

way. With outspread wings and weariless feet, he parted the air and sped downwards towards the earth. And as he went, he thought joyously of the exceeding beauty of heaven, and he tried to imagine the dimness and darkness which disfigured the world to which he was sent; and he felt a gladness in his heart that he was sent, not like the Angel of Righteousness to smite men for their wrongdoings, not like the Angel of Discipline to educate them through pain, but to spread before their eyes visions of beauty which thrilled his heart, and to revive in them the love of what was fair, and the joy of beholding it. Nearer he came to the dull and smoky atmosphere and heavy air of the lower world; nearer, till he heard all around him the soft, sharp sound of the dropping rain, and the sad and restless rustling of the forest leaves; but clear and low, heard among all the sounds which greeted his ears, he heard the Voice which sent him forth on his errand: "Go to the dimness of the world, and brighten the lot of the darkened with the beauty of the Eternal." And as the darkness of the world gathered round, deepening as he descended, and the saddened and saddening sounds of earth snote upon his ears, the angel's heart was filled with a deep pity which longed to fulfil the Eternal's command, and brighten the lot of the darkened with the beauty of the Eternal. And as he set his foot upon the earth, the angel bowed his head in mingled reverence and compassion, and, speaking low as to himself and to God, he said, "God help me to bring the light of eternal beauty into the midst of this darkness. God helping me, I will."

## CHAPTER I.

EVERY day the artist might be seen at work. In the great open square of the town he worked. The great square was large enough for many poor people to carry on their open-air trade without hindering the general business of the town. All the townfolk were proud of the great square. It was the largest (so they said) of any city square in the kingdom. Nobody objected to the little stalls set up by the poor or the country people in the corners of the streets which opened upon the square, or in the angles of the steps which led to the public buildings which surrounded and adorned the large square. Nobody objected to the miniature booths and movable stalls, where flowers, and fruits, and carved ornaments and toys were sold; indeed, they lent a picturesqueness to the scene, and gave the sense of

freshness, and brought back the memory of country life to the toilers of the town. So they were of use also. The tired and thirsty men, as they came out of the Law Courts or Town Hall, would stop and buy some fruit to refresh themselves as they hurried across the hot and sunlit open square. From the flower stalls, bright bouquets were bought by those who, ascending the great cathedral steps, wished to brighten with their little offering the house of prayer. And now in the square, among the fruit-sellers and basket-makers, the artist was seen at work. Openly before the eye of the world he set up his easel and painted his pictures; his quiet and serene face showed no sign of emotion as the critics of the crowd passed their judgment upon his work, or his mode of handling his brush, or upon his distribution of color. He was the artist of the Green, for so the great paved square with its pathetic back look at its earlier days was called, and as the artist of the Green he must be prepared for the outspoken opinions of the candid critics; and as he sat and painted there day after day he heard many opinions, and he seemed insensible to all. There were two things about him which after a time struck the people who noticed him. One was the quiet and unruffled demeanor amid the strange and reckless criticisms of the crowd. He painted as a man who had made up his mind, and whom no words could move from the pathway he had resolved to tread. The other thing they noticed was his occasional absence. I have said that he painted in the Green every day. This was not literally true. Every now and then his place was empty for a day. After these absences he would return to work as a matter of course. He spoke but little, and he never attempted to explain why he had been away. Those who thought at all on the matter supposed that he had been into the country to glean inspiration from blue skies and green fields. Certainly his pictures possessed finer and clearer qualities when he returned to work. But as yet none had seriously noted his pictures at all; they were gazed at and chatted about by the crowd, who were not slow in delivering their judgment, but none of the established artists of the town had paid attention to his work. If they had seen him at all, they had glanced with a sort of contemptuous surprise at the tall and fine-featured man who was "degrading art" by working in public, and who could not be a man of note and power, for he did not belong to

any of the art institutes of the town or of the kingdom. Perhaps the contempt of the professional men was increased when they discovered that the newcomer did not confine his efforts to painting. There were days when he might be seen hewing shapeless stones into forms of beauty; and when he wrought with his chisel there was something like the imperious energy of inspiration in the way he worked. The chips and fragments fell on the pavement like flakes of snow; with wondrous rapidity features of strength and forms of loveliness seemed to grow beneath his hand. Slowly this interest in his work spread through the town; the dull curiosity of the ignorant was followed by the intelligent appreciation of that large body of people, to be found in every place, who, though not, perhaps, to be reckoned among the cultured classes, are yet profoundly responsive to all that appeals to the heart; and it was to the heart that the new worker made his silent appeal. The people that stood by could not have explained their own emotions, but the silence which at times fell upon them told that some deep feelings were roused. Many a poor woman, climbing the steps of the great church, would come to a stop, and, drawing her child instinctively closer to herself, would stand gazing upon the figures, on the artist's canvas, and, after awhile, gentle tears would gather in her eyes, as though some long-suppressed trouble had been drawn from the heart, and had found relief in finding expression and, with a hand that clasped more closely the child hand in hers, she would pass onward to her quiet prayer under the dome of the great cathedral. Strong men would look on with hard and careworn faces, and in spite of themselves the lines on their faces would soften as they followed the rapid hand of the artist, and perceived some meaning in his work. He painted simple things—a flower, a child, a mother with her firstborn on her knee, a strong man toiling in the field, or in the workshop; he carved fair forms of innocence and eager figures of supple strength, and figures of heroic patience and unvanquished purity; and his works had a power over the hearts of men. Men would go to their homes and look with such an unwonted and wistful tenderness at their wives that the poor women, missing rough words or rough handling, feared that their husbands were ill. Many a poor woman who had lived in dread of her husband's return, and who had been accustomed to hurry her children to bed or out of their