

At the first notes of the hymn Kevin gazed at the old monk who had just reappeared beside him, and the monk gazed back at his companion with a slight pallor on his withered cheek.

"What is that music?" asked Kevin, scarcely daring to credit the evidence of his own senses.

"I cannot say," said the monk, with a happy smile flitting over his grave countenance; "but I have often at night heard heavenly music resounding through these ancient walls. Many saints have lived and died here, signor, and it would not be wonderful if sometimes the angelic choirs should descend to praise God in this now silent and deserted shrine. But I have never before heard them in the daytime."

"That is no angel's voice," replied Kevin, "unless, indeed, a woman may be an angel."

And with these words, which rather shocked the good old monk, he dashed away and left him.

As he hurried along the quadrangle, and threaded the passages that led to the Cloister of the Fountain, the psalm of Killeevy, the hymn of his native mountains, swelled fuller and clearer on his ear, and beat more urgently on his heart. He followed the sound, and, guided by it, drew nearer every moment to the singer.

"Ah," he thought, "what bewitchment is this!" remembering the night when the same voice, the same strain, waking him out of his sleep, had hurried him out into the midnight streets of London, only to fade away as he pursued it, and to lose itself in the noises of the thoroughfare. "Am I waking or sleeping? Has an angel, indeed, descended out of the heavens to mock me?"

But the voice did not grow fainter as he proceeded; on the contrary, it swelled richer, fuller, more soft and sweet, and following it he entered the Cloister of the Fountain—a delicious, dreamy spot, a tangled garden where tall plants and flowers grew in wild luxuriance, in the centre the wide, white marble basin of a fountain, its carved urn crowned with the blossoms of the cactus. Here and there a straight, reed-like plant, covered with bloom, shot high above the rest, and caught the broad sunlight that fell full upon this wilderness of beauty and the same sunshine dyed to a richer coral-color the sculptured arches of terracotta upon their light pilasters, which, springing from a low wall around the garden, formed the shady red-roofed alleys of the cloister.

With one hasty glance Kevin took in the entire scene: the wild, green garden, the light, fairy cloisters, with their coral glow, and high above, soaring in the clouds, the wonderful cupola, circling upwards with its airy galleries and spires and its delicate varieties of tint. But the voice he pursued did not come up out of the fountain, nor did it descend from the heavens. It was coming from a slight dark figure leaning over the wall in a nook by one of the pillars, the head and shoulders in the light, the dark draperies flowing back into the shade, a young, upturned face, with wide, arch blue eyes, and a cloud of soft curls over the forehead, a fair and rosy face, as sweet, as saucy, almost as childlike as the face that had vanished from his home one night, and which he had been longing for and dreaming of ever since. It was not Elsa, it was not Francesca, but it was the very little Fan lost from Killeevy Mountain long ago.

With a slight spring she came to meet him, flying with outstretched hands, and was caught in his arms.

"Oh, Fan!"

"Oh, Kevin! is it you? Is it really true?" Weeping, laughing, stammering, clasping and unclasping hands, they knew not how the first minutes passed over their heads.

"My darling, my Fanchea, you are exactly the same: but with what a difference! Half a yard more height, and all these black gauzes; but that is not it all. What the half-blown rose is to the bud, that is what you are to the little one of my memory. And, oh, my darling, how beautiful, how lovely you have grown!"

"Have I?" said Fanchea, delighted; "I was afraid I might not be nice enough to please you. And, oh, Kevin, do you know how changed you are? If I had

not caught a glimpse of you and been able to piece you together, and make you out to be really Kevin, I should have been afraid to introduce myself to so elegant a gentleman."

"You saw me, then, before to-day—lately?"

"I saw you in the cathedral; and you passed me in the cloisters a little time ago."

"You let me go past; you did not speak to me!"

"I had to get up my courage. I think I never could have spoken to you, except by singing. I thought, 'he will remember my voice,' and I sang our hymn. I knew if you were within hearing it would bring you to me."

"Had I been dead, it would have called me out of the grave," said Kevin, and then broke into further extravagances which it is unnecessary to record.

And then, walking up and down the old cloister, hand in hand, like a pair of strayed children, who had lost each other in a wood, been frightened at the loneliness, and found each other before the night came on, they told each other their separate stories, of all that had befallen them during the passing of those eight eventful years. After that they were on the island again together, with the sea rolling in their ears and the white birds circling above their heads. Fan forgot that she had sung upon a stage, and Kevin that he had given poems to the world. They were boy and girl again, on the rocks, amid the sea-foam, with Nature's inimitable music ringing in their ears and in their souls; till the sun began to burn redder on the cloister roof, and Mamzelle came from out of the shadows somewhere, in search of her charge.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—CONCLUSION.

"So this is you, sir!" said Lord Wilderspin, glaring at Kevin. "You are the Kevin who has been keeping us all in fear, holding a sword over our heads for the last seven years, obliging us to resort to dark plots and heartless advertisements lest our little *prima donna* should be snatched out of our fingers. And here you come, confound you, just in time to destroy all our prospects."

"I am delighted to hear I gave you so much trouble," said Kevin, smiling. "It would hardly have been fair if the pain had been all on my side."

"Impertinent rascal. You are as saucy as the minx herself. Hallo, Fan, this fellow will beat you."

"My lord," said Fan, gravely, "I have promised Herr Harfenspieler and Mamzelle. Kevin and I have resolved that I must not disappoint you. I will keep the engagement that you made for me."

"You shall do no such thing, you monkey. Those two old people will have to be put in prison! I tell you you are as free as air, and shall do only what you please. As for me, I am not the least disappointed. I have known for a long time that you were only a wild bird fit for a hedge, that you would never do to sing in a cage. Now, I have already bought a hedge for you in your own country, and you can fly off and sing in it as soon as you like!"

"I don't know what you mean, sir," said Fan, coloring.

"I mean that I have looked on you as my own child, that is all. Every bird needs a bit of green sod to sing on, and I have bought you a little bit of territory of your own, in the neighborhood of your beloved Killeevy. Mind you have a room always ready for me, for I mean to pay you visits."

"Lord Wilderspin," said Kevin, "we cannot accept so much. You have already been only too generous to Fanchea. We can never forget—"

"Hold your tongue, sir, and go on writing your poetry, which by the way is extraordinarily good. I tell you this girl has been my daughter for seven years, and you not only come and dare to come and take her from me, but you presume to dictate to me as to what I am to do for her. If you do not like her with the fortune I choose to give her, you can go and seek a wife somewhere else."

So that night when "Lohengrin" was performed at Milan saw Fanchea's first and last appearance upon