

"Look merry," she would bid me, or "look sad, go and make that old miser abuse you well, and then the lady following him will be sure to give you a trifle."

In the summer we used to sit on the withered grass of the Piazza, and sing together. Since I went about with Pallidina, I was no longer unhappy.

We never missed a service or a musical mass. The beautiful dresses worn by the priest, the flowers on the altar, the chanting, the organ, the incense, the kneeling crowd, the great tapers that twinkled like stars, all these were a delight to us. Sometimes, too, we went up close to the theatre, to listen to the music.

"Which do you like best?" Pallidina would ask me, "the Opera or the music in the Duomo?"

To which I answered that I liked the church music best, but that perhaps that was because the operas sounded so faint heard from the street. Pallidina, however, preferred the organ and church chants, because they were meant for the good God, and declared that, all lighted up of an evening, the church was like Paradise; and no wonder, since it was the road thither.

As we had followed strangers and the cicerone about the Duomo times without number, we knew all the pictures quite well.

"That Virgin is by Andrea del Sarto—look, Momo, how beautiful. The pulpit in the Battistero is by Nicolo Pisani. You know there is a portrait of Nicolo Pisani in the Campo Santo."

"So you have told me," &c.

We were also well up—but more especially Pallidina—in all the lions of the place: knew the history of Ugolino and Archbishop Ruggiero; knew, too, about Republican Pisa, and that it had been a seaport; and when we walked through the Duomo, my sister would point out the old lamp that hung in the great nave, and say:

"Don't forget, Momo, that that was what first made Galileo think of the pendulum."

"What! was he a clock-maker?"

"No—he was an astronomer."

"Are there pendulums in the stars, then?"

"No, no! how silly you are. I don't know rightly how to explain it, but I will ask Signor Carlino, the cicerone, the next time I meet him alone and he seems in a good humour." In this way Pallidina used to keep my mind awake, and with her aid I learnt more than any one would have imagined.

I remember once saying to her, "After all, it's very unjust that some should be rich and some poor."

"There must be all kinds," she replied; "you see, some are pretty and some ugly,

some sick and some well. And, after all, it is no great hardship to beg; it's a hundred times worse to be rich and wicked. I once heard Monsignore the Bishop say a thing I have never forgotten—that it is harder for a rich man to get to heaven than for a camel to go through a needle's eye."

That, however, was too much for me, and I exclaimed, that he could not have meant a camel like those belonging to the dairy farms, that brought milk on their backs every morning into the town.

"Yes, but it was one of those very camels," she affirmed.

"In that case," I argued, "there can be nothing but poor people in Paradise. How will they contrive to live there?"

"No fear, mio caro, I am quite sure that those who have bestowed charity upon us with all their hearts will be there, and those pretty ladies, too, who put their hands, all sparkling with rings, before their faces to hide their tears—oh, how often I have seen that! . . ."

"What, you have seen ladies in silk dresses crying?"

"And in velvet dresses and in pink bonnets, too, and their carriages were waiting for them at the church door."

"Somebody must have been dead at home," I replied.

"Certainly not, Momo, for they were not in mourning. I tell you that they had pink bonnets."

"They must have been ill, then."

"No, they had their sorrows."

"What sorrows can people who want nothing have, Pallidina?"

"Dear Momo, it seems that in this world, when people think you have got everything, there is always something or other wanting. So, you see, the good God is just, since He sends rich people such sorrows that all their smart dresses and their fine palaces, and their servants, and their carriages, cannot comfort them."

It must be a wonderful sorrow, indeed, I reflected, that would have made me cry in a beautiful carriage, and wearing a gold chain and gold watch! I thought that it was so just and right of God to afflict the rich, that I actually thanked Him for it mentally!

From that time I was less unhappy, and in church I liked to creep near the ladies who were the most beautifully dressed, and if I saw them shed tears, I thought to myself, "Nina is right; their troubles must be greater than ours," and I used to feel sorry for them.

Another of our pleasures in church was to touch the different textures worn by them—satin, velvet, furs—and sometimes to feel with