

Then I too joined in the laugh; for Metaphora, as I now divined, was none other than the curious bouncing creature whose grin and whose movements had already caught my attention. There are some people who are born to excite a smile. I at once seemed to recognise, by a flash of instantaneous insight, that Metaphora was a member of this class; and the accounts I was presently given of her showed me I was not mistaken. Her manners, her English, and her impulses were all equally entertaining. I was gratified to find that, quite unconsciously, I had already aroused in her the liveliest interest in myself, that she had described me to Mrs. Falkland as being a 'very pretty gentleman,' that she had actually added, 'He all the same as Vahly Pasha'—Vahly Pasha being the Governor, the most magnificent human being she knew—and that that evening she had given special attention to my room, 'because the poor gentleman would be tired, having been all day on the roses.' In Metaphora's language 'the roses,' I found, meant 'roads.'

I asked why her idea of making me more comfortable should have shown itself in hiding whatever I was most likely to want. 'Ah,' said Mrs. Falkland, 'she is really almost half-witted. If I tell her to look for a thing she will often start off before she has heard what it is, and then she will come back to me saying, "I not find it." I say to her, "How can you if you will not stay to hear what it is?" and then she answers, not so much to me as to herself,