

once, and welcoming you back to its shelter. How can you guess that only a few minutes ago Fanchea's little footsteps were falling on the very pavement where your own feet are treading now, her eyes turned where your eyes are resting, her whispered questions rustling through the echoes of the place?

After kneeling in prayer, giving thanks for he knew not what benediction that he felt to have descended upon him, he passed on through the church. On either side brazen screens of exquisite and fantastic workmanship separated him from innumerable chapels, each a jewelled shrine, the wonders of which it would take a day to explore. The poet's lines on "Maidenhood" floated through his mind as he peered through the mysterious gleaming tracery so light, so beautiful, so strong.

"Bear a lily in thy hand.  
Gates of brass cannot withstand  
One touch of that magic wand."

And again Fanchea rose before his eyes. The gates of brass unlocked, all the treasures of the chapels were laid open to him, and from the deep-blue roof, sown with stars, that hung like a twilight heaven over all, to the altars encrusted with precious stones, and the precious pictures unveiled for his gaze, all was a vision of wealth inexhaustible, and beauty not to be told. Earth and sea had given their richest colors and gems to create bird, butterfly, flower, spray, set in undying brilliance and freshness among the creamy marbles of the altars. Faces of angels with gem-encircled throats looked from the corners, visions of bliss and loveliness unspeakable were revealed to him as the curtain was silently withdrawn from canvas after canvas. Standing in the great choir, before the high altar, he heard the story of crime and repentance that told how the foundations of this palace of religion had been laid in blood and tears, and his heart ached and marvelled at the thought of all the sorrow and evil that go to make and mar the sweetness and the splendors of human life. The forlorn majesty of that great altar, shorn of its sacrifice, the lofty shrine robbed of its Jewel, touched him to the soul, and he knelt at its foot, struggling suddenly and terribly to resign himself to the will of that great Creator who holds the threads of all destinies in His hands, and so often chooses to fill the pure heart full with woe, that the wicked heart may revel in delight.

"Come joy, or come sorrow," was the cry of his will, "let my feet still keep the upward path!" And then a deep and tranquil joy took possession of him. It seemed to him that before this lonely altar his soul had been wedded to some high ideal purity, and he arose and turned away with a paler lip, but with a more steadfast reliance on the law of the Supreme Director of his fate.

Glancing upwards, he was startled to catch the eye of a monk in white garments, who was peering down on him from a small window in a gallery above his head, as if silently and secretly witnessing the compact that the stranger had made with his God. A second and more attentive look discovered to him that it was only the picture of a Carthusian, a cunning fresco, the whim of a painter, who had placed this monk on guard, never to be released from his watch till the walls of the Certosa shall have crumbled into dust.

Having visited the refectory, sacristies, lavatory, chapter room, and other parts of the monastery, all rich beyond description in marbles, painting, sculpture, Kevin found himself at last treading the great cloister, round which stood the monks' dwellings. Each Carthusian had a little house to himself, four chambers in each, two above and two below, and a sweet little garden, now a wilderness of weeds and flowers, with grapes hanging unplucked from the walls. Here he worked at the particular trade or industry cultivated by him, tended his vine, his bees, his flowers, taught the birds to feed from his hand, and meditated on death and eternity. All was now empty, silent, deserted. As Kevin stood with folded arms at the window, looking down into the neglected garden, the secret

of the lives of such men as those who had dwelt here seemed made known to him. Overpowered with affliction, crushed by the loss of someone too dearly loved, he imagined the sick heart turning away from a world that could not comfort it, and finding here peace, toiling for the good of others in silent self-effacement, praying, dreaming, with eyes fixed beyond the grave, caring only for the poor, and taking no natural pleasure except from the flower he coaxed out of the earth at his feet, or the bird he had lured to his window.

"Poor soul!" he thought, "that hid its struggles here. What was the sorrow that drove it into such shelter? Where is it now reaping the reward of its patient toil? How long the time must have seemed! As for me, I would rather take my burden out into the world, and falter and limp with the disabled and the halt: I should want to hear the world's great voice in my ear, even its groans and cries, and coin my own woe into language that might bring assuagement to its pain. Neither the needle nor the loom would content me. I should want to speak, to sing—"

Here a sound like the echo of a soft, rich note of music, just broke the stillness to his ear, as a star will gleam and vanish; and Kevin caught his breath with an impatient sigh, thinking his imagination had deceived him.

"It is the old story," he said, as he listened in vain for a repetition of the sound. "Every note in Nature disturbs me with the echo of her voice. So easily beguiled as I am, how slender is the hope I am clinging to now. Let me take warning, and nerve myself for the perpetual disappointment that awaits me!"

Fan and the Signora had arrived earlier than Kevin, and having explored all the wonders of the monastery, were now lingering about those spots which interested them most. Mamzelle was deeply engaged in studying the meanings of strange paintings in an arched gateway leading from one part of the building to another, while Fan, having left her to her reflections upon the same, was flitting up and down and round the Cloister of the Fountain, breathless with excitement and joy. Standing under the shadow of one part of that arched gateway, she had seen Kevin pass with his guide. He had passed without looking up, but she had easily recognised him. He was on the spot, in the very building. She had only to run after him, call out his name, stretch forth her hands, and end the long separation of years. And yet she hesitated and lingered, possessed by some feeling which she could not understand, which made her hands tremble and her feet refuse to run. She shrank from flying in search of him, from seeing him start in surprise, perhaps perceiving a look of disappointment flash into his eyes at the first sight of her. How did she know that he would not be dissatisfied with the girl, the woman who had now taken the place of his little Fan? She would rather see him coming to meet her, prepared to behold her, getting a glimpse of her in the distance, and then seeking her of his own accord. Without having shaped such a feeling into thought, she acted upon it, and flinging herself upon the low wall of the cloister, looking into the garden, and supporting herself by an arm twined round one of those exquisite pillars that support the arches of lovely terracotta work, she opened her lips, uttering a few rich, sweet notes, like the beginning of a blackbird's song.

"He said he should know me by my voice," she thought. "Now, if his memory be so good, he will come."

Then she paused to gather courage and breath for a louder, longer song, a fuller, clearer message to the friend she was going to summon to her side, and in a few minutes the "Hymn of the Virgin Triumphant" broke the solemn stillness, rang through the ancient cloister, and floated with all its tender supplication, its quaint, wild grandeur, away through the old, startled passages, and across echoing walls, till it fell mysteriously, pathetically, urgently, like a call from Heaven, upon the ear for which its message was intended.