

life on the battle-fields as a nurse and a doctor. After that—who knows? Such men never *do* anything as history counts doing, but they are the salt of the earth for all that. He courted obscurity and got it at last. A homeless wanderer, long dead in some distant country, no doubt, and—like Moses again—no one knows the place of his grave. But there would be a great shout above, my sons, when that soul was welcomed home.”

There is general silence again, and the grave young faces look down.

“And she . . . she was . . .”

“Yes, she was a martyr also—the greater martyr of the two when you come to think of it. They say the cult of the Blessed Virgin has done more to raise the status of women than any other cause at work since the days of chivalry. I should like to believe it. But look at Italy where our poor sisters used to slave in the fields until their faces had lost the human look. And look at France, where outside Notre Dame, with its incense and guttering candles and pealing organ, its bleeding Christ and its weeping Virgin, there used to be the Morgue with a young girl’s beautiful body lying on the slab. There is one thing raises the status of woman, though, if an old fellow in a cassock tells you so—that’s love. And love was what made *her* a martyr.”

“It made her a genius, too, Monsignor, if that head of the Christ in the fountain was modelled from *his* head.”

“Ah, yes—they were the last of the great lovers.”

This word raises the spirits of the young students, and they begin to laugh and jest again. Meantime the old gentleman at the side table is shuffling in his seat. A waiter approaches him and asks if he is going to see the statue unveiled.

“Whose statue?” he asks, with an obvious effort.

“Why, don’t you know, sir? David Rossi’s. He lived in this house and the statue was found in the cellar.”

The old gentleman rises and quietly goes away. No one sees him go. The merry laughter of the young students follows him into the street, where he is almost borne down by the great concourse that is pressing up to the Piazza Colonna.