

which I so sedulously burnt at the altar of Her whom alone I served. Would that I had known no other mistress ! It was not to be so !

One day I was out sketching. It was a day bright and sunny, but with a touch of the hot mistral blowing gustily over the indigo-tinted Mediterranean, raising the dust in clouds over the city far below me, but up where I sat only causing a quivering excitement amongst the tiny leaves of the olive trees, turning their dainty dull green to daintier grey--the under tint of the leaf. I had pitched my easel a little way below a bend of the roadway, which here crept along, airily, above a declivity of some two hundred feet, and was sketching a couple of old olive trees between whose trunks I could catch a distant glimpse of the city and sea. A charming "study," charming, perhaps, only in an artistic sense, came slowly up the roadside, *en route* home from the city—an old woman spinning as she walked, short skirted and doubtless dirty, but with a big basket balanced juggler-wise on her head, making a delightful "bit of colouring." By her side, a girl of about eighteen, also busily spinning, carrying at her back a brown-cheeked baby, and wearing on her head, or rather thrown back behind it, the invariable round straw hat which, in that position, always reminded me so strongly of the "nimbus" with which the old masters encircled the heads of their saints that it was only natural to evolve the nimbus from the straw hat. Just before the group vanished behind the turn of the road, a providence, considerate of artists, caused them to come to a halt, and the artistic *pose* they made there gave the very effect my sketch wanted. Rapidly as possible I filled in the group, and was just engaged in the last touches, when my ear, being fortunately at the moment an idle organ, caught the sound of the sweetest and most musical ripple of a laugh I ever heard. I looked up, and at the moment, dashing round the bend of the road, faster far than the steep descent warranted, came one of the delightful low pony carriages which abound in Nice, drawn by a pair of high-spirited little Corsicans. I had only time to see that it contained two ladies, one of whom held the reins, and a man servant behind, when, as fate would have it, just as they passed the group of peasants, a vicious gust of the mistral caught the basket on the head of the elder woman and hurled it with a crash to the ground. A shy ! which swept the slight carriage to the very verge of the precipice, a succession of loud screams, a wild plunge, and in a moment more the ponies would have bolted to certain destruction. Without thinking what I did, I dashed up, caught the reins, and, with all my force, drove the frightened animals down upon their haunches—the ladies were safe !

The excitement of the moment over, the poor beasts themselves seemed to be aware of the peril they had so narrowly escaped, and now stood with quivering flanks and dilated nostrils. For myself, the blood