

THE JOURNEY BACK

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white dust the carriage rolled onwards between vineyards in which, here and there, labourers were working, sheltered from the sun by immense straw hats. A long line of waggons, laden with barrels and drawn by mules covered with bells and sheltered from the flies by leaves, met them. In the distance Domini saw forests of eucalyptus trees. Suddenly it seemed to her as if she saw Androvsky coming from them towards the white road, helping a man who was pale, and who stumbled as if half-fainting, yet whose face was full of a fierce passion of joy—the stranger whose influence had driven him out of the monastery into the world. She bent down her head and hid her face in her hands, praying, praying with all her strength for courage in this supreme moment of her life. But almost directly the prayers died on her lips and in her heart, and she found herself repeating the words of *The Imitation*:—

"Love watcheth, and sleeping, slumbereth not. When weary it is not tired; when straitened it is not constrained; when frightened it is not disturbed; but like a vivid flame and a burning torch it mounteth upwards and securely passeth through all. Whosoever loveth knoweth the cry of this voice."

Again and again she said the words: "It securely passeth through all—it securely passeth through all." Now, at last, she was to know the uttermost truth of those words which she had loved in her happiness, which she clung to now as a little child clings to its father's hand.

The carriage turned to the right, went on a little way, then stopped.

Domini lifted her face from her hands. She saw before her a great door which stood open. Above it was a statue of the Madonna and Child, and on either side were two angels with swords and stars. Underneath was written, in great letters,—

JANUA COELI.

Beyond, through the doorway, she saw an open space upon which the sunlight streamed, three palm trees, and a second door which was shut. Above this second door was written,—

"Les dames n'entrent pas ici."

As she looked the figure of a very old monk with a long white