

it! How impossible it would be for him ever to paint what he had seen! How his hand would de-flower it! But she had given it to him, and so he must do his best.

On the morrow he did not go abroad. All that day, all the next, he worked in his little bare room, scarce taking food, unconscious if there was still any material world around him. All he knew was that he had seen in sleep, smiling upon him, a face he could wait for until he should be dead. Strange perfumes crossed the air as he labored—the flowers, he thought, of that wondrous meadow. He smiled pityingly at the pot of geraniums, the pot of basil on his window sill. The old woman with whom the student lodged wondered what strange thing the boy was trying to sing over his drawing in that close-shut room. But he traced a scroll at the base and wrote, feeling some agony of denudation in the words, 'Assumpta est.' He threw down the pencil when he came to her name.

The design was placed upon Conrad's easel the third day. The old man drew his breath sharply when he saw it, and looked about for the boy; but Hans had fled. Days elapsed before he returned; and then it seemed to the master he was sad, but neither spoke of the cartoon. A week later one of the judges, meeting the painter on the street, congratulated him warmly.

Conrad's gladness had been ready long before, and now beamed out of him.

'Ah! My Hans?' he chuckled.

'Nay, good master; Ludwig has it.'

'Ludwig? Gott in himmel! You have given it to Ludwig?'

'It was closely contested. But we do not like the yellow tone of Hans'; it admits too much light, and ignores some of the main laws of glazery. The whole figure would have to be rehandled.'

Conrad's head fell. He had not thought of the leading himself. He could well see how the lad would overlook it. And Ludwig had got the window. Loyally the old man tried to be glad, to be impartial, but the angry tears stung his eyes; for he knew what quality of vision was in the design of Hans the dreamer, and Ludwig's natural tendency was toward the painting of hams and melons. Ludwig's cartoon was very careful, even elaborate. From life, with much correctness, he had drawn Katrina, the innkeeper's daughter, in a blue dress, and with her plump chin upturned. It was well composed and true to nature. Conrad had seen Madonnas done like this before. But even that color-feat of the boy Hans' painting, in the sweat of his brow, the mist and fire of the opal for St. Mary's glory—even that had told against him. It admitted too much light.

Conrad called the lad to him softly and told him as one tells of a death. He got no answer, and asked Hans what he thought.

'Think, sir? I think it very natural. The work in it is execrable. But I did my best.'

And with that he went back to paint in the background of Conrad's 'Holy Family.' Full soon he heard that the prize had gone to Ludwig and his stout wench in the fairing robe. It did not affect him very much; his whole soul had craved a share of work and glory in that stupendous Gothic structure he called in heart's heart the 'spot of dreams'; but, since that was denied him, he did not care who was preferred. The sorrow that went deepest with him—and it did go to the core and the marrow—was that his Lady had refused his service. If she had had any pleasure in him she would have let him work for her. He had thought that she indeed had helped him in his trouble; but, if she forsook him now, then he had been in error from the first.

Lonely the boy wandered out to the Chapel of Angels, but he found no solace. His Lady and Mistress had repulsed his love. He came in the moonlight to the minster, where day by day mallet and chisel rang, and joyous workmen crowded the scaffoldings stark in the blue. The flying arches sprang upward; everywhere the carven stone blossomed into flower and figure; and here, in the nether shadow, stood he, Hans, who was an orphan, whom God had made an artist, but who never would have a share in that. 'Perhaps,' he said to himself—'perhaps I am not worthy to work for her.' And so he went home, with his head low and his face white with pain in the moonlight. After that the old town and the school of Conrad saw the lad no more.

Loud was the laughter when it was found that this child of dreams could be smitten with a jealousy of success so intolerable and unforgiving that it drove him from friends and land. Conrad, who best knew the boy's sensitiveness, could but agree that disappointment and humiliation had proved too much for him. At heart he did not wonder that Hans would not en-

dure the seeing of Ludwig's subject preferred. It was gall to his own soul. But the years passed, and no tidings came from the wanderer.

Hans himself travelled on foot to the Netherlands and France and Italy, studying everywhere as he went. Once, and again he found a patron. Twice he set forth as a pilgrim to the holy spots of Palestine, and at length, having won fame in the art-loving communes of Italy, he decided that this should be his home. From Bergamo a letter went to Conrad the painter; it brought no answer, and the writer realised it must be too late. Then he turned back resolutely to the painting of Maonnas. By these Giovanni d'Alemagna had his greatest fame; though he was also an architect of no mean acquirements, and his designs were frequently prized above those of native draughtsmen.

So his skill grew and grew; and to everything he touched a peculiar grace of inimitable beauty was imparted. His was the artistry of the soul and eye and hand. And he had grown bluff and jovial. But there was one subject he could not speak of, and that was his boyhood's 'spot of dreams.' Sometimes he would close his eyes and think about it. He had built cathedrals himself since that; but there was one from which, as a lad, he had been excluded, and the old wound would not heal. Travellers occasionally brought him, in scraps, tales of the solemnity and magnificence of that place.

One day the ineradicable desire of land and tongue, the passion of home-sickness often stifled, laid its spell so potently upon the aged painter he undertook the long, difficult journey for the first time. He could remember, as he passed them smiling, the clear river, the meadows breaking into strata of blue blossom or whitening with lilies of the valley. He could smile at the recollection of the boy Hans, so simple, so deadly in earnest, so tragic-full of childish and unchildish sorrows. There was the window in the gray, gabled street—no more geraniums or basil at the sill, but still the window of that most foolish, perhaps lovable boy. There, shrunken surely and weather-stained, the house where Conrad the painter had lived and held his school.

And then the old man Giovanni d'Alemagna—old as Conrad himself by this time—picked out of his memory the old way to the minster. Miles away he had seen it; an arrow of gold first, a steeple above the haze; next a toy carving, gem-like upon the city. Then at the walls he lost it. And here he was at the door! His breast tightened in the grip of that old, old pain, smoothed almost into silence. The moonlight seemed to have come back over buttress and scaffoldings. Strange how this caught his breath! Strange how beneath the noble arch his limbs seemed to weaken!

A canon hastening to Office paused in the portal.

'You are weary, sir. Come within and be seated.'

'Not weary. This spot, not seen since childhood, moves me.'

'Ah, no wonder! Was it completed—the carvings, the stained glass?'

'Almost completed. I mind me, when I left the city, the scholars of Conrad were making a design.'

'For a window? You are keen of memory, sir. It is sixty years, if I err not.'

'They pass quickly. Ludwig of Bremen—is his window set?'

'Long since—though, indeed, not Ludwig's. His was so badly injured in the firing it went perforce to the ash-heap. And, as the poor youth died soon after, Conrad pressed forward another design. There was some trouble about it at the time. I do not quite recall the circumstances. The Conrad school were a turbulent element, but Conrad put it to them by vote. It is a very beautiful window, whoever may have been the author.'

A bell hastened the speaker toward the inner shadow, and the traveller turned away. He had a dread and a fear to enter. To-morrow, perhaps, but not to-night—not with the old regret so acute and so bitter on him. So not even Ludwig had got it! Poor Ludwig, dead at twenty! Katrina must have married someone else. How idly he, Hans, could wonder about it! How dispassionately! Much of the sharpness of life must have lost its edge. And Conrad had proposed a new cartoon! Whose? The old man's artistic honesty was above false dealing or favoritism. The scholar he commended would be his best. There was Otto, whose coloring was so luminous; and Adolf, who drew so very well. Were they dead, too? How old he must be himself, if, of the canon's predecessors, it was the grandsire knew the Conrad school!

The painter slept that night at a hostelry where the old names evoked no memories; but French merchants with gold-ware made the house noisy.