

other under cover of the book which Lettice held, and their hearts seemed to beat in unison as the joyous choral music pealed out across the hall—

“Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
Tochter aus Elysium,  
Wir betreten feuertrunken,  
Himmliche, dein Heiligthum,  
Deine Zauber binden wieder,  
Was die Mode streng getheilt;  
Alle Menschen werden Bruder,  
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.”

“I feel,” said Alan, as they lingered for a moment in the dimness of the gallery when the symphony was over, and the crowd was slowly filing out into Regent Street and Piccadilly, “I feel as if that hymn of joy were the prelude to some new and happier life.”

And Lettice smiled in answer, but a little sadly, for she saw no happier life before them but one, which must be reached through tortuous courses of perplexity and pain.

The dream of joy had culminated in that brief, impulsive, unconscious transmigration of soul and soul; but with the cessation of the music it dissolved again. The realities of their condition began to crowd upon them as they left the hall. But the disillusion came gradually. They still knew and felt that they were supremely happy; and as they waited for the cab, into which Alan insisted on putting her, she looked at him with a bright and grateful smile.

“I am so glad I saw you. It has been perfect,” she said.

He had made her take his arm—more for the sake of closer contact than for any necessity of the crowd—and he pressed it as she spoke.

“It is not quite over yet,” he said. “Let me take you home.”

“Thank you, no. Not to-day, Alan. See, there is an empty hansom.”

He did not gainsay her, but helped her carefully into the cab, and, when she was seated, leaned forward to clasp her hand and speak a parting word. But it was not yet spoken when, with a sharp cry, Lettice started and cast herself in front of him, as though to protect him from a danger which he could not see.