

Cuddling his arm closer, she answered teasingly, "Who ever heard of such arrant nonsense! You know full well that you would not destroy one musty feather, or deprive a reptile of a dried varnished scale, for a dozen daughters."

They had been moving steadily along the wide approach to the church with the eager crowds, and were at last ascending the steps leading to the massive doors. How lightly their hearts beat, and how little each dreamed of the dire events the inexorable Fates would weave into their lives, should they cross the sacred threshold!

In her eagerness to ascend the steps the young girl stumbled. The misstep was noticed by a superstitious *habitant* close behind, who hastily made upon his breast the sign of the cross, and dropped farther behind.

At last the doors were passed, and she stood in the body of the gorgeous edifice. In the bewilderment at the scene which opened before her, she scarcely noticed that the scarlet-clad beadle, who stood near the door with monster crook and imposing mien, had bowed to her father and was leading them down the main aisle to two, fortunately, vacant seats in the nave of the church. Well might her sensitive heart be thrilled. Before her was a sea of upturned faces fixed on the great orchestra and choir high up in the organ-loft, where towered an organ of colossal dimensions. A thousand gleaming candles, mingled with a multitude of subdued electric lights, dazzled her eyes and brought out with startling vividness the brilliant colours on the artistically frescoed walls, on the solemn imposing pillars supporting tiers of vast galleries, on the beautiful resonant dome, on the numerous figured saints, on carven niche and tall pinnacle.