

of cheng, but at last I succeeded in making him promise that I should have a dose of opium on the evening we had appointed to go to Covent Garden theatre to hear Weber's *Oberon*. I well remember the evening. We went through the crowded Gray's Inn Road and Holborn, through Lincoln's Inn Fields, Great Queen street and Bow street, and at last gained the gallery door of the theatre. Numbers of people were already assembled there, and we took our places in the rear rank quietly, and ascended the many flights of stairs without much grumbling. The gallery of Covent Garden is not the most comfortable nor the best ventilated part of the huge theatre, and even without the narcotic I had taken and which now began to operate, I might have been tempted to sleep. As it was I lay back in my seat, closed my eyes, and straightway began to dream half-formed, misshapen dreams that refused to make themselves clear. Presently I heard the sounds of music, and knew that the overture had begun. The music seemed different from the *Oberon* overture that I had known before; it was deeper, clearer as to meaning, yet more mysterious, indefinitely grand with an element of strange weirdness running through it; instead of instruments played by human hands it was the voice of invisible spirits that I heard; gnomes, nixes, kobolds were chanting in concert; huge forms took up the words and repeated them; storms raged through forests of dark pines; distant thunders growled, and Rhines and Danubes flowed boisterously, but all was music, enchanting, subjugating music that I must needs listen to and which moved me profoundly. Now I felt that I was in the land of fays, of mythology, of romance; my nerves, strung to the utmost, responded to every vibration of the notes; my imagination, free to wander, led me roaming through the realm of half-waking dreams

"On paths unknown, to climes unknown."

The overture ceased, but the music in my brain continued. I was the one among thousands of spectators that could hear the real strains and wondrous melodies of which the ordinary overture was but a faint imitation, a lost echo, and while the curtain rose amid the plaudits of the audience, I, falling more and more under the power of the opium, lived more stirring scenes than the mimic ones on the stage. After a time I sat up and looked around the great hall, full from floor to ceiling, and strangely enough it