

THE MISSION of MARIA ANNUNCIATA



I

Maria Annunciata lived in one of the most crowded quarters of densely populated New York. There the children of sunny Italy had gathered in tenements that were veritable human hives, where the pitiless sun of summer beat down on scorching pavements, and the smells and the sights and the sounds, the everlasting din of traffic, must have been distraction to those who came, perhaps, from those lovely mountain districts, high up amongst the Sabine or the Umbrian hills, or the shore of some tranquil lake.

In these sordid and fetid surroundings, Maria Annunciata had grown to woman hood, though she had been brought thither somewhere about the age of twelve, from a charming little village, on the slopes of the Apennines. By one of those ineffaceable impressions, that engrave themselves so deeply on the mind of a child, she remembered having seen Rome, and its wondrous churches. Her grandmother had brought her there on a pilgrimage, to pray at the tomb of the Apostles and to see the Holy Father. The whole had seemed to the simple and fervent soul of the child like heaven.

Her grandame, had been some years dead, and as Maria firmly believed, in Paradise. Often when she stood at the door of that tenement, on the fifth floor of which she lived, and looked up earnestly at the glowing western

sky,
wha
upon
orpha

Th
out t
far fr
and a

Ma
stepn
her fi
good
But a
her, v
Holy
Com

fallin
grand
thron
sence
peopl
smile
upon
own.
some
blesse
with
that c
influe
influe

So,
as it i
it her
and f
such
and a
trying
Pope

And
by ta
great