

^Excuse first draft don't know if you can read it.^1

~~In the dark~~

~~Workers~~

~~by~~

~~Ralph Iron~~

Workers

by

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In a far off world God sent two spirits to work. The work he ~~gave~~ ^set^ ^gave^ them was to tunnel through a mountain. And they stood side by side & looked at it. And they began to work. But they found the hole ^where^ they had to ~~mine was too small to allow~~ ^for^ two persons to work in it, & they must have air coming ^in^ from two ^both^ sides otherwise ~~when they got to the centre of the mountain~~ ^work was very narrow^ that there was not room for two; ~~unreadable~~; that if they bored the mountain only from one side they would never get through; that the air must come from both ^two^ sides ~~or they could not breath it in the~~ ^& meet in the centre.^ middle.

Then one spirit said to the other, "You must go & work at the other side, while I stay here".

And the other spirit said, "Yes".

And it flew ~~away~~ to the other side of the mountain. And for years they worked: & each one ^in his^ tunnel ~~got deeper~~. And, after ~~many years~~ ^,^ ~~as the spirits worked~~, each one heard the sound of the others axe as it picked, & they knew that they were coming nearer, that the other was at work.

~~And~~ At last, the ^se^ spirits died ^,^ before they got to the centre; & God sent other ^s^ spirits to take their ^place^ work.

¹ This insertion is at the top left-hand corner at a 180 angle pointing in, with a demarcation line draw round it in OS's writing.

But they had heard ~~^the picking of^~~ each others axes ~~^picking^~~ in the dark; & that unreadable
^was^ enough.

~~Ralph Iron~~

Alassio, Italy.

April 16 / 87

^I picked these flowers for you at the church. That green is olive.^²

^Do you know I don't believe anyone except Vizeitelli³ will take my book.^⁴

^ I made two new allegories last night after I was in bed. This I made about three o'clock.
I've been to for a walk to that lovely ruined church at Santa Cruce, so nice & lovely there.
Now I've come back & just writing these out before I forget them⁵ I love this one. I wouldn't
change a word of it for the⁶

^devil. You mustn't say it's not nice!⁷

² There is an unaddressed envelope containing a sprig of olive stem and leaves but no accompanying letter or note elsewhere in the Schreiner collections, which may be what is referred to here.

³ Henry Vizately (1820-1894) was a former printer turned journalist and publisher. He had a long association with the *Illustrated London News*. Vizately and Company published avant-garde books including Zola and the Mermaid Series of reprints of English Elizabethan, Jacobean and Restoration drama in which Havelock Ellis played an editorial role. In 1888 Vizately was prosecuted for his translation of Zola's *The Earth* and was fined; when it was reissued in 1889, he was prosecuted and received a three months prison sentence.

⁴ This insertion is at the bottom left-hand corner, at a right angle pointing out. The book referred to here is likely to be *From Man to Man*.

⁵ There is no indication as to what these other allegories were.

⁶ This insertion is at the bottom right-hand corner, at an angle pointing out. This comment and tone as well as provenance all show that it was sent to Havelock Ellis, for he was certainly very critical of Schreiner's writing.

⁷ This insertion is facing out at 180 degrees on the right-hand edge.