

Simeon was silent. But over Mary's soul there came an inexplicable change. Perhaps she learned now what she had not known before. But more probably it only came to her then in another way. Yet it was a change, an operation of grace, a new sanctification, an immense work of God. A clear and detailed vision of all her sorrows, especially of the whole Passion, was with its minutest circumstance instantaneously impressed upon her soul ; and her immaculate heart was deluged with a sea of sorrow, which was supernatural both in its kind and its intensity. It seemed as if the vision came from the very face of Jesus, as if He looked it into her and engraved it there. She saw His own Heart all unveiled, with all its inward dispositions. It was as if the Incarnation had come upon her again, and in a different way. She was raised to fresh heights of holiness. She entered upon another vast region of her appanage as the Mother of God. She was the same Mary and yet a different one, who but awhile ago had entered the temple. But there was no surprise with this portentous change. No starting, no weak tremor, no fluttering of the spirit. Her unshaken peace grew more peaceful because of the world of bitterness that had gown down into it. The light of the Word had flashed up on high in Simeon's arms, in Simeon's song, and there followed darkness, deeper, thicker, more palpable than that of Egypt. Suddenly, out of the sunshine of Bethlehem, she found herself in the heart of the eclipse on Calvary ; and she was calm as before, with unastonished dignity, with the tranquility of unutterable love, with the strength of divinest union, and with the sword right through her broken heart, which should remain there for eight-and-forty years, and then when Jesus should draw it out of the wound, she would bleed to death with love.

She heard Anna come into the temple, and acknowledge Jesus as her God. She heard the words the aged prophetess spoke about Him to those there who "looked for the redemption of Israel." She was careful that the least things which the law ordained should be obediently fulfilled ; and then, with Joseph and the Child she wended her way back to the green hollow of Galilee, to the steep sloping streets of the sequestered Nazareth,