

into a golden vapour round that childish figure, and illumined it with a radiation of concealed light. But having thus spoken, Manuel turned and went on once more,—and faithfully, in a mental ravishment which to himself was inexplicable, the venerable Felix followed. And presently they came to the plain and uncomely wooden edifice where Aubrey Leigh and his bride had plighted their vows that morning. The door was open—Aubrey would always have it so, lest any poor suffering creature might need a moment's rest, and resting thankfully, might see the Cross and perchance find help in prayer.

"Do you remember," said Manuel then, "when you found me outside the great Cathedral, how the doors were barred against me? This door is always open!"

He entered the building, and the Cardinal followed, wondering and deeply agitated. It should have been dark within, but instead of darkness, a soft light pervaded it from end to end,—a warm and delicate radiance, coloured with a rose glory as of sunset—and Bonpré seeing this stopped, seized with a sudden fear. He looked about him—on either side the huge unadorned barn-like place was empty,—he and Manuel stood alone together as it were in the cold vast void. Before them towered the Cross on its raised platform,—and below that Cross was the sloping footway leading to it, where lay many of the buds and leaves and blossoms of Sylvie's bridal flowers given to her by the poor; and yet—in this empty desolate shed there was a sense of warmth and consolation, and the light that illumined it was as the light of Heaven! Trembling in every limb, the Cardinal turned to his companion—words were on his lips, but they faltered and refused to be spoken aloud. And Manuel gently touching him said—

"Follow me!"

Straight up through the centre of this place, hallowed by the prayers of the poor and the broken-hearted, the light child-figure moved, the old man following,—till at the footway leading to the Cross he paused.

"Here will we pray together!" he said,—and as he spoke a smile lighted his eyes and rested on his lips—a smile which