

spoke in whispers, their arrival was the signal for certain murmurs of "Sh! Sh!" Mrs. Cressler made Laura occupy the front seat. Jadwin took her cloak from her, and she settled herself in her chair and looked about her. She could see but little of the house or audience. All the lights were lowered; only through the gloom the swaying of a multitude of fans, pale coloured, like night-moths balancing in the twilight, defined itself.

But soon she turned towards the stage. The applause died away, and the contralto once more sang the aria. The melody was simple, the tempo easily followed; it was not a very high order of music. But to Laura it was nothing short of a revelation.

She sat spell-bound, her hands clasped tight, her every faculty of attention at its highest pitch. It was wonderful, such music as that; wonderful, such a voice; wonderful, such orchestration; wonderful, such exaltation inspired by mere beauty of sound. Never, never was this night to be forgotten, this her first night of Grand Opera. All this excitement, this world of perfume, of flowers, of exquisite costumes, of beautiful women, of fine, brave men. She looked back with immense pity to the narrow little life of her native town she had just left forever, the restricted horizon, the petty round of petty duties, the rare and barren pleasures—the library, the festival, the few concerts, the trivial plays. How easy it was to be good and noble when music such as this had become a part of one's life; how desirable was wealth when it could make possible such exquisite happiness as hers of the moment. Nobility, purity, courage, sacrifice seemed much more worth while now than a few moments ago. All things not positively unworthy became heroic, all things and all men. Landry Court