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time when the fame of his eloquence and the sweetness of his character had brought him to an almost unequalled position of influence and power in the religious life of the metropolis, he had worked humbly but strenuously in the interests of the poor ; and when at last the high temporal reward of his labours was offered to him, the astonishment of his colleagues was unbounded at the announcement that he had declined the dignity and was retiring from active work.

Soon after his retirement he had visited Egypt, and, while staying at Luxor, had acquired the plot of ground upon which he presently built his little settlement ; and now he was residing here, for the third winter in succession, at the foot of the immemorial hills of Thebes, aloof from the affairs of man, his mind immersed in a calm and serene contemplation, and his inward eyes looking with quiet gaze towards that horizon of hope whence should come the salvation of the world.

Four or five men usually lived with him in this retreat : some of them archæologists whose work lay amongst the adjacent ruins of the ancient necropolis, and others painters or men engaged upon some piece of literary or scientific work which necessitated quiet study. And upon the minds of this company of thoughtful men the ascetic figure of Father Gregory exercised an unconscious and yet commanding influence, bringing an atmosphere of contentment and calm into their daily affairs, and at the same time stimulating them in their work by the magnetism of his personality.

Crossing the courtyard, he now entered his simple bedroom and sat himself down in the wicker arm-chair to rest. The walls of the room were whitewashed and unadorned by pictures ; the floor was covered by rough grass matting ; the furniture was of the simplest ; but upon the table and the