

Excitement began to give way before bodily fatigue and Fanchea crept into the little bed provided for her. In her dreams she continued to explore the white valleys, holding the angel fast by the hand. And now the angel had got Kevin's face.

She left the hotel at dawn, her imagination still filled with snowy fields, lit by the stars and tracked by spirit feet; but in a few hours afterwards the first sight of Italy had colored her brain with vivid pictures of life and set the warm blood tingling in her veins.

"Now I am going to be happy," said the signora. "Youth, joy, hope, have all been frozen out of me in colder climes; yet I am bringing back my soul into the sunshine of my native land." And at the first sight of the blue mountains she wept.

"I am bringing my Italy an offering worthy of her acceptance," she continued, embracing Fanchea. "Here is a treasure which proves I have not quite thrown away my years. If I have failed to develop my own genius, I have at least found a substitute."

Herr Harfenspieler nodded assent, and bade their charioteer stop, and all three travellers alighted and sat by the roadside while the professor produced his violin and poured forth one of his most impassioned reveries from its strings. It was a greeting, he said, a homage, a love-song to the land of music. The signora shed copious tears and Fan stood by, gazing down into half-disclosed vistas of Italy. Rich mountain valleys clustered with chestnut trees, and in the distance deep and exquisite hues glowing among the folds of the lower mountains, like the gems from a half-open casket. The two old people beside her seemed inspired. Would not Italy and song be to her all they were to them? Must not her life be well spent in devotion to the art they so adored?

Descending the strange staircases down the mountain sides, alighting in lower and still lower valleys, each one richer than the last in teeming fruit trees and luxuriant vegetation, Fanchea dropped down out of the clouds into Italy. After some particularly rugged descent, whose peril had made the heart stop beating, and the breath come hard, how sweet to see the stream again running placidly through the valley, the burnished campanile glittering among the trees. How pleasant to hear the shouts and laughter of the peasants busy in the shady recesses of the chestnut boughs, gathering in their harvest of food. Chiavenna with its yellow-green mantle of vines, backed by deep blue mountain walls, and illuminated by the flash of its sunlit rivers was left behind at last, and under the warm brooding sunshine our friends sped along through the flush and glory of the gardens and fields of Lombardy. The grasshoppers sang loud in the grass, and a monstrous green one perched on the driver's shoulder. Close to smiling, embowered homesteads the melons ripened in the sun, and picturesque maidens, sunburnt and dark-eyed, carried long baskets of fruit upon their backs. A draught of new-made wine, procured from the makers at a roadside cottage, gave the travellers strength to press on and catch the steamer proceeding down the lake to Como. Overpowered with fatigue and the drowsiness of the warm air, Fan lay down upon the deck with half-closed eyes, and was floated through the enchanting beauties that girdle the beautiful lake.

Established at Milan in apartments not far from the Duomo, Fanchea threw herself into the musical studies awaiting her, yet was allowed time to explore the great city with its treasures. After a siesta, well-earned by an industrious morning, she and her guardians spent the afternoon visiting the churches and galleries, studying the glories of the Brera, sitting in the silent, deserted refectory of the banished Dominicans, before the wonderful Cenacolo, the fading picture of the Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci; diving into primitive ages among the solemn shades of the rude, grand old Romanesque church of St. Ambrogio, where spectral bishops, saints, and Lombard kings lie in wait for you along the ghostly aisles. A few moments were always saved, going or coming, to spend in the sweet

and glorified stillness of the magical Duomo. A twilight drive on the Corso refreshed them after all their exertions, and, later, they walked about the merry streets to see the crowds of pleasure-takers, or visited the brilliantly-lighted arcades to look at the shops.

The Duomo was a perpetual delight to Fanchea. "Ah, Mamzelle!" she exclaimed, "if you had seen our little church at Killeevy—four bare, white-washed walls, a wooden altar, and a crucifix! Yet how strong our prayers were! How well we loved God. I only hope they pray as well here. If our hearts could, they would have piled up riches like these to give honor to heaven. And oh, how glad I am that someone has been able to do it!"

She was never weary of walking round the aisles on solemn tip-toe, basking in the enchanted light that fell through the jewelled windows, scrutinising the grave or benignant faces of the saints that clustered round the tabernacles on the summits of the majestic columns, or marvelling at the details of lilies, sunflowers, fruit, heads of cherubs, sculptured out of the rich yellow-white marble. Walking through lanes of glory, her eyes wandered down cooler aisles full of shadowy majesty, but ending in vistas of violet, and crimson, and gold. The beauty and the holiness of it alike laid hold of her soul. She saw it all with the eyes of a mind early trained to the influences of the same religion that had gathered all these glories as upon one altar. Her heart accepted it as a new joy that had suddenly become her own, and she offered it, as if this were the first time it had been offered, to the Creator.

"I did not do it," she thought, "I had no part in making it, but the delight I have in it makes me feel it entirely my own. And I rejoice to lay it all at the feet of God!"

She would rise with the very first light, so as to have an hour to spend in the cathedral before the work of her morning began, and return to her tasks saturated to the very finger-tips with the sweetness and holiness that lurk, as lurks incense, in this marvellous sanctuary. One morning, having finished her devotions, she was wandering as usual in half-solemn, half-fluttered delight through the mazes of the Duomo. Having got away into the curved, marble-paved alley behind the great altar, she stood, herself a little in shadow, gazing at the three gigantic eastern windows that fill the apsis, and half-dazed by the flood of sunshine that came pouring through their painted panes, casting myriads of ethereal jewels upon the air and along the pavement. Beyond this indescribable glory the depths of the mighty Duomo retreated into a rich and sombre shade, out of which shone dark bronzes, warm yellow-white marbles, a cloud of transparent crimson, and glimmers of gold.

Leaning against the wall, out of the light, she saw a gentleman come round from the other side of the choir, and pause, dazzled by the splendor of the sunlit windows. He walked forward into the light, and then stood quite still. His figure was tall and well knit, and had a certain manly grace, but there was nothing about it to remind Fanchea of anyone she had ever known. Her eye rested on him for a moment: she was pleased to see another person smitten with the same enthusiasm that was devouring herself. Another moment of quiet observation from her shadowy corner, and a qualm of strange emotion shook her heart. Surely something in that upraised face was intimately familiar to her: the broad white brow, the serene grey eyes, were associated in her mind with all that is beautiful and good in existence. The light crisp hair had become a darker brown, the lower part of the face was clothed with a still darker beard, yet who in all the world could this be but the friend of her childhood; a taller, more matured, more graceful, more cultivated, an altogether idealised, yet perfectly recognisable Kevin!

Fan's first impulse was to utter such a scream of joy as would have startled the echoes of the mighty Duomo, and to fling herself forward into the light; the next was to stay quite still in her corner, unseen, till a sudden faintness which had seized her should have