

ingly allude to them: the world has worshipped before them; Byron has given us the poetry of their awakened thought, and they have been catalogued in prose by no lesser pen than Shelley's.

But Santa Croce, what of it? Italy, richer in her dead than in aught she possesses instinct with life, has, within these walls, garnered up her best mental harvest: here sleep Michael Angelo, and Machiavelli, and Alfieri, and Boccaccio; and here is the cenotaph of Dante, to whom Florence was, as he wrote himself, *Parvi mater amoris*. We roamed from chapel to chapel of this glorious place; if the architecture one day attracted us, there were the noble recollections for another. Then came the most illustrious monuments; then the humbler epitaphs. Of these last, only one has been fixed on my memory. I have since learned it is very well known; it was erected over a young girl, and bore this inscription:

"ELISE DE L.—

Ne me plaignez pas, si vous saviez combien de peines ce tombeau m'a épargnées."

As if affection still lived within that tomb, and even thence sent forth its voice of comfort to the living!

Harley yet cherished the idea that he was destined soon to meet with the lovely apparition that had so strangely filled his mind. It was a portion of his philosophy that the heart possesses in itself a prophetic wisdom, if men would only allow out its secret impulses; and he certainly showed his own perfect conviction of the truth of this assertion, by building largely upon it, and becoming cheerful under what I could not help pronouncing a mere delusion. I humoured him in it however. I do not know that those friends deserve any gratitude who labour to destroy the harmless imaginings which bring us pleasure; dreams they may be, and fond ones, but if they beguile the time of our sojourn, why awaken us from them to life's sad realities?—they are visitants from another world, and yet, in their kindness, our friends would have us exchange them for the more certain deceptions of this.

English families we could find in abundance; but we did not mix much with them. Harley's object could be as easily accomplished in the public promenades; and once or twice going to the country *fêtes* of the duke, gave us a correct knowledge of what English were in the place. Besides we were so much occupied with our own plans, that we had no time to throw away on the cultivation of our countrymen's acquaintance.

We were one day at our old haunt, the cathedral: it was thronged with people; mass was going on at one of the altars; and a small circle of worshippers were assembled in that quarter; in another a group of mendicants were soliciting alms; in another were visitors, come like ourselves to loiter and gaze. We passed them all; many of the last were from our own land, as we could easily tell from their manners and the ends of their whisperings, gathered up as we walked by; but they were strangers to us, and we passed on.

We crossed by the altar where the white-robed priest was officiating; the tall candles burned dimly in the rich glare of day; the worshippers were absorbed in adoration, and paid no attention to the noise of our footsteps. Leaving them, we came to the aisle where were the tomb and epitaph I have before mentioned; I do not know what drew us there beyond the interest those simple words created. Harley's imaginative mind had formed some pathetic story of a maiden, the joy of her parents and the pride of some one dearer to her than both, taken from the arms of love, and brought down suddenly to darkness and the worm: this gave him sufficient reason for wishing to see it again, and his eloquent fancy even stirred my matter-of-fact disposition. And it is a touching truth, that in strange places the passing visitor never overlooks the houses of the dead; his heart naturally claims a brotherhood with those dreamless sleepers; its warmest feelings are entirely theirs, even when it must, of necessity, be closed against the unloving that are around it and alive.

The strong sunlight was flung across the aisle in slanting radiance, and the living glory poured itself down upon that low grave, as if marking out a pathway to the heavens for the young immortal. In the column of light thus let down,

danced a thousand gay motes, whose increasing activity contrasted strangely with the stillness of the place, and its quiet occupiers. There was an old man there; he had been endeavouring with failing eyes slowly to decipher the inscription for a fair girl who stood near him, but turned away from us. The scene was a striking one, and fixed us breathless to where we stood. The old man's task was done; he had been reciting the last words as we drew near, and rising from his stooping position, he took his hat from the marble floor where it had been lying, and advanced to his young companion. They had not heard our approach; for, evidently unconscious of the presence of strangers, he now, in a low and broken voice, said something to her the purport of which we could not catch.

The answer was in English, and thrilled us from very sweetness—

"And yet, father," she replied, "is it not well with them that die young? The early-called—who that loved them would bring them back again?"

She turned in her fine enthusiasm. The light playing about her person made her almost "too bright to look upon," and cast round a face in which sadness and beauty were deeply blent together, that halo which painters fling over the heads of the Virgin and the saints. Poor Harley, who had been before fascinated with the lovely picture, almost leaped from the ground where he had been fastened; for there before him was the cause of all his perplexity and sorrow—there stood the mysterious Unknown of the opera.

Fortunately for us, we were placed beneath the protection of one of the side-arches, and the sunbeam which so plainly revealed to us this interesting group, placed us at the same time in deep shadow with respect to them. It was impossible for them to see us distinctly, yet they were now aware that listeners had been by for some time. I saw the moment called for decision; the old man with wrinkled brow, looked haughtily in our quarter, to re-prehend and repel our intrusion. In a deep whisper to Harley I besought him to recollect himself, while I went forward to offer our apologies. Was not that face known to me? Yet, if it were he, he was greatly altered. I came nearer. It could be no other. It was he—the friend who had watched over my orphanage in India, Colonel Montagu.

He recognized me at once.

"What! young T—, how came you here; enjoying Madam Fortune's kindness, eh? Boys think they never can get liberty enough. But, John, I am delighted to see the son of my old dear friend; how long are you from England?"

I replied, asking a thousand pardons for Harley and myself, on account of our unintentional eaves-dropping, and wound all up by saying, "I was now only happy that it had so happened: rudeness for once was rewarded, not punished."

"No apologies—no apologies, boy. Do you not recollect your old friend, Emily—or shall I have to introduce you again? Here, love, is an old acquaintance of yours, Mr. T—, now of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-law, and so forth."

She had not forgotten, and received me kindly and affectionately. We had romped together in childhood, and during my sojourn under the colonel's roof had felt for each other as brother and sister. From the time that my uncle placed me at school, and thence moved me to Cambridge, we had not met, though I had occasionally seen her father in the interval. I never learned, until this kind friend had long been in the grave, his reasons for keeping aloof from me at that time; it was lest he should move my uncle's jealousy, and thence mar my prospects. Relatives not over kind themselves are peculiarly sensitive of that goodness coming from other quarters wherein they are themselves deficient.

We had not met for nine or ten years. I found every early promise of beauty amply fulfilled; she had grown to lovely womanhood. Perhaps, taking those features separately, you might bring to mind many to excel her in each—some to outshine her in dazzling beauty of face—some to possess more exact symmetry of form; but, taking her all in all, such a union of happy qualities and rare loveliness, such an elegant mind inhabiting a temple worthy of its reception, and such