeling the sun filtered through tall trees,
Lying on his back, eyes closed, the boy remembered, in a vague, dreamlike sort of way, another presence a long, long time ago with which he had felt as at ease as he felt with this badly scarred man. It was from the memory of that distant presence that he knew that he was called David. That, and a sense of ease; nothing more. Not a face, not a touch, not a voice. He opened his eyes and willed his mind to come away from that distant presence. He decided, firmly, that if he wants to, this man Samson, ~~thxkx~~ who had led them ^{safely} away from the slavers can take the place of that distant ^{Presence} (presence)...If the slavers don't get them... and if he wants.

Samson opened his eyes and sat up.

"Time to move, boy."

"Yes, sir," the boy murmured, liking the softness in the man's voice; liking the fact that it was just the two of them on this journey of exploration.

Then the man and the boy set off on their journey again. They moved much faster in the coolness of the afternoon. The boy pushed himself to keep up with the man. The man eased his pace, just a little not to overtax the strength of the boy. If a man had a son he would want him as willing and as strong as this one. ... If a man was sure they would not take away his son....Or whip him....Or break him.

They journeyed through the afternoon and far into the night.

The land climbed steeply now. The moon came up, big and round and full, bathing the land in a soft clear light. And in the moonlight they crested/~~the~~^a rising hill/out of the valley. They could look back now and see all of the broad valley through which they had travelled. They could even look down and determine the location of the little river where they had left the others. Ahead of them, more hills flowed into more valleys, and rose again and fell again; but none as deep as the valley out of which they came. Some of the hills you looked down on, others you looked up to. All green and with gently rounded tops, and with the highest hills farthest away, reaching up to the moonlit skies.

"This is the land!" Samson exclaimed, more to himself than the boy. "If there is water, this is the land! They will not come here. Rest now, boy. When day come we will seek for water."

"Samson," the boy said and was silent.

The man waited for a long time. Then he said:

"Yes, boy; what is it?"

"Nothing... I just thought..."

"Then tell me the thought, boy."

"It is good to be here, with you....Now..."

"It is good to know. Tired, boy?"

"Yes." How nice to be free to confess it.

"Hungry?"

"Yes..." There was a hint of gaiety to it.

"And still good?"

"Yes...Is that what it is to be free?"

"Yes, boy; it is a good feeling even when you are tired and hungry. Now rest. We will need our strength for tomorrow's search."

That night the boy slept closer to another human being than

by choice and of his own free will, and without the fear and the terror of being brutally violated. Once, ^{during the night} with the moon on his face, a terrible nightmare out of the past made him cry out loud.

The man shook him awake gently.

"Hush, boy. Peace. They cannot hurt you now. Sleep. Samson will look after you."

The boy turned over and went into a deep sleep.

The man, now, was possessed of an enormous and overpowering anger that would not let him sleep. It had no focus, no point at which it could be directed, nobody, no thing on which to vent it; nothing on which to dissipate it except ~~only~~ life itself, perhaps. But then life, the business of being alive, of being born in a certain time and a certain place, is something over which man has no control. To be angry at that is to be angry ~~for~~ at the moon for being in the sky, at the rain for falling, at the wind for blowing. The man relaxed as best he could and allowed ^{full rein to} the anger and the violence of it, ~~full rein~~. Not till the sun rose again were the terrible forces of that anger spent. And still the man could not sleep. When the boy woke, refreshed, and saw the man's face a wave of panic shot through ^{him}. The man looked sick ~~unto~~ death. He had seen people like this after they had been ~~driven~~ pushed beyond the strength of their body by the driver's whip. And he had seen some just lie down and die.

"Samson, Sir. Stay here and rest, ~~and~~ I will go back for Jonas."

"No, boy."

"You are sick. ^{sin} I know. I have seen it."

"I will not die, boy. It is a sickness of the spirit. It will pass. Do not fret. We must seek for water."

The boy ~~was~~ worried but held his peace. They spent the day crossing the hills and walking through the valleys. The next morning

before the sun had cleared the Blue Mountains they came on a narrow valley between two hills; and even though the bottom of the valley was still enveloped in ^a cloud of thick white mist, they could ~~hear~~ the sound of water running down from the wooded hills.

"This is the place," Samson said quietly.

They were on comparatively flat, gently sloping land. To their right, rising steeply, was a high hill all by itself. And on its crest was a huge flat stone which ^{time and sun and rain and wind} had ~~been~~ cracked into four pieces. It was all overgrown, as though no human feet had ever walked this way. An air of gentle ^{new} ~~tranquility~~ ^{over} hung over the land, over the rolling hills and shallow fertile valleys, and ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ the deep clear pool in the misty valley.

"This is the place," the man repeated, even more softly.

Then the man and the boy walked down to the water, opening the same path that another group of now-vanished people had trod when~~e~~ they tried to escape from slavery and the slavers' whips.

The long days of hard work were over at last. The time to rest was at hand. The skies grew black and heavy till all the land was in darkness. The air grew heavy so people sweated while doing nothing. Then the skies opened and the rain fell out of the heavens. But they were comfortable now, and dry, and secure. They had prepared well for this. Samson had driven them, and they had been willingly driven, to be ready before the rain came. First they had cleared ~~they had cleared~~ a stretch of land where it sloped least. Then the women had planted the precious seed corn they had carried with them.

The/ earth, once they had cleared and burned the bush to kill the wild thorns, was suprisingly soft and rich and dark, like a well ^{,well turned,} tended/field allowed to lie fallow for ~~several~~ ^{many} seasons.

Maria it was who once told Samson musingly: "It feel like others grew food here...."

Samson had grunted noncommittally and carried on, always measuring the time available to them against the changing sky.

When the land was clear and the seed planted they made their shelters. The north wind and the south wind were the strongest up here; and where there was change the wind came from the north-east or the south-east. So the shelters had to face west or south-west.

Jonas, supported by Sickly Joe, was all for the shelters facing south. South was where any intruders would come from. The women and the boys had no experience of such matters so their views were not sought. Still, Maria and David said they agreed with the leader and were scoffed at by Joe who took pleasure in showing up their ignorance with a few shrewd questions about the weather. In the end Samson exercised his right of leadership and insisted. Jonas gave in very quickly. Joe contained his anger, wandered off down to the pool and was quickly followed by Flo. So it was agreed the ~~shelters~~ would face west, away from the prevailing winds.

The rain started when only three of the planned five shelters had been completed, and, of course, the cooking place, which had been built first. They gathered in the middle shelter, the biggest of the three. ^{Crude benches & flat stones provided seating.} A low fire warmed the place, and gave some light.

The smoky smell of scented wood burning was everywhere. The heavy sheets of rain made a steady dull noise on the sloping thatched roof. There was not enough space; they all ^{huddled together} pressed awkwardly,

uncomfortably.

~~uncomfortably, close to each other, three men, two boys, five women and two girls, all runaway slaves who had finally found a escape and shelter and were ready to rest.~~

"The rain catch us." There was self-reproach in Samson's voice

"We couldn't do better," Maria protested.

"Yes," Jonas said. "We work hard and you work harder. Could'nt do better."

A chorus of other voices murmured agreement.

"Still, the rain catch us," Samson insisted. He had miscalculated and he wanted them to know it and to learn from it. "Should have started the houses two, three days earlier and would would be done now. " He turned his head till his eye rested on David's face in the flickering light. "We must be more careful in our plans; check the sun and the wind and the rain so that nothing catch us."

David nodded imperceptibly and only the silent brown woman, the one whose presence all of them often forget, only she seemed to notice the silent communication between the man and the boy who was as big and as broad as a man. Neither the man nor the boy ~~xxxx~~ were aware of her noticing.

"We will build the other houses when the rain stops," Jonas, misunderstanding, tried to comfort Samson. "Do not fret, bredda Samson

"Tonight the women will sleep here, all together," Samson said thoughtfully. "Maria will be in control. You, Jonas, will be in control in the other place with Joe and Noname. David will be with me..."

"We have another matter, bredda Samson," Maria said quietly, "So hear me. The journey is over. You have led us to this place. And it is a good place. We can make our lives in freedom here. But

there are few of us; not enough to make a village..."

"Others will come," the woman called Belle said.

"Perhaps," Maria brushed it away impatiently. "But hear me. We are few and this is our place of freedom. Any who come after us will not have made the journey with us and we must say who can stay and who cannot."

"Good," Jonas cut in.

"Yes," Samson echoed.

"But it is of now we talk," Maria continued. "What do we do tomorrow and the next day? Do we go on as we have been since the start of our journey?" She paused till Samson prompted:

"Talk, woman. What is it you are saying?"

"That's it, Samson. I am a woman and you are a man. We are, all of us, men and women and boys and girls and there is not enough of us to make a village, unless we breed. Down there they made us breed for slaves. Up here, we must breed in freedom to swell our numbers. It is that you must think of, Samson. You are our leader. If we go on as we have on the journey we will die one by one and there will be no reason to the journey. How are we to breed? Who is to breed for whom, and when it is done, how will we raise the children? I have watched you, bredda Samson, and I know these matters are not in your mind. Now they must be. Think about them; tell us what we are to do."

There was a hushed silence in the thatched hut with the flickering smoky scented fire. In the silence the heavy downpour suddenly sounded very loud, though still very dull. All about them was the sound of water: the world was wet; only they, in their shelter, were dry and warm. Twice, ~~xxxxx~~ Samson opened his mouth to speak; and twice he shut again, without a sound.

Maria tried to comfort him with her mind and her voice.

"Take time and think, bredda Samson. We have time now. But we must know what to do."

They were all thinking now, made aware by Maria, of the sexual needs and urges which had been suppressed by fear and the urgency of escape and the long driving journey to this place. But it was hard to think clearly and creatively about something over which, until now, they had had no control. Where they came from ~~se~~ was a transient, casual release of animal urge; or it was careful, selective breeding determined by others to produce and improve slave stock. There was no element of choice; no tenderness; no endearing passion; no warm companionship; no ~~lasting~~ bond made lasting by the ~~joy~~ shared joy and pain of procreation and the slow unfolding and flowering of another life and another person; no sense of continuity. So it was hard to think; and yet they thought far into the night. Not clear thoughts; not thoughts ^{that could be} ~~that could be~~ dressed in words and sent forth to make others understand: but thought as feeling, instinctive, which was the beginning of thought, before the birth even of language.

When the rain finally eased up and a silvery crescent moon appeared, the men and the boys left the women and the girls in the warm hut. And all their minds were full of ~~thoughts~~ thoughts about ~~breeding~~ breeding, made all the more difficult because of their shapelessness, being without words.

They began the day's work early, in the first light of the morning, before daylight was properly on the land. There were the young trees to choose and fell for the uprights of the buildings;

the younger, ~~suppler~~ more supple ones for the woven walls to be selected; the vast lengths of wiss with which to bind; the mounds of leaf and bark of the trumpet trees to cover the walls; the huge ancient trees to tap and bleed for the flowing white matter which thickened and held things together and kept out the wet. Because of the night's heavy rain, it was wet work, slippery under foot; dangerously slippery when machete had to deal with wet bush. They worked fast, steadily, carefully, without resting, without eating.

Only Maria, Noname and the two girls, Big Mary and Little Mary, were not part of the building gang. Maria instructed the two girls in the digging of tubers and the selecting of edible green leaves. The boy, also under her instruction, was putting up a shelter in the highest corner of the pig pen, watched curiously by the ^{now} ~~name~~ tamed hog whose size had almost doubled. Maria made a fire, lighting it from the last glowing embers which had kept their hut warm through the night. She packed four clay pots around the half-fire, filled each with clear water from the pool, stoked the fire some more, and continued pounding the tubers as the girls brought them in woven baskets carried on their heads. Every now and then she ~~xxx~~ rejected a tuber as too old and coarse, or as not safely edible. The coarse ones she heaved over her shoulder without looking; they all dropped on the same spot in the hog's pen. The others she stacked carefully on the ground to use as samples in her later instructions to the girls, and everyone else wanting to learn, of what not to use for eating. The water came to the boil. Maria made even-sized dumplings from her mound of pounded tubers. She dropped one into the boilingwater, waited until the water came back to boil, then dropped in another. She repeated the process until the pot was

full of boiling dumplings. Then she did the same with the second; then the third pot; then the fourth pot. When all the dumplings were cooked she fished them out of the water with a large wooden spoon and packed them into a leaf-lined ^{straw} basket. She repeated the process three times, squatting beside the fire, pounding stone to the right of her, mound of crushed tubers on a woven mat to the left of her and beside that, within easy reach, a bowl of water for damping the tubers for easier moulding. The boy, meanwhile, had completed the shelter and had made two trips down to the pool for water. He was the water man; his job was to see that all the water containers were always full. On his third trip down to the water Maria called him.

"Here, boy!" and tossed a dumpling in his direction without looking. He caught it deftly and in the same motion put it to his mouth and sank his teeth into it. The taste of it made his stomach rumble out loud.

"I hear you..." Maria said drily. The boy shuffled off shyly.

When the girls came with their next baskets full Maria tossed them each a dumpling and they ran ^{much} back to their labours.

From the distance of the hill to the right the ^{raucous} ~~voice~~ voice of fat bounygy Belle suddenly rose in song, and came nearer. Maria smiled. That one always sang when she was hungry; they were all hungry now. They had worked through the morning with no food or drink. They all wanted to make sure that ~~Samson~~ the rain will not catch them, that Samson will not reproach himself this time.

The sun was high; the clouds were beginning to build up far out at sea and over the high mountain. She measured the distance of the clouds then looked to where the men were building. The fourth hut was nearly done and there was enough material to complete the

fifth. Joe was on the frame of the fifth one. Samson and Jonas were nearly done with roof of the fourth one. That quiet Sarah was packing ~~in~~ and sealing in the walls with the bark and leaves and sticky white glue. And as Maria watched, Flo wandered over, seemingly casually, to work with Joe on the last structure. On an impulse, Maria yelled:

"Flo! Come here!"

Flo changed direction and walked more purposefully to where the older woman cooked. Without looking up Maria picked two dumplings from the now full basket, wrapped them in a leaf and held them up.

"Here for you and him..."

Flo started to protest: they lived by Samson's rules.

"Is all right," Maria cut in before the words were formed.

"Is all right. The journey done. Is different times now. Take it..."

"T'anks," Flo murmured, took the dumplings, looked furtively to where Samson and Jonas worked, then hurried to where Joe was.

Not long for him, Maria told herself, thinking of Joe.

Samson, who had seen what transpired, paused briefly to look at Maria, then carried^{on}

Yes, bredda Samson, Maria told herself; Times different now.

They finished the last building just after the sun had reached its highest point. Samson was pleased and they sensed it, and felt good.

"Come," Maria called gaily. "Time to eat or rain catch us!"

They ranged themselves about the fire in the green and sunny place, each beside the one or ones with whom he or she felt most at ease. The two Marys, Big Mary and Little Mary, and Noname almost instinctively stayed near Maria. Jonas sat on the right^h ~~side~~ of Samson, David on his left. Flo sat near Joe, Belle near Flo. Only

Sarah received her food and then withdrew from the circle, to a distant spot just within earshot. Then they ate the dumplings and the savoury greens and washed it all down with cool water. When they had eaten Maria got up, motioned to ^{No name} ~~Nome~~ and the two wandered ~~off~~ to a clump of dense bushes. When they came out of the bush each carried a clay pot with a narrow corked neck. Maria placed her pot in front of Samson and the boy did the same.

"It is a day to feast." Maria remained standing, looked steadily at Samson. "It is for you to say. Taste it and say."

Samson did not have to taste it. He knew what it was.

"Not the children," Samson said. "And not much."

one of
Maria reached down then, took the two pots. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxx~~ ^{pulled the cork} ~~it~~ with her teeth
~~xxxxxxxx~~. She ~~opened~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and the thing hissed as the vegetable cork came out. She offered it to the leader. He held up ~~water~~ drinking his ~~drinking~~ bowl. She poured some of the stuff; then she did the same for Jonas, then Joe, then the women. Only Sarah turned down her drinking ^{bowl} shaking her head. At last all the adults had it. Samson raised the drink to his lips.

"Wait," Maria said. "The children were part of the journey. *Let me mix it with water for them, make it weak. They suffered with us; make them feast with us. Please. ^{David is almost a man.} It is better so; or they will feast alone and in secret."

Samson remained quiet for a long time, looking at Maria, then at the children, especially David. He had not thought it would be so hard to know the right thing, to do the right thing.

"Jonas?" he asked for help.

"Follow the woman, bredda..." Jonas said softly. "She know..."

Samson nodded. "All right, woman."

"Come, children," Maria said happily. "Come ^{David,} ^a feast with us."

mixed for
 She/~~gave~~ each child a watered down version of the strong
 brew, ^{making David's the strongest.} The others waited, watching closely, till each child had
 received his or her drink. Maria did it in the correct order: first
 David, the eldest; then Big Mary; then little Mary; then Noname who
 had, by general consensus, been judged the youngest. When it was all
 done Maria said: "Now."

Samson raised his bowl till it was on a level with his lips
 but a good eight inches way; then he tilted the bowl so that ^{some of} the
 drink trickled onto the ground at his feet, ^{and sank into the earth.}

"This is our land," Samson said quietly.

"Our land," Jonas ~~repeated~~ ^{echoed}, repeating the libation of the earth.

"Our land," the others murmured in chorus, each wetting the
 earth with a few drops of liquor. Then they drank, each draining
 his or her bowl in one long draught.

They were silent after that, for what seemed a long time.
 The clouds were darkening over the high mountains; the rain was on
 its way. Directly overhead, wave after wave, of small swift birds
 passed, going north. The strong drink warmed and relaxed the people.

"What will you call the land?" Maria asked

Now everybody looked at Samson. But it was Sarah, the one out-
 side the circle, who answered.

"Call it Mount Zion, brother Samson. Like the place to which
 Moses led the children of Israel out of slavery."

^{all eyes}
~~Everybody~~ turned to Sarah now.

"It is in the Bible," Sarah said defensively, sensing the
 need to explain. "The book from which the preachers teach us;
 remember?..."

A few nodded, remembering the preachers and the black book
~~the~~ ^{on Sundays} out of which they talked about a God of love to people

enslaved.

"Mount Zion..." Maria tried it out aloud; feeling it with her mind, testing it.

"But that in the sky," Belle said. "Preacher always talk about^a place in the sky where everybody free."

"First you have to dead," Joe cut in bitterly. "Then heaven."

"Mount Zion is not in heaven," Sarah said.

2 "Then where?" Joe asked.

"It is a place like this one."

"With the people like us?" Flo wanted to know.

"Yes," Sarah was a little hesitant.

"And this leader...." Maria said.

"Moses," Sarah said.

"This Moses. He lead those slaves to freedom?"

"Black people like we?" Jonas asked.

"Only black people are slaves." Samson sounded as though Jonas was daft; only black people are slaves; not whites; whites are slaves; blacks are slaves.

"I don't know," Sarah said. "The Bible calls them the children of Israel."

"Must be black," Samson insisted. "Where this place?"

"Faraway, across the sea." Sarah still sounded uncertain.

"Where they took us from?"

"I born ya," Flo cut in.

"Not your papa; not your mama." Maria dismissed the interruption.

"I think so; the Bible don't say."

"This Bible," Samson was intensely curious now. "It speaks to you like to the preachers?"

"I can read it," Sarah said quietly, like one revealing a

guilty secret.

"I seen slaves can read," Joe nodded. "House slaves; inside slaves. Is one like that help me run away."

"This place where this Moses lead the slaves," Samson clung to his point. "Could be where we come from?"

"I don't know," Sarah said.

"That Bible thing don't tell you?"

"I will search it," Sarah said then clamped her mouth shut

"You have the thing?"

"Yes, bredda Samson."

"Here?"

"Yes , bredda Samson."

"Bring mek we see it!" Jonas was keyed up with excitement.

Sarah appealed to Samson with her eyes.

"No. Is her thing. We free people now. She will show us if she want to...All right, sister...And this place, this name...

"Mount Zion," Sarah said, then, impulsively she explained:

"I was the playmate to the master's daughter and they sold my mother, the woman who mothered me. I stayed in the big house and learned and did everything the little girl did. ~~Then~~ I learned to read with her and preacher taught me with her. When I became big I was sent back to the slave quarter and when the mistress and the daughter went to where they came from the master wanted to breed me..."

"So you ran away," Maria finished for her.

"Yes." Sarah hesitated long, then added. "From the master and from the slave quarters. Driver tried to breed me and whipped me when I fight against it."

"Enough, woman," Samson said brusquely. "Tell us the name."

"Mount Zion," Sarah said. And now, at last, she felt at ease

home at last, as after a long and hard and lonely journey. She looked about the darkening hills and valleys, then at the small group around the fire who had suddenly become her family. Then she looked at David, half-boy, half-man, and made her own decision. Suddenly, her eyes made four with Samson's and it seemed that he knew what had passed through her mind.

"Mount Zion," Maria said, pointing up to the hill to their right. On the crest of that hill was an ancient old tree, so huge it took the ~~entstretched~~ arms of three men to circle it, and so hard that a sharp matchete/^{would}bounced off it, making hardly a scratch, and ringing as when mettle ^{strikes} (striks) stone. And near the tree were four fragmented pieces of an enormous flat granite rock, bleached and smooth by time and the elements. "That is Mount Zion." Maria waved her arm again, taking in the land on which they sat, the valley below it to their left, and the valley in front of them where the deep clear pool was. "And this is the valley of Mount Zion." She looked to Samson for confirmation.

"We will call this place Mount Zion," Samson said.

In the excited babble that followed the announcement they missed the approaching sound of the rain and when it came they had to scamper to get food and drink and dry tinder and a glowing ember under dry shelter. Then they retired to wait out the rain, the women and girls in the same hut they had occupied the night before; the men and boys sheltering as they had done before.

Samson, stretched full-length on his back, tried to grapple with the problem Maria had posed: how to increase their numbers so that the little group would, in time, become a community and a village.

Three men; five women; how do you divide them? How do you arrange them? Two boys, two girls, easy: David and Big Mary, Noname and Little Mary. But how arrange the men and women? Two for me; two for Jonas; one for Joe. That Flo would do for Joe. But why one for him and two for us? Not fair. Two for Jonas; two for Joe; one for me. But that's not fair too, and I am the leader. The two girls. That's it. If the big girl is put with the women there would be two for each. But what of the boys? Little Mary for David. Who for Noname? And free people supposed to decide for themselves, choose for themselves...What to do? How to do it?...He drifted off to the lulling effect of the steady endless beat of the rain on the hut. On the other side of the hut young David snored rhythmically, deeply asleep, utterly spent from the day's efforts.

The rain stopped near morning. The only sounds now were the dripping of water from branches and leaves and gurgling down to the deep pool and above that, rising to a strident pitch at times then fading to a soft purr, the sound of the crickets, coming and going in wave after wave. The night birds, the owls, returned in waves from the south, eager to outstrip approaching daylight, and made for the deep dark cave in the hill to the north of the little settlement.

Before sunrise Maria and the children had rekindled the fire and prepared the bush-tea; the people had come in twos and three to drink their tea and munch a dumpling or two and then marched off into the bush to carry on with their allotted tasks. Jonas and Joe^{and David} went off^{to} clear a piece of^{densely forested} sloping land for future planting; Flo, Belle and silent Vie went to the already cleared and partly planted cornpiece; Sarah and Bg Mary went down ~~xxxxxxx into the valley xxxxxxxx then turned westerward, following~~ into the valley ~~xxxxxxx then turned westerward, following~~

retracing the course of the little river whose waters fed the deep pool. The land sloped gently upwards. Two miles beyond the pool, in a sharp leftward bend they came to the clay bank. Their crude tools were there from other times; bits of broken clay pots, shaped stones, strong sharpened pieces of stick. They sat on two stones, facing each other, and began the day's work of digging clay, dipping it in the slow-flowing water, rolling and pounding it, then shaping it into into the pots and pans and bowls and jars the community used. These two had come here and worked in silence on most days since Samson had found this clay bank and entrusted them with the responsibility for making the group's pots. But this morning Big Mary did not want to work in silence. Since yesterday Sarah had become a figure of intriguing mystery and Mary wanted to find out more; but how? Sarah had brought up that wall of silence about her; Big Mary knew of no way to penetrate that. She kept looking up, kept waiting, senses alert.

When all the others had gone and Little Mary and Noname had gone to gather wood and then carry water, Samson emerged from his hut. Maria sensed that he had waited to be alone with her.

"They have gone." She gave him his tea and a couple of dumplings.

"We must talk," he said. "Come..." He waved to the high hill behind them.

"Mount Zion," She reminded him.

He finished his food quickly and they set off on the steep climb up the hill. He used his machete to cut a path; she used a stout staff as support and to beat down thin dripping wet branches. They climbed steadily, following the curve of the land; every now and then it seemed they came on patches where the bush was a little easier to clear, the earth a little firmer to tread, as when other

creatures had been there. At one point they came on such a clear and easy patch that Maria stopped and looked about.

"Animals here, place clear!"

Samson paused, ~~xxx~~ turned, and looked down to where their settlement nestled in the morning sun. Everything stood out sharply; there was a clear line of sight. He shook his head.

"We would hear it. We would see it; especially Bredda Jonas."

Maria moved to his side and looked down. Yes; it was all there even the women working in the field and the men chopping down the hillside; and far up ⁱⁿ the valley, like two little bright dots in the ^{the sun on} yellowish reflection of the clay bank, the pair making pots. Yes; you would hear or see, especially Jonas with his sharp hunter's smell and ~~xxxxx~~ hearing and sense.

"Then what?" Maria asked.

"I don't know." He did not mind admitting ignorance with her.

"But somebody, something, cleared here...."

"It look so; but long time gone."

They continued their climb, and then, suddenly, unexpectedly, they were on the crest. Maria let out a loud ooh of wonder as all the world suddenly lay spread out before her. There it was, the place from which they had run such a long time ago; far down there, beyond the climbing hills, the houses, the trees, the smoke of fire, the ships at sea, and the sea itself; it was all there, laid out in the morning sun. And to the left were the mountains reaching right up into the clouds; and to the right another flat plain running to the sea; and behind, to the north, the near hills, higher than this one, this Mount Zion, blotting out everything else except the sky.

The man and the woman gazed and turned and gazed and turned again, awed beyond words by the glorious splendour of it all. Then

Samson sat on one of the four huge pieces of granite rock and felt the peace and tranquility of this place. The deep burning anger that was inside him, that matched the marks which had been burned on his body, and which was all that he could remember of life, subsided; the peace and tranquility of the place crept into him, pervaded his body and mind; he felt a great calm, a great gentleness.

Maria came and sat beside him on the rock.

"What must we do?" he asked. "I don't know."

"About the breeding?"

"Yes."

"I say 'Give each of the women a place; and in the first year you, the leader, will go to each. The children that are born will carry your name. In the second year the man and woman will decide and the children that are born will carry the name of the father..."

"But me alone in the first year. Why?"

Maria smiled wickedly: "You don't want it? Make Jonas leader. Listen, Samson. The leader must have more children; and if all the the woman have children for the leader the women and the children look to the leader and give him strength. ~~And the breeding with the other children in later times will make make everybody sick or foolish~~ And when others run away and come here and join us, we, all the women you breed, and their children, will be one family; and the men, Jonas and Joe and young David and even little N6name will breed from the women you bred or from their children, and we will be the strong family ^{at the centre} ~~in the middle~~. We will be the people who found this place and build it. Do it so, Samson."

"Will they agree?"

"Do you agree?"

"I don't know."

A thought flashed across Maria's mind and made her smile.

"Tell me, you ever breed a woman?"

"No."

"Never?"

"No."

"So you don't know how."

"I have seen."

The woman threw back her head and laughed out loud.

"Look is one; do is different. I must teach you."

"But the others."

She turned serious and sober instantly.

"Let me talk with them. Call them and leave it to me. You agree?"

"What will you tell them?"

"What I told you."

"You think they will agree?"

"It is the only way if we are to ~~grow~~ in numbers, and if our children are to keep this place...Now, you agree to let me tell them?"

"Yes." He still sounded uncertain.

She nodded, ignoring the uncertainty. This was how, she recalled vaguely, the mother whose mother had been brought here had said they held people together where they had brought her from: this is how the future is ensured and the leaders and founder protected.

"I must see to the food," she said. "Is the talk over?"

He nodded, deep in thought; staring at the distant town on the plain.

"Come." She rose and went down. He shook his head and stayed.

Samson went carefully over Maria's ^{plan, examining} ~~suggestion~~ it for flaws, for some weakness that would render it unworkable. The idea of having to sleep with all the women did not excite him; he had seen others do it in the slave dormitories and it was like a man wearing himself out that he might sleep deeply. He, Samson, wore himself out on hard work so there was no need for the other thing to sleep deeply: only the humiliation and outrage of the driver's whip on his body and the hard anger the memory of it brought at times kept him from sleeping; but even this, hard work eased. So you felled the biggest trees and cleared the roughest land and shifted the biggest stones...He could find no flaw in what the woman said. And he had come to trust her, to depend on her as he searched for answers to the many questions he faced as the leader of these free people who had submitted their lives to his guidance. There was no justness, no truthfulness, with those who enslaved them and used them like animals. Up here, as free people, there must be justness and truthfulness between them. This he must tell them, so he must remember ~~remember~~ the words with which to tell them. And this land, they must share it with justness. Of this, too, they must talk.

He explored the hill till he knew all of its turns and grades; then he cut his way down a curving sloping ledge till he came on a small cave set in the marl rock; the entrance was overgrown by hard stubborn bush which grew ^{straight} out of the rock. It was hard to chop the bush away, but at last it was done, and again Samson looked down, from a slightly lower angle this time, on the ^{town} ~~town~~ far down on the plain and the endless sea beyond it. Again the sense of others having been here was strongly with him; but not recently, not in a long, long time, or the entrance would not have been so thickly overgrown and the things in the cave all powdery dust, except two flat stones on

which those others of another time may have sat. He sat on one of the stones and again that earlier sense of peace and tranquility overwhelmed him, but even more powerfully this time. For a time Samson sat as one in a trance, utterly still, utterly at peace. Then he shook himself slightly, rose briskly and left the enchanting place, making his way back to the crest of the hill, then more briskly, down the hillside.

The rain came earlier that day than it had done the day before; the day before it had been a little earlier than the day before that. It would do this every day until the peak of the rainy season, when it would rain all day. Then it would taper off, coming a little later each day until it finally stopped and the hard dry season would be on the land.

Maria spoke to the women in their hut that night. The two girls were included, for they were women too and soon they, too, would have to undertake the task of multiplying and perpetuating the numbers of a free people. The women listened in silence and, when Maria had done, silently accepted what had been decided. Choice had never been theirs; always, matters had been decided for them; and this decision was for the common interest. The only outward sign of concern showed by any of them was Sarah chewing her lower lip.

Then Maria ~~xxx~~ braved the pouring rain and scampered the short ^{distance} (distance) to the hut which housed Jonas, Joe and Noname. The boy was asleep. Jonas sat near the fire, using its glow as light by which to fashion sandals from tough ~~xxxx~~ but pliable tree bark. Joe lay on his back, head cushioned on his hands, wide-awake, his eyes made bigger by the gauntess of his face, staring at nothing. Joe sat up and moved nearer the fire on Maria's signal.

Again she explained the plan she had proposed to Samson

but this time she made it sound as though it was all Samson's idea. Then, looking steadily at Jonas, she ended up: "The mother of my mother was the one they carry from Africa. And she told my mother, and my mother told me, that is how they do it. What shall I tell the leader?"

"Let it be so," Jonas said; then he smiled crookedly. "And next year, you and me?"

"You want me fe keeps?"

"Yes.."

"And you, bredda Joe?" Maria asked.

"Is not me him goin' breed," Joe snapped and returned to his bed.

"Don't pay him no mind," Jonas said.

Maria touched the back of Jonas' hand lightly, briefly then left. Noname had slept through it all. This time Maria scampered through the rain to the hut where Samson and David slept. They were both asleep. The glow of their little fire was almost out. She shook David lightly and held her finger to his lips as he woke.

"I made a bed in the new hut," she whispered, pointing. "Go sleep there. I stay here tonight."

The big boned boy rose, naked, and went out into the rain, not questioning the woman's instructions. Then Maria took off her wet ragged dress, dried herself as best she could, and lay down beside the sleeping Samson, trying to get a little warmth from his body and running her hand lightly over the huge scars that stood like ridges on that body... They had bred her three times as a slave; and three times, after the pain of it all, they had taken away the child of her body just as she had got to know it and to love^{it}. This time, if she could still breed, the child would hers and free and no one

would take it ~~away~~ from her. No one. But first she must teach this one who had no knowledge of it. She must teach him the joy of it as that last one who had bred her in slavery had taught her. She went on caressing him, expertly, carefully, thoughtfully, respectfully, her own ~~xxxxxx~~ long suppressed sexual desire coming alive as the ~~the~~ man, still half-asleep, stirred in response. She reached down and caressed the man rhythmically. The man woke fully, fully aroused. The woman continued to caress him, making her body dance against his in provocative little shivers, all the while telling him quietly about the three times she had given birth, and the three times that the fruit of her body had been taken from her. And she told him what to do with the other women, and how to do it because a woman breeds most easily when she is fully aroused and the man and the woman reached their peak at the same time. Those who had tried to breed her roughly or too quickly had never succeeded, Only the three who took time and were soft and caressed her body into making willing responses. The man listened, relaxed, grew warm with the woman till he, too, joined in the caressing; feeling her body, the ^{roundness} (rouddness) of her buttocks, the fullness of her breasts, the hard flatness of her belly. And tenderness/~~xxxxxx~~ ^{for this} woman flowered in the man. This was the first one, the first time, and for him, a new beginning. So he held her close in deep emotion as the warmth and the tenderness spread through him. And it was something special for him when he went into her.

But for all the woman's physical warmth and sexual desire, she received him with a calm, quiet, clear-headed ^{detachment} ~~satisfaction~~. It was not her first time; the only difference was that this time she had ^{done the choosing} ~~chosen~~ and the purpose of the choosing ^{was} theirs and ^{was} clear. Her body had for too long been used by others for it hold any special value or meaning. ~~there was no tenderness for anyone left in her.~~

It was a tool, a reproductive tool to be sure, but a tool like any other, there for the using in the fulfilling of a purpose; and for her, the purpose was clear; she had worked it out in her mind with great care, ~~great deliberation~~, on their long journey to this place.

[She, Maria, would be the mother of this free community; they would make it multiply and grow strong in these hills; and she would supervise it and make sure it was done in the right way. Only when the man's passion exploded in her, compelling a responding explosion, did she cry out and lose control, surrendering all thought to the blinding flash of passion that consumed her utterly... When thought and consciousness returned she was utterly spent. She sensed that

His arm was a deadweight on her shoulder. this was how it was with the man, too. At some point somewhere their bodies had changed position and they lay side by side, but still locked in the embrace that had been part of their passion. She tried to ease the big, heavy, arm off her shoulder, moving slowly, easily, not to wake him. But he was awake and moved the arm for her, resting it high up on her hip.

"I will breed no others," he whispered. "Only you."

"It sweet you?"

"You know, woman."

"And I am the first one?"

"Yes; and the only one."

"Then hear me good, Samson. You will not have me again until you have had the others. I told you why; it must be so."

"I want only you."

"But you will breed the others?"

"Yes." His voice was heavy with sleep.

She held her peace, feeling him drift into deep sleep, knowing

that he will, for all his protesting, do as she wanted; for the power she had over this man, which had ^{grown during} ~~xxxxxxx~~ the long journey to this place had been made complete this night. The beauty of the unscarred body of Jonas the hunter ^{had} ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{often on} stirred her ~~xxxxxxx~~ the long journey to this place. This body, made hard and ugly by the driver's whip had held no attraction for her. She ~~had~~ known that if they ever reached a resting place it would be thus; the leader would have to breed ~~the~~ ^{the women} all/for the sake of numbers and to assert his power and to bind them together. But after that, she had thought, it would be different and Jonas was the one she had singled out for herself; none of the other women would be able to pull him away from her even though they were all younger. Now it was different. She would be this one's woman and he would be her man, and she would show him the way to be a good leader, and she would let him alone use her body to breed and for easement.

The decision was made. The woman turned her head slight so that her forehead touched the man's chest. His body smelled like burnt leaves. She closed her eyes and joined him in the deep sleep.

In the women's hut Sarah was the only one still awake. She knew that Maria would spend this night with Samson and that tomorrow the women would draw lots to choose the next one. It was the dread of this which had kept her awake, making her heart beat so hard she felt it in her head. All night long she had been working herself up, willing herself into a state of mind that would do the thing which might save her. Now the rain had eased. Now they were all asleep. Now was the time to do the thing.

§ She rose quietly, her leafy skirt rustling; but she did not

mind; if anyone woke they would think nothing of her going out; they would think she has gone to relieve herself, and turn over and go back to sleep; so there was nothing outwardly furtive about her movements. She went out of the hut and went round to the back as though going to the bush to do her business. Then she verred to the left and moved quickly and lightly past the back of the hut where Samson and Maria slept. She had helped Maria prepare the place for David. The pounding of her heart, now, was like a drum beating in her ears. She hesitated briefly outside the entrance, then went into the hut; then she froze.

David had woken instantly.

"Who you?"

"Its me, David. Sarah." Her voice felt tight, choking.

"What you want?"

"Nothing...I thought..." She could not go on.

"Oh..." Then David's voice changed. "I see...Come..."

They made love awkwardly, clumsily, messily, without skill and without satisfaction. Sarah bled profusely which frightened and worried David until she explained it ~~and~~ to him. Then, when the rain had stopped completely and the moon had risen, they walked down to the pool in the bright moonlight. He sat on a stone watching while Sarah wash the blood away. The night air was cool and the water was cold so Sarah came out shivering, her skin chilled and bumpy.

"Come," Sarah said and took David's hand and led him up the sloping land, partway up the now dark hill they had named Mount Zion. There, in a sheltered ^{dry} spot under a rocky overhang surrounded by a dense cluster of trees, Sarah showed David her own private place, the place to which she retreated when the day's work was done and

she was free to be of her own. The others knew of this place; they knew it was where Sarah could be found after the day's work, but they all left it alone, stayed away from it, ^{would} only ~~went~~ ^{go} there by ^{which, till now, was never made.} her invitation. This, for them, was the outward and visible expression of the freedom which did not exist in the slave village or the slave barracks where anybody could, at anytime, enter anywhere. Slavery meant no privacy: slave master, driver, could enter anywhere anytime. Free people can make private corners which are respected by other free people. So Sarah kept her treasures in the private place: the book she read she ~~treasured~~ from when alone; the special pots she had made; the beautiful flowers and leaves she collected daily. Some she had transplanted to make a flowering garden on a piece of level ground by the side of the overhang. There, in her private place, they tried again. It was less messy than the time before, and no blood; less frenzied and, for David, more pleasurable, more satisfying. But, for Sarah, it was the absence of pain this time, and the sense of a flowering tenderness in David, that made it rewarding the second time around. She must bind him to her and passion would come; she must bind him to her and escape the other thing and bear only for him: forsake all others and go only with him.

David, for his part, was discovering the joys and glory of having a woman, a woman of his own, untouched by anyone else, pierced by him. The fear when he first saw the blood had now been turned into a bursting pride in his own manhood; pride that this beautiful woman - both Jonas and Joe had said she was the most beautiful woman in the group - should want him, and want to bear his children.

The big-boned boy became a man and all through what remained of the night the ~~woman~~ woman used her body and the words from her book to feed and nurture ^{his newly aroused} the boy's passion and pride of manhood.

In the very early hours of the morning, as the first light appeared in the eastern sky, after hours of deep sleep, on their third try, they made a perfect connection and were enveloped in a completely shared passion. When it was over, drifting into a sleep of utter exhaustion, Sarah knew with quiet certainty that she would bear David's child. They were bound together now; and now she may be able to do the things that were in her book. They slept deeply.

They woke to the sound of the horn, usually blown by Noname, calling the group to the main communal meal of the day. The sun sat high in a cloudless sky, tilting slightly to the West. The greater part of the day's work would have been done by now; any further work, after eating, if such were undertaken, would be casual, light, not much. And they, David and Sarah, had slept right through the work day at its peak.

Sarah woke first, touched David, and he woke. They lay in silence for a while, listening to the echoes of the horn bouncing back, more distantly and at greater intervals each time, as the sound travelled over the hills and into the valley, till at last there was only the memory of it echoing in their heads.

"We must go ~~down~~," ^{she} said, turning her head quickly to read David's face. What she saw reassured her, made her feel at ease. He was calmed, not frightened or worried as she feared he might be. She sat up and touched his chest. He sat up and touched her breast. A small smile of satisfaction tugged at the left corner of her mouth.

"We must go down," she repeated. "They will be vexed."

"Because of the work?"

"No. Because of us. This is not Maria's plan."

"No matter. It is our plan; it is your plan for us."

"They may punish us," She looked steadily into his eyes, will him to look into hers. "They may beat us and make us promise."

He thought about it and she felt the resolve build up in him, slowly and steadily, over many minutes. Then he said:

"No," very firmly, and again: "No!"

We are ready now, she told herself; no longer afraid or worried

She jumped up in one quick graceful move and ~~wrapped~~ covered her nakedness with the dress made of a mixture of tattered old cloth and soft pounded pliable bark sewn together with fine strings of wiss. David put on his short, tattered slave pants, then, hand in hand, they went down to the communal eating place where Maria presided over the food.

The others saw them from a goodly distance. They looked at each other, then at Maria, then at Samson, then again at Maria. Samson looked up, stared for a while at the two coming down, then returned to his food and ate without looking up. The others followed his example. They all knew what had happened, had known since ^{early} morning ~~when~~ ^{when} ~~none~~ Moname had gone to wake David and found the empty hut with the bloodstained bedding. He had called Maria and everything had become cleared. Now they waited for the two, all pretending an indifference which none felt.

At last the two stopped just outside the circle of the eating group. They stood side by side, close enough for shoulders to touch, for arms and hands to brush against each other with every movement.

Maria finished eating, look up at the two, then looked at Samson

"Shall I speak?"

Samson nodded: "Speak, woman."

Maria ^{stared up} ~~looked~~/steadily at Sarah, using the strength of her mind

to force Sarah to look awgy. It would be easier then. Sarah returned Maria's ~~her~~ steady stare. Maria felt the defiance, and when David took Sarah's hand she knew there was no easy way; these two would not bend. ~~And~~ It flashed through her mind, tinged with a bitter ironic amusement, that that Sarah had fooled her: she had thought of her as someone who had to be instructed in the pleasing and using of men; not so. David, after one night, was ready to die for her.

"You have broken the rules we all agreed to. Why?"

"I did not wish to be part of the breeding," Sarah said.

"You said nothing when we agreed."

"I was afraid."

"So you turned his head. \\\\"

"I turned my own head," David cut in.

"Who lead who?" Samson asked.

"I did," Sarah said. David's had tightened on her to the point of pain. Then, as suddenly, it relaxed.

"I did," David said.

"They mock us!" ^{Maria}cried angrily. She closed her eyes, bent her head, waited for the flash of anger to pass. When it had, she opened her eyes, looked at Samson, then at each of the others in turn, excludin only the two, to make it clear that she spoke to all but them. "Hear me, Samson; hear me, all you. They break the thing we agree then they mock us and our leader. 'I did, she say; I did, he say'. Let it be so. They both lead each other to break what we agreed. And if they can do it, why not you? \\\\" She looked at Jonas. \\\\"Or you? \\\\" She looked at Joe. \\\\"Or you? \\\\" She looked at each of the women in turn. \\\\"Or me? Why not all of us? And if we break what we agreed then everything will die and we will be divided. So I say they cannot stay here again. They

must leave us to live with what we agreed; they must go..."

"It hard," Jonas said softly.

"Yes, it hard," Maria said. "It will be harder for all of us if they do not go. Each one will look on them say, why not me."

"Punish them and make them stay," Joe suggested. "Take her away from him."

"No!" David shouted. "No punishment! No one touch her; no one take her from me."

"She just a woman like any woman," Belle laughed mockingly at David. "Same hole; same everything; try and see; bet me do it better than she!"

"Stop that!" Maria tried to sound sterner than she felt.

Flo looked speculatively at Sarah.

"Think he breed you?"

Sarah needed.

"Then give over the child to bredda Samson when it come." She looked to Maria to see how she would take the idea. "Could still be part of the family."

"And tomorrow you will want to do the same," Maria said.

Flo looked quickly at Joe then down at the ground.

Samson, whose mind had withdrawn to some distant private place of his own, came out of his reverie and looked at David and Sarah in turn.

"You will not live by what we agreed?"

Sarah straightened herself: "I will not breed with anyone but David."

"Will you give me the child to make a strong family? Maria will care and love it."

"If they stay others will want to do what they did," Maria insisted. "They must go, Samson."

Jonas nodded sadly: "The woman is right, brédda Samson."

"Better they go," Flo said suddenly. "Me go do same thing if they stay."

"Will you give me the child?" Samson repeated.

"No," Sarah replied.

Samson looked at David.

"She said 'No'" David said.

"Then let them go," Samson said with mingled grief and anger.

"There is land up there," He pointed to the Western end of the valley of Mount Zion. "And there is water. Let them go there. They will not live by what we agreed so we must cast them out. Let them go, now!"

Samson rose abruptly and walked briskly away, in the direction of the hill they called Mount Zion. They watched him go, then, in ones and twos and threes, they all dispersed, none looking at the two who had just been cast out of their community.

At last there were only Maria, Sarah and David.

"David is hungry," Sarah said.

"Then eat, before you go." Maria hesitated over her pots then made up her mind. Quickly, deftly, she made up a parcel of food, wrapped in green leaves, tied with wiss. "You will need ^{food} ~~this~~ for your journey, ^{and for tomorrow.}"

Sarah accepted the food without a word.
Maria She watched them in silence after that; she watched them eat, when gather their few belongings. Then ⁿ she watched them climb to what had been Sarah's private place and come down a little more laden. Then she watched the two walk westward, along the bank of the water-course ~~between~~ in the deep valley between the two hills. Then, as the rain came she climbed the hill to find Samson and give him comfort.

There was no sleep for Sarah and David that night; no corner of the bush where they could escape the rain. After hours of searching for shelter they gave up and huddled together on the soaked earth at the base of a huge tree, wide awake, cold and uncomfortable, stoically waiting out the rain. The capacity to endure is a condition for survival in captivity; those who survived developed that capacity early, learned early to dull their minds and sensibilities at moments of great pain or punishment or discomfort. So Sarah and David each withdrew inward to a point where they could endure the pouring rain and the chill of the night, and the strain of being alone, just the two of them, in alien surrounds.

When the rain stopped near morning, they rose again and continued their journey in search of a place to live. The sun rose and warmed the wet land. They took off their wet clothes, tied them to a long slender post which David carried on his shoulder and kept walking, naked, through the land. There was no person to see their nakedness, no need to hide their nakedness. They were out of the long narrow valley now, the settlement of Mount Zion out of sight behind the last hill they had topped. The land, here, sloped downward veering to the southwest. ~~And~~ The water dripping from the trees here did not flow eastward as did the water feeding the ^{streams} ~~streams~~ which flowed into the valley of Mount Zion; the water here, flowed southwestward, with the fall of the land. As their ~~bodies~~ warmed their spirits returned from the deep protective distances into which they had withdrawn; they became consciously aware of each other again, alive, ~~aware~~, caring. They looked at each other with seeing eyes now, aware once more of their nakedness and of the physical thing between.

"Water must be there." David pointed to where the sloping

land
/ seemed to end~~ed~~, hemmed in by another western hill. To himself, he thought, if its not there then we're in worries.

Sarah saw a huge dry washed stone and made for it.

"Let us rest."

They sat on the stone and ate some of the food Maria had given them and washed it down/~~water~~^{with} water from David's gourd. When they had eaten David insisted that they move~~d~~ on. Sarah wanted to stay a while longer; her body ached from the wet and the cold and all the walking and all the passion of the night before last. But David insisted; they had to find a place and build a shelter before the rain came; there would be time for rest after that. So they went on down into the bed of the valley and came upon the water. This was a round valley, not long and narrow as the valley of Mount Zion. The land sloped less steeply. The water was trapped in a rocky place in the northwestern corner of the round valley. Above the water, to the west of it and with the gentlest of grades, was a wide stretch of land.

David hurried ahead of Sarah; he climbed the rocks/~~xxxxxx~~^{and went} across to the flat land and disappeared into the bush. Sarah sat in the sun, on the edge of the water, resting and waiting. They had found their place and her mind was at ease. The only noise was the sound of the birds, loud in the nearby bushes and the sound of water. Then she heard the~~swish~~^{swish} and clang of David's~~s~~ machete.

"I found the spot," he called. "Come see!"

She made sure their belongings were secure; chopped some bush to cover them, then crossed the rock wall above the water to join David, and see the spot where they would make their home. When she saw it she realised he had remembered her private place at Mount Zion.

The hill, of a very hard, very dark slatey rock, rose sheer behind the wall along which she had walked to get to him. And where David was the rock caved inward, making a natural shelter, as had been hers when they were at Mount Zion. But the land here was different, running easily and gently down to the water, some fifty yards away; shallow at the land's end, deepest where it met the rock wall.

"Here," David said, turning ^{in a circle} in the small area he had cleared.

"Yes! David, yes!" She wanted to hug him and make love to him, any way to please him. "Yes, David!" Then she raised her machete and swung at the bush. She would please him! She would help him clear the land! They would work together; she would help him as another man, to hasten the work and lighten the task. Tomorrow she would go back to woman's work; today she would work like a man. She swung her machete again, all her aches and pains and weariness forgotten for the moment. Then she caught the rhythm of the singing sound of David's machete and tried to pace herself by it. At first she tried to match him two strokes for one, but it was too much and she would not be able to keep up for long; so she adjusted it. Three strokes from David and she joined him on the fourth. One, two, three, then four! They worked steadily for nearly two hours. They bypassed the huge trees, clearing only the undergrowth; and because it was virgin land, the undergrowth, except at the very fertile spots at the water's edge, was comparatively light. So they cleared a good stretch of land, making it possible to live and move ~~enxine~~ and work and grow food between the huge trees. Later, David would fell some of the bigger trees to use for building a proper home and to clear more of the land. For the present what they had done was enough, a good beginning. ~~So~~ They built their first hut between three tall

the sheer rock wall sheltering it on the trees, ~~the sheer rock wall sheltering it on the~~ west from which no prevailing wind threatened; the slope of the land protecting ^{it} ~~them~~ from the north and the south; and the opening facing east; and the water was nearby.

When they had done David and Sarah went deeper into the bush and returned with huge piles of leaf and bush and bark. Some of the healing leaves David wetted and wrapped around Sarah's torn and blistered and broken hand. Then they ate what remained of the food Maria had given them, then, too worn out for anything else, they lay down in their shelter and slept. They did not hear it when the rain came; they did not know it when the rain stopped. They slept through it all, warm, dry, worn-out; they had found their place, made their home.

~~2. CHILDREN OF THE EARTH~~

(2)

Samson sat on the highest point of Mount Zion, on one of the enormous huge fragments of the/~~huge~~ rock time and the elements had ripped to pieces. He knew now that part of that ripping up process must have been lightning. This high hill was a place of lightning; he had seen the lightning at work up here; he had seen it strike dead a huge and ancient tree like a flashing sword of fire. Time had been kind to Samson. His face~~d~~ had lost its gauntness,/~~his near-black skin~~ his near-black skin ^{abundant}glowed with the good health which comes of/~~proper~~ ^{abundant}nourishment; even the scar on his body seemed softened and reduced by time. ^{Many}~~These~~ years had passed since their coming to the valley of Mount Zion; good years they had been. Only the casting out of David and Sarah was the painful blemish of these years. But Noname, grown to young manhood now, had found ^{David and Sarah}~~them~~ in one of his wanderings and had reported that they were well, in a good place with water and had bred three children with one on the way. One day, Samson ~~decided~~ told himself again, he would go to them and give them a chance to make their place; what was done had to be done. Maria was right about that.... Yes, he had been right. It was the faint, small, distant movement of people he had seen in the first light of morning. What had impelled him to climb to this point so early in the morning? What had made last night so restless? A foreboding of this? Soon, now, soon as he can see them more clearly, can make out who or what they are, he would have to hurry down to join the others at the spot where the advantage would be with them if they had to fight...If we have to fight...If we have to fight... He knew the others were in their appointed places. Only the youngest girl was back at the settlement guarding the ^{fourteen}~~fifteen~~ little children, ages ^{ranges}~~between~~ ^{seven}~~three~~ years and

nine months, that they had force-bred mostly in the first and ^{and Threl} second years. Samson had father^{ed} all three of Maria's children; Flo had bred twins, a boy and a girl for him shortly after Maria's first child^{re}. Then Vie, who could not speak, had become part of Maria's household and Maria had encouraged him to breed her and a child had been born for each of the ^{first} three years. Belle had bred him a girl as loud as herself. And Big Mary had bred him ^{a boy} ~~one~~. Big Mary had been young and difficult and unskilled and Maria had to help and force them both. So ten of the ^{seventeen} ~~fifteen~~ children were ^{Samson's} ~~his~~.

Jonas had then taken over Belle and Big Mary as his women and they had each born him two children and were now each carrying. And as she had done for ^{Samson} ~~him~~, Flo had bred twins for Joe the first time, and a single one the second time and was now so big it looked like she was going to have two more for Joe the third time. Instead of dying, as Maria had expected, Joe grew stronger and less facetious with his chat. Only Little Mary had not yet reached the time for breeding.

There had been a small fuss between Samson and Jonas over Maria. After the first breeding Jonas had wanted Maria to move in with him, had even tried to force her, and Samson, seeing it, struck him to the ground. But that was a long time ago. Maria had explained to ^{Samson} ~~him~~ how it had come about, that she had made Jonas think she would go to him after the first breed^{ing} because she did not know of her feelings for ^{him} ~~Samson~~ then. The knowledge that she had once ~~of~~ thought of being another man's woman had weighed heavily on Samson for a long time. And the loss of her to another ~~to another~~ man had weighed heavily on Jonas for a long time. During that time there was a bad spirit between Samson, the leader, and Jonas, his righthand man. So they ceased eating together as a group; and since the time of eating

together was also the time of thinking together and talking together and planning together and feeling together, all that was lost when they ceased to eat together. It lasted a time and then Maria put an

One day
end to it. When the women came to the cooking place at the end of the day's work to collect the food to take to their huts they found Maria had no food; when the women returned to tell their men, the ^{the women} men and the children all came to the cooking place to find out what had gone wrong. Maria waited till all the angry, hungry voices were stilled, then she spoke to them of her own anger. Why should she cook for all of them, mind the children for all of them, if they are no longer one family, if they no longer share words and feelings with each other? She reminded them of how this had come about. She reminded them they had cast out David and Sarah to ensure the unity and the growth of the family tree. If branch keeps breaking away from branch soon the stem and the root would die. If that is what they want then they had all better separate. She would cook only for Samson and the children that were Samson's. Samson alone would have to work the fields to provide for her and ^{all his} ~~her~~ children; and each man would have to work alone to provide for the women and children who are his, and each woman for the man and children who are hers. "There will be no morning sport to clear the ^{land} ~~land~~ and make the work easier; no one to help a man bring down the tough old trees. Each alone. Is that what you want?"

It was then that Samson and Jonas looked at each other and the anger left them...But what would it have been like if they had separated and each family ^{had} gone its own way?...If ~~he~~ and Maria and the little children were alone and those he was now watching were coming, as they now are, what would they have done?....

Those who were coming were now near enough for him to make out

individual figures. It looked like three people and a string of animals. One animal, the bigger, leading and with someone on its back, then two smaller animals, also carrying people, then three of the smaller animals, carrying packs.

Samson left his look-out point and hurried down the hillside to join the others. They were into the dry season and patches of the hillside land that they had cleared ^{by} ~~with~~ fire, looked bare and dry. Underfoot the path had become firm, easy and with no growth after long and regular use. So Samson could move with speed and ease. The hills about Mount Zion now, and the valleys into which they flowed, were clearly marked with many such foot^hpaths used regularly ~~now~~ by the little community. The section of hillside near the settlement from which they ^{chopped and} collected the wood for cooking and for warmth during the cold season was a bare patch of rock ^{the} which grew bigger and bigger with the passage of time. Each time the heavy rain came the topsoil on the bared patch was washing ^{ed} down with the water that flowed into the pool down in the valley.

Breathing slightly harder because of his greater weight, Samson came to where the others ^h waited. It was a point at which one valley led into another; narrow, with the hills separating the two valleys becoming gently sloping ledges overlooking the passageway. Joe, still very skinny but much less sallow and more wiry-looking now, flanked by Maria and his woman Flo, was in command of one ledge. A huge mound of rocks, packed so ^{they} ~~that~~ it could easily be released as an avalanche, was his main weapon. And each of them had a worn-down but razor sharp machete. Jonas, ~~with~~ his women Belle and ^{a fully developed and spreading to fat} Big Mary and the mute Vie from Maria's household, were similarly arm and position. ^{ed} Samson stopped in the passageway immediately below the two ledges. The people on the

ledges were not visible. ^{His} He voice rose softly, at the level of sound carries in these valleys: quiet, soft-spoken conversation. "They coming soon now. Is three and animals. I will meet them here. You know what fe doxxxx if is trouble...."

Maria, anxious for him, ~~could not resist~~ ^{ed} whispering:

"Take care, you hear. ~~ly~~"

It warmed him all over; a gentle smile passed over his face.

^{half} He half-leaned, half-sat on a rock outcropping, sharp machete ^{at} in hand, body and mind/~~and~~ full alert, waiting.

The best part of an hour passed. They waited in silent patience, part of the silent landscape, as oblivious ^{to} to time as were these hills and valleys themselves. The sun burned hot on the dry land. There was a sharp dryness to the air. No breeze blew. Then the strangers topped the ridge leading out of the lower valley and came fully into sight: ^{the} one on the big animal leading the way. A mule, Samson thought, a big mule; the others, small donkeys. The three people all wore broad-brimmed straw hats which shaded their faces from the hot sun... Why hadn't we thought of that, Samson wondered. Instead of using leaves and wiss to cover our heads, weaving dry grass and straw... But inside he knew why they, why he, had not thought of it. All the things ~~xxxx~~ which reminded him of the days of his bondage had been wiped out of his mind. He, and they, had never talked of what had happened down there on the plains where they ^{had been} ~~were~~ slaves. They had wiped those days and years from their consciousness as the rain wipes out a person's marks in the sand. They had lived, they had behaved, as new people, free people, firmly suppressing any recollection of a time of nightmare... Now, the coming of these strange ^{him} forced ~~them~~ to remember they had been slaves who had run away... And

slaves can be returned to their masters and to their masters' drivers and slaves can be punished...The scars on Samson's body came alive and the peace and tranquility he had known in these quiet hills and valleys left him and the memories, and the threats, ^{and the fears} of the past ^{again} possessed him. With ^a huge act of will he brought them all under control...This time, he knew, he would die rather than be taken into slavery again..

Now the strangers had reached the bottom of the shallow valley and were climbing the slightly sloping land up to the passageway to the next valley where Samson and the others waited. And Samson, and the others from their waiting places, could see the people clearly: a man and two women; a mule and five donkeys. This they could handle; whatever else had to come later, this they could deal with: a man, and two women and their animals - and black as we...

Samson moved into the middle of the narrow pathway, showing himself, and waited. When they came within calling distance the man on the mule raised his right arm, his animals came to a stop.

"Morning, bredda," he called in a husky voice.

The sun had passed the high point of morning.

"Morning," Samson called, a question mark in his voice.

"We come in peace," the man said. "The animal say there is water in these hills."

"It smell our water," Samson called back. "This is our land."

"Then give us to drink and we will move on; we will pay you in return."

"Then come," Samson called, relaxed a little now, but still on guard, ^{approach of the} watching the man and two women and their animals. It would be good to have animals like those..Perhaps they could exchange ~~xxxx~~ some of their corn for one of those.

The man on the mule pulled up a few yards from Samson and dismounted. He was small, wiry, very black, with a lined old face and a strong young man's body. Samson towered over him. Now, the others came down from their ledges to surround and examine the ~~at~~ strangers. The two women were much younger than the man; one in her late twenties, the other in her middle teens.

"They call~~ed~~ me Robert," the man said. "When I was a slave the one who owned me, and them," he gestured with his head to the women, "was named Mr. Bagley; so I am Robert Bagley, and this one," indicating the elder woman, "is Lena Bagley, and that one is Eliza Bagley."

Samson went through the ritual of introducing his people, in order of status in the community. He ended: "So is water you want. Then what? Where you going?"

Something the man had said bother^{ed} Jonas, so he cut in: "How you get away?" ~~Then he~~ looked pointedly at the laden donkeys.

"Then you don't know," the man said.

"What?" It was a chorus ~~of a number~~ of voices.

"Slavery done," the man called Robert said quietly. "Done many months now; nearly a year." He looked up into Samson's eyes. "No runaway has to fear again. It's all done. Many people are moving into the hills. After the English King free us they ask us to stay on the estates and on the plains and work for money as free people and learn a trade: some agree to stay; but more leave and go into the hills. \/"

"Fe true? \/" Maria whispered in wonder.

Flo remembered that first child they had taken from her; her eyes filled with tears.

"So nobody can take us back," Jonas said.

"Nobody," the man said. Then he smiled at Jonas. "I took these

things from the place of the Bagley who had been our master. They kept us working as slaves for many months after the King made us free. When we found out about it the man and his driver ran away and left us; and the slaves took ~~what~~ ^{three last} they wanted from the place to pay for what had been done. We/were the/houseslaves/ we took ^{animals and things} these/and decided to find a ~~new~~ place in the hills. There are many moving into the hills and some will reach here soon. Now you know."

"It over!" Joe exclaimed. "It over! I can visit Kingston now!"

They looked at each other wonderment; they embraced each other; they laughed and the cried all at the same time. They had been free for more than ~~three~~ ^{seven} years now; but it had been a ~~stolen~~ ^{taken} freedom, a stolen freedom ^{with} ~~for which~~ recapture and punishment were always ~~ever-present possibilities~~ ^{possible}. While they were runaway slaves those, both black and white, who traded in the capture and return of runaway slaves, were a constant threat. Every time there were signs of the appearance or the approach of strangers, they were conscious of this danger, and they were filled with fear and foreboding. This was why they had tried to blot out of their minds, ^{out of} their memories, all that had happened to them before they escaped to this place. Now the threat of the return to that past was over; now, at last, they were free to remember the pain, the humiliation, the degradation.

"I will never go down there," Samsen said harshly. "Never!"

It will come out now, Maria told herself; it will come out and he will be at peace and we will have ^a good life in the valley of Mount Zion. Aloud, she said: "Come, let us go home. Let us welcome the strangers and give them water to wash and drink. And tonight we will have a feast to our freedom! Come."

They led the strangers over the hills and through the valleys to their home.

Samson, Jonas and Joe got gloriously drunk that night. Maria's brew had been fermenting in the warm earth for a long time. Now it went to all their heads in celebration of an emancipation that was already more than a year old. Everybody was loud, tipsy, happy. After a few drinks even the subdued strangers, for whom emancipation was no news, joined in the heady celebration. They talked at the top of their voices; they embraced each other; they feasted prodigiously on Maria's dumpling/which, this night, was accompanied by pieces of fat ^{salted} (slated) pork - corned pork - contributed by the strangers.

At first the talk had been subdued as the stranger, Robert Bagley, told them of all that had happened and of which they were ignorant...The great slave rising in the west; the hunting and the killing of the slaves. The drying up of the riches of the slave masters. The growing numbers of those they called the Free Coloured; and ~~the~~ of the free slaves even before the king freed all the slaves. But it was hard to be serious for long. This was the night of freedom. No more fearing; no more waiting for the militia or the hunters...

So they drank and shouted and sang far into the night. Then, because it was a warm clear night, bright as a day when there is no sun, and because they were free, they fell asleep one by one, where they were, stretching ^{ed} out and lying in a wide circle around the ^{under the big moon and under the stars.} ^{slept} eating place. Only the children, and a few of the women/in the huts on that first night of their knowledge that slavery was over.

Early the next morning ^{declared} they came together, still caught up in the wonder of their freedom, and planned for the days ahead. As usual Maria guided the planning, always making it sound like Samson's planning and looking to Jonas for support whenever some matter was in doubt. And so, while they drank their bush tea, they agreed that

they would continue to work the land in common, sharing the rewards of their labour as they had done in the past. Samson would continue to be the leader, Maria would continue to be the mother of the community. But now there was no need to always be together for their safety and protection; no need to always be on the alert in case they had to abandon this place quickly to seek another. This ~~new~~ place now, would be that permanent home Maria had talked and dream of for them and for their children and their children's children unto the generations yet to be born. So now, instead of ~~huts~~ ^{huts}, they would build homes that are strong and lasting; they would ~~fell~~ ^{cut} trees and out stones... And they would build a place of worhsip, Maria suggested tentatively. But the hardness in Samson against anything connected with those who had enslaved them was so strong, Maria's suggestion was left to die. ^{land} Each man and the people of his household would choose a piece of/on which to build a house and with enough yardspace to grow family food. The rest of the land they would work ^{in common} as before. Samson would be the first to choose his land and his hooose would be the first built; then Jonas; then Joe; and Noname now, was big enough for his manhood, too, to be recognised and for him to have his own house. So it was agreed and they dispersed to do the day's work.

Robert Bagley had brought many wondrous things: a dozen new machetes, half a dozen axes, four digging bars, ^{several hammers,} two rolls of wire, several pliers and two small caskets of nails. There were, too, several bales of the heavy canvas-type material out of which slave clothes had been made. The women had brought all the ~~abandoned~~ clothing they had found in the abandoned slave master's house.

On the third morning of this arrival ⁷
 Robert Bagley joined Samson, Jonas and Joe, as they climbed the sloping land leading to the big tall trees above the deepest end of

the pool. Bagley was not used to this type of terrain, not used to walked great distances as easily and quickly as these men. He kept falling back and then having to run to catch up. When they reached ^{The} place he was out of breath and sweating profusely, so he sat ~~down~~ ^a on the ground, his new, unused, unsharpened machete beside him, and watched them fell one, two, three, large tall trees before they paused for breath. By then he had recovered.

"Sorry I'm not helping" Bagley said. "Not used to this kind of work."

"S'allright," Samson smiled at him.

"You'll learn." Joe was friendly, reassuring.

"Take time for body to get used to this work," Jonas put in.

Then they returned to their chopping, and in the space of something a little over an hour of steady, rhythmic chopping, they brought down three more enormous trees. Bagley was fully rested by now and he tried his hand at a smaller tree.

"It need to sharpen," Joe advised. "Find a hard rockstone and rub so." ^{He} demonstrated.

"Can we stay with you?" Bagley blurted ~~it~~ out suddenly, ~~and~~ stared at Samson. "Give us a piece of land and we will give you half of what we have."

Samson straightened up. "Half the animals?"

"Yes," Bagley said.

"The big one in it?"

"The mule? Yes, Mass Samson; but it doesn't suit you. The mule can't breed. We have two jacks and three jennies; they will breed."

"We share things here," Jonas said quietly, "You heard. Everything."

"Everything?" Bagley sounded worried and uncertain.

Jonas looked quickly from Samson to Joe, his suddenly twinkling eyes telegraphing a message/^{which}~~with~~ both picked up.

"Everything." Jonas sounded very solemn now.

Bagley hesitated for a long time: "The women?"

"The women, too," Jonas said.

Bagley searched the ground, his head swaying from side to side as though looking for some small specific object.

"The women," Bagley said softly. He looked up at the clear cloudless morning sky, not seeing the solitary John Crow, far up, floating on air with effortless grace. "Then we must leave." Bagley's voice was heavy with depression. He had so much wanted to stay here. There had been a strong sense of goodness and security among these people: something they had not found in any of the other group they had encountered on their journey. Now they would have to leave again. And such a tranquil place this was.

"Because of the women?" Samson asked quietly, Jonas' humour forgotten, his mind on David and Sarah.

"Yes," Bagley said, getting up and turning to walk down to the huts. "I promised them I would not let any man force them again. For them that ^{is}~~was~~ freedom."

"And you will fight for them?" Jonas was seriously curious.

"If I must," Bagley replied and began to walk away.

"Wait!" Samson said. "You can stay if the others agree."

Bagley paused and looked back at the big man. "And the women?"

"That your business," Samson said. "Jonas just running a joke."

"Yes," Jonas said.

"Not a good joke," Bagley said, hurrying away.

"Bredda Bagley!" Jonas called

"Mek him go," Samson said, watching the little man's quick movement down the hillside, trying to read a message from the flow of the movement.

"Him vex," Joe said casually.

"But him stay," Samson said. Then added: "If we agree. { }

"Yes, him stay," Joe said.

Jonas felt he had misread the little man, gone wrong somewher

"Why him so vex?" "Just because me run joke?"

"Because him frighten," Joe said. "A man doan like to be frightened."

"But he's no coward," Jonas murmured.

One of Samson's very rare smiles flitted across his face.

"That's why ^{he's} ~~him~~ frighten, bredda Jonas."

They return^{ed} to the task of felling trees, working steadily, silently, methodically, pausing only occasionally for a brief silent period of rest, then returning to the task in hand.

Bagley ^{approached} ~~joined~~ Maria among her cooking pots as she prepared the ^{day's} main communal meal. His own female companions seem to have slipped into the community routine. Lena has gone off to the fields with the other women. Eliza had join^{ed} Little Mary in taking care of the large brood of little children; the voices of the children at play carried clear through the valley from a point far down to the left in the bottom of the valley where the little river flowed shallowly toward the deep pool. From the right, ^{from the steeply} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ sloping land above the pool, came the equally clear sound of the methodical thud of metal against hard wood as the men felled the trees.

The community had, over the years, turned both the cooking place and the eating place into ^a with a huge thatched roof on post comfortable sheltered area. The ^{accommodat} eating place, now, ~~was~~ had one long communal table - long enough to ~~seat~~ ^{long} all the adults comfortably and the children crammed together - and rows of/benches along both sides of the table. Maria, now had a special seat with back supports on which she presided over her pots. The once-wild hog's pen had been enlarged and enlarged again as the first litter had grown and, by inbreeding, produced litter after litter after litter till the community was abundantly rich in hog's meat. And just beyond the hogs' pen, and manured by the waste from it, was Maria's lush kitchen garden of green vegetables; ^{wild spinach,} acid little berry-like tomatoes, ^{little} cho-cho on a/wooden/frame pumpkins ^{and} prepared by Noname, ~~and~~ and other edible greens and pulses carried by the birds on the ~~the~~ wind and carefully ^{selected} ~~found~~ and transplanted and nurtured by Maria, assisted by Noname and Little Mary, both of whom seemed to ^{have} ~~be~~ absorbed some of Maria's own uncanny feel for finding edible things and making them grow.

Bagley drew nearer, slowed down and paused hesita⁷tly near the obviously busy woman.

"Mister Maria..." He had quickly realised that this one was key. "Can I talk with you?"

She looked up, ~~quickly~~, a darting, birdlike flash of her eyes over his face, reading his eyes, reading his mind, then she looked down at her work, blank, waiting, her face an expressionless mask. Bagley remembered how it had been when he had served those masters in the other days when you had to be a blank in their presence so that they would not notice your black ^s ~~pre~~ence even while you served ^h their needs.

"Did you talk with Samson?"

"Yes. And the other two; Jonas and the one called Joe."

"It is as they say," Maria said; "As Samson says. He leads us

"And you are his woman, the mother of his children.}"

"What is it, ~~Mass~~ Bagley?"

"I asked him to let us stay.}"

He paused but she showed no reaction. He felt forced to go on:

"He said we can stay if the others agreed."

"If Samson said so then it is so."

"Please.}"

Maria stopped working, folded her hands in her lap, turned her eyes fully on his face and waited.

Still the blank mask, he ^{thought.} ~~told himself.~~ ~~Aloud,~~ He said: "Jonas ran a joke about how/share everything, even the women.}"

Maria eyes came to life; a crooked smile flitted across her face. Then she was blank again.

"...Samson said that part was a joke. I want to ask you.... "

"When we first come here," Maria cut in, "We did not know how long we would be alone or if anybody would ever come or if ^{slavery} slave: ever done. So we agree to make/a new people. ^{us} It was a beginning from nothing. And all the women had to bear a child for the leader so his family would be big and strong and all the other families would be part of his family. That is done now. We do not need your women. We are the family, all of us you find here. If Samson say you can stay, you can stay. But you are not part of the family; not part of those of us who came together to find this place and who are now part of the leader's family.} Is that what you wanted from me."

"Yes.} And one more thing. You yourself, will you let us stay"

"If Samson say.}"

"But you yourself," the man insisted.

"I do not know," Maria said coldly. "I do not know you ~~or~~ of your ~~own~~ women. I do not know what kind of people you are. If the others say you can stay I will accept it."

"Please, sister. I will not stay if you do not say you want us to stay. I want us to stay here but it would be better for us not to stay if you do not want us here. I know the power is with the men but you are the mother of this place and the women and the children, while they are growing and after, and even the men, will all be guided by you without knowing. If you do not want us, they will feel it without knowing why." "

"You will respect Samson always?"

"I will. We will." "

"And his children?"

"And his children." The man hesitated. "Sister, I am tired and not very young and I need a place where we can live in peace. You know not all those who are freed are good or peaceful. I can see you are good people here, and peaceful." "

"You cannot be part of our family."

"I know that."

"And you will live by our rules even if you do not like them?"

"I promise that. I will be loyal to Samson and I will be loyal to you who are loyal to Samson."

Maria returned to her work among the cooking pots. Bagley remained seated on the huge log near the fire, not knowing what more to say but certain that without this woman's blessing it would not be worthwhile their putting down roots in this beautiful and peaceful place. Maria reviewed the talk between herself and this stranger; she went over it again and again, testing it, examining for any flaw

that would show up some hidden motive or tell her more about the man. Did her really want to stay here for the simple reason he gave? A clever one, this, a man who thought clearly and sought to make friends where he thought power and influence were to be found. But is that so wrong? Is not that precisely what she herself had done? And if he wants to protect his women, is that, too, not precisely what Samson would do or what she herself would do for her man and her children and her household.

"What did you do down there?" she asked abruptly.

These people don't ^{want} (wnt) to remember being slaves, he told himself.

"I was in charge of the big house. I looked after things."

"Then you can read and figure?"

"A little. Lena is better at reading."

"Can she teach the children?"

"Yes. ^{xx} And I can build things and start a store later, when more people move to this part of the hills. You will need somebody who can manage then."

He's rushing me now, Maria ^{thought} ~~told herself~~; he's trying to push things. "I will talk with Samson about it," she said coldly.

"Please leave now, I want to get on with the food."

Bagley rose to go; "One more thing, if I may?"

"Allright; what?" This is the main thing, Maria ^{thought} ~~told herself~~; the thing that was at the back of his mind all the time.

"When the others come here and ask for land, how will you deal with them? Will you just give them land in return for half of what they have? And what if they have nothing?"

Maria suppressed her excitement, her face more masklike than ever. "What should we do? What is in your mind?"

Bagley sat down on the log again. He would not look at her now; would not do anything to provoke her suspicion or hostility. He picked up a long straight stick, lowered his eyes to the ground and doodled symmetrically on the dry ground, making the outlines of a fenced-in place with marker-posts and a house on a rising.

He said: "I was thinking it would be good for the family to let the strangers use the land in return for what they call a rent; they will give / a portion of what they grow every crop time; or a portion of what they make. This way they will know the land is not theirs and they must pay and go on paying to be on it. Wait. Do not ask yet. Wait till I have done. Whatever a man grows a certain amount will come to the family. Some of it can be stored; some can be carried down to Kingston to sell or to trade for the things you need up here. This way Samson's power, the family's power, will remain and grow stronger and you will decide who and how many people can come here. Now ask."

"And you?" Maria asked softly.

"If you let me, I will plan and keep the records for you; I will keep the stores."

"Like the driver?"

"No; not like that. Like the book-keeper of slavery days, but not robbing you for you yourself will be here to see."

"And why will you do this? Why for us? Why not for yourself?"

Now, at last he looked up, looked straight at the woman, allowing her to see the irritation on his face and hear the impatience in his voice. "I'm doing it for myself, woman! Can't you see that! Look at me! Can I find a place like this by myself, me and two women? Can I build it up to this and then force others who come later to

accept my rules and pay ~~my~~ rent. You and your men, you and your family, you are strong; you can make others do as you want." He waved his arm in a wide arc as though to embrace all the quiet landscape. "We made our journey to find a place like this for ourselves, But we, one small man and two weak women, we cannot do what you have done."

But they have done it, Maria told herself; just ^{the} two of them. Her mind was suddenly so full of David and Sarah she did not hear all of Bagley's words. But no matter, she understood him now. She would let him stay and she would use him to strengthen Samson and the family. She would use his smart brains to serve their interests. David and Sarah...She had the measure of this one now: a smart one with a big brain, who can plan things but not bold enough, with not enough heart, for great ventures...Such make good servants and managers. They are not to be feared for they have ^{NO} stomach ~~for~~ for the challenges to power. He would never take or try to take what was Samson's. A little stealing, perhaps, but no more.

Bagley realised the woman's attention had strayed. Instinctively, intuitively, he also realised that there was now no longer need to go on talking, persuading, pleading his case. He was, suddenly, absolutely certain that she would let them stay and that the plan he had laid before her was how it would be. A great sense of relief and peace settled on Bagley's spirits. He ^{tried to} choked back the tears of joy that came unbidden to his eyes. You must not show tears in the presence of this stern woman; she would not understand ^a weeping man...He rose abruptly and walked away toward the hut which had been assigned to them. The mule and the donkeys were tethered and grazing a little distance ~~away~~ from that hut. All their precious goods and

stacked
 possessions were/~~placed~~ in a high neat pile by the entrance to the hut. In the long journey to this place protecting and safeguarding their possessions had ^{meant survival, had} been Bagley's ~~most~~ ^{main} preoccupation. Some of their things had been stolen on the way whenever they encountered other people. At one point Bagley and the women had to fight off a would-be donkey thief. It was then that they were startled to see the donkey itself, a big Jenny, join the fight and drop the would-be thief ^{with} ~~would~~ a neat kick which missed his face but caught him on the right shoulder. The stunned thief scrambled to his feet and scuttled away ^{his} leaving/knife, machete and a canvas bag of food and other things, ^{all} probably stolen. ~~Bagley and the women had decided, behind them~~
 But since they came to this place he had not been concerned about the security of their possessions. These people would not touch their things. Bagley busied among their things, unpacking some, rearranging others, searching, until he found the long rifle tied in its canvas cover, and the wooden box jam-packed with rifle bullets. He would not need this now; it would be his present to Samson, and he would show Samson how to use it. If only Lena were ^{here} with him now; someone to talk to and to tell of the lifting of the burden from his spirits.

A cool wind sprang up and blew through the valley, finding its way through the openings in the hills which connected one valley with the next. The vegetation, along these wind passages, was in constant motion - trees swayed, leaves shimmered and danced to the soft whispering hiss of the voice of the wind. And where the wind passed the heat of the dry season became more tolerable, less harsh, less savagely drying.

When the sun began to tilt to the west Maria's food was ready and she judged that it was time for the day's work to be done. They

will all have worked themselves out by own, especially those doing the hard physical work: the felling of the trees, the clearing of the bush, the turning of hard dry sod. The lighter work which took less of the body's strength could be sustained for much longer. With the hard work it is wise, it is efficient, to put a different measurement on time. ^{Good working time,} ~~Time~~ then, is not the number of hours a man works but the amount of work he gets done while the strength and the will are still in him. After that, effort at hard work is a thing of diminishing returns, a waste of both a man's time and his body.

Maria took the small horn that hung from the post nearest her seat. She put it to her lips and let out a cracked, bleating sound. Then she waited. Soon~~x~~, strong and clear, the response came from Noname's horn. He was working on one of the farthest hillsides the family was opening up. Everyone will have heard that call and will be coming in.

"Mass Bagley!" Maria shouted. "Come gi me a hand!"

The children were the first to come trooping up from their playfield ^{by} the drying river^{bed} which did not now^{in the dry season,} carry any water to feed the pool. ~~And then~~ ^{followed the children} the others ~~came~~ in in twos and threes till all were present, first to wash by the large communal water trough, then to seat themselves around the long table for the main meal of the day.

During the meal Maria quietly ^{told} ~~informed~~ Samson of her talk with Bagley. Bagley, for his part, ate with his head close to Lena's, ~~in~~ whispering to her all that had transpired that day. The women nodded from time to time and seemed relieved. At one point, ^{the} on/~~pretext~~ of getting more food to the table Maria singled out Lena to help her and Noname. The two women talked hurriedly while dishing up and lingered to go on whispering ~~xxxxx~~ for a while afterwards.

When the meal was done Samson rose and made a sound deep in his throat. Everyone became silent.

"The ~~strangers~~ who came among us are asking to stay with us. Jonas and Joe and I have talked about it. And I say they can stay if the pay us rent and follow our laws..."

"I say so too," ~~said~~ ^{said} Jonas, though the rent part was new to him.

"Yes," Joe added.

"They cannot be part of the family," Maria said.

"We understand that," Bagley said. ^{"We"} ~~But~~ will serve the ^{interests} ~~(interests)~~ of your family."

"It is to their suit," Maria said. "We will give them a home and peace. And it is to our suit. Mass Bagley will help to look after our business, like a storekeeper and a manager; and Miss Lena teach our children." Maria looked enquiringly at Samson till he nodded, then she continued: "And there is the renting of the land. Mass Bagley will tell you of that.." She sat down.

Bagley rose and explained carefully what he had already told Maria and what she, in turn, had already told Samson during the meal.

When Bagley had done Joe asked: "And what happens to the rent? How will we share it?"

Nobody had thought about that. Samson looked at Maria; Maria looked at Jonas; they all looked from one to the other; then they all turned to Bagley, the man who had first come up with this plan.

"Let the head of your family keep ^{it}," Bagley said, "For all of you. There will be a record of what there is and when anybody has need of anything it will come out of his share."

"How much will a share be?" Joe wanted to know.

"Yes, Mass Joe," Bagley explained patiently. "That is what we

are coming to. First you must decide if you are going to follow this plan. When you have done that then you must decide how you will cut up the land to lease, and how much, ^{each person may lease} and what rules you are going to make for those who lease, and for how long they are going to lease. You want to decide what you will do if a person lease the land and does not pay after the first crop; or if a person brings another person who is not of his family on to the land. Only after all these matters are decided and agreed on and are working well and the rent from the leasing is coming in, only then do you need to worry about the sharing of it."

"First you catch the bird..." Jonas murmured.

"Nothing wrong with knowing!" Joe snapped.

Jonas ignored Joe and addressed Bagley: "So how we work this?"

"I propose," Samson said, and they all fell silent, knowing that whenever Samson said 'I propose' he and Maria had decided on a course of action: "I propose we leave it to Mass Bagley to work out the plan for the leasing, and when he is ready he will put it to us to decide. Now, we agree Mass Bagley and his women can stay? And the work they do for the family will pay for the land we give them?"

There were murmurs and nods of assent. Then Robert Bagley hurried to the hut where their possessions were and returned with the rifle. He unpacked it carefully and presented it ceremoniously to Samson. "And two of the donkeys, too, for you to use for the good of the family. And the women of my family will give enough cloth to make a dress for each of the women of your family. That will be for free to show our thanks. After that it will be business and trade

"You are good strangers, Mass Bagley!" Maria ^{said} ^acried with joy ^{which did not reach her cold, watchful eyes.}
 "Not all strangers," Bagley warned. "We met some who are bad. Let you family beware and be strong and be on guard always."

(sudden
 Their/stony silence told Bagley that he had over-reached himself; these people were not in need of warning from him to be on guard; he had been presumptuous, forward, pushing; he must guard his tongue. He lowered his head, looked at the tabletop, withdrew into himself. After a while, gradually, the silence was dissipated and the people talked among themselves of the day's work and the day's plans, and the new ideas let loose by the coming of the strangers. Gradually, the strangers were drawn into the late afternoon and evening's activity till they ceased to feel like outsiders. But Bagley had learnt his lesson and there was a conscious restraint in everything he said.

In the early evening, when the heat of the sun had gone from the land and the cool breeze had turned the warm air balmy and invigorating, Samson led Bagley up to the hill of Mount Zion. It had been Maria's idea. Samson was at peace up there; his mind seemed clearer there than anywhere else; she had shared deep thoughts with him up there; they had looked at the world below and made their plans for the family. Now, she wanted him to think clearly about Bagley's plan; and she wanted to be there to hear it again and test it again, but more calmly now than earlier. The woman, Lena, Bagley's companion - Bagley's woman? - would be there, too, to help in that testing. For how she reacts could be a guide to their true intention. So Maria and Lena followed the two men up the hill. From below, the voices of the family, the voices of the children, mingled with the ^{subsidin}~~sunning~~ breeze. For all the bleak harshness of the dry season there was a gentleness over the land. A woman's voice rose above the others, in song, slightly rusty, very appealing.

"Flo feeling good," Maria murmured.

Not knowing how to respond, Lena made a noncommittal sound.

She had quickly discovered that this Maria whom all the children called Mama and ran to in ~~all~~ their troubles, and whom even the animals - the dumb things - turned to for comfort, was the most powerful person in this little community/^{whose members} ~~xxx~~ called themselves a family. Lena did not understand/~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{all that} had gone into the making of the bond between them; what she understood clearly was that Maria was central to that bond: you move with care in dealing with such a person. Even Bagley moved ^{low,} with more than his usual care in dealing with Maria. ^{low,} Perhaps she could learn to deal with people as this one does. \

They reached the/^{crest} ~~xxxx~~ of the hill and Bagley let out a sigh of wonder at the sight of all the world laid out below him.

"Lordy, Lordy," Bggley murmured, then called out loud: "Lena! Lena! Come look!"

The ~~xxxx~~ woman hurried to his side, tall, strapping, big-bosomed, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, with thin tapering ^{spindly} ~~slender~~ and big narrow feet. legs/ She was a good head taller than Bagley; with a smooth austere ^{mat} soft-featured/~~near~~-black high cheek-boned face; the face was a young girl's; only the lines about the lips, and the lips themselves, told of harsh experience which had ~~xxxx~~ force-bred strength and resilience. The normally expressionless dark eyes glowed with excitement. She, too heaved a sigh at the sight of all the world at her feet. Without being aware of it ^{she} slipped her hand into Bagley's and held tight. In the midst of the wonder of it all she became aware of the returnin pressure of his hand, of the man himself, and of messages of feeling. She released his hand quickly and moved away a little. Their eyes met briefly, as though for the first time.

"It brings out the truth in people," Maria murmured, half-mocking, half-gently.

"Come!" Samson called from his favourite perch on the largest piece of the huge scattered boulders which had once been one. The ^{old} trumpet ~~tree~~ ^{tree} which had been his shade tree had been struck by lightning, leaving only the dead stem reaching up like a scarred flagpost. Samson was pleased at the response to the majesty of his view, with ^a ~~that~~ personal, proprietary sense suggesting that he himself had created that view; and there was the air of playing it down, of a pretense at casualness of the owner totally aware of the value of his possession and therefore free to make light of it.

Maria sat on one of the boulders near him, watching the two who were now self-consciously a foot apart but still caught up in the excitement of their new perspective on the world, still disturbed by the flow of feeling between them this place had released.

"Let them be," Maria spoke for his ears only. "I thought they were man and woman; I was wrong. I don't think they ever slept together."

"Hush, woman," Samson ordered, but with a gentle indulgence in his voice: "I did not come here for your matchmaking." ~~xxxxxx~~ He raised his voice: "Come, Mass Bagley! The sight won't go away!"

Bagley and Lena joined them and found stone perches of their own.

"Now," Samson said. "Tell me again of your plan for the renting and the cutting up and the storing and the things you told Maria

Bagley went over it all again, quietly, carefully, confidently, ^{clear} assured, this time, ~~xxxxxx~~ by the knowledge that he had the support of Maria. He had, also, between this moment and the time he spoke to Maria, thought the whole plan through more carefully so it was now a ^{clear} concept he could visualise and explain almost as a

man makes a picture, but with words. Maria's eyes darted from Bagley's face to Lena's, then back to Bagley's then again to Lena's; back and forth, back and forth, registering mood, reaction, emotion; listening intently and comparing the words he used now with the word he had used earlier; testing, weighing, judging the man and his motives against his words, ^{and} against the reaction of this woman who had been with him a long time and who had just discovered a stronger bond between them...Not clever like the man; not able to manage him and guide ^{him}, unless she knows of the weakness ~~in him~~ of his spirit and how to make use of that; but a woman soon knows these things. Even Flo has learned to manage Joe with his mean and jealous spirit and his big mouth; and Flo is not as smart at this one, and there is no weakness of spirit in Joe, just not enough smartness to match his ambition...And listening, Maria found nothing to cast doubt on her original judgement; nothing in the man and nothing in the woman's reaction. This man was as she had first judged him to be: smart, ambitious, but sufficiently aware of his weakness and his need for security in the shadow of a stronger one, and therefore he had the capacity for loyalty to such a stronger one. Samson would be such a stronger one for this one.

For his part, Samson listened in silence ^{while} ~~till~~ Bagley spoke; all his attention on Bagley's words till he saw ^{clearly} the picture Bagley wove with his words. His mind, clear as usual up here, saw the plan and all its implications as he had not seen it at the eating place. Maria, as usual, had been right to make them come up here. Now he understood the plan, understood Bagley's mind; now he could improve on the plan and guide Bagley to make it better. He ^{was} ~~did~~ not consciously aware of ~~know~~ when Bagley stopped speaking for his mind simply took over where Bagley left off, refining, improving Bagley's ideas.

Maria made a small sign and the three of them waited in silence while Samson, lost to the world, completed his thinking. When it was done ~~next~~ his eyes came alive, searched for Maria's, and they embraced each other with their eyes.

"Yes," Samson said quietly, speaking really to Maria only though he included the other two. "Yes, we will do it that way. Allright, women?"

Maria nodded. It was Samson's plan now. He would know what to do; and he would tell her in his own good time.

"Night is coming," Maria said. "Better we go down."

"You go," Samson said: "Take the sister with you. We will stay and talk a while; we will soon come,"

The women left and made their way down the hillside. The two men remained seated ^{between them}. There was a long silence/while the light over the land changed rapidly, turning the high mountains to the east first to a dark purple then to a deep hazy blue, seen through a clear mist. To the west the reflection of the disappeared sun lit up the ~~th~~ ^{that arched} cloudless sky in a bright orange glow/~~afixlight~~ across the heavens and touched the earth from watery horizon in the south to watery horizon in the ^{west} ~~north~~. The plain below was a deep blue haze, and the sea, further back, was darkly metallic. In a matter of moments the light over the land changed again. The light from the sun disappeared suddenly, as though turned off; the full moon, now, came into its own, casting a gentler, fairy-like glow over the land. The Blue Mountains became dark shadows against the sky: the transition from daylight to nightlight was instant; but yet there was no darkness over the land, only a different kind of light

At last Samson broke the silence: "Tell me, Mass Bagley," ~~his~~

voice heavy. "Why they do this to us? Why the slavery thing?"

Bagley felt cornered: "I don't know, Mass Samson."

"Because we black?" Samson persisted.

"I never see white slaves," Bagley said.

"Just because we black." Samson made it a confirmation.

"To work for them," Bagley suggested.

"So they have slaves in their own country to work for them?"

"No. I don't think so."

"So people can work for them without being made slaves?"

"They work for money in their own country; like the bookkeeper

Samson
"So why they do this to us?" / Pressed: "Why they don't make us
work for money?"

"They do now."

"Why not before? You know how many slaves died? Where I was
many were whipped to death."

"We were lucky," Bagley said heavily.

Samson ~~he~~ pulled the tattered covering off his back. "See!
They did this to me. Why? Feel it!"

Bagley ran trembling fingers across the thick welts on the
broad back.

"And the one who did it black like you and me. I killed him."

"They made him do it."

"I know; but he did it. Would you do it?"

"If he didn't they would do the same to him."

"I know; but would you do it?"

"I really don't know, brother Samson. I am not strong like
you. I could not take that kind of pain; I think I will do anything
they tell me to avoid that kind of pain."

"He was big and strong," Samson said. "Like me: but he found

joy in hurting. He hurt women, he hurt children, he whipped sick old men till they died. I know. I saw it. I still dream about it."

"They made him do it," Bagley said heavily.

Samson was angry now: "Was he not a man? Could he not refuse?"

"And be whipped?"

"Yes! And be whipped!"

Bagley felt cornered and on the ^{defensive} ~~(defensive)~~ as though he had whipped women and children, and whipped old men till they died. He had heard of such things but never seen them. Would he have done it if the alternative was that he himself would be whipped as this one has been? Would he do it?

"It's hard, " Bagley said. "When they own you like ~~an~~ animal and can do anything to you, its hard not to obey their orders."

"And when you obey them, hurting your own people becomes a pleasure. Why did they not use their own people to do the whipping? I ask you, why black people to whip black people? Why slave to whip slave? Why not white drivers to whip black slaves. It is that I will never forget! They use a black man to put these marks on my body; and so they made me, a black man, kill a black man to remove the bitterness of the shame. If these mark^s had been put on me by a white man it would be clear. And if I had killed him that would be clear too. This way there is the special shame that it was one like me, a black slave, who put these marks on me; and there is the special shame that it was a black slave like me/~~XXXXXX~~ ^{that I} killed for putting these marks on me. Do you understand, Bagley? Do you understand? They do this thing and they take away our manhood; and because they use us and our own to do so whatever we do to/~~them~~ ^{those of us whom they use} destroys our manhood further. It is like an animal caught in a trap and the more he

tries to break free the tighter the trap holds him and the more he hurts himself. The bad thing here, brother Bagley, the hard thing here, is that it is our minds and our spirits that they have caught in that trap. They have set a trap for our minds in order to destroy our manhood. I could not see this until I came up here where the air is clear and a man can think. It took me a long time to see it. But now that I see it I cannot see a way out, I cannot see an answer. Will we ever be free of that, brother Bagley, will we ever be free?" Samson turned his head and looked searchingly at Bagley's face in the clear nightlight. The rage and anger and the passion had left him for now; but it would ^{be} ^{again} building, he knew, as it had done in the past, taking weeks or months before there is another compelling need for release, or until he found an answer that would allow him and his to break out of the trap in which their minds and spirits were locked by those who had put chains on their bodies and turned them into conditioned animals. "Do you understand what I'm saying, brother Bagley?"

"I think so, brother Samson."

"Then try to help find the answer so that we can be really free, free in our minds."

"I will try," Bagley said, not knowing what it was that he would try to do. But knowing certainly now that this was the leader, however strong Maria was.

They stayed on the hill a while longer, not talking, each wrapped in his own thoughts. Then Samson led the way down along the ~~clearly~~ ^{moon} lit path. Behind him, Bagley wondered what he would have done if they had ordered him to be a driver and he had to whip people.

He was terribly depressed by the answer his mind kept giving, no matter how he turned the question around. Perhaps Samson was right. ~~Their minds were imprisoned.~~

Perhaps their former slave masters had made a prison for their
 a prison
 minds; ~~and~~ you could not see or touch, or even feel, unless you
 were a man like Samson and had suffered the pain he had and had a
 hill like his on which to sit and see all the world and think.

Later that night, lying on the floor of his section of the
 hut Bagley tried to explain to Lena and Eliza ~~what~~ ^{, lying at the opposite wall,} what Samson had
 talked about. Somehow it was not as clear as it had been up there
 on the hill; the words were difficult, the picture blurred; the
 more he tried to make them understand, the less he succeeded.

Eliza began to snore softly. His talk had lulled her to
 sleep. He stopped speaking, feeling depressed though everything had
 transpired to make him feel good. They had a home now, a place of
 safety among good people. Then he sensed, rather than saw, Lena
 leave her place and crawl over to his. It had begun up on Samson's
 hill and he knew it had to come to this. But here? With that other
 one sleeping and likely to awake? The woman lay beside him.

"What of her?" He whispered. "She may wake up..."

"It does not matter," the woman said. "She has seen it before
 And I told her tonight it would be so with us."

"You are sure? I am not young. You will not want another
 later? It will be painful for me if you do."

"I am sure," the woman said. "It is I who choose you. Come."

The dry season dragged on with seeming endlessness. Hot dry
 days gave way to hot dry nights; even the cool night wind ceased
 to blow through the land. And in the hot days Samson and the other
 two worked at felling the big trees and Bagley and Noname used the
~~animals~~ mule and the donkeys to pull the trees to the building

sites the women had helped to prepare. The land which had been cleared of trees and bush grew dry, parched, dusty. The water level of the pool dropped lower than they had ever known it. They blamed it on the long drought and dug ~~xxxxxxx~~ steps into the claylike earth, down to the new water level, to ensure that the women and children could still reach the water. They used rocks and trees and wiss to make the way down to the water safe. But still one of the children drowned in the pool during that hard dry season. It was one of Flo's twins by Joe; a three year-old little girl. It was the first death since they had reached this place and the despair it brought hung over them throughout the long dry season. But/they built three solid timber houses during the harshness of the three dry months. Joe, in particular, worked as though he were driven, as though work would ease the pain of their loss. Flo, near the point of delivering, periodically broke into hysterical screaming.

The ^{great} inflow of strangers Bagley had anticipated did not come. A few came, but slowly, in small numbers, at long intervals. about. Near the end of the dry season two groups did come, one hard on the other. One a group of four - two men and two women, and the other just two young men. These told of a number of big and growing settlements scattered in places with water all the way up the hills. The nearest one, they said, was in a place called Red Hills which had a large number of people. Another, and going westward, was a place called Cypruss controlled by a man called David and his wife Miss Sarah. Many people had gone there for there was a church and David was a strict man of justice and of God and Miss Sarah was the teacher. On hearing this, and when they were alone, Maria and Samson talked about going to see David and Sarah, but they were ~~afraid~~ uncertain whether David and Sarah would welcome them. After careful questioni

they turned away the two young men. The two couples became their first tenants under the lease arrangement. Each was apportioned a piece of land to work and was given seed for planting when the rain came. They were helped to settle in, helped to build their shelters, but they were not allowed to become part of the collective communal life. Bagley and his two women were the only outsiders allowed to become part of that communal life. Later, during the rainy season, other strangers came. Some they welcomed and leased land to; others they sent away. Always, they decided together whom to allow and whom to turn away. The choices were determined, mainly, by whether those who came were families or individual adventurers. The families about whose willingness to work they were satisfied, were welcomed and helped to settle in. The rest were turned away. In the end a small community of a dozen families were scattered in the long valley of Mount Zion, all tenants of the original family of Samson and Maria and those who had been with them when they cut their way through the bush to this place in the days when men and women were still held as slaves.

In the remote hills and valleys
/ All over the land, ~~other~~ groups, some like Samson's who had escaped during slavery, others who had repudiated the apprenticeship they were offered after slavery, yet others who wanted to have nothing to do with the system which first enslaved them and then released them, built self-contained and self-sustaining communities of their own, close to the earth, a part of it. And except when the dry season was particularly harsh and particularly long, the earth was kind to them gave them life, sustained them, even revealed some of its secrets to them; and these, each community, each village, each family shared ^{the} co-operatively, in an old remembered way whose ^{unknown} roots were lost in the distant past that went back ^{to times} beyond ^{the days of} slavery.

3

Sarah David

UWI Library

3. SARAH & DAVID

(1)

Samson was struck down in the good season of the calm and easy not-too-hot-and-not-too-cold, not-too-wet-and-not-too-dry days before the coming of the Christmas Breeze. He was partway up the hill to his favourite look-out point when a terrible flash of lightning exploded in his brain with a force that struck him to the ground, and pinned him there, unable to move any part of his body. It was late afternoon; the day's work was done and they had eaten, so no one was concerned when Samson did not return when night fell. He often stayed up on his hill till far into the night; sometimes, on rare occasions, he did not come down till the early hours of the next morning. Maria these days, was ~~after~~ too busy managing her brood of growing, scrapping youngsters, all now between eleven and fourteen, to devote as much time and thought to Samson as she had done in the early days. Only at night, when they were in ^{the big} bed ^{he had built with such pride & care} and alone, ^{here} was there time to share thoughts and be sensitive to each other's ~~many~~ moods and feelings. And often they were both too tired for even this; so the bond between them was less strong, less close, than in the early days. [The family had flourished over the years, but modestly; not as grandly as Bagley's vision of leasing land had led them to expect. Joe had left the community and Flo and his children ^{in the seventh year} He had simply gone down to Kingston with Bagley on one of his trading trips and not returned. So Flo and the eight children worked the land and benefitted from being part of the family. As time passed one of the tenants on the land became a regular visitor to Flo's house. He was remarkably like Joe; physically sickly-looking and with a sarcastic tongue. He had four children by the woman he had brought with him, and after initially protesting the thieving of her man by

Flo, the woman made the best of the matter when the man told her she could leave if she did not like what was happening. In the end the man became the ~~nominal~~^{accepted} head of both households. Flo's children and the other women's children all accepted him as a kind of father and he treated both sets of children with an even-handed, if casual, paternalism. The ^{two} women became friends and shared the man and the children. The man led the women and both sets of children in working both Flo's and his own rented land. For the rest, the family had remained intact; the same closely knit group which had begun with that long journey from the plains by a bunch of runaway slaves. Noname, now, was a grown man who had fathered five children ^{in quick succession} by Little Mary who was no longer little but a dumpy happy laughing young woman. Some of the bigger children of the family had become difficult over their isolation. They travelled to some of the other nearby villages at weekends and brought back unfavourable comparisons of how more exciting life was in some of these other places. There were regular Saturday night dances in places like Red Hills and in Rock Hall further up ^{in the hills}. Young men could meet exciting new young women and sport. And so a couple of young girls, Flo's eldest and Belle's and Jonas' first born, had run away from home to find the excitement.

Bagley, for his part, had stayed with the family for ^{eight} ~~six~~ years during which he kept faithfully to his promise to manage things for them. Then he and Lena ^{and Eliza} moved their store to Red Hills where they could do a better trade. ~~But~~ Bagley still ~~collected~~ collected the family's produce and carried it for sale to Kingston in his huge mule-drawn cart, and shopped for them, and brought them back the proceeds of the sale of their produce. ^{His reward was continued possession of the land they had been given.} ~~At~~ ^{to and from Kingston} first he had made the long journey ^{once every four or six months.} As his business grew there was need

for more frequent trips to Kingston. He had hired assistants who had all robbed him so he ended up depending only on Lena and Eliza to help him with the business. He had at first tried to get Noname to joining in , hoping that after a time the young man would take over the journeys to Kingston. Noname was of the family and could be trusted with goods and money. He had even tried using Eliza as ~~part of the~~ bait to persuade the young man to become his partner. But that one was totally wedded to his land and to Little Mary. So now Lena and Eliza managed the store whenever he travelled to Kingston, and he hired one/~~or~~ two strapping and known young men from the Red Hills community to ~~travel with him~~^{act} as bodyguards whenever he journeyed to Kingston, which was now once every month or six weeks, with two huge carts drawn by two sets of six strong mules apiece. This way, the journey ~~to~~^{and} from Kingston usually lasted about a week. And Bagley's one endless/~~unrelenting~~^{and ever-increasing} fear ~~was~~ on these trips was / that he may return one day and find Lena and all the money gone. It haunted him whenever he was away to the point where his journeys became nightmares...If only he had been able to make her have children; no matter how hard and how often he had tried, he had failed. Even when he had fully satisfied her. Or had he ever, really? / So the nightmare haunted him whenever he was away from her..

They found Samson in the early hours of the morning, before daylight. Maria had gone to sleep, expecting to find him at her side when she woke in the morning. Thus when she woke in the pre-daw hours and Samson was not beside her, she was alarmed. She sent one of the elder children to tell Jonas and Noname Samson had not come down from his hill, then she, herself, set out along the familiar path up the hillside.

A small search party, headed by Jonas and Noname and including a few of the male tenants who lived nearest the family settlement which was the heart of the village, found them a little over an hour later. Maria sat on the ground, motionless, Samson's head in her lap. They were two-thirds of the way to the top of the hill.

"He can't move," Maria said to Jonas. "And he can't speak."

Jonas went down on one knee. In the half-light of the oil lamp he saw that Samson's eyes were wide open, seemed aware of him and Maria and the others. "What happened, brother?" Jonas urged, trying to coax some sound out of his old friend. "What happen, man!"

"I tell you he can't speak," Maria said.

"A stroke," someone said. "Sometime it go away and he can speak again."

"Make we take him down," Noname, said. He had grown into a strong-bodied young man of small size, all muscle and smooth-skinned grace. "Come. Make we build a thing fe carry him."

They ^{chopped down} ~~used the~~ bush and young trees ^{and wove these into a} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ stretcher. Noname tested it for strength, then they ~~can~~ lifted Samson's big heavy body onto it, and made their way down the hill, slowly, carefully, not to drop their stricken leader or shake him too much. And all the while Maria held on to that strong right hand of Samson's; but now that hand was limp, no feel to it, no response when she pressed it; no sign of the great strength which had gone into the building of this place.

When they got down, carrying Samson's body, the first signs of daybreak ^{were} ~~was~~ showing and the word had spread ^{that} ~~xxxxx~~ and the entire population ~~xxxxxx~~ of the valley was waiting silently at Maria's yard.

They carried Samson into the house and laid him on the huge wooden bed which filled almost all of the room. Maria fussed about, making him comfortable, ensuring that they moved him slowly, without bumping into things and jarring his body. The cluster of people remained waiting outside.

"Go, tell them," Maria said to Jonas.

He went out to the broad veranda facing south. "Mass Samson awright...Only one thing: he can't move and he can't talk. Is a stroke they say..." There was a collective sigh and everybody began to talk. Jonas held up a hand. "Make him rest; you go on, you will hear what happen later."

They dispersed slowly, in small groups, talking among themselves. One or two of the older women lingered, waiting to be of service, for they knew that at times of trouble one hand must wash the other. After a while the men who had made up the search party and who had carried Samson down left, leaving only Jonas and Noname with Maria and her huge family. The family itself gradually and the women who had lingered returned to its everyday routine. Vie and two elder girls/prepared the early morning food; the boys went to the fields to do the work Papa had assigned to them long ago: routine distracted their minds from the terrible thing which had befallen them. Only in the room where Samson lay was there no end to the preoccupation with the disaster. Did he hear what they were saying? Did he understand? What to do? How to find out? Was he hurting? Was he thinking? What was he thinking? How to know? Maria sat on one side of the big bed, Jonas on the other, Noname leaned against the wall near the door.

"What must we do?" Maria had said it again and again, at intervals, ^{each time} when the realisation of what had happened overwhelmed her

anew. This time Jonas answered.

"I will go into Red Hills. I hear say someone there knows about herbs. Perhaps they can help."

Noame pushed against the wall and straightened up, making it an act of decision. "I will find David. Maybe David and Sarah know what to do." He left the room quickly, giving Maria no time to react or gainsay him.

"That one never forgot David," Maria whispered broodingly; "Like this one here," she looked searchingly at the open-eyed, motionless figure on the bed. "I bet he would agree."

"They shared much," Jonas reminded her, then softened the harshness
/ ~~shared~~ of it; "We all shared much."

"Its a long time since them gone," Maria murmured. "Long time Perhaps he won't want to come. He was a boy when we sent him away."

"Who had done a man's work." A small smile flitted across Jonas' face and was gone. "And he bred that Sarah like a man! When I look pon them that morning she was drunk with it, like abee drunk up to its eyes in honey!"

Maria recalled it vividly, despite her despair and depression a smile of remembrance lit up her eyes. "Eee...I remember; she almost smelled of it. It come so sometimes and it bind them...It come so with this one for me; I was his first and it bind him to me..." She moved abruptly, "Hear me, Sam!" raising her voice to near shouting.
intently

"Easy, sister," Jonas said/watching the man on the bed.

If the man heard, there was nothing to show: no change in the eyes, no hint of feeling, just a blank stare.

"I will go now," Jonas rose and went to door. "I will try to come beck quickly with good news."

Maria composed her face into a blank mask and nodded.

Noname reach^{ed} the village of Cyprus in the late afternoon, with the setting sun in his eyes, / and was startled by the change which had taken place since that first time, many years ago, when he had come upon it, and found David and Sarah. Then it was a long quiet wooded valley with one little shack, very little cultivation, and only David and Sarah and their three children; a lonely, lonely place, he remembered thinking at the time. This time, reaching the crest of the last hill, he looked down on more houses than in their own valley at Mount Zion; more houses than he could count, some tucked away in ^{well cultivated} ~~thxxxxxxx~~ fields of corn and cane and shaded by huge breadfruit trees in the bottom of the valley, near the water, others dotted on the sloping hillside land. There were regular pathways, packed stone fences, wooden fences, marking off some of the land. And dominating all this ^{on} / the highest south-western crest, was the church that David and Sarah had built and the renown of which had reached, years ago, far and wide, and even to him and the people at Mount Zion. In moments of quiet, moments of rest when no others were about, he and Samson had talked often of making the journey to see David and Sarah and look upon this widely known church of theirs. Always, something had happened to make them put off the journey and talk about another time and another time. And now Samson was paralysed and would never make the journey. But what a huge building that church was! And what a sharply sloping narrow roof! He must find out how David did it. And this prosperous and flourishing land, with all these houses, and all that cultivation, and all the people moving around, was founded by David and Sarah, who had been sent away from their settlement so long ago. The big house down there, near the water, with all that green rolling land rich in food trees, that was ^{where} David and Sarah had their shack when he first saw them here those many years ago.

Noname walked briskly down to what he knew was David and Sarah's home.

The young man who opened the door to Noname was the spitting image of David - as David had been in the/days of their long journey up into the hills; tall, big-boned, broad-shouldered as the young David had been, as Noname remembered the young David when he, himself was an even younger boy, looking up to David as the big brother to turn to in difficulty; the same rich dark-brown skin drawn tightly over the high cheek-boned face, the same light grey eyes which seemed not to belong ^{distant} ~~with the darkness~~ of face, the same reddish tinge to the hair which was a cross between kink and tight curl, the same feel of contained strength Noname remembered. The likeness startled him into a long bewildered silence which the young man finally broke: "If it's my father, he's not home yet. He'll be back soon." The young man turned his head slightly, indicating a long bench on the veranda.

Not the same voice, Noname/himself; softer, quieter, weaker; then it came to him, like Sarah's though deeper, being a man's. "I'm from Mount Zion; they ^{told} ~~call~~ me Noname..."

"Oh yes," the young man was warm, alive, interested now; "Please come in. My mother is home; I will call her."

He flung open the door and turned and went away, disappearing through a small door at the far end of the big room. The room was darker than the outside; only the light from the open door and the two big windows to the west prevented it being completely dark, made it possible for Noname to see. It was a bigger room than Noname had ever seen and with the same high sloping roof he had seen on the church, but he was looking at it from the inside this time. There was a long table in the middle of the room; not as long as the old

communal table at Mount Zion but long enough for a dozen people to sit comfortably on each of the two matching long benches on either side of the table. At the two ends were two chairs, one slightly bigger and higher than the other. And over the table a large oil lamp of brass body and glass cover, hung from a ceiling beam; smaller lamps stood on the table at spaced intervals. Benches and chairs were ranged along the walls. This room was, evidently, more than just a private living room; it was also a meeting place. Noname sat on a bench near the door and waited...What would she be like after all these years? How would she receive him? How would she react to what he had to tell her and David...That boy of David's, seeing him so suddenly there took him back to a time on that long journey when he, Noname, had a running belly and was too weak to keep up and still carry his load; David had taken his load and made him lean on him without letting the others know...Funny the things you remember, things you thought you had completely forgotten, that had not been in your head for years, and something happens - a look, a face, a word, a sight - and it all comes back like yesterday...Boy like David, repeat of David; only Sarah's voice but as a man's voice; and strong-looking too, again like David.

He was so engrossed in his thoughts he did not see her till she was near the long table and raised the lit lamp she carried a little; then something about her made him jump to his feet more quickly and awkwardly than was normal for him. She put the lamp on the table and came ^{toward him} ~~forward~~ as though floating, the long dark dress just not touching the floor, ^{but} ~~hiding~~ her feet completely. Her face was part of the gathering shadows; her presence filled the entire room. This was not the Sarah Noname remembered.

"Noname? Is it really you? Welcome my dear..."

This overwhelming presence and this rich, compelling, purring organ-like voice, were not as Noname remembered Sarah. She rested both hands lightly on his shoulders, bent down and kissed him on the cheek, then stepped back/ to examine him more closely, all the while telling him how pleased she was to see him and how pleased David would be. David had gone on a journey and would be back later. Did he want to wait for David or would he in the meantime tell her what had brought him here.

"It is Samson," Noname said. "He's sick; he can't talk and he can't move. People say its a stroke..."

Sarah let out her breath in a long loud sigh. The light on the table was not strong enough for Noname to see Sarah's face clearly, to look into her eyes and try and put a meaning on that long sigh.

"When?" He voice was without feeling

"Sometime in the night. We found him this morning."

"On the hill?"

"On the way up."

"Or down," she added.

"Yes," Noname said; and felt tired suddenly.

"Oh please sit down, my dear...I'm sorry; I forgot what a long walk you've/had." She clapped her hands twice. A shadowy female figure appeared in the far door. Raising her voice only slightly Sarah called; "Something the drink, please." She turned back to Noname

"And Maria: how did Maria take it?"

"Bad."

"Oh Noname! What do you mean 'bad'?"

"It look like she can't believe it. Its a kind of shock. She doesn't know what to do."

"Yes. I understand what you mean. He was her life, the life

through which she lived; if that/^{life}is paralysed, what will she do?"

The shadowy female returned with a pitcher and two mugs on a bamboo tray, placed it near Sarah and withdrew. Sarah poured two drinks, a long one for Noname, a small token drink for herself.

"You will like it." She seemed certain of his taste.

What if I don't, he wondered, putting it to his lips. She was right, but it was more than just liking it: all the different fruit of the earth seemed to have gone into it, been blended with the refreshing mild sweetness of honey, to make a drink of heavenly delight. He took a long swig, then another, then another till the mug was empty. She refilled it for him and he knew she was pleased at his enjoyment of it.

"David and the children love it; they drink it all the time. The mixture must be just right; too much or too little of anything and it will be spoiled. It took me a long time to get the mixture just right. I learned it from Maria; only, I'm better at it than she is now; I worked harder at it, took more time, and I had more time because I had only David and the children of my own body to look after. She wanted too much; she used too many people. Perhaps that's why..." She stopped speaking abruptly.

"It is good," Noname said, sensing where Sarah's thoughts were leading and wanting to change the direction.

"Not to worry, my dear," Sarah said as though calming a frightened children. "You must never be afraid of your thoughts. Keep them clean and/^{free of malice}~~pure~~ and do not be afraid of them; do not hide them because you cannot hide them from God. So let us say it aloud: perhaps that is why she has suffered this punishment."

The second time, Noname thought: how can she do it? Then he

realised she had picked up this one too. She was laughing at him in a soft gurgling voice, like water running quickly over round pebbles on a sunny windy day.

"Its really very easy, my dear; if you learn to listen hard enough, like the birds do and the bees and the other little creatures do, and if you learn to look and see ^{clearly} and ~~clearly~~ and see/closely enough."

Startled, Noname asked: "You can know what everybody thinks and feels?"

"Not everybody. Only some people, people close to ^{us} you, people ~~you~~ care about or people at the other end of it, sometimes. I think I will always know what Maria feels or thinks if I look at her face; but not for the same reason that I know what you or David thinks."

"Always?"

"Most of the time; when my own feelings are not too strong; With David and the children my own feelings blind me most of the time because they are so strong. As I told you, it all began at Mount Zion with Maria who tried to teach us how to find out about which plants to eat by watching the little creatures around us; and when we came here and were alone ~~for all these years~~, the ~~very~~ loneliness forced me to learn Maria's lessons better than she herself did, and I improved on them. So you see, there's no obeh, no magic, no miracle, except ~~of~~ really listening and really seeing." She rose. "Come, Noname, meet the children, meet the family. I know they will want to ask you about the journey we made when we were runaway slaves. It is like a story to them, exciting and hard to believe as anything else; harder still to believe that it happened to their own parents. Come we will eat and sit out and talk about these things till David comes."

"Please..." Noname wanted to return to his own family.

But there was the need to do something about Samson; perhaps David knew what to do. Better to stay and wait for David. His Mary will guess the reason for his absence..." Is nothing," he said and followed Sarah out of the large cool dark empty room into another, ^{equally large,} brightly lit and seemingly crowded with people. He nodded, not really ^{or} registering names/~~and~~ faces, not connecting a name with ^a face, as Sarah called out the names of her children and of the other members of her household.

They were halfway through the meal when David walked into the room. No name looked up at the giant stranger, even less like the David he remembered than the young man who had opened the door for him and who now sat beside him. This one was big and quiet in a way the land can be quiet; the same sense of peace and quiet that ~~xxxx~~ Noname felt when alone on his land came from the presence of this man who had been his friend and big brother David. Only the eyes were the eyes of a stranger, looking calmly, coldly, through you.

^{talk}
The/~~chatter~~ at the table stopped. Sarah rose, and everybody stood up with her, so Noname did the same. David walked to his place ^{and examined} at the head of the table, counted/his children with his eyes, embraced Sarah with his eyes, only then spoke to Noname.

"Welcome, little brother. It is good to see you." He took his seat; Sarah followed, then all the others. The talk resumed at the table till food was placed in front of David. The silence returned while David bowed his head in silent prayer. When he raised his head and started to eat the ^atalk returned once more; neither he nor Sarah took any part in it. Noname waited for the meal to finished, overwhelmed by ~~the~~ sense of being a stranger in a strange place, unfamiliar with the ways of this place. He used to know David and Sarah; ~~he was not~~

this was still David and Sarah, still the same two people he once knew; he was not sure that he knew them now. In times of trouble you do not turn to strangers for help: are these strangers now?

After the meal the ~~many~~ army of children and others dispersed. David went into the large room, now well lit, for a meeting of the church affairs. Sarah showed Noname a small room where he would spend the night then left him for a meeting of her own to do with the affairs of the school she ran for all the children of Cyprus. She had said: "We have much work, Noname; David with the land and the church and the community's business, I with the family and the school and the community's business too. They are talking about a person coming up from Kingston next week - a white man - who wants to talk about our church becoming part of their church; some of the elders are for it, some against. I think David has made up his mind so the meeting will not take long. Mine will be over quickly, too. Then we will talk about Samson. Rest now."

Noname could not rest so he left the little room and found his way out on to the long verandah by way of the room where they had eaten, ~~and~~ without going into the big room where the meeting of the elders^{was}. Sitting there alone, looking up at the bright stars in the clear night, listening to the noises of the little night creatures, the disturbing sense of ~~strangeness~~ strangeness left him and he felt at ease again. This place founded by David and Sarah was so much bigger, had so many more people than they had in Mount Zion. He could understand why. The valley, here, was wider, the land to the water less steeply sloping, it could sustain more people more easily. But it was not as intimate, not as enclosed and protected and cut off and isolated and difficult to approach; and there was no high hill like Samson's hill: a rich, broad-bottomed fertile valley this, but no safe hiding place as was

~~the valley~~ the almost sealed-off valley of Mount Zion for a group of runaway slaves. Militia or slave hunters from Spanish Town or the Catherine Plain would have reached here with speed and ease. Now, with no militia to fear, with no slave hunters to avoid, the openness of this valley, its easy accessibility has made it more prosperous, more peopled. Time changes the fortunes of land as much as of people. All this Noname sensed ~~with~~ and understood intuitively. The land changes too, with people and circumstance: it responds to need, adjusts to change, is valued and revalued again in accordance with the strains and demands of the changing times. The level of the deep pool at Mount Zion was dropping lower year by year. And he knew that one day it would be too low to sustain all the people there. Perhaps, before that day, all the people will have left. But he, Noname would not leave. That was his land, the only land he had, the only land he wanted. That was the piece of earth on which he first felt free as man and boy; he would not leave it, even if the pool dried up... Here where he sat he could hear the gurgle of the water as it trickled slowly from the gently sloping wooded hills down to the equally slow flowing river which was part of the river network which fed the great Ferry river on the plain immediately below. A rich and beautiful place this Cyprus of David and Sarah; but ^{not} for him. He will talk to Mary about sending their children to Sarah's school; it's good for children to learn and he was impressed with the learning of David's children at the meal table... Time passed and Noname dozed off, leaning against the stout legs of David and Sarah's home...

When he woke they were on the bench beside him, a huge pitcher of Sarah's brew at hand.

"Time to talk, little brother," David said in his deep quiet

voice. "Sarah told me. You tell me again, all ~~that had happened~~ ^{of it}."

When Noname finished David asked: "What do you want us to do?"

"That's why he came here," David. Sarah sounded testy.

"We don't know what ^{to} do," Noname said.

"Yes," David said. "What's to be done, beside prayer, ~~that's it~~ ^{that is} ~~xxxxit~~."

Well, Sarah? What's to be done?"

"I've sent word to some of the older women," She said. "We will know what they say by morning. There are herbs and bushes which ~~are supposed to help~~ ^{will help and may cure} ~~in the morning~~ ^{in the morning}. We'll have them early."

"Then we'll decide what ^{else} to do. Is he in pain?" David asked.

"Don't know," Noname said.

"Not usually," Sarah said. ^{"the old women's herbs will take care of any pain."}

"In the morning, then," David rose abruptly and walked away.

"He's very tired," Sarah said reassuringly; "And he's upset. Samson means much to him, even after what happened. And when he's upset he likes to be alone, away from people; even away from me; so don't take it any way."

"S'allright..." Noname had hoped for some guidance, for some comfort.

"We will do something for Samson," Sarah assured him. "Trust us. Trust David."

But how do you trust people you do not understand, who are suddenly like strangers to you?

"I'm tired too," she said, again sensing his mood. "He still calls you little brother from the time of our long journey; so he remembers just as you remember and just as I remember. We remember how Samson took care of us and guided us; we have forgotten nothing. Allright?"

Noname felt ashamed of all his doubts.

No name woke early, long before daybreak; it had ^{made for} ~~had~~ a place restless night this sleeping in a strange bed in a strange ~~place~~ away from his own ^{home and his} ~~own~~ bed and without the familiar presence of Little Mary beside him; he had spent most of the night in the strange dreamlike state between sleep and wakefulness: thoughts, dreams, worries, intermingled, became as one, created anxieties which ~~that~~ were part consciousness, part dreaming. He lay still for a while in the half-dark little room till mind and body came together. ~~Then~~ He thought of Samson and moved his body consciously: arms, legs, fingers and toes, muscles - they all responded. He got up, opened the little wooden window and dressed quickly by the cool predawn light; from the little window he saw that David and Sarah's household was already up and about. He went out, expecting to encounter only the helpers and the children; he was wrong. David and Sarah were in the ^{big back} ~~back~~ room where they had eaten the night before, two very old women with them, and several little bundles of herbs tied in different coloured cloths stacked on the table in front of them. The rich smell of freshly brewed coffee filled the room.

"Morning, Noname," Sarah said. "See, we kept our promise. These are the ~~Nanas~~ I told you of and they have brought the medicine.

David filled an earthen mug with coffee and pushed it to the space near the empty seat beside him. "Sit here, little brother. Now explain it all to him, mothers."

"This one," the most wrinkled and leathery of the two leathery old women, said in a whispering voice, putting a gnarled ^{hand} ~~hand~~ on a bundle tied in the red cloth, "Is the first to give him. Pour boiling water over it. Two yabas full so," she indicated the size of the Yabas by shaping them with her hands in the air. "Then you strain ^{it} ~~it~~ into one big

Yaba and cork it. Give him a cup in the morning and in the middle of the day and before he goes to sleep. Know how to hold his tongue and put it in him? Know how to get food into him?"

"Oh Lord..." Sarah sighed. "I didn't think of that."

"Does Maria know what to do?" David asked and they all looked at Noname.

Noname shook his head uncertainly. "I don't know. I don't thi

"Then he will die," the second old woman said in a slightly more robust voice than the first.

"Then one of you must go with Noname to make sure he lives."

The two old women looked at each other, then the younger of the two nodded. "As you will, Pastor."

"But we will go together," the elder said.

"To help and support each other," the younger explained.

"There will be much to do if he's not to die."

"If he's not already dead," the elder added.

"Allright," David nodded and turned to Sarah. "Two donkeys and provision. Do we send anyone with them? Or will N^oname bring them back?"

"I'll bring them back," Noname said.

"One of us must go and see Samson," Sarah said. "We can bring back them then. How long will you need to stay there?"

"Three-four days," the elder said. "If he's still alive."

"He's alive!" Noname exploded suddenly.

"Easy, little brother," David murmured.

"I'll see to the preparations," Sarah said and left room.

Again, as abruptly as he had done the night before, David got up and walked away, only pausing briefly this time to lay his hands lightly on the shoulders of the two old women.

This time Sarah was not there to soothe away Noname's distress. David did not even look at him as ^{he} left.

A little before sunup all was ready. The two old woman had been lifted onto two amiable and equally ancient donkeys. Behind them hampers of ^{provision} balanced evenly on the hips of the donkeys. Noname himself carried the parcels of precious herbs in his shoulder bag. Sarah saw them off. There was no sign of David and Noname was not even sure he was still at the house.

"They will take care of Samson," Sarah said; "One or the other of us will come and look for Samson and take them back when the time is up. Tell them that; and tell Maria to do everything the Nanas say; they are the only ones who can help us now. Tell ^{her} if she doesn't he will surely die."

"Even with that he may die," the elder cut in.

"But I know you will do everything to prevent it," Sarah said very firmly, making it an order.

Then, moving ~~firmly~~ quickly, purposefully, Noname led the two donkeys out of the valley of Cyprus and in the direction of Mount Zion. At the crest of the land, before dipping out of sight of the wide valley and all it contained, he looked back. Sarah was still standing where he had left her, tall and straight, her long dress down to the ground, radiating a feel of power. She raised her hand and waved, and he knew that that was what she had waited for; she had known he would look back, and she had waited to wave when he did, to make up for David. He turned again and led the animals into the next valley and out of sight of David and Sarah's prospering Cyprus.

They lay side by side, utterly relaxed, all ^{physical} passion spent on each other; and as always at such times they were very close, ~~to each other~~, very gentle, very caring. Sarah half-turned her head and looked at his face by the filtered light of the moon reaching into the room ~~by the high open window~~ ^{high} through the leaves of the tall Avocado near the high open window. His face was tranquil open, unguarded...My David; only I can make him be like this...A few years back there had been a young woman, a pretty thing whose man had died, and Sarah knew when the Pastor's comfort of the young widow had turned to something more. She had waited; it had not lasted long and he had come and told her and asked her for help. She had talked to the pretty young thing who had then moved away down to the plains where there were many other men. After all the years together he had to try another to find out the true value of what he had. He had no interest in any other since; ^{there were} not even the looks he had given other, younger women before that had happened.

"You should have talked to Noname. He was upset."

"What about?"

"Anything. Samson; the past."

"You know I can't do that."

"You should try. People misunderstand."

"I have so much to do, so much to learn. No time for idle talk"

"I know; but you must try, especially with Elder Jones."

"He's going against me; he wants us to join with them."

"I think he's jealous of you; that is why you must make a friend of him."

"You know I'm no good at idle chat, Sarah!"

"If he sides with them, three or four other elders will

follow him; we want to stop that."

"We will have to fight him then."

"Not till we have to, David. Try everything else first."

"Allright." He sounded doubtful.

"On Sunday, after church, I will ask all the Elders to stay and break bread with you; only the Elders, no women. I'll put Elder Jones at your right hand."

"Oh, Sarah! He's such a hypocrite..."

"We must try this way first. If we have to fight we will. But try this first. I will talk to the Elders who are with us so they understand. Will you do it, please?"

^{idle}
#Small lying/chat is so difficult."

"This is for a purpose, my love. We must use everything we have to stop them taking over our church. Even if Elder Jones goes over to them we must try to ensure nobody else goes with him. If they see you treating him like a brother and if he then still betrays you, they will wonder if he will not do the same to them. It is not just for him. It will make the others see."

"Yes, I see; you are right as usual. Why didn't I work it out like that?"

"You can't do everything; that's why I'm here to help."

He burst out laughing. "Oh, my Sarah! If I didn't know you so well I'd call you a hypocrite."

and voluptuous
She got out of bed, tall and statuesque in her nakedness;
broad
tight-bellied, firm-breasted; only the flared hips and the strong
thighs hinting at the fact that that body had borne eleven children.
In the half-light the sight of her nakedness stirred David afresh,
as though he were seeing her naked for the first time. She sensed

the renewed stirrings of passion in him and her mind and body responded. Quickly, she poured them each a drink of her special nectar. How long would this burning passion continue between them? When would it end? When her body could no longer bear children? She had been using some of the old women's medicine and it had ~~re~~ prevented her becoming pregnant these past three years; but there had been ~~no~~ let-up in the passion; no easing of the pleasure they found in each other's bodies - as deep and as warm as that very first time, after the pain of the piercing. Sarah uttered a silent prayer; Let it always be so, Lord.

"Come woman."

the meaning of
She knew/that gruffness in David's voice.

"You will play the hypocrite then with Elder Jones..."

"Yes, woman; come!"

"We still have much to talk about."

"Afterwards. Come!"

Samson was still alive when Noname and the two old women reached Mount Zion. Desperate, Not knowing what to do, Maria allowed the two old crones to take over and order and command as though her house were theirs. They brewed a nourishing broth compounded of meat ~~(fresh~~, not salted ~~they~~ insisted - and vast ~~quantities~~ of green vegetables and yellow roots. When this was reduced to a thick soup, they ordered help and propped up Samson's great frame, ~~xxxxxxx~~ forced open his mouth and wedged ~~xxxxxxx~~ it, and ~~the~~ one held down his tongue while the other spooned the broth down his throat. It was a long slow process. When the feeding was done they stripped him naked and bathed his body in hot water made strong smelling by the herbs they had soaked in. *the water*

Then they took turns massaging his stomach and lower abdomen in firm downward movements, on and on and on until the elder sighed, dressed soaked in sweat, "It move..." The younger went to the door and again summoned help, but only men. Jonas and Noname came in and were told to raise the lower part of Samson's body/while the old women spread a pile of broad leaves under his buttocks. Then, with the two men holding Samson in a crouching position, the elder oiled and pushed her hand, shaped into a pointed spatula, up his rectum. She pushed and heaved till it seemed her whole hand was gone; she worked her hand, groaning and grunting, eyes closed, sweat dripping down her face; then she withdrew the hand, slowly, and with it came a foul noxious smell which filled the room and all but choked those in for all the open door and open window. When the hand was finally out the elder held up for the younger to see, a hard, stinking, rocklike little black ball. "The cork!" a hint of tired triumph in her voice. Then Samson's body voided itself.

"He will live," the elder said, wiping her hand on a clean edge of the mound of leaves.

The younger held ^{her} his tongue and poured a dark brew down his throat while the elder removed the pile of fouled leaves from the bed.

"Allright to put him down now," the younger told the men. "The drink will make him sleep for a long time."

"They lick him bad," the elder said. "I saw one take licks like that in slavery time; he died. This one is strong; they lick him so and he lives. That why they call him Samson, like in the Bible?"

Jonas
Neither/~~Samson~~ nor Noname knew but Jonas said: "Yes."

"You can go," the elder dismissed them. "Tell the women to come clean up."

Maria did all the cleaning herself, refusing to allow anyone to help her, refusing to allow even Vie or any of the children into the room till all the ^{muck, all the} ~~sixxxxx~~ smell was removed from it. The two old women cleaned themselves and went ^{to} ~~to~~ the room provided for them and immediately fell asleep, side by side, utterly ^{worn} ~~worn~~-out, like two children who had played too hard. When Maria came looking for them to find out what would happen next, they were in deep sleep, holding hands, the younger sucking her thumb.

The strangers came up to Cyprus from the Catherine Plain end, as though coming from Spanish Town, though they really came from Kingston. The journey was easier on the animals by way of the road to Spanish Town, turning off at Ferry for the steep climb to Cyprus. This way the climb was much shorter than the climb by way of ^{Liguanea.} ~~Liguanea~~. There were two of them, both on horseback; a thin white man of small stature with the dull yellowish colouring of one long in the tropical sun, ~~all~~ dressed in black, with broad brimmed black hat; the other with a burnt-copper dressed in ^{blesche} ~~black~~ skin, ~~black~~ canvas trousers and shirt, ~~white~~ white by wear and weather, ~~xxxxxx~~ with a broad-brimmed straw hat that kept his face permanently shaded. The black rider was the armed one, rifle cradled ~~xxxxxx~~ easily in the crook of his left arm, machete dangling at his knee on the right side of the saddle. He stayed a horse's head behind the white rider, only going ahead when they ^{encountered} ~~approached~~ people or approached some point of limited visibility: a sharp blind turn in the track, the crest of a hill, ^{cluster} ~~a~~ of trees restricting sight. When these were cleared he fell back again. They had started the journey early but the hot sun had caught up with them and there was ^{no} breeze on this part of the hills at this time of the day, so the

white rider sweated profusely and kept mopping his face with a large snow-white handkerchief.

When they reached the outskirts of Cyprus there was no need to stop and ask the way: the magnificent church on the slope of the distant hill, and the large sprawling house near it was their destination.

"What a beautiful place, Joseph!" It was a surprisingly big voice for that sized body, deep and rich as the notes of an organ.

"Yes, sir," Joseph said noncommittally.

"Now let us go and take the measure of Pastor David, if Pastor he is." The white man spurred his tired horse to a gentle canter; the black followed suit. The people of Cyprus stopped what they were doing to turn and stare. This was the first white man to come to Cyprus. White people stayed on the plains and the big estates; black people stayed in the ^{hills} ~~plains~~ ^{they}. As ~~he~~ neared their destination the white man slipped on his parson's collar without slowing his horse, with the ease of something done again and again till it became instinctive.

Somehow, by word of mouth passed across the landscape by men in their fields, by little boys running with the word from one household to the next, the ^spresence and the coming of the strangers was made known to David and Sarah long before their arrival. So they were waiting when the strangers arrived.

The white man sprang quickly from his horse and hurried forward right hand extended, a warm smile on his face. He doffed his hat when he saw Sarah. What a striking woman, he thought as he tilted his head to look into David's eyes. So this is Pastor David.

"Pastor David! So glad to meet you at last. We've heard about

Rae, John Rae

your great work. I am Pastor ~~Winters~~, travelling secretary for our church's Council of Elders."

David took the extended hand and noted the firmness of the little man's grip.

"David Brown," he said formally. Samson had given him, all of them, that surname; he wondered momentarily how Samson was. "This is my wife Sarah."

The man bowed slightly and took Sarah's hand: "Mrs. Brown... I hope you do not mind too much my coming like this. Our President, the chairman of our Council of Elders did write twice," He paused.

"Yes, I got the letters," David said. "I do not go to Kingston much."

"We thought so, which is why they sent me."

Something about the man's companion, the man's bodyguard Sarah judged him, nagged at the back of Sarah's mind; something familiar, something that went back to that painful past of the days of bondage. She had seen him somewhere, or someone very like him, much younger but still him or someone so like him as to be a twin. And the man, too, it was apparent, was trying to place Sarah.

Rae

"Your companion, Mr. ~~Winters~~," Sarah said. She would make the man introduce his bodyguard.

"Oh I'm sorry, Mrs. Brown. That's Joseph. He looks after me when I travel. He's a good and faithful servant of the church. We're very proud of him."

Sarah was not listening to the man; her mind went back in time. Joseph; Joseph. That was the name of the young boy she had tried to protect. "That you, Joseph?"

"Yes, Miss Sarah," the man said, as he had said it as a frightened

ed boy along time ago. His face remained impassive; only his eyes glow

"Come into the house," David said to ^{Rae}~~Villiers~~. "You've brought my wife a piece of her past. Let them be for while."

^{Rae}~~Villiers~~ followed David into the cool dark room, suddenly less certain of himself than he remembered being in a long time.

"You really my little Joseph of long ago? The one I used to give food out of the window?"

"Yes, Miss Sarah." Still only the eyes shone with feeling.

"Oh Joseph! Joseph! I never thought I would see you or anyone from that place again."

She took both the man's hands, squeezed them and led him round to the back of the house where the horses would be stable. And in her mind she rejoiced; Joseph would know more of ^{Rae's}~~Villiers~~ plans than ^{Rae}~~Villiers~~ thought. The past had sent them an ally.

All day long the two men had fenced with each other, feeling each other out, testing reactions and responses, mentally exploring each other's possible strengths and weaknesses. They talked about the land and what grew best on this part of it; about how David and Sarah began the building of their church long before the first settle came into the valley.

At one point, as they crested a slight hill that led to Elder Jones' home, they paused to look back at the church. Unexpectedly, David said: "You know, we were runaway slaves and our leader, Samson had killed a man, the driver who had hurt him cruelly. Do you think God will forgive him?"

^{Rae}~~Villiers~~ began to give one of those equivocal ~~Christian~~ church answers, then stopped himself.

"I don't know; I am not one of those persons who knows the thinking of the Lord on every matter. Tell me, what do you think?"

David counter^d with another question. "Can you put yourself in Samson's place? Can you think of yourself as a slave?"

"No; and I cannot know the true feelings of a man who was."

"Can the Lord?"

"What do you think?"

"Like you, I don't know; all I do know is that his son was cruelly whipped, like Samson, and hung on a cross where he died; the feelings of such a man, the pain of such a man Samson knows and I know. Such a one must know ^{how} ~~what~~ it feels to be a slave."

"White men have been sold into slavery too," ^{Rae} ~~Willers~~ said. "And to this day, in Africa and the Arab countries brown men and black men are holding other brown men and black men in bondage."

"Slavery," David said softly; "Slavery."

"Slavery," ^{Rae} ~~Willers~~ conceded. "Cruelty and injustice are not confined to one people or one race or one nationality"

"I agree; but is there ^{no} ~~not~~ difference between the cruelty and injustice within one people or one race or one nationality and the cruelty and injustice of one people or race or nationality against another?"

^{Rae} "I have not thought about that," ~~Willers~~ said honestly. "Perhaps I should have, but I haven't. I will now. My first instinctive reaction is to say all cruelty and injustice are the same, no matter the circumstances."

"Think about it and we will talk about it again."

Perhaps this is the time, ^{Rae} ~~Willers~~ thought. Aloud he asked: "Has this to do with our invitation ^{for you} to join with us?"

"Think about it and we will talk again." David turned the surefooted mule abruptly and led the way down the sloping land to Elder Jones' house. A small, slightly ironic smile flitted across ^{Rae's} ~~Villiers'~~ face and was gone. This encounter was proving very different from any of his other encounters; nothing simple or straightforward about it; this man was in control, whatever Jones had told the Elders. Would be interesting to see how Jones behaves in his presence.

It was Saturday and ~~was~~ was customary people had stopped and left their fields working/in the early afternoon. This valley reminded Villiers of the land of the Shonas in Africa where he had served briefly before being sent to Jamaica; it was a miniature version of that long Shona valley in which he had first discovered his gift for learning African languages and his ability to get on well with black people, not because they were childlike, as most of his missionary colleagues seemed to think but because they were, for the most part, devastatingly and literally straightforward in their dealings with each other and with everyone else. Those who were not straightforward, the cleverly devious ones, stood out in sharp contrast, like the rogue animal or the social deviant in a world of accepted conformity. The ancestors of the people ~~here~~ in Jamaica were brought from another part of Africa and their ways, overlaid no doubt by the bitter experiences of slavery, were very different. There's this weird assumption that all black people are alike, and if you can deal successfully with one group of them you can do so with all of them: ^{his experience belied this.} David's voice cut through his reverie.

"Do you want to talk about your business?"

"You mean with Elder Jones?"

"Yes."

"I'd prefer to talk with you first." As he said it, ^{Rae}~~XXXXXX~~ knew he had walked into a trap. He extricated himself as best he could, knowing ~~that~~ the futility of it after his long awkward pause. "I met Elder Jones in Kingston."

David ~~xxxx~~turned his head and looked into ^{Rae's}~~XXXXXX~~ eyes: "I know."

"Wanted to find out if I'm a liar as well," Rae murmured.

"As well as what, Mr. Rae?"

"As well as your enemy."

"Are you my enemy, then?"

"You've treated me as such; all this feeling and fencing."

"But are you?"

"That's a hard one, my friend."

"To think about and talk about later?" David suggested. "Like the purpose for your visit?"

"It is my duty," Rae said thoughtfully. "If I don't do it, someone else will. If I refused to come they would send someone else."

They travelled in silence after that, the surefooted mules moving easily over the uneven land and the rock-strewn track to Jones' house where the land dipped sharply.

Jones waited for them on his verendah, a big, hearty man, not quite as tall as David but as broad and as strapping. He was still in his field clothes and these clung tightly to his body. A small thin woman poked her head out of the door then disappeared again.

"Greetings brother Jones," David called. "I think you know Mr. Rae. I'm showing him around."

A wide ingratiating smile that did not reach his eyes cracked

Jones' broad face into a series of mini crescents. "Welcome Pastor David, Pastor Rae!" His voice had a hearty booming ring. "Just back from the fields! No time to change! But come in, please!"

Rae spoke quickly, cutting off whatever ^eresponse David was about to make. "We're just passing, Elder Jones; just wanted to pay my respects; not stopping. I understand we'll have a proper meeting tomorrow after church. Pastor David and I have much to discuss."

"Yes! Yes!" Elder Jones boomed. "I understand!" He pounded off the verendah and wrapped both his huge hands around Rae's small pale extended hand; face beaming, eyes coldly calculating. "I hope your discussions are fruitful!"

"I'm sure you do," David said drily.

"Greet your good lady for me," Rae said, seeing the small figure among the dark shadows just inside the door. "I look forward to meeting her tomorrow." He looked at David and they turned their mules together, as though by prearrangement.

As soon as their backs were turned Elder Jones' beaming smile was replaced by a thoughtful frown. "They're close," he said to nobody in particular. "Too close..."

The two men rode in silence ~~rode in silence~~ for the best part of half an hour. At last Rae said; "You're a patient man, Pastor David."

"You will tell me if you want to," David said.

"And if I don't you won't ask?...I deal with people like that most of the time; its part of my work. They are the ones who bring more communities into our fold; but I deal with them all the time and you get to know them and, sometimes, you grow a little tired of them. Sometimes the tiredness becomes very heavy."

"So you turn away from your work?"

"No; the work goes on; he's not necessary now; he may be, later, though I hope not. I'd prefer to deal only with you and Mrs. Brown. You see I don't call her your good lady. That is part of our everyday dishonesties required by the work."

"And if you get nowhere with Sarah and me?"

"Oh we'll get somewhere. We always do." Rae sounded depressed
"I think it is time for us to sit down and talk. My friends - the very few I have - call me Jock; I'd like you to."

"Are you our friend?"

"I'd like to be."

"By taking what is ours?"

"Not taking; putting it in a larger context."

"Against our will?"

"No; preferably not."

"But if you have to?"

"I think your wife should be in on this now."

"I'm glad you see that."

"I see more than you think, my friend."

"Then you should see we do not want this union."

"I see that, and more; and I would like you to see what I see before you close your minds, for your sakes as well as for our sakes."

David held his peace and they rode all the way home in silence. Sarah met them at the door.

"It is time to talk," David told her.

"The three of us, please," Rae said.

David crossed her cheek with the back of his hand, a rare

show of affection in the presence of a stranger. "Let us eat together; just the three of us. Tell the children."

While Sarah went to arrange matters David led Rae to his work room, a long narrow ~~xxx~~ room attached to the back of the house, jutting out like a landlocked peninsula. The two long walls, east and west, had open shutters running almost their entire length, and reaching almost from floor to ceiling, /so letting in both morning and evening light; by day the room was permanently bright. A large oil lamp hung from a ceiling beam ^{desklike} directly above the large/table which contained Sarah's bible, some writing material, three books and a number of magazines. A smaller table against the east wall contain^{a straw tray with} a huge yaba of Sarah's nectar and several mugs; four chairs made up the rest of the furnishing.

"What a place to work and think!" Rae exclaimed. "I envy you." He picked up Sarah's bible, black clothbound, finely printed, much used, some of the middle part coming away from the back binding, but clearly ~~xxx~~ handled with much care and love. To the Most High and Mighty Prince James, By the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c.

"Sarah brought it with her," David said softly. "She used it to teach me to read and write. And she used it to teach/~~the~~ ^{our} older children when we were alone, before the others came into the valley."

"How long were you two here alone?"

"About ten years," David said.

"A long time."

"Didn't seem so then; there was so much to do^{to learn.} We needed the time to get to know each other."

"Never lonely?"

"No."

"She must be a wonderful woman."

"She is."

Sarah came in at that point. Rae sensed a quick momentary confusion in David.

"What is she?" Sarah asked. "And which she?"

"He said you must be a wonderful woman."

"And you?" Sarah laughed at him with eyes.

"Not fair," Rae said quickly, suddenly sounding very Scot.

"Time to talk," David said brusquely.

"Yes," Sarah said, continuing to laugh at him with her eyes.

Sarah filled three mugs with her nectar; the men made themselves comfortable in chairs. The mood and atmosphere in the room changed. Sarah stood by the high wide west window, watching the changing light in the orange sky; a hill obstructed her view of the sun setting over the rim of the Caribbean sea.

"Where to begin," Rae said thoughtfully.

"Why you want to take us over," Sarah said. "That's as good a point."

"You know our Elders would deny that they want to take ~~me~~ you over."

"I thought we were going to be honest," David said.

"I think it is important that you understanding them, their reasoning, their motives. In your own interest."

"And you care about our interest!" Sarah was scoffing.

Rae held up his hand and nodded ~~in~~ acknowledgement of the jab.

"Allright," David brushed it aside. "What is their motive?"

"Growth and survival; survival and growth; they interact.
or weakening
Just as contraction/and death interact. You are not singular in
your church here. There are others like yours all over this land;

indeed, all over the world where the Christian message has been carried. There's a bitter struggle going on about it in Africa. Some of them are true Christian churches, like I believe yours is; others are distortions, admixtures of christian faith and paganism or christian faith and superstition or christian faith and animism. Among some Africans we found attempts to graft Christian teaching on to ancestor worship and spirit worship so that rivers and trees and rocks assumed odd christian shapes...."

"There are no such problems in our case," Sarah said.

"No," Rae agreed. "But until you are within the fold there is no assurance that it may not come to that one day. The purity of God's message must never depend for its survival and perpetuation on any one or two persons. A day will come when you two will not be here and others who may not be like you may inherit your church and your responsibilities. All your work may then be distorted and your church may be used to serve someone's wish for personal power over others."

"And this is not possible within your fold?" David cut in.

"You know it is. The history of the Church of Rome is replete with instances of men using the power of the church for personal power over others. That was one important reason for the Reformation and the Protestant breakaway. But even there, the very fact of the wide all-embracing nature of the Roman Church ensured that those who used the church for personal power would, sooner or later, be brought under the control of the true meaning and teachings of the church. The very nature of the church ensured the victory of its self-cleansing power and the ultimate defeat of those who would distort its purpose. So neither Popes nor Princes prevailed for long ~~over the~~

in their attempts to use the church to serve other than christian ends. It is that structure which we talk about as the fold which is the strength of the church. The church must maintain and strenth-
en that structure. So we must bring all the independently establishe
litte churches into the fold."

"And if you don't?" Sarah asked.

"Then the structure will be weakened. To the extent that the so-called independent churches are allowed to grow and flourish to that extent will
/the corporate chistian community be damaged. As the one grows and gains authority the other must shrink and lose authority. That is the nature of things."

"Wait," David said. "Let's make sure we understand you. Are you saying that the survival of your church demands the destruction of ours?"

"Not the destruction. The taking into the fold."

"And that is not destruction? You say you must take what is ours and turn~~ed~~ it into what is yours and that is not destruction of what is our?"

"Peace, my friend. To destroy is to wipe out. We do not want to wipe out your church. We want to bring it into the wider fold of all other like-minded chruches practising the same form of worship. We offer you the greater strength of a wider community. We can send you preachers and teacher^s to help with your work. We can see that your school has more books and other supplies for your children; that your mothers get regular help and instruction."

"And for these benefits we must give up our independence?"

"We all of us surrender our independence, or a measure of it, to the greater whole and derive the greater benefit. Surely that is

reasonable."

"If it is your choice," Sarah said.

"If it is your free choice," David said.

"But it is," Rae said. "We cannot force you to join us."

"And what if we don't?" Sarah slipped into a chair and braced herself. Better to get it over with.

"I would be very sorry," Rae said softly, his big voice just above a whisper. "I came here not caring, doing my duty because it ^{is} ~~was~~ my duty. Now, because I've met you and seen this place and know something of how it came about, I care."

"But not enough to tell them to leave us alone..." Sarah said.

"If I did they would not listen; and I can't let my caring ^{And they would not let me.} interfere with what must happen. Please understand. They can't just leave you alone and pretend this place does not exist. If they did a score of independent church would refuse to join the fold and a score more would pop up here and there..."

"And soon the fold of which you speak would be too weak to impose its will. And that cannot be allowed to happen, right?" David's voice was bitter now, and tinged with suppressed anger.

"What will they do," Sarah asked, remote and deliberate and cold: "What will they do if we refuse?"

"He's part of it," David said harshly, "Their agent."

"Please, David." She looked searchingly at Rae in the fast gathering gloom, trying to read his mind but his eyes were in shadow. "What will they do?"

"You will not notice it immediately but things will begin to happen. Another place of worship to begin with, a place like Elder Jones'; then a visiting pastor and more help and things than you can

give. You may know we've already got a piece of land where we can build a church and school, thanks to your own generous allotment of Policy...."

Sarah nodded, Joseph had told her of the parcel of land they had bought from Elder Jones.

Rae's voice droned on quietly..."It will be slow and steady. And in the end we will win. We've done it all before; we have great experience at it. Whatever you decide, be sure of one thing: we will win in the end because we must win and because ~~we~~ we are stronger than you."

"And the Christian justice of it?" Sarah asked.

"Is there really such an issue involved? Think of it. You have founded a good community here, a Christian community and you have brought that community the message of the Lord as ^{best you can,} ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~, and I think you have done a wonderful work. But the church will tell you you are not qualified to minister the gospel; it needs more than the will and just an intimate knowledge of the Bible. And the church says to you 'well done, thou good and faithful servant' we are now ready to take over the work from here; come into the fold. And if you say 'no' the church begins its own work which it must do. Where ^{does} ~~is~~ the ^{matter of} Christian justice come into that?" No, Mrs. Brown, I hate it but I see no question of any kind of justice or injustice involved."

"Only of power," David said bitterly.

"Yes; the power and the survival of the church."

"And those who were slaves are not good enough to manage their own churches; only those who were once the slaver-owners!"

"Your anger is just," Rae said heavily. "But it will change nothing."

"And you care nothing."

"I do care, my friend, but ..."

"You are not my friend!" David's rage was towering now.

"David, my dear," Sarah's voice caressed him, and Rae was startled by the effect; the man's rage dissolved instantly. Then she moved her head slightly and spoke to Rae: "You say you care. If you care, tell us what to do. Or would that be a betrayal of those who sent you, of your side? What are we to do to be left alone?"

"You will be left alone," Rae said.

"With your rival church in our valley..."

"Yes; neither you nor I can stop that."

"So we can do nothing?" Sarah pressed him.

"You can do something..."

"She does not mean surrender," David said.

"I know that; neither do ~~it~~ I; certainly not in the long run."

"But surrender in the short run..."

"David," Sarah appealed. "Yes, Mr. Rae..."

"Please bear with me," Rae said. "It's not easy to explain, but you two have learned patience here, and this requires patience to understand and patience to carry through successfully."

A member of Sarah's extended household came in and lit the lamp; she was followed by two others carrying trays of food which Sarah arranged on the table. The helpers withdrew; Sarah motioned the two men to settle down to the food. David said grace, and then they ate the meal of succulent smoked hog, roasted breadfruit, ^a and spinach-like green, ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ called callaloo and avocado pear. Near the end of the meal Sarah said: "Please go on, Mr. Rae."

"Call it what you will," Rae said slowly. "Call it the official

church or the establishment or the white church - and it did, however willingly or unwillingly, collaborate with the slave system, as you say - it is, at bedrock, part of a system of order, a way of doing things in a managed and organised way which ensures stability. Anything outside that system which threatens the strength of that system, also threatens the stability. Do you see what I am trying to say?"

"I understand," Sarah said noncommittally.

"If you do then you will understand that within the system all things are possible; it is even possible to change the system itself from within. That is what the Reformation was all about. Our protest was against the dogmatic domination ~~from~~ of Rome. It took time. If you want to protest against the domination of the church in the colonies by white people from Europe then, as we have done with our reformation, you must first be within the fold. And as we did from Rome, you will meet great resistance, and you will suffer setbacks, but because you will not be against the system even the setbacks will have elements of victory because they will compel changes within the system."

David, coldly thoughtful now, said: "You are telling us to give up the independence of our church we now have, to submit to you, become part of your fold, and then try to change you. Why should we?"

"Because," Sarah cut in, "He says that is the only way we can survive."

"More than survive," Rae said. "Take over, in time, something bigger than you could ever build by yourselves. You, and people like you could, in time, become the Council of Elders. You yourself could become the President."

"But you are not part of the Church of Rome," Sarah said.
 "You broke away to be independent."

"We were of the fold, in tthe fold, till we were driven out./
 You must be in the fold, you must be part of the system, if you are
 to challenge it, to change it successfully, even to break it up.
 You cannot stay outside and do so; it will destroy you."

"So we are back at the thing of power," David said.

"All of life has to do with power," Rae said impatiently. "You
 yourself are reacting to a challenge to your power."

^{We}
 "I did not build it at anyone else's expense; we took nothing
 from anybody else."

"And" Sarah said, "We always used it morally, as the Bible
 teaches."

"You were fortunately. Things were clear and simple for you
 for a longer time than for most others. That simplicity cannot
 continue. The use of power is complex and difficult and the church,
 in all its forms, has a greater experience in the use of power than
 any of the other systems on earth. That is why we know your independ-
 ence threatens our power even while we admire you for it. That is why
 we say come into the fold and shape us to your desires. That way we
 will not have to destroy you."

"Having taken away our independence," David jeered.

"And offered a greater," Rae said.

"On your terms, through your system, through your eyes."

"That is the difficulty," Rae said. "And I do not know the
 answer to that one. We broke with Rome but go on trying to live by
 the purest and highest moral laws first laid down by Rome."

"Not Rome," Sarah said. "The Lord Jesus himself, Mr. Rae."

"True. But without the system, without the structures of power developed by Rome, and later by us, without our massive organisation and power the teachings of the Lord Jesus would not have girdled the earth and so dominated men that even great temporal powers bow before it." It would have remained small and obscure."

"And still," Sarah said softly, "With all your power You cannot leave one little independent church in one little valley in the hills alone."

"Because the church and the nature of church power can be fragmented and destroyed that way." It may not appear to happen because of you or your church, but each thing lives and grows or withers and dies at the expense of something else; if your kind of church grows it must be at the expense of ^{our} ~~the~~ system. But you can make that system your own and take it over in time. I believe that is what will happen one day. And I believe people like you two can be the pioneers for that day."

David murmured: "And Satan said bow down before me and I will give you all the earth."

"Let us not assault each other with the scriptures," Rae protested. "They can be used to make my case as well as yours; they will not help us in this instance."

"And if we join," Sarah said. "What will we have to do?"

"Submit yourselves to guidance; some instructions, perhaps. We manage these ^{matters} carefully so there will be no loss of dignity, no loss of respect. Your case would be special, this I can promise you. It would suit us for you to sit on the Council of Elders but there would first have to be the special instruction and ordination."

"I was a member of your church as a slave," Sarah cut in.

"I was baptised after instruction. I gave David that same instruction and I baptised him as I was baptised. The laying on of hands is unbroken. Christ's apostles who first preached the gospel did not have

licences or black suits or white collars."

Rae nodded and smiled. "That was before the church became a power system, Mrs. Brown. Today it is a power system, the greatest in the world, and it must have rules. We will apply them with ^{due} care."

"As you rob us of our independence with due care!"

"Please, David," Sarah calmed him again. "And where will it lead then, Mr. Rae?" What would happen to our church? Our school? Who will be in charge?"

"There are different ways of handling these things..." Rae stopped abruptly, peered at the woman's shadowy face in the lamp-light. "Why are you asking these things when the answers do not really interest you, Mrs. Brown?"

"To try and understand you, Mr. Rae; to understand what manner of man can come and do these things and say they are done in the name of God."

"In the name of the church, Mrs. Brown; in the name of the church."

"The church of God or the church of man?"

"They are one and the same. But about me, ma'am, it is simple; I'm a cog in a great machine, conscious of the power of that machine and the rules for the using of that power. Within the rules I can use that power, even to make things easier and more bearable for people like you; outside that great machine I am nothing, just as the President of the Council of Elders would be nothing without that machine: it is what gives us power individually and collectively. If you can see that then what I feel or what you feel is only important within the framework of that machine."

"But you are a man," Sarah protested. "You have soul and

conscience. You have choice, free will..."

"I'm beginning to think he's right, Sarah," David cut in. Think about it. Remember our long talks about the church and slavery? They tried to make Christians of us, they made a Christian of you, without preaching against slavery. They wanted us to be good Christians and good slaves at the same time. Remember Samson's anger about that."

"And yet," Rae said. "it was the work of the church, more than anything else, that led to abolition."

"Not here; not among us," David objected.

"But still the church," Rae retorted. "To be tolerated here, to be allowed to do its work here, the church had to appear to acquiesce." ~~(acquiesce)~~

"The parson visited the great house," Sarah said coldly. "I know. I was there. I saw it. He was the friend of the owners, not the slaves; they entertained him and he saw the slaves through their eyes. The one who came to our plantation had no feeling for us, no Christian love. I was young but I could see it."

"He was part of the system," Rae said.

"And the system was slavery," David said.

"And yet we ended slavery," Rae said. "Without wholesale slaughter or murder. We ended it by using the system. But there is point to your criticism. It would have been easier now if we had made it plain then, if the church had made it plain to the slaves then, especially the Christian slaves, that accepting the fact of slavery did not mean that the church was approving of it. We made the mistake we still make the mistake, of confusing illiteracy with ignorance, as though people who cannot read and write cannot think and reason

And so, knowing that what we were doing was really in their interest, we did not bother to make the slaves understand our motives and our purpose. We dealt with you as wise parents with foolish children. I think that was wrong."

"You still do it," Sarah said.

"Really? Is that what I am doing now? Telling you the harsh truth about power and the use of power that the church might survive and flourish? I don't think you are being fair this time, Mrs. Brown."

It was Sarah, this time, who exploded: "Fair! You talk to me about fairness! You come here and tell us you are either going to take over or destroy our church and then you talk to me about not being fair! No, Mr. Rae! That is treating us like children!"

"You are being unfair, Mrs. Brown," Rae insisted quietly.

"I think I understand why but it is still unfair. You are turning an argument of reason into one of feeling; and I can no more argue with your feelings than you can with mine. We can try to understand each other's thoughts, we can even try to understand each other's feelings. What we cannot in conscience do is argue the superiority of one set of feelings over another. I have told you the intentions and methods of our church and I have laid it out before you openly and in good faith, holding back nothing. Would you have preferred me to make it less frank, less open, ~~tell~~ forthright? I could have done it, you know. I've done it before now, God help me. Would you really have preferred not to know all that is involved in the choice you make?"

"Peace," David said. "It has become too personal. We are not seeing as clearly and calmly as we should. Let it rest for now. We will talk again tomorrow."

David rose and lit a small ~~portable~~ oil lamp, went to the door

opened it and waited for Rae. Rae and Sarah rose and faced each other. She towered over the little man. They seemed awkward with each other. Impulsively, Sarah offered him her hand.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Rae. This means much to us; it is all our life."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Brown; sorry to be the one to bring these tidings; sorry there is no way I know for this not to happen."

Sarah straightened her back, raised her chin, seeming even taller, more statuesque. Rae turned and followed David out of the room. Sarah remained, putting the used dishes together. David led Rae to the room where Noname had slept but Rae was in no mood for sleep. This, he knew, would be one of those restless nights which afflicted him from time to time, whenever his faith was disturbed or undermined and his spirits troubled.

"I am not likely to sleep," he said to David at the door.

There was a bond of understanding between them now; both men seemed unwilling to part with each other.

"Then why do you do this?" David asked.

"Someone has to."

"Not necessarily you."

"Someone with less feeling, perhaps?"

"You know what I mean."

"We do not want to destroy what you have here."

"Does it matter?"

"I think it does; and so do others. They know more about you and your work than you think."

"It won't be the same; it can't be the same. It's already started changing."

"I know. That's why I didn't want to stop at Elder Jones'."

I look at him and become afraid of what might come. Change can be terrible at times, and the worst part is that you cannot stop it even if you see that it is not for the best."

"Not even through ^{the} power of your system?"

"I'm not arguing our case now."

"Sorry. There's rum in the house; want me to bring you some."

"No. Can I walk out to your church?"

"Yes; it's always open."

"Expected it to be."

"Want me to come?"

"I'd like to be alone."

^{house} "Allright then; goodnight. Stay out as long as you like. The ~~house~~ will be open. There'll be someone about if you want anything."

"Dagga...Pastor David."

And David stopped and turned back.

"If you could manage the change, if they agreed to leave you ~~xxxxxxx~~ to manage the change, only helping where help is needed, would you join us then? Don't answer now; think about it."

"Allright. I'll think about it; but you know it will not be our change: it will not come out of our conditions and our needs; it will be your change, whoever manages it."

"It is the damage I fear," Rae said.

"Then leave us alone," David said softly.

"You know we can't. I've explained that."

"Then the responsibility for the damage must be yours too."

"That is easy. Systems of power find no difficulty taking responsibility for damage and destruction; that is why wars are made so easily, why people can be put in chains, why even the church can be so brutal at times. And still we cannot function without systems."

Systems are faceless, conscienceless, heartless; but they impose order and keep the peace and make the future possible."

"Then why worry about the damage," David said coldly.

"Why will you not understand..."

"You mean why will I not surrender. To understand, as you want is to surrender. That is what you want. It is not enough to take what is mine. You want me to tell you it is right for you to do it, not in so many words, perhaps, but by understanding. Well, I will not. If you have any more conscience than the system in whose name you excuse this wickedness then let that conscience eat into your soul! I will not understand! I will not see with you! I will not give you my mind!" David walked away, his big body a moving monument of contained rage.

For a long moment John Rae stood by the door, the hot little oil lamp growing hotter in his hand, a quiet depression over him. How often he had done this sort of work; and each time it was different from any other time before. This time it was more personally painful because these two had ~~renewed~~ revived old spiritual doubts. The strength of their faith was its simplicity: do what is right and thou wilt find favour in the eyes of the Lord and his blessings will fall on thee and protect thee all the days of thy life. Or is there more to it? We, the body of the church, are the conscience of the system; we do what we do for the greater glory of the church. Then why do the good ones, the best among them, resist us so hard? Why is ^{only} it/easy to win over ~~enix~~ the self-seeking and the crooked; why do we so often have to break the good and the upright and destroy their works? Oh, Lord, give me the strength to persuade these two to come into the fold, to walk with us and continue the work they have started.

here. For ~~they~~ name's sake. Amen. John Rae placed the little lamp on the bedside table, ensuring it was near nothing which could catch fire, then he left the little room and found his way to the back door leading out of the house and up the sloping hill to the church. The moon had not yet risen so the land was darker than usual. A dog barked nearby, half-announcing, half-challenging his presence. A voice, person unseen, growled: "Is allright; is parson, hush." The dog was silent. He felt and smelled a fine mist coming down on the valley. And suddenly he remembered his lonely childhood in a crofter's cottage among the Scottish hills. Not the same, really; very much colder and very much bleaker. So why this strong remembrance? At other times of deep depression his mind had slipped ~~xxxxxxx~~ back to those hard yet tranquil childhood days. But never as sharply and strongly as this night. Beyond the strength of our system, beyond the indisputable reality of the harsh logic of the needs for the survival of that system, what right have we to destroy the work of good people like these? Is survival justification enough? He talked ~~xxxx~~ of 'our' change and 'your' change. They needed no guidance from us and our system to get to this point. Would they get beyond it, perhaps beyond our system, by themselves if we left them to themselves? But how can we leave them alone... Guide us, O, Lord that we may do Thy will...

David stood at the open window of their bedroom. Sarah was in bed, her long hair, out of its tight knot, now made a kinky/^{dark}halo round her face.

"He's entering the church," David said. "His spirit is really troubled."

"If he is a good man," Sarah said thoughtfully. "Then he should

let others do this dirty work."

"Not dirty, my dear; not from their standpoint. Painful, perhaps, unpleasant perhaps but, again from their standpoint, very necessary."

"Then why his distress? He's not going back to them to say: Don't do this, or, I think it is wrong to do this."

"You are being unfair to him, Sarah. You know that doing what you are sure is right can still cause you distress. Want me to remind ~~me~~ you of some of the times you yourself were so distressed?"

Sarah's mood changed, and her voice with it. "You're suddenly very clear-headed. Why, my David? What are you seeing?"

"Think of him," David's voice was almost impersonal. "Think hard about him and all we said to each other."

"Allright; now what?"

"For all the power of his system, for all his knowledge that we cannot resist it and win, he still wants our agreement. Think. They didn't ask for our agreement to turn us into slaves."

"But they did use some of the slaves to become drivers," Sarah said.

"Now you are thinking," David approved. "And the drivers had to agree because they were the only slaves with some sort of choice. They could choose to drive the others and get the benefits of being drivers or they could refuse and remain like the others and often suffer more punishment for having refused. Did you know Samson refused to be a driver?"

"You never told me. That why they hurt him so?"

"Partly. But you see now why he is so anxious to win us over? They want drivers to drive ~~our~~ ^{the} souls and spirits ^{of our people} into obedience to ~~t~~ It is a kind of slavery of the mind instead of the body."

"A slavery of the mind; a slavery of the spirit." *Sarah missed,* "Oh, David, it's a terrible thought. Does he understand this?"

"I don't know. We must find out; make him understand."

"Then what?"

"Then nothing. He must understand, that is all; and we must understand."

"Is it fair to him, David? He does not have the choice the slave driver had. He cannot say no without betraying his own kind. When the ~~driver~~ slave refused to be a driver he was *loyal* to his *and still a slave* own. If this man refused to do his church's bidding he would be disloyal to his own, *and cast out of his world.*"

Sarah, "But this man wants us to be disloyal to our own. He is like the agent of the slavemaster who says to us you come and be our driver of black souls and we will take care of you."

"He has others who will do it, if we refuse."

"We know that, and he knows that. So why does he trouble with us?"

"He told us himself," Sarah said. "They don't want to destroy what is here already if it can be avoided; take over and build on it. That is what they want. And that part of it is reasonable, even to me. What is not reasonable is to take it against our will."

"You do not need reason when you have power."

"Then why the attempt to reason with us."

"Because the conquest of the mind is the most complete victory."

"Then it is not just our church."

"No. He told us so himself. He was honest with us."

"To make us over, not in God's image but in their image."

"So that we see the world and ourselves through their eyes, as they see us. We must make him understand that, Sarah."

"What makes you think he does not already?"

"Because he's out there, my dear. Because his spirit is troubled. Because I think he is a good man."

"Oh, my David," she protested in exasperation. "What makes him a good man? His good language? The good manners with which he tells us they are prepared to build another church here and turn the people against us?" No, my David. A good man would see that what we are doing is good and give us his help or leave us alone. You know that."

"And what of their system? Are you saying a good man will not become part of their system? All their power, all their strength is founded on their system. He is a man of their system. We cannot say that because a man is a servant of his own system of power he cannot be a good man."

"Jesus stood up against the system of his day," Sarah said. "And the system destroyed him." Were those who destroyed him good men

"For there to be good order there had to be a system to control and manage the power. Those who opposed the system were bound to be destroyed by it."

"So?"

"So this is something you and I have not really thought about until now. It is not simply good men and bad men, Sarah. This is the thing we have not seen and could not see as long as we were here alone. First Samson, and then your Bible, taught us to work together and to build together, and so it has been with all the other communities of these hills who escaped from slavery or turned their backs on the slave ways of the plains and plantations when slavery was ended. What we did not see is that their system will not leave us alone.

Perhaps it cannot leave us alone. Perhaps their system has to take over and take over and take over until it has control of all the world."

"And turn everybody into drivers for their system or else destroy them?"

"Perhaps that too, my Sarah."

"But why, David? Why?"

"Because anything not under their power threatens it. He said so."

"I know that; what I want to know is why do they have to have this power? Why is it such a terrible fire in them, driving them to such terrible things?"

"I don't know," David said heavily. "Let us see if he does."

There was a long silence in the room after that. Sarah snuggled deeper under the light bedclothing. The high pitched whine of a solitary mosquito was cut off suddenly as it passed too close over the lamp and was instantly scorched to death. Sarah allowed body and mind to relax.

"Come to bed," she murmured sleepily, as she had done countless times over the years, and then, drifting off, half-heard him adjust the shutters of the window, ^{half-}heard him move across the room to his bedside chair, ^{half-}heard the heavy thud of the big boots, the rustle of the shedding of clothes, felt the bed sag with his weight, then felt him and leaned her head against his chest and, ~~slipped~~ feeling safe and secure, ^{slipped} ~~slipped~~ into a deep untroubled sleep. David lay thinking and brooding for nearly an hour more, then he, ~~too~~ deliberately put all thought out of his mind and fell into a deep sleep.

Only John Rae, alone in the quiet and dark and austere high-ceilinged church, was too restless for sleep.

¹ disturbed and

The morning sun cast a warm spell of tranquility over the church on the edge of the wide valley. People, in their Sunday best, came strolling to the church from miles around, the~~ir~~^{ir} gay bright colours the women wore challenging the gentle warmth of the sun. They came in twos and threes and in larger family groups, men and women, boys and girls, and a large number of old grannies their heads tied with the coloured bandanas of slavery times. The younger women wore pretty woven straw hats decorated with coloured ribbons of white and red and blue and pink. The men looked awkward in jacket and ties and unfamiliar Sunday hats, the boys uncomfortable at having their usually bare feet enslaved in heavy shoes and boots.

Sarah and David and ~~the~~ John Rae/^{received}~~xxxxxx~~ for the congregation under a huge breadfruit tree near the church door, surrounded by the Elders of the church. Each member was introduced to the visiting white Pastor who had a handshake and a word of welcome for each. Then they they gravitated to friends and acquaintances and the talk become spirited and lively and the atmosphere that of a Sunday mornin outdoor party.

Elder Jones and the three Elders who were his supporters in the move to have their church join the greater church/^{based in Kingston}on whose behalf ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ the visiting Pastor was here, stayed self-importantly close to the visitor, ensuring that all the congregation saw where they were. Without any sign of rudeness Rae kept his distance, speaking to David or Sarah when not greeting a new member of the congregation.

At one point Sarah leaned toward Rae and whispered: "You must not ignore your supporters, Mr. Rae."

"Wish I could," Rae whispered back, a wicked twinkle in his

eyes.

"Mr. Rae!" Sarah protested, only half in jest.

"Mrs. Brown!" Rae mocked back in perfect mimicry of her, and roared at his own humour.

"You're very cheerful this morning," David said.

"There's a time to weep and a time to laugh," Rae said. "I want to laugh on this beautiful morning. I wept enough last night."

Briefly, David's eyes met Rae's.

"For us?" David murmured.

"For myself," Rae said, noting the warm caress of a woman's voice in laughter somewhere just behind him.

"Sarah wondered whether a good man should do your work."

"Am I a good man? Does a good Christian have to be a good man And what is being good in this instance?"

"David thinks for you it is serving your system," Sarah said.

"What do you think?"

"Can a good man serve a bad system?"

"You have judged it then?"

"Explain the lust to power that would control everything. Is that not your system?"

"Let him laugh for now, Sarah," David cut in. "Come; it is time to begin."

The very old man whose duty it was, rang the church bell for the last call and the people trooped into the church...

...At the end of the service David told his congregation:

"You know Pastor Rae has visited with us these past two days. We have talked and we will talk again and the Elders will be a part of that talk. Some of you know what this is about. You will hear more.

Now Pastor John Rae will give you his message of greetings from his church."

He's very sure of himself, Rae thought as he mounted the pulpit, very sure of his people; not at all the secretive possessiveness of a man jealous for his personal power Elder Jones had hinted at down at the Kingston office.

"I bring you greetings of the President of our Council of Elders and of all the Elders^{and}/of all our congregations all over this land and all over the world in the name of Christian love and Christian unity." The high-ceilinged church with its huge wooden rafters intensified the deep richness of Rae's melodious 'preaching voice'.

"Amen!" Elder Jones led; "Amen!" many voices echoed in unison.

"We are very impressed with your work here. The fame of your pastor, Pastor David Brown, has travelled far and wide. Men speak of him as a good and wise and Christian leader who walks in the footsteps of our Lord. And now that I have seen it for myself, now that I have had the privilege of speaking with him and his good and gracious lady Rae looked at Sarah and his eyes twinkled momentarily. "Now that I have seen and felt the spirit which inspires your efforts, I understand why men talk of yours as the most united and productive Christian community in all the land, and I can say, from the fulness of my heart: Amen. So be it; let it always be so that the blessing of the Lord may always be on you and on those who lead you into the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Amen."

"Amen!" the congregation said; and it was a warm appreciation of both the meaning of the words and the preacher's art with which they were delivered.

"I come to offer you the hand of brotherhood, to invite you to

share with us the wisdom and the goodness you have found and brought about here, and to receive from union with us the strength and the support which comes with the greater power of greater numbers. Alone, you, or indeed, any other small country church, can do only so much. Together, united in one great congregation which embraces the whole country and all the countries of the world, there are no limits to what the church can do in your name and our name and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen." Rae stepped back dramatically, eyes closed, both arms raised.

There was a momentary hush, then vociferous 'Amens' and 'halleluiahs' ~~'halleluiahs'~~. David waited till the hubbub died down, till the congregation was silent again; he waited till the people became restive, concerned and uneasy over his silence, till they started turning to each other equiringly; only then did he rise.

"We thank Pastor Rae for his strong message of Christian love and brotherhood." His speech was soft, casual, conversationally quiet over the years as his people had grown to expect of their pastor. "I am pleased that the pastors words moved so many of us. We must be moved and stirred by words of unity and love and brotherhood. But afterwards we must think calmly and ask hard questions. And there are questions to be asked, not about Christian love and Christian brotherhood, for we all agree on that. But who is my brother? He who say so or he who show so? And how does he show it? These are questions to which we must seek and find our ^{own} answers. These are not questions others can answer for us. You know there are some answers a man must find for himself; not even a brother can find them for him. We welcome the hand of friendship that is offered. Friendship is a good thing if it

is a thing on which two decide; it is not a thing only one can decide and force on another. If the two do not decide and agree, and one puts it on the other, it is not friendship, whatever else it is. And just as a man cannot force ^{a woman to love him} ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ if she does not want, ^{to} so any love of any kind which is forced by one side on the other is no love. So it is not only the man who decides; the woman decides too. Sometimes, ^{and softened -- face} a rare smile touched/their Pastor's/ and brought responding smiles to many of the older heads in the congregation. "Sometimes when there is love on both sides, it is the woman who leads the way while making the fool man think he is the leading bull." David's eyes lingered on Sarah's face in the front row. "It was so with many of us. And as it is with people so must it be with ~~people~~ what Pastor Rae calls systems. There must be love from both sides to make the bond. All this we of this church must think and talk about. When we have done so and come to a point, we will let you know, Pastor Rae. That is how we have always done our business here. That is how we do the Lord's business in this community. We thank you for coming and we thank you for your message of Christian love and Christian brotherhood."

A woman ^{the one with} in the church choir, it sounded like/the melodious voice which had impressed Rae under the breadfruit tree, raised her voice in a Christian song of joy and praise and all the congregation joined in filling the church and floating out into the broad valley till all the valley was filled with the joyous Sunday morning sound of praise to a God unknown.

Again, John Rae was overwhelmed by the eerie haunting feeling of ~~being~~ being very close to the bleak Scottish hills and valleys of his distant childhood. He closed his eyes and allowed the music to wash over him. And watching him, and the single unbidden tear that rolled down his cheek, the former slave boy, David, felt compassion for this

man who had come here to take over or ~~also~~ undermine all that they had built. Then David felt Sarah's mind tugging at his consciousness. He straightened up, touched John Rae, and they led the singing congregation slowly out of the church.

The early morning mist hung low in the valleys between the hills, giving the green earth an ~~amazing~~ ethereal, almost unearthly appearance. From a distance the four riders appeared to sink ~~into~~ and vanish into the mist as they went down into a valley, and rise out of the mist again as they crested a hill; unreal, ghostly figures sinking and rising in a ghostly sea of mist with the crest of the hill as green islands in the mist.

They rode in pairs, David and John Rae ahead; Sarah and Rae's bodyguard Joseph behind, and a spare mule, extra big and strong, behind them. They had been riding for nearly three hours and the brightness of daylight was beginning to show behind the Blue Mountain. Soon, the mist in the low valleys, two thousand feet above the level of the sea, would be dispelled and the earth/^{here}would lose its ethereal appearance and become normal/^{again,} ordinary, as the earth everywhere else, not an ocean of misty hills and valleys suspended high in the sky.

John Rae wondered whether he would ever be able to make those leaders down in Kingston understand what he had seen and experienced here with these two. Could he make them understand that he had deep philosophic discussions such as he has not had since his university days with two people born into slavery and with no formal schooling? How could he, when he could not have such discussions with them ~~Eldest~~ themselves? To them he was useful because of his skill at dealing with the former ~~Slaves~~ and at bringing them into the fold, but he was

also far too clever to be fully trusted. If he told them of these two in straight and truthful terms it would be seen as part of his cleverness, part of his skill at dressing up simple things to make his work ~~more~~ appear more important and exciting than it really is. And some of it was a charade, what these two would call a thing of ^{detour} show. This ~~trip~~ to their original home to see the legendary Samson, now stricken and paralysed, was such a thing of show. It would make the journey down to Kingston that much longer and slower, ^{But he wanted to see this Samson} and the place where all those runaway slaves had first settled. If only we could leave them alone to make their own changes, or to let change come in its own way and through them rather than through us. But how could we without surrendering our control? Without allowing the world to drift into chaos and the wars of confusion which preceded the power of the church on earth? Whatever their faults the Elders were right, the church is right, about the world's need for a central ^{Christian} and united worldwide authority. Not even these good people on the edge of things could be left out of this central authority of the church. David's point, last night, about wanting dominion ^{over} the minds of black people was a strong one...My answer was equally strong without any help from any white missionaries he and his Sarah and their congregation had, all by themselves, surrendered their minds to our Christian God. What had Sarah said then?

"We are nearly there," David's voice cut into his reverie.
 "You'll see it after the next hill."

Sarah spurred her mule forward till she rode beside David on the narrow path. Rae sensed the excitement in her and her need to be near David. He reined in his mule and fell back to ride beside Joseph. Sarah and David rode side by side, almost touching, as they climbed

the last hill before the valley of Mount Zion.

At last the long narrow valley lay below them. They halted and looked down.

"Oh, David," Sarah murmured. "Such a long time. We should have come before. It looks so small now; so dry. What's happened? Not many houses or people."

The sun was up now, high above the high Blue Mountains, and the mist was banished from the land. The long valley looked dry and parched. The river that Sarah remembered was, now, a deep dry yellowish gully course at the base of the valley. What was once a thick and permanently moist and dense forest of huge and ancient trees on the slopes of the hill leading to Samson's lookout was now a barren place of shrub and rock. And the deep pool immediately below where the sloping forest had been had become a deep dark waterless hole. The village was still there; a dozen houses or so. As they rode into the valley people came out to look at the strangers.

Nothing was as Sarah remembered and David sensed her mounting dismay. He tried to comfort her with words.

"It is a long time, Sarah. It cannot be as it was, as you remember it."

"It's so dry," Sarah said.

"They burned it too hard," David said. "He shouldn't have allowed that."

They rode in silence the rest of the way. And Sarah and David remembered the valley as it had been when they were ^{sent} ~~driven~~ out of it all those many years ago. Then it was a green place of tall trees and rich damp earth and gurgling water, held together by the will of Maria and the strength of Samson.

David turned his head to Rae. "It has changed since we left. I thought it was only Samson..." His voice trailed off. Sarah took his hand and held it tight as they rode on more slowly.

An impulse to offer them comfort rose up in Rae. He raised his voice: "The last time I visited the place where I was born and grew up, there was no-one left whom I had known. The house where I lived with my mother after my father died was a ruin with only some of the walls standing, and weed had taken over the rooms where we had spent our days and nights. I wept because I knew there was nowhere to go back to for the rest of my life..."

"Change is not always good," David said coldly.

"But it cannot be stopped," Rae said.

"There is Maria," Sarah said, letting go of David's hand and spurring her mule on.

The others were there too: Jonas, grey, big-bellied now, but still the same; Noname, the one they had most recently seen; Big and Little Mary, both pregnant and both grown fat from eating too much starch; but most of all there was Maria, ~~xxx~~ unchanged physically, an ageless, firmly held-together black presence. ~~xxxxx~~ And there were many others, adults and children, unfamiliar to Sarah and David.

Sarah slid off her mule and embraced Maria. There was no responding embrace from Maria.

"Forget the past," Sarah murmured. "It was a long time ago, Maria. Please be as glad to see me as I am to see you. Where is Samson?"

Maria turned and led the way round the house to the sunny side of the verendah. David, meanwhile, introduced Rae and Joseph to the welcoming group.

Samson, dressed and normal-looking, sat in his huge chair

catching the morning sun. One of the two old women had fed him and had just finished wiping his face.

Sarah slipped into the chair facing Samson's. "How is he?"

"Awright now, Miss Sarah; but he not going change."

"Not getting worse?"

"No; and not getting better."

"Can he hear? Can he understand?" Sarah got her answer from Samson eyes. "It's allright!" she cut off the old woman. "He hears; he understands."

"How do you know?" Maria sounded angry.

"Look in his eyes," Sarah said.

"I've looked in his eyes every day! I've begged him for a sign!"

"Not anger, Maria, please. Look with love."

"Still the same," Maria said bitterly. "Always love."

David came up with Rae. The old women suddenly grew agitated.

"Something wrong! He's getting a fit?"

Sarah looked intently into Samson's suddenly very bright eyes. Then she said urgently: "Take him away, David! Take him away now!"

"Who?"

"Rae! Take him away right now! Samson doesn't want him here!"

David grabbed Rae's arm and led him away.

Sarah put her hand on Samson's. "I'm sorry." She watched the fire go out of his eyes, sensed the agitation leave the caged body. "I'm sorry," she repeated. "We should have remembered. I should have remember.^{ed} Try to talk to me; tell me with your eyes. I will try to understand. Please try..."

The old woman gathered her things and moved away quietly.

David led Rae away from the cluster of houses, up the over-used, over-burned, undernourished sloping land in the direction of the hill that was Samson's lookout. On either side of the worn footpath were mounds of rock, piled up to make planting space for yam. The huge old trees which shaded the way to the top during an earlier time were all gone and the short dry shrub offered no protection against the bright morning sun.

"Did not expect this to happen," David apologised. "My fault for forgetting. He was hurt badly; the marks they put on his body will remain till the day of his death."

"We must pay for the sins of our fathers," Rae murmured. "I think it would be better to move on. What will you do about your..." Rae was lost for a way to describe Samson. "Will you accept our help. Bring him down for one of our doctors to look at. We may be able to help."

"No." David said. "You can see he will not want that. He swore he would never have anything to do with Kingston."

"And white men..." Rae said very softly.

"And white men," David agreed. "He was a proud man."

"And they put chains on him..."

"On all of us. And now you want to put chains on our minds."

"If being in the fold is being in chains then we all are, black and white alike. You must see that."

"There is the difference of choice," David said, his voice grown cold and remote.

"Choice!" Rae exploded. "Who has choice? What choice have I got? What choice has anybody got but ^{to} ~~the~~ function as part of the or be destroyed. process and the system. Choices are made before we are born."

"Your system, not ours; and that is the difference. Your fathers and forefathers created your system so it is easy for you to talk about being a part of it. You had choice through your forebears. We had no part in the making of your system just as we had no part in the turning of men into slaves. Our forebears had no part in it either."

"Oh my brother in Christ!" Rae said heavily. "You know and understand what I am saying and you will not reach out to help me. Why? I told you they - we - cannot leave you to succeed. The change must and will come. You either go with it or are swept aside ~~with~~ by it. I do not want you to be swept aside..."

"So you would take away my choice, our choice, as the price of survival."

"There is no other way."

"There is Samson's way," David said.

"Then there really is no more to say," Rae said.

They turned and retraced their steps to the village in silence. The people had dispersed; only Jonas and Noname and Rae's bodyguard Joseph were with the animals outside what had once been Bagley's store. Sarah was still with Samson and the others were about their business. Rae, grown depressed and desolate by both his failure to win over David and Sarah and by ^{his sensing} ~~the fanning~~ of the slow dying of this place, was anxious to be gone. And Joseph, who understood him better than the little white Pastor realised knew it and was ready. Noname instructed Joseph on the quickest way to Red Hills, from where the journey would be straightforward. Bagley in Red Hills would fill their water gourd and sell them whatever food they ^{may} need for their journey down. Rae wanted to go without seeing Sarah' but David

sent for her and she came quickly.

"Is he allright? Pastor Rae is leaving."

"He's calm now....I'm sorry about what happened, Mr. Rae. I'm sure David explain^{ed}."

"Not to worry, Mrs. Brown, he did. I am sorry to have to leave you in this way. I would have preferred it another way. I hope you will think of me as a friend; I will always think of you both as such. And believe me when I say I will never forget you."

"David and I will remember you, Mr. Rae."

"I know you understand what is bound to happen. Is...there..."

"We do, Mr. Rae, and there really is nothing you can say to change matters. You did what you had to; we must do what we have to."

Rae took Sarah's hand....She would always be his tower of strength and he would need her in the days ahead. Impossible to think of this woman ever being anybody's slave; and yet she was. Then he took David's hand and resisted the strong impulse to embrace him. Then, very quickly, he mounted his mule and hurried away ~~out~~ ^{down} the ~~of the~~ drab path that led out of the narrow valley ^{and down} to Red Hills.

Sarah embraced Joseph. "Come back to us, Joseph. Come back any time you want to. There'll be a home for you. No matter what they decide you are part of us."

"I know what they decide, Miss Sarah", Joseph said. "I will take him down then I will return. Then I will come home." Joseph looked into David's eyes, a quick, brief, glancing embrace of commitment. "Mass David." Then he mounted and followed Rae out of the valley.

Rae pulled up the animal and waited for Joseph at the last point from which he could look back at the village. When Joseph reached him, he said: "You want to remain with them?"

Joseph's face was expressionless. "I will take you down, Pastor. That is my duty."

"But you want to stay?"

"I don't know. It is good up here; quiet, cool, no fighting, no heavy rum drinking."

You have made up your mind, Rae told himself; but you will not tell me. You're not yet as forthright as those two back there; but then, I've never thought of you as anything other than a good and faithful body servant so I've never tried to talk to you. Now it is too late. You will evade me with oblique, glancing responses which do not offend and give away nothing.

"But tell me, Joseph. Wouldn't you like to come back up here? I thought Mrs. Brown would ask you to."

"Maybe one day," Joseph said.

"Yes," Joseph. Maybe one day. Let us go." Maybe one day it will be possible for people like you and I to talk to each other instead of using words as weapons to probe and barriers to repel the probing.

Rae spurred his mule forward. Joseph followed, a horse's head behind his master, the rifle cradled in his arm, the machete hanging from his saddle. It was a long ride down to Kingston; longer this way than had been the climb^{the} up to Cyprus by way of ~~the~~ Catherine Plain; but it was downhill all the way so it would be easier on the animals, and it would be quicker going than it was coming.

Sarah and David walked slowly back to Maria's house, using

the time gained by their pace to talk.

"I don't think Maria can cope," Sarah said.

"She can cope," David said. "She can cope with anything she has to."

"Or wants to," Sarah added.

David stopped and kicked at the ground. "Are you saying she does not want to?"

Sarah stopped a little distance ahead of him. "Yes."

"Why?"

"I think we should ask her."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I think he knows it too."

"But she loves him."

"She loved him strong, David. She loved him and made ^{him} our leader."

"He was our leader before."

"Yes. But not in the way she made him. She made him the leader who built the community and drove us out when we broke the rules. Remember, David, he was the leader but it was Maria's will that made ~~things happen~~ him make things happen."

"You could be wrong, Sarah. This is a heavy blow for her. She may have lost control for now."

"Let us talk with her."

They found her alone in the kitchen at the back of the house. There had been no time for David to greet her properly, no time for him to go and look at Samson. He had not seen her in many, many years this woman who was the nearest ^{approximation to the} ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ mother he had never known. In those early years she had been his mother, the mother of all the youngsters who were in that runaway slave party. Samson

had become the father-figure, she the mother, especially after they had reached this place. Now, he towered over her, broader and taller than Samson in his prime.

He took both her hands, hard and bony, and held them tightly. She was as he remembered her from those early years, physically unchanged. Only the eyes were changed: the knowing, at times laughing gentleness he remembered was not there; a sombre bleakness instead.

"It is good to see you, Maria. You have not changed."

"You have changed. You have grown big, strong. I hear your Cyprus is better than here. I hear you," she used her eyes to include Sarah, "have done well and prospered. We tried to build a school here

"We were fortunate," David brushed it away.

"I hear she has given you many children; she alone and you have as many as all the women bred for Samson."

"You remember," Sarah murmured in the background.

"I remember everything," Maria said ^{sharply.} ~~firmly~~. "What we did was right. We were alone; we did not know of the freeing of the slaves."

"That is in the past," Sarah said. "We are not here to judge the past."

"About Samson," David said. "We want to help."

"What can you do? The Nanas you sent stopped him from dying. But they cannot make him walk again, they cannot make him talk again. So what can you do with a man who lives but is like a man who is dead? What can you do?"

"We can help to look after him," Sarah said quickly. "Nurse him, care him, make him know we love him; we can make him happy and pray he will get better."

"And if he does not? Your old women say he will not."

"We will just care him...Till he dies."

"No matter how long?"

"No matter how long."

"And you," Maria's eyes searched David's face. "You agree? You agree with this ..."

David said
"Yes," David, letting go of her hands, suddenly bitterly depressed to find Sarah was right.

"But he is not a man again!" Maria was possessed of a sudden flash of anger. "He's not my man again! My man was strong! He could do anything! I know if he could choose he would choose to die; to be left to die."

"He has not chosen yet," Sarah said.

"You know?" Maria grew very still.

"I know."

"He makes you understand?"

"Yes."

Maria nodded, accepting the truth of it in spite of herself and against her will. "I cannot understand him." Her voice was cold, distant. "I cannot understand this one who fouls himself and cannot move or speak. I look on him and I see only what he was, the proud strong man who was in that body. He is not there now and his eyes tell me nothing."

"You must be patient, Maria. It takes time." Sarah moved a step toward Maria. Maria's body swayed back, refusing the offered contact and embrace.

"You just came here and you understand him." She was colder now, more withdrawn.

"What do you want to do?" David asked in an equally cold and impersonal voice, examining Maria's face closely.

"What can I do," Maria countered. "You say care for him till he dies. We will care for him. Will you leave your old women?"

"No," Sarah said quickly. "They have their own families."

"Then they must teach Vie what to do," Maria said. "Let the dumb look after the dumb."

Sarah started to protest but David cut it off.

"We will take him to Cyprus," he said coldly. "We can care for him there...If you wish."

There was a long silence between the three, a silence that seemed without end. Maria held on to herself tightly, using the force of her will to keep her body calm and relaxed. They thought she had no feeling for him, she knew that; these two who had ~~her~~ what she had planned for them to do; what she and Samson should have done. Let them think what they want to. Only she knew how she felt. To see your man die and then to live with the empty shell of him. To remember how he was as your stomach is turned by the filthy uncontrollable smell of him...To lose respect. To lose respect. To lose respect...Endlessly, day after day after day, to lose respect. And to remember how it was. For how long? Till he dies, she said. How long is that?...Oh, Samson! Why did you let this happen? Why did you do this to me? I must look after the living and try to make one of your sons strong as you were, to do what you and I failed to do.

"If you wish," Maria said at last. She left them abruptly. She walked round the house to the part of the verandah where Samson was. She sat down and stared into ~~xxx~~ his eyes, looking for some sign of recognition, some understanding, something, anything, that would tell her of the link of life between them. She saw nothing; just the blank stare of the empty shell of the man.

"They will take you to Cyprus," she said, ~~and left him.~~

"You hear me? They will take you to Cyprus; they will take you away from me and your children and your place. Do you want that? Do you want them to take you away? She says you understand? She says you made her understand. Now make me understand. Show me a sign. Make me understand! Do you want to go with them?"

Just the blank stare; nothing else. She sighed heavily.

"Down there on the plains on the plantation when a ~~make~~ man grew sick they looked after him to make him well so he could return to work. But if he could not get well and return to work they put him away to die for the work must go on. You know that. The life must go on. We must raise the children and find food and water and work the land; that is how it is. If you are not part of this, if you are not the father, you are no use to us, you are nothing. If you will get well, Samson, we will wait and we will look after you till you are well. If you are not going to get well you are a burden we cannot bear. The old women say you will not get well. But if you make a sign to tell me you will get well I will believe you and we will all work and wait; I will even clean the smells away myself. You hear me, Samson? You hear me? Shew me you hear me..."

She leaned forward, staring intently into his eyes, willing him to respond, to show some sign that she could cling to. That Sarah had said calmly with love...Calmly, with love...Hear me, Samson please...Still only the blank, empty stare. Abruptly, Maria got up and walked away, body held stiff and erect by the strength of her ^{seamy} mind, /mat black, ~~seamy~~ face and expressionless mask, dark eyes almost as blank as Samson's.

what remained
The members of the family - ~~the survivor~~ of those who had

made the long journey to Mount Zion all those years ago under Samson's leadership - met at the old gathering place, now part of Maria's extensive yard, in the early evening, when the day had grown cool ~~and~~ but yet with still enough light by which to hold a meeting. They had carried Samson's ^{in his} chair to his customary place at the head of the table; so it was as it had been when this place had been the centre of all their decision-making. Jonas and NOname, and now a returned David, were there. Only Joe had gone away; gone on a trip to Kingston and never returned. Among the women, Belle had died in childbirth less than a year ago, and Flo and her new man with his two families had abandoned ^{their} Mount Zion lots and moved nearer Red Hills with its flourishing community of small peasants and artisans. Flo's new man, it turned out, was a skilled Carpenter who earned more at that trade than he and his two families did at farming the dry Mount Zion hillside: and he was teaching all his male children, his own as well as Flo's boys by Joe, the carpenter's trade; 'setting them up in business' as he described it ~~graciously~~ under the influence of a few shots of 'whites' at Mass Bagley's rumshop of a ^{Saturday} ~~Friday~~ night after collecting his week's earnings. So of the women there remained ~~only~~ Maria, Vie the dumb one, the two Marys and, now, the returned Sarah. There were of course others too; the large number of children of the original family, people who had come to settle later under Bagley's not very successful tenancy plan, and a few who had drifted into the valley and attached themselves to this or that household as helpers in exchange for food and shelter. These were on the fringe of the meeting of the family, away from the long table, able to watch and hear, but taking no part in the proceedings.

Jonas, the proud hunter, Samson's righthand man of the old days, grown fat and heavy and old now, opened the proceedings by welcoming David and Sarah and remembering, mainly for the benefit of the onlookers, the days of that long journey out of bondage when Samson guided them to this place and was their shield and protector, with Mother Maria as the nurse and the provider. He remembered^{ed} the good days when they were building this place, and the joy of working together in the good place with good people; the stories they told at this very place on warm nights when the moon made the world a soft clear place and Maria's brew warmed their bodies and made men feel^{sweet} ~~amx~~ toward their women; and he remembered cold nights when they huddled around warm fires; and he remembered the wet days and nights of torrential rain before they had built their sturdy homes. And somehow, looking back, it all seemed more exciting, more adventurous, more fulfilling than he had found it at the time..."And now we get a blow," Jonas concluded. "Our leader get a lick that is too heavy for the mother of the family to carry alone, even with the help we who live here can give. So David and Sarah come forward and say they will take Mass Samson to Cyprus where they can care him better than we can. It is Maria's wish that he go with them, if the family agree. We who know David and Sarah know they will care him good. And maybe he will come back better one day. We moved well together...."~~xxxxxx~~ Jonas, overcome, stopped speaking and looked at Maria.

Maria felt dry and empty. She shook her head slightly and waited for others to speak. Noone wanted to speak. So she said, coldly, so that noone should know her feeling: "It is hard but he must go. We cannot manage him here. We must care for the living."

"It is hard indeed!" David said harshly, unable to hide his

anger. "In slavery days when a man became useless they cast him out. Those days are done and still we cast out a man because he is useless
softly,

"David!" Sarah said/urgently, taking his arm. "She's hurting enough."

"We did not ask you to come and take him," Maria said. "You do not have to."

"We are taking him," Sarah said quickly. "If the family agrees

"I agree," Noname said quickly, to avoid any further argument.

"Me too," his Mary said.

"And me," Big Mary said.

"Yes," Jonas said heavily. "Care him good."

"We leave in the morning," David/~~xxxxxxx~~ barely controlled his anger. "First light."

"We will travel with you, Noname and I," Jonas said.

"Come!" David said to Sarah and walked away from the meeting place.

Sarah paused beside Maria, laid her hand lightly and briefly on Maria's, looked into the expressionless eyes; and whispered: "Forgive him. He's angry because it seems you don't care." Then she hurried after David as he walked briskly up the sloping land in the direction of the high point they called Samson's look-out.

She found him at the top of the hill, sitting on one of the huge boulders, staring into space and seeing nothing, seemingly unaware of the world about him. She leaned against the rock, careful to keep her distance and careful, also, to be able to see his face fully in the fading light. When you have been alone with someone for a long time, when love and understanding have reached the point of shared feeling, shared responses, of knowing thoughts before

they are spoken, at times before they are fully formulated, there is the danger of seeing that loved one as a part of self, an extension of self and, ultimately to be taken as for granted as some part of one's own body or mind or feeling. She'd slipped into that once, a long time ago and that was part of his comforting of the bereaved/^{young}widow nearly turning into more than just comforting. Now, always, she saw him as a separate person; her own heart, her own mind - but separate and apart from her. Seeing him thus, an act of will to begin with, was part of the enriching of the ~~firm~~ bond between them. She waited till some of the bleak remoteness passed from his face, the tautness from his body.

"You were hard on her," she said.

"No harder than she is on him." He was calming down and she relaxed and felt at ease.

"Hardness for hardness?" she murmured. "Like an eye for an eye?" Something about this place that she remembered from long ago; something in the air up here; some soothing quality that caresses the spirit and makes you feel at peace.

"She's learned nothing. She's driving him out as she drove us out. All these years together and she's learned nothing. And not one of them protested; just as when she drove us out. Nothing's changed."

"No David!" she protested, but mildly. "Not the same. It was Samson who drove us out."

"But her will."

"He had to say yes. Don't punish her because he did not say no. The final power was his."

"You know it's not as simple as that."

"He made the decision, David."

"Allright. But I still think it was not as simple as that."

"I didn't say it was simple; few decisions are. I said he made it. She proposed it. He carried it out. And they all agreed; just as they agreed a little while ago."

"So nothing has really changed."

"Oh, David. We made the decision this time, you and I. Not Maria; not the others."

"Because she did not want him here; he is useless and she does not want him. She said so."

"But they would have kept him if we did not propose to take him."

"And put him aside to die as they did the useless old slaves..

"That; yes. But they would have kept him."

"Allright; so they would not have driven him out; they couldn't because he can't move. They would have left him to die slowly."

"No. Maria, perhaps. Not the others; not Noname; not Jonas; not all his children. No need for you to be angry with Maria. She has lost control. She does not know what to do without him as he was.

"She can accept him as he is."

"I do not think she can," Sarah panicked momentarily at the the thought of perhaps having to accept a paralysed David one day. She fought back the wave of panic. "I don't think she can live with defeat. To accept what he is is to accept defeat."

"So she casts him out."

"No. We take him away."

"And what does she do? Pretend it never happened?"

"She puts it out of her mind. She remembers him as he was. She chooses the strongest of his sons and she dreams through him as she dreamed through Samson. It is the only way she knows, David."

"Its^a hard way," David mused. "As hard as the slavery way."

"It is also the way to survive, my dear: For some, like Maria, the only way. As long as you do not give in you cannot be defeated, no matter what happens. To be defeated you must admit defeat. Is she really so very different from us, my dear? Is our answer to John Rae really so very different from Maria's refusal to admit defeat?"

"You are ~~xxxxx~~ straying now," David protested. "Straying far and wide. The comperison is false. And we are prepared to face and deal with defeat."

Sarah laughed; a gurgling sound of warmth and contentment.

"For the same reason that we were prepared, all those many years ago, to be driven out rather than ^{submit to} ~~xxxxxxx~~ Maria's plan. She was right then and we were right then. You said so yourself."

"I am not sure about this time," he countered.

"It took you years to see her rightness the first time. You are the one who always tells people to take time and think, Pastor Brown. So you take time and think, and judge not lest ye be judged. Look at the Mountains, David! They don't look the same as from Cyprus

They looked at the mountains in the fading light of the dying day. And they saw all the space between the Blue Mountains and the sky and the distant sea through a misty purplish haze that invested all the world with a tranquil enchantment and a great stillness. Sarah moved nearer David till their bodies touched. She took his hand. They sat on the great boulder holding hands, allowing the peace and calm of the place to wash over them in quiet, gentle invisible waves. Gentle pre^sences swirled about them and Sarah remembered coming up here with Little Mary many years ago and having the strong sense of people though they were the only ones on the hill. It was so now.

In the fading light they both recalled the early days of their coming to the valley of Mount Zion; the early days of peace, of high hopes, of long dreams with Samson and the sense of Samson's presence a protective shield over all they did, wherever they walked. And now, David thought, he cannot even come up to his hill again; he will never be able to see the view from here again; to ^{again} see Kingston and through it, all the cities of the earth. Sarah picked up the thought and answered it:

"He does not need to be up here again. The memory of this view is with him always. He can always come up here in his mind and look and see all this again. We never forget special places or special faces."

"Yes," David agreed, thinking: If you were to die tomorrow I would remember you always; I would see your face clearly always, sharply as I see and feel it now. Impulsively, he flung his arm about her shoulders and held her tight. She turned her head and kissed him, gently, tenderly, as a mother kisses a disturbed child to give it comfort.

"Duppies?" she whispered.

"One slipped through," he said. "I'm glad he can come up here in spirit. I'm very glad I found you, my Sarah."

"You forget I found you, my David. You forget I made you take me."

"So no-one else would," he mocked. "You used me to upset Maria."

"And how you enjoyed it!" The ³gurling laugh well ^{ed} up in her again. "I close my eyes and still see it; you wild as a bull."

"Shameless woman!" He held her closer. Remembered passion stirred renewed passion in him. "I want you."

She grew still, serious. "Up here?"

"Yes. Now."

She began to ask why then choked back the question. The duppy that had slipped through must have been a terrible one; the kind you do not talk about until much later. She straightened up, took his hand and led him along the path which took them to the small room-like cave immediately below the lookout. The sleeping and cooking places were still there though they had clearly not been used in a very long time. Weathering had ~~turned~~ crumbled the stones and clay of the fireplace; cooking pots were reduced to bits of broken pottery only the neck of the water yaba was identifiable; termites had reduced the kindling logs to small mounds of dust most of which the wind had blown away. The more ~~sheltered~~ sleeping area was a bed of dry leaves giving off a faintly scented brownish burnt-leaves smell.

They stripped and went down together on the brown leaves and made love; not with the passionate heat of other times, but gently, tenderly, as an act of devotion and commitment. When it was over they stayed close to each other for a long time, unwilling to break the bond. At last the air turned chilly till Sarah began to feel it. So, reluctantly, they rose and dressed and went back up to the lookout.

Kingston, far below, was in hazy darkness now. Here and there a thin swirl of white smoke spiralled up into the darkening night, so straight that there clearly was no wind down there. Beyond Kingston the sea was a curving sheet of dark green glass, stretching away as far as the eye could see. The mountains, to ^{the} east, were a massive dark presence over the land.

Sarah took David's hand once more.

"Duppy put to sleep?"

"Yes...Please don't die for a long time, Sarah."

So that's it; but of course; all that talk about remembering.

"Oh my dear! I will try to live as long as I can, David. You know that; but we don't control these things."

"I know. My foolishness."

"No, dear. Just preparing yourself. We all do it. I did it earlier when I thought of you being like Samson. I wanted to ask you never to get a stroke."

Again David embraced Sarah, but without the earlier hint of desperation. One day he may have to go on living without her, or she without him; one day he may be stricken or she may be stricken as Samson now was. Being prepared for that possibility, having brought it out into the open, having shared their consciousness of it, they were both now better prepared for it. To live with the conscious knowledge of the shadow of uncertainty, with the knowledge that disaster or tragedy could strike at any time, to be afraid and to know and acknowledge your fear, and still to live creatively and with unstinting love, that is to live with grace. Holding on to each other, alone on that high hill, David and Sarah shared a heightened momentary consciousness of the grace they had won. And it had all begun in this place which was now slowly dying; among the people down there whose community was visibly disintegrating because their water was drying up and the land had been abused and ill-used into a state of sickness.

In the morning they would take Samson out of this valley, and he and they would never see this valley again, would never stand on this hill again and look down on the world below. Yet he, and they would carry the memory of this valley and of this hill with them for all their lives, and perhaps beyond; for they will pass on something of what they found here to their children and, through them,

to their children's children, until the thread of memory is ended, which is the point at which life really ends. There can be no death as long as there is remembrance of person and place; there can be no life when person and place are no longer remembered.

All these things David and Sarah sensed and felt up there, as swirling, smoky, ghostlike shadows of consciousness; wordless, all mood and feeling, matters of ~~the~~ sensing/suggestion/voices and spirits and flashing presences, a world of apparent unreality which yet fixed man in time and space, investing him with that extraordinary mixture of questing inquisitiveness, an overweening sense of self-importance which sets him at the centre of things, and a ^{deep} humility which makes him bow and pray to a God unknown and strive after goodness and grace. Always, in the times ahead, David and Sarah would share a remembrance of this place because they had shared the mood it created.

"Time to go down," David said.

"I don't want to leave," Sarah sounded puzzled.

David touched her face and smiled. "We must go. There is something here...But we must go."

"It makes me sad," Sarah said, "to leave. It's like leaving friends. What will happen?"

"The place will remain," David said. "It will always be here."

"Will other come to it?"

"We came."

"Will it be as special? Will they feel what we feel?"

"I don't know," David said. "I don't know what kind of people will come and why."

"No more runaway slaves," Sarah said.

"Not the only thing to runaway from," David said thinking of

wondering what he would do, what he would be ordered to do, when there were no more independent churches left. "But there always will be," he said out loud.

"What you talking about?" Sarah's voice implied he had been touched in the head by this place.

"I was thinking of Rae," he said.

"There always will be what?"

"Independent churches," he said. "I was wondering what he would do when there were none to take over."

"And there always will be some, your mind said."

"That's it."

"And that's something to run away from too..."

"Or fight. Come," he said insistently, "We must go down."

"Please don't be afraid of my death, David. It is life that is important, not death. And ours has been good; we've made life good you and I. We've been happy together and raised good children and loved our neighbours as the Bible said."

"And we've built a church," David added.

"That too," she said. "So don't be afraid when the day comes; I promise you I won't be afraid. Lonely, yes; but not afraid."

She tucked her arm ^{under} ~~xxxx~~ his, turned her head in one long lingering parting examination of the details of Samson's lookout, then she moved with him to the path that led down to the little village in the narrow valley. The world, all the world they could see, was soft and unutterably beautiful in the fast gathering darkness. They knew the land and they knew the way so the darkness held no threat and there was no need to hurry against it.

David died first, quietly and peacefully, sitting at his desk in the narrow room, business papers in front of him, Sarah's Bible to the right of the business papers. He sat as though he had just
 / leaned back to take a breather from the numbers on the sheet in front of him. Sarah found him thus and stayed alone with him in the little room for nearly an hour before letting the rest of the household know. By then she had composed herself and no-one, not even her children, saw her grieve for David. That had been more than thirty years ago; years of terrible loneliness without the companion of her life beside her. But she had kept faith with him and ~~they~~ with the promise she had made that last time on Samson's hill all those many years ago: she had not been afraid and she had carried on their work as though he were still there; and he was still there, always with her in spirit, in the little room or on the land where they had worked together in their youth when they were all alone, and often, later, she saw and felt his presence strongly in their firstborn son, John, her righthand man,
 / grown into a man like his father now, whose voice at times, or a gesture, or a way of looking or smiling, or a choice of words, often brought David fully alive in her heart and mind. As time passed and Sarah grew older her remembrance of David grew stronger till, in the end, he was more alive for her than all her vast household of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren and all the surviving descendants of the large extended household she and David had built up over the years. With time, events, too, merged till there was no distinction between past and present, only the continuous present in which the living and the dead and what happened thirty or forty or fifty or ten years ago all had the same relative value and immediacy. So when she remembered

the passion they had shared it was with the warmth of last night's love-making; the first coming to this place was as a few days ago; the birth of John yesterday - making the births of all the others a rapid timeless immediate and successive flow of one delivery after another. Everything happened yesterday or the day before or earlier today. Time moved to a point of timelessness for a very old woman; and Sarah's memory in very old age became a very small, very clear pool on which sunlight and shadow played magical tricks.

The battle with Rae's church had started a few months after they had brought Samson from the valley of Mount Zion. Another white Pastor, not Rae, had come to Cyprus for what was clearly a final attempt to make David and Sarah see the error of their ways. He sounded like that; a fat, well-fed, comfortable looking ^{young} man who did not bother to hide his condescension toward black people whom he called 'my children'. Sarah refused to put him up for the one night he spent in Cyprus, explaining, ever so politely, that the strain of looking on a white face may prove too much for Samson. Surely, she suggested, Pastor Rae must have explained that Samson and the reason why Samson was allergic to white faces. David had rebuked her silently with his eyes; Sarah had tossed her head defiantly and walked away in a strutting, hip-swinging manner of a provocative slave-girl trying to curry favour with an overseer or a book-keeper. And then it dawned on David that his concern for the sensibilities of this fat young man was wasted. Sarah had read him aright: this fat young man in Pastor's garb expected no better from black people: to him they were all like overgrown children but with the added dimension of being naturally devious, lustful and over-sexed; they had to be treated as children and saved from their own dark natures.

So David did not over-rule Sarah, and the fat young/^{white}Pastor had to spend the night in Elder Jones' bedroom, while the Elder and his wife moved in with the children.

When David and Sarah rejected this final invitation to join their church with the larger church in Kingston Elder Jones led the break from David's church. About a third of the congregation went with him, and there was a great coming and going between Elder Jones' home and white folk from Kingston. Then Elder Jones started the building of a new church and one of his sheds was quickly turned into a well-stocked store from which all manner of goods and food from Kingston could be bought for very low prices.

It was Joseph, ^{now part of their household,} wise in the ways of the Kingston church, who warned Sarah of the importance of securing their land before the church laid claim to it. So David and Sarah and Joseph went down to the colonial administration offices, and after much time and effort came away with papers giving them title to nearly half of Cyprus. They had been just in time. The land on which Jones' house stood and ^{which Jones had worked,} a good few acres beyond it/had already been bought from Jones by the church, which was using the sale papers to seek title to that particular ~~piece~~ parcel as well as to all unregistered land adjoining and abutting it. After this setback the Kingston church redoubled its efforts: it built a house and installed a bright, very light-skinned, ^{equally pale-skinned} very stern young coloured Pastor and his/wife in the house. The young wife started ^a school for the children of the breakaway congregation. The Cyprus community became ~~more~~ divided: those who went to David's church were divided from those who joined the new church which ~~existed~~ its leader called the old and true church. In the end the divisions ran so deep that those who worshipped in one church would have nothing to do with those who worshipped in the other.

Women who had been friends over many years ceased talking to each other, passed each other as strangers. Men who had worked the land together and who had shared in the co-operative efforts of digging days and morning sport, passed each other as hostile strangers, not saluting each other, not smiling. On Sunday mornings, when the church bells rang, and the people of Cyprus marched to their two churches as soldiers of opposing armies march into battle, the depth of the division wrought in Cyprus were clearer than on any other day of the week: the day of the Lord was the day of the outward and visible manifestation of a community divided in the name of the Lord.

Then, ^{one} in the early hours of ~~the~~ morning, some six years after Pastor Rae had first visited David and Sarah and invited them to join the greater church, the battle was resolved by a huge fire which lit up the predawn world of the hills for miles around. The great ~~church~~ wooden church David and Sarah had built all those many years ago, was on fire. The huge ^{floor and ceiling,} beams, the long rows of wooden seats, the beautiful wooden altar, all cured and made dry and moistureless by time, blazed in a riot of living fire that all the efforts of all David's congregation and all the water they hurled against the flames could not quench, though they fought the blaze for all of four hours. In the end it was David who ordered his followers to give up the hopeless fight against the fire when a part of the high ceiling collapsed with a great explosive woosh which sent massive tongues of fire leaping at the sky. The long lines of men, women and children, making four conveyor-systems between the river and the church, continued to work for a while after David signalled them to stop; then, hesitantly, reluctantly, one after the other, the human conveyor-belts stopped moving the buckets of water up the line. People went on their knees

where they stood; others, too worn-out and weary to pray, lay on the ground; some wept, some were dry-eyed, holding themselves in.

Sarah held David's hand, tightly, as though it were a staff to holding her up.

"I did not think of this," David said, a great desolation in his voice.

She wanted to comfort him so she said, knowing he would not agree: "We can rebuild it, my dear. It would be easier and quicker than the first time; then we were alone, now we have an army of helpers."

As she expected, David said nothing.

It took all that day and most of the next before the fire finally burned itself out, leaving what had once been the most beautiful church in these hills a huge mound of ash and charcoal. No one knew how the fire was started; no one ever found out; no one talked about ^{it again} after David refused the offer of his congregation to rebuild the church on the same site.

David and Sarah withdrew from the life of their community for what remained of that year, which was nearly nine months. Gradually, in time and in small numbers, many of David's congregation drifted to the imposing new cutstone church which had been started before the fire and was completed a few weeks after the fire. Most of the children who had been taught by Sarah were now attending the new church school which had a building of its own and two teachers. Although a few of the defiant Elders of David's former church continued to hold services in their own homes, and tried to keep alive the spirit of their old church, the battle for the control of religious activity in Cyprus was over; and the outcome was as the little Scots missionary troubleshooter of his church had told David and Sarah it would be.

In the new year David turned his vast energies to business. They already had a forest of pimento trees and coffee bushes on the sloping land above the burnt-out church. Now, he built a factory for extracting the pimento oil, and a series of marl and clay platforms for drying the coffee, and a series of huge clay and brick outdoor ovens. He mobilised the members of his extended family and put them to work. Sarah kept the records; ^{their} ~~the~~ eldest son, John he put in charge of the pimento and coffee operations. They put more land under coffee, under citrus, under banana. Sarah's protegee, Joseph, was put in charge of a livestock farm of pigs, goats, chicken and two of David's younger sons were put under Joseph to learn all about livestock farming. Some of the ^{girls} ~~children~~ had been sent to boarding school down in Kingston for Sarah was determined that her daughters should have the best training available and there were places in Kingston where such could be had at a price; but mainly Sarah herself taught their daughters, and helping her in the management and record keeping side of the business was part of their training. As time passed they brought more of the land under cultivation, produced more pimento, more ^{ore} citrus, more bananas, pimento, more coffee, huge quantities of pineapple, vast amounts of ginger, till David's farm became the largest and most prosperous in this part of the hills. In time the mule tracks gave way to wider ^{the greater volume} dirt roads to carry David's produce down to Kingston to be sold to the merchants and traders who in turn shipped these to the markets across the seas. And David and Sarah prospered and grew rich.

Through it all, until he died ten years after coming to Cyprus, Sarah looked after Samson. The two old women who had first gone to him after his stroke had long since died; but before that they had taught a younger woman how to look after him. This young one was

Samson's constant nurse, looked after him, washed him, fed him, exercised the muscles of his body, until a bond grew up between them as between a mother and a helpless child. Each ^{morning} ~~day~~, no matter how busy or what the pressures, Sarah spent at least half an hour sitting with Samson at his favourite spot on the verandah. Each evening before retiring, David and Sarah sat with Samson and discussed the day's affairs, making him a silent part of the discussion. To the children of all sizes, shapes and ages he was the casually accepted, off-handedly honoured almost ancestral ~~presence~~ ^{silent} living presence of the history of their parents. He was 'Papa Samson' to whom you could tell things you could not tell anyone else; to whom you could complain about real or imagined injustices; to whom you could safely reveal outrageous thoughts and deeds. And it seemed to Sarah and David that Samson was at peace enveloped by all this love, jealously guarded by his young Nana. Once only, there was a little movement in his left hand, and his young Nana worked on his muscles as though she could, by an act of will, bring them back to active life. Neither Marie, nor any of Samson's children, ever came looking for him. Jones, for all his promises to David and Sarah, and to himself, never came. Noname came once; but he was ~~not~~ preoccupied with the increasingly more arduous struggle to win a living for his family ^{from} ~~out of~~ the now parched and barren valley of Mount Zion. David sensed that Noname had come in a moment of desperation so he offered Noname ^{the job} ~~of~~ ^{overseeing} his just started twenty acre coconut farm. The offer cheered Noname's spirits enormously and both David and Sarah expected him to accept, but at the last minute Noname found it impossible to abandon his piece of earth in the valley of Mount Zion, no matter how hard the struggle. He tried to explain: but how to tell people, even these people, that a piece of hard parched earth has become part of your life. Then he looked into Sarah's eyes and knew she understood.

Noname sat with Samson for the last time in the fading light of the late warm summer evening, and spoke of all that had transpired in the valley of Mount Zion. Sarah had urged him to give Samson all the news, so he spoke steadily, even though he ^{did not} ~~was not~~ know whether Samson heard or understood any of it. Because he did not know, it became like talking to himself, thinking aloud, remembering people and places and happenings, not in silence as a person usually did, but out aloud. And Noname who had always found it difficult to talk to people, who had always had trouble finding the words to give voice to his thoughts or feelings, suddenly found the words flowing freely and easily as he sat talking to Samson. It came as a new experience, making him conscious ^{aware} of the words he used and of the sound of his voice, and of the many ways in which the voice can be raised or lowered or bent or turned to give different-different meanings to words and the use of words and the sound of words. He grew drunk with the joy of it and talked on, giving Samson details of what went on in the valley of Mount Zion which he must have registered without noticing, now all invested with a vivid clarity by his discovery of the twin magic of the word and the human voice.

So they sat there on the verandah at the ending of the day, the big stricken silent man and the wiry little one, his words tumbling all over the place. Samson's Nana periodically came to the door to see that all was well then retreated again. The members of the household went about their rounds. Whenever anyone came home after the day's absence, they paused to salute Samson. Some, the menfolk, would touch his shoulder or hand or nodd or mumble some greeting and carry on; the womenfolk would touch him, kissing his forehead or cheek and linger a little longer than the men. At such times Noname would check his flow of words till the person had gone

then he would start off again. Having discovered the magic of the words and the voice he was like a drunkard who could not stop drinking.

Noname decided to return to the valley of Mount Zion after supper that night. It was ~~xxxxxx~~ a time of the full moon and he and his donkey knew the way. When Sarah could not persuade him to stay till morning she instructed Joseph to immediately have a donkey loaded with produce for Noname to take with him. So Noname took his leave of Samson and, a little later, of David and Sarah, and set out for home, the home to which Samson, in his prime, had led them those many years ago. He had told Samson that the numbers in the valley had now dwindled to five families. The other families had moved to where there was more water and the land was easier; some to the higher hills to the north-east of Mount Zion; others to the growing and flourish community ^{ing} coming into being ⁱⁿ the fertile rolling valleys of Rock Hall; others down to Red Hills; and others ^{further} down to Lime's Kiln or the higher ridges of Sterling Castle. There was more water in these places and the land was easier to work. Of those who remained there was Maria's family or what was left of it since half of it had moved to Red Hills; there was Jonas' family, but Jonas had already found himself a good piece of land on the hill just above Red Hills and was building a big house there, so it was just a matter of time before he would leave; and there was he, Noname, and his family, and like him, Little Mary did not want to leave the valley, even though she was growing terribly thin with the hard work. The other two families were newly arrived strangers, attracted by Maria's low land rent. Noname had no time for them; the ^{men} ~~xxxx~~ of one was a thief whom he had caught stealing yam; the other was lazy and did nothing for his family. All this he had told Samson but not

David and Sarah. Not all your worries you tell to everybody; no need for them to know how bad things really were.

At the crest of the hill which was the last point from which he would be able to see David and Sarah's sprawling home he paused and looked back. They had gone into the house. He would have seen their shadowy figures if they had waited for him to go out of sight. Their not waiting for the last farewell wave brought a sudden, unexpected ache to his heart, and he felt very lonely and alone in this vast and beautiful moonlit world.

"Mek we go home," he said, ^{lightly} nudging the flanks of the donkey with his wheels, and tugging the rope of the second one, weighed down with two panniers laden with all manner of food. "Them doan even want you back, donkey, them so rich; rich to Bahtid...." And so Noname rode ^mhope through the night, talking to the donkeys, remembering, aloud, how Samson had been before he was stricken and how he and David had been boys together, and the chores they had done together and the things they had learned together. And now David was a big and rich man and he, Noname, was ^a small poor man, even though they had started out together from the same place. Not many years between them either; maybe four-five, not much more. Maybe it's that Sarah who can see into people's brains and know what they think. We all wrong, donkey, we all wrong from the beginning. We all thought Maria was the strong one; and it not so at all, at all, not so. That Sarah turn David into a king and a rich man and a preacher man too. ^a Hrd woman, that one! Me ^{ca'an} ca'an handle anyone like that, not even to grow rich; only me sweet likkle Mary - soft and gentle and easy to move with and loving the land same as me. But Maria shouldn't a done that and we shouldn't a agree for them to go. Now it is ^{them} ~~them~~ caring ^{to the animals, to the land, to herself} Samson and him not lonely at all, at all... So he talked aloud and ceased to be alone; and ceased to be lonely.

Samson died in his sleep. His Nana found him dead when she came to prepare him for the day. His eyes were open and he seemed alive but she knew he was dead, so she called Sarah, and Sarah called ^{from his little office where he} David/ ~~who~~ had already started the day's business. David closed the staring eyes and felt the hands and moved the arms; the rigidity of paralysis which had gripped Samson in life was gone in death; his arms and legs and body moved easily; rigor mortis had not yet set in.

The women prepared him quickly for burial, for in the warm tropical ~~lands~~ decay sets in fast. The men, in the meantime, prepared the burial ~~place~~ spot in what was once the churchyard before the church had been burnt down. Many of his former congregation and their relatives had been buried in the churchyard, so David and Sarah had turned ~~it~~ the place into a quiet burial park/ ~~surrounded~~ ^{fenced-in and} surrounded by a citrus grove of grapefruit, oranges and limes. By sunset of the day of his death all the preparations were ready and Samson was buried in the shadows of a young ^{ebony} ~~makany~~ tree, no more than ^{thirty} ~~fifty~~ years old, twelve feet tall and in ~~itself~~ full flowering. The birds had carried ^{its seed} ~~it~~ ^{this} to ~~the~~ spot where it rooted and start its life. Sarah had carefully guarded the early years of ^{that} ~~its~~ life, and everyone now knew and passed on the word that this was a tree that was not to be touched. This tree would, in all probability, outlive all the humans who gathered in its shadows ~~that~~ on that late warm afternoon that Samson, the leader of the runaway slaves, and the only father-figure ~~that~~ David and Sarah and Nona and Big and Little Mary had ever ^{his body} ~~was~~ buried. known/. As they lowered/ ~~him~~ into the earth, to become part of it, part of the system feeding the root-network that would allow the ebony to grow into a giant tree, and with David's voice sounding the familiar parting words about the dead, Sarah thought about Maria, and of the special desolation of being ^a women in a world ~~like~~ like this in which you

[illegible]

By the time the letter telling him of the death of his grandma Sarah reached Jacob, she had been dead and buried for more than a month. They had dug her grave as close beside David's as could be done without disturbing the older grave. John, David's and Sarah's first-born and now head of the sprawling family with its extended connections, and now in his middle sixties, had spent all his life witnessing the close, and at times exclusive, bond between his parents; that closeness to the exclusion of their children at times, had set up resentments and jealousies ~~at times~~; ^{but} ^{now} time ^{as} had washed these away ~~by the time~~ they put Sarah to rest beside her beloved David, a little distance from the grave of the legendary Samson. Now they remembered only the good things and the good times and the warmth and ^{the} gentleness that had radiated to them from these two. So the children and the grandchildren and the great grandchildren, and those they had taken in and made part of their extended family, each built private shrines within themselves ^{as personal remembrance of} ~~and there remembered~~ David and Sarah, and ^{of} the legend of Samson leading them up into the hills, away from bondage.

Something about the big young man's bearing disturbed the professor, made him slacken his pace and keep his distance and follow the young man. There were many other people about, strolling in twos and threes and ⁱⁿ larger groups; others sprawled on the lush grass under the trees off the paved walkways; some sat on the benches scattered at intervals under shady trees on the vast campus grounds. Daylight was fading and in the Georgia twilight there was a faint fresh fragrance to the warm still air. A sense and feel of peace and tranquility hung over the land here. The professor had been ^{in this place for two years} ~~here a year~~ now, and still he could not reconcile the peace of this place with the known reality of violence and brutality just beyond its confines and all through this land. Perhaps this was the augury of how it would one day be in this fair land, when our white fellow countrymen will see us for what we really are, good patriotic Americans like themselves, with the same abilities ^{the same} passions and weaknesses, and with the same dreams and hopes. This is what the highly educated and gifted and talented minority among us must show them ^{come to} till they respect us, and through us, in time, all Negroes AND ACCORD THEM THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY which is their just due.

The tall young man turned off the beaten path and down a piece of sloping land to ^a thick cluster of trees. The professor hurried after him, drawing closer, no longer wanting to follow unobserved. It was time to be seen and heard now, he judged, if this young man was as desperate as his bearing suggested. The young man paused at a huge fallen tree, leaned against it, and waited.

"Why are you following me..." then he recognised his follower.
 "Oh, professor..."

From the islands, the professor decided; that link to the

speech could only come from the islands of the Caribbean.

"You seem to be in trouble," the professor said in a quiet soothing voice, steady and measured, as someone who chose carefully even his most casual remarks.

"A personal matter," the young man said; "Nothing to do with this," he waved an arm to encompass the little world of the university.

"Personal and very deep," the professor said. "They're the most difficult to live with at times; it usually helps to let it out. And sometimes a stranger is the best medium through which to achieve release; the reactions of a stranger are of no moment on deeply personal matters."

There was a long, drawn-out silence in the quiet Georgia twilight; not a sound, now, from anywhere, as though all the world had hushed its breath.

The young man wished this busybody would go away and leave him alone; he wished he had the nerve to tell this smooth-faced, handsome little copper-brown man with his pointed beard and curled moustache and Englishman's ways of speech and manner to mind his own business and go away. He was not even one of this man's students. But this man was a professor and you cannot just tell a professor to mind his own business; especially one like this, whom everyone seemed to hold in awe. The professor sensed the changing mood in the young black man, saw the slight, not conscious, squaring of the shoulders and ~~pricking~~ raising of the chin, and felt quiet satisfaction. Distraction is the first step.

"It is my grandmother," the young man said reluctantly, the mood changing again; he lowered his head. "She died...And I wasn't there."

"Can't you still go? How far?"

"They buried her; ~~in~~ a month ago. The letter reached me today. The professor had guess^{ed} at the Bahamas, but a month would put the place much further; Jamaica, perhaps. Aloud, he asked: "Jamaica?"

"Yes, Jamaica; far up in the hills,"

Tears suddenly welled up in the young man's eyes, spilled over the lids and rolled down his cheeks. He let them, unchecked.

"My grandmother and my grandfather were runaway slaves, part of a group that went up into the hills." For all the flowing tears the voice was calm and even. "And grandpa and grandma went alone into the bush as young people and built a world for us. And now she's gone and I wasn't there."

"And your grandfather?"

"He died long ago... We used to sit under a tree near grandpa's grave and she would tell me, ^{and then} when we were alone, ~~or us, when~~ there was a whole group, ^{of children, tell us} about all that had happened from the time they ran away right up to the time we were born."

"She sounds like a wonderful woman. How many of you are there

Despite the tears, a radiant smile flashed across the young men's face. "She called us her army, there are so many of us. They had eleven children and the eleven had eight and nine and ten and twelve and even fifteen; my father and mother had the smallest number with eight; and now the children are having children. We are her army!... And I wasn't home to bury her; all the others were there."

"I'm sure she understood. I will leave you now to your remembrance. Come dine with me this evening and tell me more about your grandma and Jamaica. Know where to find me?"

"Yes, sir."

"The name's DuBois..."

"I know, sir."

"Come, young man; I ^{am trying} ~~was~~ to find out your name."

"Oh, yes. Brown, sir; Jacob Brown."

"Allright then, Mr. Brown. I'll expect ^{you} in my rooms about seven this evening - ~~this~~ is, unless you do not really want to come. You do not have to, you know. I really want to hear about Jamaica."

"I'll be there, sir; I want to come. I'll tell you all I can about Jamaica."

"And I'll tell you ^{of} my travels in England and France and Germany and some of the people of colour I met there."

Professor Dubois ^{rose from the huge} ~~straight~~ trunk of the fallen tree and walked briskly away, leaving the young man still seated on the great tree. He thought the mood had changed and the young man would be all right. He thought: and so the grandson of a Jamaican ~~is~~ runaway slave woman, just one of the often odd mulatto offspring of the ~~this one is~~ and strange liasons bred by American slavery ~~and born a mere five years after the first phase of American emancipation, which was the freeing of the slaves of the rebels.~~

Except for the bottle of wine and the table napkins and the china crockery and, of course, the privacy, it was the same as in the large communal student dining hall; the food was the same, but somehow Jacob Brown enjoyed it more than he remembered doing in all of his two years at this place. He had found the food bland, not rich and spicy as the food he was used to; these people did not seem to use pepper and ginger and garlic in their cooking; and it all seemed ~~to~~

cooked in water, not in the rich coconut oil which brought out the full flavour in a piece of meat, especially in a nice hunk of pork killed just the day before. Here, he had to drown his food in salt and ground black pepper to give it any sort of flavour and sharpness.

And how he missed his real food and his rich Saturday soups: yam and pumpkin and green banana and cocoa and dasheen, the roots of life; and sweet and sour sops and starapple and naseberry and custardapple and ~~otaheita-apple~~ and pawpaw and mango and the different-different melons and the little tartly-sweet/red fruit of the cherry bush, the sweets of life: and all washed down with freshly pressed cane-juice, at times spiked with the lightest touch of whites to give it a 'kick'! Or a mixture of cool orange and grapefruit juice given extra sweetness with a measure of honey! *or grandma Sarah's nectar!*

"You are faraway, Mr. Brown," Professor DuBois murmured; his eyes, normally guarded and with a touch of sadness to them, twinkled brightly now; a gentle smile tugged at the left side of his mouth, softening the ^{remoteness and} ~~remote~~ austerity the world usually saw. He seemed a kindly, concerned, sensitively gentle man now.

The second glass of wine had relaxed the young man, so he smiled at DuBois, a wide, open, frank, sunshine smile: "I was remembering our food at home. It's all rich and hot and greasy."

"And delicious, I'm sure."

"Yes sir! Very delicious."

"Not bland, like this."

"It's different," Brown said quickly, not wanting to sound complaining.

"It's institutional food. You'll find this kind of food in every institution you go to, anywhere in the world. It is as different from our folk-food as it is from your folk-food. What we

call soul food is as spicy and full of flavour and taste and as rich and gooy-gummy as anything you have down in Jamaica, believe me!"

"Then I must try it, sir."

"You will; have no doubt, Mr. Brown. Institutional food is something completely apart from the food people eat in their own homes, so do not judge our food or anybody else's food by the institutional food you get at colleges and universities and other places of mass catering. Odd but one of the important things I learned in Europe. I thought, for instance, that all Indians ate the same thing called a curry which reduced everything to a fiery heat which burned up your innards and reduced all food and all flavours to one uniform overpowering hotness. ^{in Paris,} Then I was invited to dinner by an aristocratic Asian lady, a Princess I think she was, and I had my first experience of the infinite variety of delicious and very, very different dishes that went under the name curry; and no single one was like the other. But enough of food. I see in the registry records that you are studying theology?" DuBois paused and passed the desert and topped up Brown's wine glass.

"My grandfather was a priest... I don't know if you would accept him as such. My grandma taught him to read and write out of the Bible and because she was the one who had been baptised in church as a slave, she baptised him and later ordained him. They all say he was a good priest; I spoke to some of the old people who remembered him as their pastor and they all said the same thing: he was a good priest." His church, which he and my grandma started ^{building} all by themselves was burned down when he refused to become part of a Kingston-based circuit."

"Everywhere," DuBois murmured softly, thoughtfully. "Even in

Jamaica, an insignificant dot in the Caribbean Sea. Why? So you will carry on your grandpa's work?"

"That's been it ever since I can remember. Grandma Sarah was a strong and determined old lady - she called herself an old Biddy - and we just agreed that I would carry on...."

The younger man hesitated, lowered his head and thought Should deeply. ~~He~~ he tell this Professor DuBois of his and his grandma's agreement on the importance of having ^{independent} churches guided and controlled by black people, not under the control of whites, not used by whites? He said, tentatively: "We agreed, grandma and I - and he would have if he'd been alive because she says it was his idea - that we need churches not controlled and used by whites; ^{allowing the} not/taking hold of our minds and telling us what to think and what not to think, what to feel and what not to feel."

"What of the religious side?" DuBois asked thoughtfully.

"What of the moral side?" He answered himself. "But then you will take of the factual historical roots of the church; and it is a political power force in the world. Is it also a brand of imperialism? Is it being used to guide black minds into accepting prevailing dominant white values? Mind you, its not the values that are necessarily wrong; it is the use of them to impose a certain domination...." DuBois stared speculatively at his young guest; coldly, remote once more. "And this is what you and your grandma talked about, out there in the hills of Jamaica?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wish I had met your grandma Sarah," DuBois said.

Jacon Brown smiled and nodded; he had made the right decision about this man. And each right judgement, grandma Sarah had always said, will lead you to others."

"I would like you to do my social studies man."

"We meet every Thursday. Will it clash with any of your other activities?"

"No, sir."

"Fine; next Thursday at five then, in my office. Tell me: apart from your promise to your grandma, do you yourself want to be a priest? Is it your calling or the fulfilling of another's calling? Are you sure of it?"

"Oh I am sure of that alright, sir. Grandma was strongminded but she never forced anything on anybody. She raised the same questions you are raising now, and many more. It's hard to explain but that is the only thing I want to do; it is like a calling. Of course what they did to grandpa and his church are important: our own church, free of domination or control by whites is one driving force, but --" Jacob Brown searched for the right words.

"But vengeance is not the reason," DuBois suggested.

"I do not not know," the young man spoke as if to himself: "All I know is that God I know, the God my grandpa and grandma raised us all, and the people in the hills, to worship, is a God of truth and caring for each other, and of respect and grace. He does not set up one people over another, and he does not measure men by the colour of their skin. That is the God whose gospel I must preach

"How can your God of love condone so much cruelty? Slavery?"

Jacob Brown began to answer then saw the ^{eyes.} twinkle in DuBois' ~~eyes~~. He relaxed, shook his head, smiled: "I don't know; many things I do not know, sir. That's why I'm here. Can you tell me, sir?"

DuBois threw back his head and laughed, a lifting gaiety to his laughter. Well done, Mr. Brown! A wise man turns a difficult question around and sends it back as a counter. The asking is often more ~~important~~ more important than the answers. Like you I do not know. But

I find it strange indeed that so much cruelty and brutality has been done by men to men in the name of the God of love. Your grandma saw and showed you and, I confess, made me think seriously about it for the first time, how the God of love is used by one race to gain domination over the minds of another. It is a terrible thought, you know, this idea of the colonisation of the human mind by way of religion. Cannot your God of love do something to stop it, to disassociate His name from it? Nox, do not answer. Let me guess what you answer will be and then tell me if I am wrong. Your grandma's religion, in the end, ^{and provides} provided /the key to the rebellion of the slaves. Ultimately, the teachings of Christ provided each converted slave with a sense of his own humanity and therefore with a measuring rod against which to judge his status; and the result led to rebellion. And this makes your God of love a revolutionary, a fomentor of discontent, dissatisfaction; He causes a questioning of the status quo, He causes self-examination and a posing of what is against what could and should be; and hey presto! an explosive revolutionary situation is brought into being. Is that what you would have said, Mr. Brown."

"Tell you the truth," Brown chuckled. "I had not thought of all that; but I wish I had."

"Well, man! Think about it now and tell me if that is what you would have said if you had thought about it."

"If I had thought it out as clearly, yes." Brown could contain neither his laughter nor his sense of high excitement. This man played with ideas as other people played game^s, and it was exhilaratin

"But here's the rub," DuBois said, suddenly sombre. "He creates the will to freedom and dignity and what you call caring and grace, this God of love; and yet, it is in His name that they hav

created slavery and racism with its lynchings and burnings, and colonialism. So it would seem He can be/^{used} to serve both good ends and bad ends, this God of love. Is He indifferent? Has He made no choice? Is it all some grand game He is playing with puny little humans for pawns? For surely, a God of love, a God of goodness should tilt the scales in favour of goodness and love and against wickedness and hate?"

"Has He not done so?" Brown asked; equally serious now.

"Has He?" DuBois asked. "Go out into the world, away from your protective Jamaican hills and away from the artificial peace and tranquility/^{of} this university campus: complete your studies and go and spend ten or twenty years out there/^{in the world} and then let us meet again and see if you give me the same answer."

Jacob Brown was very serious now as he asked: "Do you really believe God is indifferent to the suffering of people?"

DuBois mood changed. He gestured with body and hands as though to be rid of an unpleasant shadow of the mind. He divided the ^{remains} of the bottle of wine into the two glasses.

"I'm the one who asks the questions, remember. You, especially when you are ^a priest who has to guide the minds and souls of a congregation, will be expected to give the answers. I am the man of questions and of doubts, which is the true business of scholarship. Leaders, persons and politicians, must deal in certainties. That's the difference. As to your question: I do not know, for I have no way of knowing. I know what men say of Him but I suspect that they have no more way of knowing than I have. This is not a matter of knowledge, it is a matter of faith, and I was not raised by anyone like your grandma Sarah."

They talked for a while longer and then Jacob Brown left

It was near on ten o'clock and it would soon be time for the general lights-out, so he walked briskly to the student quarters. It was a clear moonlit night, comfortably warm and still, with the faint scent of Georgia pine on the air. How his grandma Sarah would have enjoyed the tension and the banter and the challenge of this night's talk. What a sharp, clear brain this man DuBois had. But then, you do not become a Doctor of Philosophy at thirty unless you have a sharp and clear brain. ~~Only a few years between us, about five,~~ ^{very} ~~and yet he makes me feel/young at times~~ Something sad and lonely about him though, this brainy goodlooking young brown professor with the French name...Grandma, Oh Lord, grandma's gone and I wasn't there to kneel beside her bed and touch her for the last time and kiss her for the last time. Last time we walked, just before I left, we went to where the church had been and she talked about grandpa and Samson. Last time she leaned on me for support; last I heard the fading, whispery old voice and felt the great strength of mind and spirit caged in that very frail old body. Oh grandma, did I tell you how much I love you? Never enough; we never tell it enough until it is too late. He made it easier, this Doctor DuBois; easier when I first got the letter earlier today, and again tonight. A thoughtful, kind man behind all that sharpness. I think I like him; I'm sure you would have. You would have taught him something for all his great book learning. Well, I will get some more of that learning and then....The thought suddenly flashed into his mind... then I'll go to Europe as he has done and then I will go to Africa, the place where the slaves came from. A black missionary to Africa! A black missionary to Africa! How I wish I could talk to you about this. But you know. All I have to do is think about ^{something} and you know, ^{it} as you always have. Oh, grandma, ^a I'll miss you so!

In his rooms DuBois took out ^a manuscript and continued working on it far into the night.

DuBois' Thursday evenings social studies group opened a new window on the world for Jacob Brown. There were some eight or nine other young people, ^{at each meeting of which DuBois had limited to ten,} in the group, with the women outnumbering the men. ^{Jacob Brown} ~~He~~ became the fourth male in the group, the other six were women. On that first Thursday evening only one of the three other men were present; he discovered, at later meetings, that male attendance was invariable lower than the attendance of the women; it was exceptional for a female member of the group to be absent; there were rarely more than two men present at ^{any} time. And as with attendance, so with performance: the women carried out their assignments with more speed, care, reliability and consistency than did the men. Often, the men, if they came, brought some excuse for a task not carried out. Dr. DuBois usually accepted these without comment but Jacob Brown noticed the professor always seemed a little more withdrawn, a little more melancholy, a little physically smaller, whenever this happened. He noticed, too, that the young women went out of their way at such times to do the kind and quality of work that raised the spirits of the professor and restored the approving twinkle to his eyes.

From those Thursday evenings, Jacob Brown began the painful process of learning what it meant to be black in America. Things he had never thought of were laid bare for him: how black men were convicted on the flimsiest of charges and then leased by the prison ^{and entrepreneurs} authorities to white farmers/much as ~~a~~ machine^s or other piece^s of ~~property~~ productive property or animals. Up to 1874 the lease term of such prisoners had been two years. The Governor of the State of Georgia at that time argued for an extension of the lease time; the Georgia Legislature agreed ^a with him and the lease time was increased to twenty years. He learned about lynchings: how black men, women and

children were set to the torch by mobs of whites for real or fancied crimes like rape or theft or being 'uppity'. Rape could be simply the way a black man looked at a white women; assault could be a black accidentally bumping against a white on a pavement, or protesting against being short-changed in a store. He learned about the defencelessness of blacks: how blacks could be cheated and robbed by whites in business or trade or commerce with no hope of getting redress in the courts of law. When blacks built homes which were considered too pretentious and above themselves such homes would be set on fire and a symbolic wooden cross would be burned nearby as warning to other blacks; the law never found the arsonists, even when they boasted about having done the deed. When black women were raped neither the law nor the white mobs paid more than lewd, suggestive attention to the event. All this ~~xx~~ DuBois' team of you^{was} women researched and gathered and reported on on those Thursday evenings with much statistical support and documentary evidence from the newspaper accounts and the reports of the proceedings of local, county and state authorities. Jacob Brown noticed that neither DuBois nor anyone else ever enquired how any one of the young women came by some particularly sensitive or obviously top secret state or county document. And so, quietly, methodically they built up a picture of the social and economic and political conditions under which black people live. Later Jacob Brown found out that these studies were not confined to ^{the University of} the State of Georgia. Information, as carefully documented, came from all over the South, and further afield, with DuBois at the centre of it all; examining, sifting, question^{ing}, collating and forever it seemed, writing.

For Jacob Brown it became clear that being black in America was totally different from being black in Jamaica, especially in the

hills of Jamaica. He had never questioned or doubted his own manhood, his own personhood in the way he had found the black Americans, especially the men, seemed always to be doing. Professor DuBois was the exception but even he seemed driven by a need to prove their humanity; to show, ~~by scholarship~~, by achievement, by quality of character, that blacks were the equal of whites. We in Jamaica, even after slavery, never had to prove anything to anybody because we knew ourselves. The whites were on top because they were stronger more cunning, more unscrupulous, more aggressive; not because they were better. So there was no question. One day things would change: blacks would get stronger and become as cunning and aggressive ^{and unscrupulous} and take over; no question about that. We are many; many more than them; and time longer than rope. So never ever any of this American black self-doubt which says you must prove you're as good as. The trouble was with the numbers. He had talked with ~~the~~ DuBois about it once. Even though their numbers were greatest in the South, and there were ^{places} where they outnumbered the whites, the American blacks were still a small minority in a vast sea of white people, just one tenth or thereabouts of all the American people; and ^{they were} a minority that looked so strikingly different. Elsewhere, in Jamaica and, from all accounts in Africa too, ^{strikingly different looking} the minorities are on top, which ~~it~~ ensures change one day; here, the minority is at the bottom which ensures ^{its} permanence at the bottom. DuBois had talked of making the majority accept the simple fact of the Americanness of the minority. That, for him, seemed the answer to the problem. But even as he put it forward Jacob Brown sensed a certain dissatisfaction in the man. It was as though heart and mind were in conflict, tugging against each other, each dissatisfied with the wisdom of the other. Once, when this

dissatisfaction seemed at its strongest, and almost next in anger at

Jacob Brown was the most passive of DuBois' small group. He was not assigned to any of the weekend investigation trips in which members of the group went, usually in pairs, from time to time; he was not asked to follow some special court case involving some matter ~~involving~~ whose importance went beyond the interests of the individuals directly concerned. It was understood that his presence in the group was part of his own education. So he slipped into the habit of making notes for himself of some of the salient points of the often heated arguments and discussions which followed the presentation of reports and statistics. Under DuBois' barely perceptible guidance, the little group ^{took} ~~accepted~~ nothing presented by any one of its number for granted; everything ^{was} questioned; everything/tested every statement, every figure, ^{several} ~~everything~~ had to be justified. And after ~~two~~ months of regularly attending the Thursday evening meetings Jacob Brown found himself caught up in the habit of testing and questioning the merits of every proposition. From time to time it led ^{to} /problems in his theological classes. The Dean of his ~~college~~ ~~university~~ faculty once had words with DuBois. According to DuBois' dry wit account of the encounter it came to a question of whether the plenipotentiaries of the Almighty could produce evidence that He did not want any questioning from His followers and preferred them to be blindly following morons and imbeciles or intelligent and questioning human beings. And with his eyes twinkling a little more brightly than usual DuBois had wondered aloud whether anything ^{was to} ~~could~~ be gained by subjecting to the tests of intellectual discipline people who had not been prepared for such discipline. ^{or such testing} Jacob Brown was more restrained in his questioning of theological statements after that. But even those teachers who were most disturbed and ~~unhappy~~ unhappy over some of the unsettling and explosive ideas DuBois planted in young minds by the new questing intellectual vigour he had