

Kevin wakened in the morning with a thrill of recollection, and rose in great excitement. "I am in Verona," he thought, "where Juliet loved and Dante dreamed, and where the grand signori of the Middle Ages held their court. Here walked the poet of the Paradiso, guarded and watched by the mighty Mastiff lord."

It was very early, some hours before his friend was likely to appear, and he went out alone to ramble about the city. As he passed through the courtyard a flock of pigeons swooped across it, and the flash of their white wings startled him, like a message from the past. It had not needed this to bring Fanchea's little form to his side; he always called upon her in spirit to share any new joy that fell to his share; and now, side by side, he and the ghost of his child-love travelled through the streets.

In the Piazza delle Erbe business was already going forward; the Square, with its rich ancient architecture, its Palace of Justice, its old Market House and House of Merchants, looked as if the contents of a hundred gardens had been emptied into its lap, while countless huge, white umbrellas spread their grotesque wings over the treasures of fruit and flowers set forth for the buyer. Under the umbrellas sat brown-cheeked, dark-eyed women in brilliant kerchiefs, guarding their juicy merchandise, and making striking groups against the background of the surrounding buildings with their dim, rich frontage of time-worn sculpture and faded fresco. It was a gay, brilliant, noisy scene: loud chatter, ringing laughter, flashing colors; and above the heaps of green melons and groves of glowing oleanders, the squat forms of the quaint umbrellas, and the animated figures that moved among them, rose the marble sanctuary-column, the Gothic fountain, with its exquisite pinnacles, the soaring arches and lofty towers solemnly looking down, as on children at play, and tragically mindful of other scenes.

"Have you ever been here, little Fanchea?" asked Kevin. "These buxom, black-eyed women are like sisters of the fiend in human shape who took you out of my life. Are you lurking behind their baskets, under their absurd umbrellas? Will you come forward presently, and ask me in bad Italian to buy a melon?"

He almost felt inclined to ask some of them if they had seen a little girl, with blue eyes and long dark hair; but with a sigh shook off the folly, and passed under the mighty arch into the Piazza dei Signori.

This piazza was comparatively silent and empty, and Kevin leaned against a column and surveyed in peace the gorgeous palaces of the great Mastiff race, with their lofty cortiles, and gigantic Gothic arches; with their massive pillars, delicate, graceful *loggie*, and the huge, towering campanile that pierces the clouds and once threw its solemn shadow upon Dante's exiled head.

Thrilling with excitement, Kevin gazed on the rows of frowning and sculptured windows. "What eyes have looked out from them!" he thought. "At which of them did Dante's strong, sad face come and go, watching for the form of his beloved lady in the golden blue of the morning sky? He was happier than I, for he knew that his love was in heaven. He looked to her on high; I search for her vainly on earth. Come along, little imaginary Fanchea," he continued, "and we will pass on through this wonderful city; and I will tell you as we go of all the good things that have fallen to my share since I saw you; you are only a pale little ghost, but you are all I have to console me for the Fanchea I have lost. As Beatrice was to Dante, so you have been the inspiration of my life. The great Master, who knew so much of human weakness, will forgive me for my audacity in drawing the parallel."

Climbing the steps of the great amphitheatre, he sat down, and gave himself up to the imaginations it suggested. His thoughts were the dreams of a poet, and took forms that may hereafter give delight to the world; his eyes had wandered away to the deeply colored horizon against which, wrapped in ether, stood up the great fortress towers of the Scaligeri, and the dark cypresses like sombre sentinels, ghostly streaks

of shadow in the glowing landscape. He marked the paradisaical hills and the transfigured mountains, the rushing Adige with its bridges, and the rude, grand, lovely and picturesque masses of the city at his feet. Suddenly sounds from below caused him to look down, and see that some vulgar show was going on in the arena of the amphitheatre. A tent had been erected and gipsies were holding an entertainment for the benefit of some straggling spectators; a girl with floating hair was dancing and singing, and shaking a tambourine. A few notes from her fresh young voice rang up to where he sat; but he could not see her face. Startled out of his dreams, he thought he beheld the scene that was so often present to his thoughts; he rushed downward to claim and take possession of Fanchea.

The people gave way, and stood back, as the pale-faced gentleman advanced within the ring, with his eyes fixed upon the graceful little figure of the dancer. They thought he was going to give her money.

"Fan, little Fan!" he said, tremulously, "do you not know me?" A child's face with a bright brown skin, and white grinning teeth flashed suddenly round upon him; a flood of eager Italian was poured into his ears, and an outstretched hand was held out to him, to beg. He dropped some coin into it, and turned away to hide the tears in his eyes. What freak of madness was this that had surprised him? Seven long years ago Fanchea might have looked, from a distance, like this. He saw tall, coarse-looking young women standing round, with beads round their throats and rude laughter on their lips: "Oh, Heaven! could she grow into one like these!" he thought, with horror, and hurried away from the spot.

All the way home to the hotel a little song, Goethe's, rang in his ears:

Sie aber ist weggezoan

Und weit in das Land hinaus.

Yes; she was, indeed, gone far out into the world of time and space; and how could he any longer hope to follow her?

In the afternoon Mr. Honeywood and Kevin walked to see the tombs of the old lords of Verona, within almost a stone's throw of the palace, where successively they held Court and made their home. There in the Piazza dei Signori they lived and ruled; here, as if in the next chamber, they lie in death. An extraordinary Gothic pile of the richest beauty, crusted over with sculpture, and guarded and ornamented by screens of wrought metal, the tombs of the Scaligeri present an entirely unique appearance, startling and enchanting to the beauty-loving eye. One over another the rich piles of stone-work soar into the azure air, having their roots, along with an ancient church, in a lonely and deserted graveyard. There is a magnificent weirdness about the conception of the whole thing, and a barbaric splendor that takes away one's breath.

"Who were these wonderful Scaligeri?" asked Kevin.

"They were the great lords of Verona in the middle ages," said Honeywood. "The first was a mere soldier of fortune, elected by people weary of the rule of a tyrant. He was called by a strange name, Mastino della Scala, the Mastiff of the Ladder; and wherever he went he carried this extraordinary ladder, which, by the way, always reminds me of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. He passed it on to his descendants along with his canine name, and you may see the dog and the ladder repeated all over these tombs. Mastiffs support each sarcophagus, and the ladder is everywhere, as indeed it is everywhere over Verona: see it woven into these wrought-metal screens."

"What a curious, startling design runs through these tombs!" said Kevin. "Below the solemn sepulchre with its reposing figure and the dark hollow of its Gothic arch; above the soaring pinnacle bearing a proud horse and rider aloft in the blue. The sharp contrast strikes one indescribably. One seems confronted by restless spirits that will not lie in death; and having broken the bonds of the tomb, still