

was a young chevalier, pure as Galahad. Corthell was a beautiful artist-priest of the early Renaissance. Even Jadwin was a merchant prince, a great financial captain. And she herself—ah, she did not know; she dreamed of another Laura, a better, gentler, more beautiful Laura, whom everybody, everybody loved dearly and tenderly, and who loved everybody, and who should die beautifully, gently, in some garden far away—die because of a great love—beautifully, gently in the midst of flowers, die of a broken heart, and all the world should be sorry for her, and would weep over her when they found her dead and beautiful in her garden, amid the flowers and the birds, in some far-off place, where it was always early morning and where there was soft music. And she was so sorry for herself, and so hurt with the sheer strength of her longing to be good and true, and noble and womanly, that as she sat in the front of the Cresslers' box on that marvellous evening, the tears ran down her cheeks again and again, and dropped upon her tight-shut, white-gloved fingers.

But the contralto had disappeared, and in her place the tenor held the stage—a stout, short young man in red plush doublet and grey silk tights. His chin advanced, an arm extended, one hand pressed to his breast, he apostrophised the pavilion, that now and then swayed a little in the draught from the wings.

The aria was received with furor; thrice he was obliged to repeat it. Even Corthell, who was critical to extremes, approved, nodding his head. Laura and Page clapped their hands till the very last. But Landry Court, to create an impression, assumed a certain disaffection.

"He's not in voice to-night. Too bad. You should have heard him Friday in 'Aida.'"