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Содержание

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BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps;
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring

lamps:
His day is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
"As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace shall deal;
Let this Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel,
Since God is marching on."

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat:
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

AGNES OF SORRENTO

CHAPTER XX

FLORENCE AND HER PROPHET

It was drawing towards evening, as two travellers, approaching Florence from the south, checked their course on the summit of one of the circle of hills which command a view of the city, and seemed to look down upon it with admiration. One of these was our old friend Father Antonio, and the other the Cavalier. The former was mounted on an ambling mule, whose easy pace suited well with his meditative habits; while the other reined in a high-mettled steed, who, though now somewhat jaded under the fatigue of a long journey, showed by a series of little lively motions of his ears and tail, and by pawing the ground impatiently, that he had the inexhaustible stock of spirits which goes with good blood.

"There she lies, my Florence," said the monk, stretching his hands out with enthusiasm. "Is she not indeed a sheltered lily growing fair among the hollows of the mountains? Little she may be, Sir, compared to old Rome; but every inch of her is a gem,

—every inch!"

And, in truth, the scene was worthy of the artist's enthusiasm. All the overhanging hills that encircle the city with their silvery olive-gardens and their pearl-white villas were now lighted up with evening glory. The old gray walls of the convents of San Miniato and the Monte Oliveto were touched with yellow; and even the black obelisks of the cypresses in their cemeteries had here and there streaks and dots of gold, fluttering like bright birds among their gloomy branches. The distant snow-peaks of the Apennines, which even in spring long wear their icy mantles, were shimmering and changing like an opal ring with tints of violet, green, blue, and rose, blended in inexpressible softness by that dreamy haze which forms the peculiar feature of Italian skies.

In this loving embrace of mountains lay the city, divided by the Arno as by a line of rosy crystal barred by the graceful arches of its bridges. Amid the crowd of palaces and spires and towers rose central and conspicuous the great Duomo, just crowned with that magnificent dome which was then considered a novelty and a marvel in architecture, and which Michel Angelo looked longingly back upon when he was going to Rome to build that more wondrous orb of Saint Peter's. White and stately by its side shot up the airy shaft of the Campanile; and the violet vapor swathing the whole city in a tender indistinctness, these two striking objects, rising by their magnitude far above it, seemed to stand alone in a sort of airy grandeur.

And now the bells of the churches were sounding the Ave Maria, filling the air with sweet and solemn vibrations, as if angels were passing to and fro overhead, harping as they went; and ever and anon the great bell of the Campanile came pulsing in with a throb of sound of a quality so different that one hushed one's breath to hear. It might be fancied to be the voice of one of those kingly archangels that one sees drawn by the old Florentine religious artists,—a voice grave and unearthly, and with a plaintive undertone of divine mystery.

The monk and the cavalier bent low in their saddles, and seemed to join devoutly in the worship of the hour.

One need not wonder at the enthusiasm of the returning pilgrim of those days for the city of his love, who feels the charm that lingers around that beautiful place even in modern times. Never was there a spot to which the heart could insensibly grow with a more home-like affection,—never one more thoroughly consecrated in every stone by the sacred touch of genius.

A republic, in the midst of contending elements, the history of Florence, in the Middle Ages, was a history of what shoots and blossoms the Italian nature might send forth, when rooted in the rich soil of liberty. It was a city of poets and artists. Its statesmen, its merchants, its common artisans, and the very monks in its convents, were all pervaded by one spirit. The men of Florence in its best days were men of a large, grave, earnest mould. What the Puritans of New England wrought out with severest earnestness in their reasonings and their lives these early

Puritans of Italy embodied in poetry, sculpture, and painting. They built their Cathedral and their Campanile, as the Jews of old built their Temple, with awe and religious fear, that they might thus express by costly and imperishable monuments their sense of God's majesty and beauty. The modern traveller who visits the churches and convents of Florence, or the museums where are preserved the fading remains of its early religious Art, if he be a person of any sensibility, cannot fail to be affected with the intense gravity and earnestness which pervade them. They seem less to be paintings for the embellishment of life than eloquent picture-writing by which burning religious souls sought to preach the truths of the invisible world to the eye of the multitude. Through all the deficiencies of perspective, coloring, and outline incident to the childhood and early youth of Art, one feels the passionate purpose of some lofty soul to express ideas of patience, self-sacrifice, adoration, and aspiration far transcending the limits of mortal capability.

The angels and celestial beings of these grave old painters are as different from the fat little pink Cupids or lovely laughing children of Titian and Correggio as are the sermons of President Edwards from the love-songs of Tom Moore. These old seers of the pencil give you grave, radiant beings, strong as man, fine as woman, sweeping downward in lines of floating undulation, and seeming by the ease with which they remain poised in the air to feel none of that earthly attraction which draws material bodies earthward. Whether they wear the morning star on their

forehead or bear the lily or the sword in their hand, there is still that suggestion of mystery and power about them, that air of dignity and repose, that speak the children of a nobler race than ours. One could well believe such a being might pass in his serene poised majesty of motion through the walls of a gross material dwelling without deranging one graceful fold of his swaying robe or unclasping the hands folded quietly on his bosom. Well has a modern master of art and style said of these old artists, "Many pictures are ostentatious exhibitions of the artist's power of speech, the clear and vigorous elocution of useless and senseless words; while the earlier efforts of Giotto and Ciniabue are the burning messages of prophecy delivered by the stammering lips of infants."

But at the time we write, Florence had passed through her ages of primitive religions and republican simplicity, and was fast hastening to her downfall. The genius, energy, and prophetic enthusiasm of Savonarola had made, it is true, a desperate rally on the verge of the precipice; but no one man has ever power to turn back the downward slide of a whole generation.

When Father Antonio left Sorrento in company with the cavalier, it was the intention of the latter to go with him only so far as their respective routes should lie together. The band under the command of Agostino was posted in a ruined fortress in one of those airily perched old mountain-towns which form so picturesque and characteristic a feature of the Italian landscape. But before they reached this spot, the simple, poetic, guileless

monk, with his fresh artistic nature, had so won upon his travelling companion that a most enthusiastic friendship had sprung up between them, and Agostino could not find it in his heart at once to separate from him. Tempest-tossed and homeless, burning with a sense of wrong, alienated from the faith of his fathers through his intellect and moral sense, yet clinging to it with his memory and imagination, he found in the tender devotional fervor of the artist monk a reconciling and healing power. He shared, too, in no small degree, the feelings which now possessed the breast of his companion for the great reformer whose purpose seemed to meditate nothing less than the restoration of the Church of Italy to the primitive apostolic simplicity. He longed to see him,—to listen to the eloquence of which he had heard so much. Then, too, he had thoughts that but vaguely shaped themselves in his mind. This noble man, so brave and courageous, menaced by the forces of a cruel tyranny, might he not need the protection of a good sword? He recollected, too, that he had an uncle high in the favor of the King of France, to whom he had written a full account of his own situation. Might he not be of use in urging this uncle to induce the French King to throw before Savonarola the shield of his protection? At all events, he entered Florence this evening with the burning zeal of a young neophyte who hopes to effect something himself for a glorious and sacred cause embodied in a leader who commands his deepest veneration.

"My son," said Father Antonio, as they raised their heads after

the evening prayer, "I am at this time like a man who, having long been, away from his home, fears, on returning, that he shall hear some evil tidings of those he hath left. I long, yet dread, to go to my dear Father Girolamo and the beloved brothers in our house. There is a presage that lies heavy on my heart, so that I cannot shake it off. Look at our glorious old Duomo;—doth she not sit there among the houses and palaces as a queen-mother among nations,—worthy, in her greatness and beauty, to represent the Church of the New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lord? Ah, I have seen it thronged and pressed with the multitude who came to crave the bread of life from our master!"

"Courage, my friend!" said Agostino; "it cannot be that Florence will suffer her pride and glory to be trodden down. Let us hasten on, for the shades of evening are coming fast, and there is a keen wind sweeping down from your snowy mountains."

And the two soon found themselves plunging into the shadows of the streets, threading their devious way to the convent.

At length they drew up before a dark wall, where the Father Antonio rang a bell.

A door was immediately opened, a cowled head appeared, and a cautious voice asked,—

"Who is there?"

"Ah, is that you, good Brother Angelo?" said Father Antonio, cheerily.

"And is it you, dear Brother Antonio? Come in! come in!" was the cordial response, as the two passed into the court; "truly,

it will make all our hearts leap to see you."

"And, Brother Angelo, how is our dear father? I have been so anxious about him!"

"Oh, fear not!—he sustains himself in God, and is full of sweetness to us all."

"But do the people stand by him, Angelo, and the Signoria?"

"He has strong friends as yet, but his enemies are like ravening wolves. The Pope hath set on the Franciscans, and they hunt him as dogs do a good stag.—But whom have you here with you?" added the monk, raising his torch and regarding the knight.

"Fear him not; he is a brave knight and good Christian, who comes to offer his sword to our father and seek his counsels."

"He shall be welcome," said the porter, cheerfully. "We will have you into the refectory forthwith, for you must be hungry."

The young cavalier, following the flickering torch of his conductor, had only a dim notion of long cloistered corridors, out of which now and then, as the light flared by, came a golden gleam from some quaint old painting, where the pure angel forms of Angelico stood in the gravity of an immortal youth, or the Madonna, like a bending lily, awaited the message of Heaven; but when they entered the refectory, a cheerful voice addressed them, and Father Antonio was clasped in the embrace of the father so much beloved.

"Welcome, welcome, my dear son!" said that rich voice which had thrilled so many thousand Italian hearts with its music. "So you are come back to the fold again. How goes the good work

of the Lord?"

"Well, everywhere," said Father Antonio; and then, recollecting his young friend, he suddenly turned and said,—

"Let me present to you one son who comes to seek your instructions,—the young Signor Agostino, of the noble house of Sarelli."

The Superior turned to Agostino with a movement full of a generous frankness, and warmly extended his hand, at the same time fixing upon him the mesmeric glance of a pair of large, deep blue eyes, which might, on slight observation, have been mistaken for black, so great was their depth and brilliancy.

Agostino surveyed his new acquaintance with that mingling of ingenuous respect and curiosity with which an ardent young man would regard the most distinguished leader of his age, and felt drawn to him by a certain atmosphere of vital cordiality such as one can feel better than describe.

"You have ridden far to-day, my son,—you must be weary," said the Superior, affably,—"but here you must feel yourself at home; command us in anything we can do for you. The brothers will attend to those refreshments which are needed after so long a journey; and when you have rested and supped, we shall hope to see you a little more quietly."

So saying, he signed to one or two brothers who stood by, and, commending the travellers to their care, left the apartment.

In a few moments a table was spread with a plain and wholesome repast, to which the two travellers sat down with

appetites sharpened by their long journey.

During the supper, the brothers of the convent, among whom Father Antonio had always been a favorite, crowded around him in a state of eager excitement.

"You should have been here the last week," said one; "such a turmoil as we have been in!"

"Yes," said another,—"the Pope hath set on the Franciscans, who, you know, are always ready enough to take up with anything against our order, and they have been pursuing our father like so many hounds."

"There hath been a whirlwind of preaching here and there," said a third,—"in the Duomo, and Santa Croce, and San Lorenzo; and they have battled to and fro, and all the city is full of it."

"Tell him about yesterday, about the ordeal," shouted an eager voice.

Two or three voices took up the story at once, and began to tell it,—all the others correcting, contradicting, or adding incidents. From the confused fragments here and there Agostino gathered that there had been on the day before a popular spectacle in the grand piazza, in which, according to an old superstition of the Middle Ages, Frà Girolamo Savonarola and his opponents were expected to prove the truth of their words by passing unhurt through the fire; that two immense piles of combustibles had been constructed with a narrow passage between, and the whole magistracy of the city convened, with a throng of the populace,

eager for the excitement of the spectacle; that the day had been spent in discussions, and scruples, and preliminaries; and that, finally, in the afternoon, a violent storm of rain arising had dispersed the multitude and put a stop to the whole exhibition.

"But the people are not satisfied," said Father Angelo; "and there are enough mischief-makers among them to throw all the blame on our father."

"Yes," said one, "they say he wanted to burn the Holy Sacrament, because he was going to take it with him into the fire."

"As if it could burn!" said another voice.

"It would to all human appearance, I suppose," said a third.

"Any way," said a fourth, "there is some mischief brewing; for here is our friend Prospero Rondinelli just come in, who says, when he came past the Duomo, he saw people gathering, and heard them threatening us: there were as many as two hundred, he thought."

"We ought to tell Father Girolamo," exclaimed several voices.

"Oh, he will not be disturbed!" said Father Angelo. "Since these affairs, he hath been in prayer in the chapter-room before the blessed Angelico's picture of the Cross. When we would talk with him of these things, he waves us away, and says only, 'I am weary; go and tell Jesus.'"

"He bade me come to him after supper," said Father Antonio. "I will talk with him."

"Do so,—that is right," said two or three eager voices, as the

monk and Agostino, having finished their repast, arose to be conducted to the presence of the father.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ATTACK ON SAN MARCO

They found him in a large and dimly lighted apartment, sitting absorbed in pensive contemplation before a picture of the Crucifixion by Frà Angelico, which, whatever might be its *naïve* faults of drawing and perspective, had an intense earnestness of feeling, and, though faded and dimmed by the lapse of centuries, still stirs in some faint wise even the practised *dilettanti* of our day.

The face upon the cross, with its majestic patience, seemed to shed a blessing down on the company of saints of all ages who were grouped by their representative men at the foot. Saint Dominic, Saint Ambrose, Saint Augustin, Saint Jerome, Saint Francis, and Saint Benedict were depicted as standing before the Great Sacrifice in company with the Twelve Apostles, the two Maries, and the fainting mother of Jesus,—thus expressing the unity of the Church Universal in that great victory of sorrow and glory. The painting was inclosed above by a semicircular bordering composed of medallion heads of the Prophets, and below was a similar medallion border of the principal saints and worthies of the Dominican order. In our day such pictures are visited by tourists with red guide-books in their hands, who

survey them in the intervals of careless conversation; but they were painted by the simple artist on his knees, weeping and praying as he worked, and the sight of them was accepted by like simple-hearted Christians as a perpetual sacrament of the eye, by which they received Christ into their souls.

So absorbed was the father in the contemplation of this picture, that he did not hear the approaching footsteps of the knight and monk. When at last they came so near as almost to touch him, he suddenly looked up, and it became apparent that his eyes were full of tears.

He rose, and, pointing with a mute gesture toward the painting, said,—

"There is more in that than in all Michel Angelo Buonarotti hath done yet, though he be a God-fearing youth,—more than in all the heathen marbles in Lorenzo's gardens. But sit down with me here. I have to come here often, where I can refresh my courage."

The monk and knight seated themselves, the latter with his attention riveted on the remarkable man before him. The head and face of Savonarola are familiar to us by many paintings and medallions, which, however, fail to impart what must have been that effect of his personal presence which so drew all hearts to him in his day. The knight saw a man of middle age, of elastic, well-knit figure, and a flexibility and grace of motion which seemed to make every nerve, even to his finger-ends, vital with the expression of his soul. The close-shaven crown and

the plain white Dominican robe gave a severe and statuesque simplicity to the lines of his figure. His head and face, like those of most of the men of genius whom modern Italy has produced, were so strongly cast in the antique mould as to leave no doubt of the identity of modern Italian blood with that of the great men of ancient Italy. His low, broad forehead, prominent Roman nose, well-cut, yet fully outlined lips, and strong, finely moulded jaw and chin, all spoke the old Roman vigor and energy, while the flexible delicacy of all the muscles of his face and figure gave an inexpressible fascination to his appearance. Every emotion and changing thought seemed to flutter and tremble over his countenance as the shadow of leaves over sunny water. His eye had a wonderful dilating power, and when he was excited seemed to shower sparks; and his voice possessed a surprising scale of delicate and melodious inflections, which could take him in a moment through the whole range of human feeling, whether playful and tender or denunciatory and terrible. Yet, when in repose among his friends, there was an almost childlike simplicity and artlessness of manner, which drew the heart by an irresistible attraction. At this moment it was easy to see by his pale cheek and the furrowed lines of his face that he had been passing through severe struggles; but his mind seemed stayed on some invisible centre, in a solemn and mournful calm.

"Come, tell me something of the good works of the Lord in our Italy, brother," he said, with a smile which was almost playful in its brightness. "You have been through all the lowly places of

the land, carrying our Lord's bread to the poor, and repairing and beautifying shrines and altars by the noble gift that is in you."

"Yes, father," said the monk; "and I have found that there are many sheep of the Lord that feed quietly among the mountains of Italy, and love nothing so much as to hear of the dear Shepherd who laid down His life for them."

"Even so, even so," said the Superior, with animation; "and it is the thought of these sweet hearts that comforts me when my soul is among lions. The foundation standeth sure,—the Lord knoweth them that are His."

"And it is good and encouraging," said Father Antonio, "to see the zeal of the poor, who will give their last penny for the altar of the Lord, and who flock so to hear the word and take the sacraments. I have had precious seasons of preaching and confessing, and have worked in blessedness many days restoring and beautifying the holy pictures and statues whereby these little ones have been comforted. What with the wranglings of princes and the factions and disturbances in our poor Italy, there be many who suffer in want and loss of all things, so that no refuge remains to them but the altars of our Jesus, and none cares for them but He."

"Brother," said the Superior, "there be thousands of flowers fairer than man ever saw that grow up in waste places and in deep dells and shades of mountains; but God bears each one in His heart, and delighteth Himself in silence with them: and so doth He with these poor, simple, unknown souls. The True

Church is not a flaunting queen who goes boldly forth among men displaying her beauties, but a veiled bride, a dove that is in the cleft of the rocks, whose voice is known only to the Beloved. Ah! when shall the great marriage-feast come, when all shall behold her glorified? I had hoped to see the day here in Italy: but now"–

The father stopped, and seemed to lapse into unconscious musing,—his large eye growing fixed and mysterious in its expression.

"The brothers have been telling me somewhat of the tribulations you have been through," said Father Antonio, who thought he saw a good opening to introduce the subject nearest his heart.

"No more of that!—no more!" said the Superior, turning away his head with an expression of pain and weariness; "rather let us look up. What think you, brother, are all *these* doing now?" he said, pointing to the saints in the picture. "They are all alive and well, and see clearly through our darkness." Then, rising up, he added, solemnly, "Whatever man may say or do, it is enough for me to feel that my dearest Lord and His blessed Mother and all the holy archangels, the martyrs and prophets and apostles, are with me. The end is coming."

"But, dearest father," said Antonio, "think you the Lord will suffer the wicked to prevail?"

"It may be for a time," said Savonarola. "As for me, I am in His hands only as an instrument. He is master of the forge and

handles the hammer, and when He has done using it He casts it from Him. Thus He did with Jeremiah, whom He permitted to be stoned to death when his preaching mission was accomplished; and thus He may do with *this* hammer when He has done using it."

At this moment a monk rushed into the room with a face expressive of the utmost terror, and called out,—

"Father, what shall we do? The mob are surrounding the convent! Hark! hear them at the doors!"

In truth, a wild, confused roar of mingled shrieks, cries, and blows came in through the open door of the apartment; and the pattering sound of approaching footsteps was heard like showering raindrops along the cloisters.

"Here come Messer Nicolo de' Lapi, and Francesco Valori!" called out a voice.

The room was soon filled with a confused crowd, consisting of distinguished Florentine citizens, who had gained admittance through a secret passage, and the excited novices and monks.

"The streets outside the convent are packed close with men," cried one of the citizens; "they have stationed guards everywhere to cut off our friends who might come to help us."

"I saw them seize a young man who was quietly walking, singing psalms, and slay him on the steps of the Church of the Innocents," said another; "they cried and hooted, 'No more psalm-singing!'"

"And there's Arnolfo Battista," said a third;—"he went out to

try to speak to them, and they have killed him,—cut him down with their sabres."

"Hurry! hurry! barricade the door! arm yourselves!" was the cry from other voices.

"Shall we fight, father? shall we defend ourselves?" cried others, as the monks pressed around their Superior.

When the crowd first burst into the room, the face of the Superior flushed, and there was a slight movement of surprise; then he seemed to recollect himself, and murmuring, "I expected this, but not so soon," appeared lost in mental prayer. To the agitated inquiries of his flock, he answered,—"No, brothers; the weapons of monks must be spiritual, not carnal." Then lifting on high a crucifix, he said,—"Come with me, and let us walk in solemn procession to the altar, singing the praises of our God."

The monks, with the instinctive habit of obedience, fell into procession behind their leader, whose voice, clear and strong, was heard raising the Psalm, *"Quare fremunt gentes"*:—

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying,

"'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.: the Lord shall have them in derision."

As one voice after another took up the chant, the solemn enthusiasm rose and deepened, and all present, whether ecclesiastics or laymen, fell into the procession and joined in the anthem. Amid the wild uproar, the din and clatter of axes, the thunders of heavy battering-implements on the stone walls and portals, came this long-drawn solemn wave of sound, rising and falling,—now drowned in the savage clamors of the mob, and now bursting out clear and full like the voices of God's chosen amid the confusion and struggles of all the generations of this mortal life.

White-robed and grand the procession moved on, while the pictured saints and angels on the walls seemed to smile calmly down upon them from a golden twilight. They passed thus into the sacristy, where with all solemnity and composure they arrayed their Father and Superior for the last time in his sacramental robes, and then, still chanting, followed him to the high altar,—where all bowed in prayer. And still, whenever there was a pause in the stormy uproar and fiendish clamor, might be heard the clear, plaintive uprising of that strange singing,—"O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage!"

It needs not to tell in detail what history has told of that tragic night: how the doors at last were forced, and the mob rushed in; how citizens and friends, and many of the monks themselves, their instinct of combativeness overcoming their spiritual beliefs, fought valiantly, and used torches and crucifixes for purposes little contemplated when they were made.

Fiercest among the combatants was Agostino, who three times drove back the crowd as they were approaching the choir, where Savonarola and his immediate friends were still praying. Father Antonio, too, seized a sword from the hand of a fallen man and laid about him with an impetuosity which would be inexplicable to any who do not know what force there is in gentle natures when the objects of their affections are assailed. The artist monk fought for his master with the blind desperation with which a woman fights over the cradle of her child.

All in vain! Past midnight, and the news comes that artillery is planted to blow down the walls of the convent, and the magistracy, who up to this time have lifted not a finger to repress the tumult, send word to Savonarola to surrender himself to them, together with the two most active of his companions, Frà Domenico da Pescia and Frà Silvestro Maruffi, as the only means of averting the destruction of the whole order. They offer him assurances of protection and safe return, which he does not in the least believe: nevertheless, he feels that his hour is come, and gives himself up.

His preparations were all made with a solemn method which showed that he felt he was approaching the last act in the drama of life. He called together his flock, scattered and forlorn, and gave them his last words of fatherly advice, encouragement, and comfort,—ending with the remarkable declaration, "A Christian's life consists in doing good and suffering evil." "I go with joy to this marriage-supper," he said, as he left the

church for the last sad preparations. He and his doomed friends then confessed and received the sacrament, and after that he surrendered himself into the hands of the men who he felt in his prophetic soul had come to take him to torture and to death.

As he gave himself into their hands, he said, "I commend to your care this flock of mine, and these good citizens of Florence who have been with us"; and then once more turning to his brethren, said,—"Doubt not, my brethren. God will not fail to perfect His work. Whether I live or die, He will aid and console you."

At this moment there was a struggle with the attendants in the outer circle of the crowd, and the voice of Father Antonio was heard crying out earnestly,—"Do not hold me! I will go with him! I must go with him!"—"Son," said Savonarola, "I charge you on your obedience not to come. It is I and Frà Domenico who are to die for the love of Christ." And thus, at the ninth hour of the night, he passed the threshold of San Marco.

As he was leaving, a plaintive voice of distress was heard from a young novice who had been peculiarly dear to him, who stretched his hands after him, crying,—"Father! father! why do you leave us desolate?" Whereupon he turned back a moment, and said,—"God will be your help. If we do not see each other again in this world, we surely shall in heaven."

When the party had gone forth, the monks and citizens stood looking into each other's faces, listening with dismay to the howl of wild ferocity that was rising around the departing prisoner.

"What shall we do?" was the outcry from many voices.

"I know what I shall do," said Agostino. "If any man here will find me a fleet horse, I will start for Milan this very hour; for my uncle is now there on a visit, and he is a counsellor of weight with the King of France: we must get the King to interfere."

"Good! good! good!" rose from a hundred voices.

"I will go with you," said Father Antonio. "I shall have no rest till I do something."

"And I," quoth Jacopo Niccolini, "will saddle for you, without delay, two horses of part Arabian blood, swift of foot, and easy, and which will travel day and night without sinking."

CHAPTER XXII

THE CATHEDRAL

The rays of the setting sun were imparting even more than their wonted cheerfulness to the airy and bustling streets of Milan. There was the usual rush and roar of busy life which mark the great city, and the display of gay costumes and brilliant trappings proper to a ducal capital which at that time gave the law to Europe in all matters of taste and elegance, even as Paris does now. It was, in fact, from the reputation of this city in matters of external show that our English term Milliner was probably derived; and one might well have believed this, who saw the sweep of the ducal cortege at this moment returning in pomp from the afternoon airing. Such glittering of gold-embroidered mantles, such bewildering confusion of colors, such flashing of jewelry from cap and dagger-hilt and finger-ring, and even from bridle and stirrup, testified that the male sex at this period in Italy were no whit behind the daughters of Eve in that passion for personal adornment which our age is wont to consider exclusively feminine. Indeed, all that was visible to the vulgar eye of this pageant was wholly masculine; though no one doubted that behind the gold-embroidered curtains of the litters which contained the female notabilities of the court still more dazzling

wonders might be concealed. Occasionally a white jewelled hand would draw aside one of these screens, and a pair of eyes brighter than any gems would peer forth; and then there would be tokens of a visible commotion among the plumed and gemmed cavaliers around, and one young head would nod to another with jests and quips, and there would be bowing and curveting and all the antics and caracolings supposable among gay young people on whom the sun shone brightly, and who felt the world going well around them, and deemed themselves the observed of all observers.

Meanwhile, the mute, subservient common people looked on all this as a part of their daily amusement. Meek dwellers in those dank, noisome caverns, without any opening but a street-door, which are called dwelling-places in Italy, they lived in uninquiring good-nature, contentedly bringing up children on coarse bread, dirty cabbage-stumps, and other garbage, while all that they could earn was sucked upward by capillary attraction to nourish the extravagance of those upper classes on which they stared with such blind and ignorant admiration.

This was the lot they believed themselves born for, and which every exhortation of their priests taught them to regard as the appointed ordinance of God. The women, to be sure, as women always will be, were true to the instinct of their sex, and crawled out of the damp and vile-smelling recesses of their homes with solid gold ear-rings shaking in their ears, and their blue-black lustrous hair ornamented with a glittering circle of steel pins or other quaint coiffure. There was sense in all this: for had not

even Dukes of Milan been found so condescending and affable as to admire the charms of the fair in the lower orders, whence had come sons and daughters who took rank among princes and princesses? What father, or what husband, could be insensible to prospects of such honor? What priest would not readily absolve such sin? Therefore one might have observed more than one comely dark-eyed woman, brilliant as some tropical bird in the colors of her peasant dress, who cast coquettish glances toward high places, not unacknowledged by patronizing nods in return, while mothers and fathers looked on in triumph. These were the days for the upper classes: the Church bore them all in her bosom as a tender nursing-mother, and provided for all their little peccadilloes with even grandmotherly indulgence, and in return the world was immensely deferential towards the Church; and it was only now and then some rugged John Baptist, in raiment of camel's hair, like Savonarola, who dared to speak an indecorous word of God's truth in the ear of power, and Herod and Herodias had ever at hand the good old recipe for quieting such disturbances. John Baptist was beheaded in prison, and then all the world and all the Scribes and Pharisees applauded; and only a few poor disciples were found to take up the body and go and tell Jesus.

The whole piazza around the great Cathedral is at this moment full of the dashing cavalcade of the ducal court, looking as brilliant in the evening light as a field of poppy, corn-flower, and scarlet clover at Sorrento; and there, amid the flutter and rush,

the amours and intrigues, the court scandal, the laughing, the gibing, the glitter, and dazzle, stands that wonderful Cathedral, that silent witness, that strange, pure, immaculate mountain of airy, unearthly loveliness,—the most striking emblem of God's mingled vastness and sweetness that ever it was given to human heart to devise or hands to execute. If there be among the many mansions of our Father above, among the houses not made with hands, aught purer and fairer, it must be the work of those grand spirits who inspired and presided over the erection of this celestial miracle of beauty. In the great, vain, wicked city, all alive with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, it seemed to stand as much apart and alone as if it were in the solemn desolation of the Campagna, or in one of the wide deserts of Africa,—so little part or lot did it appear to have in anything earthly, so little to belong to the struggling, bustling crowd who beneath its white dazzling pinnacles seemed dwarfed into crawling insects. They who could look up from the dizzy, frivolous life below saw far, far above them, in the blue Italian air, thousands of glorified saints standing on a thousand airy points of brilliant whiteness, ever solemnly adoring. The marble which below was somewhat touched and soiled with the dust of the street seemed gradually to refine and brighten as it rose into the pure regions of the air, till at last in those thousand distant pinnacles it had the ethereal translucence of wintry frost-work, and now began to glow with the violet and rose hues of evening, in solemn splendor.

The ducal cortege sweeps by; but we have mounted the dizzy, dark staircase that leads to the roof, where, amid the bustling life of the city, there is a promenade of still and wondrous solitude. One seems to have ascended in those few moments far beyond the tumult and dust of earthly things, to the silence, the clearness, the tranquillity of ethereal regions. The noise of the rushing tides of life below rises only in a soft and distant murmur; while around, in the wide, clear distance, is spread a prospect which has not on earth its like or its equal. The beautiful plains of Lombardy lie beneath like a map, and the northern horizon-line is glittering with the entire sweep of the Alps, like a solemn senate of archangels with diamond mail and glittering crowns. Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa with his countenance of light, the Jungfrau and all the weird brothers of the Oberland, rise one after another to the delighted gaze, and the range of the Tyrol melts far off into the blue of the sky. On another side, the Apennines, with their picturesque outlines and cloud-spotted sides, complete the inclosure. All around, wherever the eye turns, is the unbroken phalanx of mountains; and this temple, with its thousand saintly statues standing in attitudes of ecstasy and prayer, seems like a worthy altar and shrine for the beautiful plain which the mountains inclose: it seems to give all Northern Italy to God.

The effect of the statues in this high, pure air, in this solemn, glorious scenery, is peculiar. They seem a meet companionship for these exalted regions. They seem to stand exultant on their

spires, poised lightly as ethereal creatures, the fit inhabitants of the pure blue sky. One feels that they have done with earth; one can fancy them a band of white-robed kings and priests forever ministering in that great temple of which the Alps and the Apennines are the walls and the Cathedral the heart and centre. Never were Art and Nature so majestically married by Religion in so worthy a temple.

One form could be discerned standing in rapt attention, gazing from a platform on the roof upon the far-distant scene. He was enveloped in the white coarse woollen gown of the Dominican monks, and seemed wholly absorbed in meditating on the scene before him, which appeared to move him deeply; for, raising his hands, he repeated aloud from the Latin Vulgate the words of an Apostle:—

"Accessistis ad Sion montem et civitatem Dei viventis, Ierusalem caelestem, et multorum millinm angelorum frequentiam, ecclesiam primitivorum, qui inscripti sunt in caelis."[1]

At this moment the evening worship commenced within the Cathedral, and the whole building seemed to vibrate with the rising swell of the great organ, while the grave, long-drawn tones of the Ambrosian Liturgy rose surging in waves and dying away in distant murmurs, like the rolling of the tide on some ocean-

[1] "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven."

shore. The monk turned and drew near to the central part of the roof to listen, and as he turned he disclosed the well-known features of Father Antonio.

Haggard, weary, and travel-worn, his first impulse, on entering the city, was to fly to this holy solitude, as the wandering sparrow of sacred song sought her nest amid the altars of God's temple. Artist no less than monk, he found in this wondrous shrine of beauty a repose both for his artistic and his religious nature; and while waiting for Agostino Sarelli to find his uncle's residence, he had determined to pass the interval in this holy solitude. Many hours had he paced alone up and down the long promenades of white marble which run everywhere between forests of dazzling pinnacles and flying-buttresses of airy lightness. Now he rested in fixed attention against the wall above the choir, which he could feel pulsating with throbs of sacred sound, as if a great warm heart were beating within the fair marble miracle, warming it into mysterious life and sympathy.

"I would now that boy were here to worship with me," he said. "No wonder the child's faith fainteth: it takes such monuments as these of the Church's former days to strengthen one's hopes. Ah, woe unto those by whom such offence cometh!"

At this moment the form of Agostino was seen ascending the marble staircase.

The eye of the monk brightened as he came towards him. He put out one hand eagerly to take his, and raised the other with a gesture of silence.

"Look," he said, "and listen! Is it not the sound of many waters and mighty thunderings?"

Agostino stood subdued for the moment by the magnificent sights and sounds; for, as the sun went down, the distant mountains grew every moment more unearthly in their brilliancy, —and as they lay in a long line, jewelled brightness mingling with the cloud-wreaths of the far horizon, one might have imagined that he in truth beheld the foundations of that celestial city of jasper, pearl, and translucent gold which the Apostle saw, and that the risings and fallings of choral sound which seemed to thrill and pulsate through the marble battlements were indeed that song like many waters sung by the Church Triumphant above.

For a few moments the monk and the young man stood in silence, till at length the monk spoke.

"You have told me, my son, that your heart often troubles you in being more Roman than Christian; that you sometimes doubt whether the Church on earth be other than a fiction or a fable. But look around us. Who are these, this great multitude who praise and pray continually in this temple of the upper air? These are they who have come out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. These are not the men that have sacked cities, and made deserts, and written their triumphs in blood and carnage. These be men that have sheltered the poor, and built houses for orphans, and sold themselves into slavery to redeem their brothers in Christ. These be pure women who have lodged saints, brought up children,

lived holy and prayerful lives. These be martyrs who have laid down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. There were no such churches in old Rome,—no such saints."

"Well," said Agostino, "one thing is certain. If such be the True Church, the Pope and the Cardinals of our day have no part in it; for they are the men who sack cities and make desolations, who devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers. Let us see one of *them* selling himself into slavery for the love of anybody, while they seek to keep all the world in slavery to themselves!"

"That is the grievous declension our master weeps over," said the monk. "Ah, if the Bishops of the Church now were like brave old Saint Ambrose, strong alone by faith and prayer, showing no more favor to an unrepentant Emperor than to the meanest slave, then would the Church be a reality and a glory! Such is my master. Never is he afraid of the face of king or lord, when he has God's truth to speak. You should have heard how plainly he dealt with our Lorenzo de' Medici on his death-bed,—how he refused him absolution, unless he would make restitution to the poor and restore the liberties of Florence."

"I should have thought," said the young man, sarcastically, "that Lorenzo the Magnificent might have got absolution cheaper than that.

Where were all the bishops in his dominion, that he must needs send for Jerome Savonarola?"

"Son, it is ever so," replied the monk. "If there be a man that

cares neither for Duke nor Emperor, but for God alone, then Dukes and Emperors would give more for his good word than for a whole dozen of common priests."

"I suppose it is something like a rare manuscript or a singular gem: these *virtuosi* have no rest till they have clutched it. The thing they cannot get is always the thing they want."

"Lorenzo was always seeking our master," said the monk. "Often would he come walking in our gardens, expecting surely he would hasten down to meet him; and the brothers would run all out of breath to his cell to say, 'Father, Lorenzo is in the garden.' 'He is welcome,' would he answer, with his pleasant smile. 'But, father, will you not descend to meet him?' 'Hath he asked for me?' 'No.' 'Well, then, let us not interrupt his meditations,' he would answer, and remain still at his reading, so jealous was he lest he should seek the favor of princes and forget God, as does all the world in our day."

"And because he does not seek the favor of the men of this world he will be trampled down and slain. Will the God in whom he trusts defend him?"

The monk pointed expressively upward to the statues that stood glorified above them, still wearing a rosy radiance, though the shadows of twilight had fallen on all the city below.

"My son," he said, "the victories of the True Church are not in time, but in eternity. How many around us were conquered on earth that they might triumph in heaven! What saith the Apostle? 'They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might

obtain a better resurrection.'"

"But, alas!" said Agostino, "are we never to see the right triumph here? I fear that this noble name is written in blood, like so many of whom the world is not worthy. Can one do nothing to help it?"

"How is that? What have you heard?" said the monk, eagerly. "Have you seen your uncle?"

"Not yet; he is gone into the country for a day,—so say his servants. I saw, when the Duke's court passed, my cousin, who is in his train, and got a moment's speech with him; and he promised, that, if I would wait for him here, he would come to me as soon as he could be let off from his attendance. When he comes, it were best that we confer alone."

"I will retire to the southern side," said the monk, "and await the end of your conference": and with that he crossed the platform on which they were standing, and, going down a flight of white marble steps, was soon lost to view amid the wilderness of frost-like carved work.

He had scarcely vanished, before footsteps were heard ascending the marble staircase on the other side, and the sound of a voice humming a popular air of the court.

The stranger was a young man of about five-and-twenty, habited with all that richness and brilliancy of coloring which the fashion of the day permitted to a young exquisite. His mantle of purple velvet falling jauntily off from one shoulder disclosed a doublet of amber satin richly embroidered with gold and seed-

pearl. The long white plume which drooped from his cap was held in its place by a large diamond which sparkled like a star in the evening twilight. His finely moulded hands were loaded with rings, and ruffles of the richest Venetian lace encircled his wrists. He had worn over all a dark cloak with a peaked hood, the usual evening disguise in Italy; but as he gained the top-stair of the platform, he threw it carelessly down and gayly offered his hand.

"Good even to you, cousin mine! So you see I am as true to my appointment as if your name were Leonora or Camilla instead of Agostino. How goes it with you? I wanted to talk with you below, but I saw we must have a place without listeners. Our friends the saints are too high in heavenly things to make mischief by eavesdropping."

"Thank you, Cousin Carlos, for your promptness. And now to the point. Did your father, my uncle, get the letter I wrote him about a month since?"

"He did; and he bade me treat with you about it. It's an abominable snarl this they have got you into. My father says, your best way is to come straight to him in France, and abide till things take a better turn: he is high in favor with the King and can find you a very pretty place at court, and he takes it upon him in time to reconcile the Pope. Between you and me, the old Pope has no special spite in the world against *you*: he merely wants your lands for his son, and as long as you prowl round and lay claim to them, why, you must stay excommunicated; but just clear the coast and leave them peaceably and he will put you back into the True

Church, and my father will charge himself with your success. Popes don't last forever, or there may come another falling out with the King of France, and either way there will be a chance of your being one day put back into your rights; meanwhile, a young fellow might do worse than have a good place in our court."

During this long monologue, which the young speaker uttered with all the flippant self-sufficiency of worldly people with whom the world is going well, the face of the young nobleman who listened presented a picture of many strong contending emotions.

"You speak," he said, "as if man had nothing to do in this world but seek his own ease and pleasure. What lies nearest my heart is not that I am plundered of my estates, and my house uprooted, but it is that my beautiful Rome, the city of my fathers, is a prisoner under the heel of the tyrant. It is that the glorious religion of Christ, the holy faith in which my mother died, the faith made venerable by all these saints around us, is made the tool and instrument of such vileness and cruelty that one is tempted to doubt whether it were not better to have been born of heathen in the good old times of the Roman Republic,—God forgive me for saying so! Does the Most Christian King of France know that the man who pretends to rule in the name of Christ is not a believer in the Christian religion,—that he does not believe even in a God,—that he obtained the holy seat by simony,—that he uses all its power to enrich a brood of children whose lives are so indecent that it is a shame to modest lips even to *say* what

they do?"

"Why, of course," said the other, "the King of France is pretty well informed about all these things. You know old King Charles, when he marched through Italy, had more than half a mind, they say, to pull the old Pope out of his place; and he might have done it easily. My father was in his train at that time, and he says the Pope was frightened enough. Somehow they made it all up among them, and settled about their territories, which is the main thing, after all; and now our new King, I fancy, does not like to meddle with him: between you and me, he has his eye in another direction here. This gay city would suit him admirably, and he fancies he can govern it as well as it is governed now. My father does not visit here with his eyes shut, *I* can tell you. But as to the Pope–Well, you see such things are delicate to handle. After all, my dear Agostino, we are not priests,—our business is with this world; and, no matter how they came by them, these fellows have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and one cannot afford to quarrel with them,—we must have the ordinances, you know, or what becomes of our souls? Do you suppose, now, that I should live as gay and easy a life as I do, if I thought there were any doubt of my salvation? It's a mercy to us sinners that the ordinances are not vitiated by the sins of the priests; it would go hard with us, if they were: as it is, if they will live scandalous lives, it is their affair, not ours."

"And is it nothing," replied the other, "to a true man who has taken the holy vows of knighthood on him, whether his

Lord's religion be defamed and dishonored and made a scandal and a scoffing? Did not all Europe go out to save Christ's holy sepulchre from being dishonored by the feet of the Infidel? and shall we let infidels have the very house of the Lord, and reign supreme in His holy dwelling-place? There has risen a holy prophet in Italy, the greatest since the time of Saint Francis, and his preaching hath stirred all hearts to live more conformably with our holy faith; and now for his pure life and good works he is under excommunication of the Pope, and they have seized and imprisoned him, and threaten his life."

"Oh, you mean Savonarola," said the other. "Yes, we have heard of him,—a most imprudent, impracticable fellow, who will not take advice nor be guided. My father, I believe, thought well of him once, and deemed that in the distracted state of Italy he might prove serviceable in forwarding some of his plans: but he is wholly wrapt up in his own notions; he heeds no will but his own."

"Have you heard anything," said Agostino, "of a letter which he wrote to the King of France lately, stirring him up to call a General Council of the Christian Church to consider what is to be done about the scandals at Rome?"

"Then he has written one, has he?" replied the young man; "then the story that I have heard whispered about here must be true. A man who certainly is in a condition to know told me day before yesterday that the Duke had arrested a courier with some such letter, and sent it on to the Pope: it is likely, for the Duke

hates Savonarola. If that be true, it will go hard with him yet; for the Pope has a long arm for an enemy."

"And so," said Agostino, with an expression of deep concern, "that letter, from which the good man hoped so much, and which was so powerful, will only go to increase his danger!"

"The more fool he!—he might have known that it was of no use. Who was going to take his part against the Pope?"

"The city of Florence has stood by him until lately," said Agostino,—"and would again, with a little help."

"Oh, no! never think it, my dear Agostino! Depend upon it, it will end as such things always do, and the man is only a madman that undertakes it. Hark ye, cousin, what have *you* to do with this man? Why do you attach yourself to the side that is *sure* to lose? I cannot conceive what you would be at. This is no way to mend your fortunes. Come to-night to my father's palace: the Duke has appointed us princely lodgings, and treats us with great hospitality, and my father has plans for your advantage. Between us, there is a fair young ward of his, of large estates and noble blood, whom he designs for you. So you see, if you turn your attention in this channel, there may come a reinforcement of the family property, which will enable you to hold out until the Pope dies, or some prince or other gets into a quarrel with him, which is always happening, and then a move may be made for you. My father, I'll promise you, is shrewd enough, and always keeps his eye open to see where there is a joint in the harness, and have a trusty dagger-blade all whetted to stick under. Of course, he

means to see you righted; he has the family interest at heart, and feels as indignant as you could at the rascality which has been perpetrated; but I am quite sure he will tell you that the way is not to come out openly against the Pope and join this fanatical party."

Agostino stood silent, with the melancholy air of a man who has much to say, and is deeply moved by considerations which he perceives it would be utterly idle and useless to attempt to explain. If the easy theology of his friend were indeed true, —if the treasures of the heavenly kingdom, glory, honor, and immortality, could indeed be placed in unholy hands to be bought and sold and traded in,—if holiness of heart and life, and all those nobler modes of living and being which were witnessed in the histories of the thousand saints around him, were indeed but a secondary thing in the strife for worldly place and territory, —what, then, remained for the man of ideas, of aspirations? In such a state of society, his track must be like that of the dove in sacred history who found no rest for the sole of her foot.

Agostino folded his arms and sighed deeply, and then made answer mechanically, as one whose thoughts are afar off.

"Present my duty," he said, "to my uncle, your father, and say to him that I will wait on him to-night."

"Even so," said the young man, picking up his cloak and folding it about him. "And now, you know, I must go. Don't be discouraged; keep up a good heart; you shall see what it is to have powerful friends to stand by you; all will be right yet. Come, will

you go with me now?"

"Thank you," said Agostino, "I think I would be alone a little while. My head is confused, and I would fain think over matters a little quietly."

"Well, *au revoir*, then. I must leave you to the company of the saints.

But be sure and come early."

So saying, he threw his cloak over his shoulder and sauntered carelessly down the marble steps, humming again the gay air with which he had ascended.

Left alone, Agostino once more cast a glance on the strangely solemn and impressive scene around him. He was standing on a platform of the central tower which overlooked the whole building. The round, full moon had now risen in the horizon, displacing by her solemn brightness the glow of twilight; and her beams were reflected by the delicate frost-work of the myriad pinnacles which rose in a bewildering maze at his feet. It might seem to be some strange enchanted garden of fairy-land, where a luxuriant and freakish growth of Nature had been suddenly arrested and frozen into eternal stillness. Around in the shadows at the foot of the Cathedral the lights of the great gay city twinkled and danced and veered and fluttered like fire-flies in the damp, dewy shadows of some moist meadow in summer. The sound of clattering hoofs and rumbling wheels, of tinkling guitars and gay roundelays, rose out of that obscure distance, seeming far off and plaintive like the dream of a life that is past.

The great church seemed a vast world; the long aisles of statued pinnacles with their pure floorings of white marble appeared as if they might be the corridors of heaven; and it seemed as if the crowned and sceptred saints in their white marriage-garments might come down and walk there, without ever a spot of earth on their unsullied whiteness.

In a few moments Father Antonio had glided back to the side of the young man, whom he found so lost in reverie that not till he laid his hand upon his arm did he awaken from his meditations.

"Ah!" he said, with a start, "my father, is it you?"

"Yes, my son. What of your conference? Have you learned anything?"

"Father, I have learned far more than I wished to know."

"What is it, my son? Speak it at once."

"Well, then, I fear that the letter of our holy father to the King of France has been intercepted here in Milan, and sent to the Pope."

"What makes you think so?" said the monk, with an eagerness that showed how much he felt the intelligence.

"My cousin tells me that a person of consideration in the Duke's household, who is supposed to be in a position to know, told him that it was so."

Agostino felt the light grasp which the monk had laid upon his arm gradually closing with a convulsive pressure, and that he was trembling with intense feeling.

"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!" he said,

after a few moments of silence.

"It is discouraging," said Agostino, "to see how little these princes care for the true interests of religion and the service of God,—how little real fealty there is to our Lord Jesus."

"Yes," said the monk, "all seek their own, and not the things that are Christ's. It is well written, 'Put not your trust in princes.'"

"And what prospect, what hope do you see for him?" said Agostino. "Will Florence stand firm?"

"I could have thought so once," said the monk,—"in those days when I have seen counsellors and nobles and women of the highest degree all humbly craving to hear the word of God from his lips, and seeming to seek nothing so much as to purify their houses, their hands, and their hearts, that they might be worthy citizens of that commonwealth which has chosen the Lord Jesus for its gonfalonier. I have seen the very children thronging to kiss the hem of his robe, as he walked through the streets; but, oh, my friend, did not Jerusalem bring palms and spread its garments in the way of Christ only four days before he was crucified?"

The monk's voice here faltered. He turned away and seemed to wrestle with a tempest of suppressed sobbing. A moment more, he looked heavenward and pointed up with a smile.

"Son," he said, "you ask *what hope there is*. I answer, There is hope of such crowns as these wear who came out of great tribulation and now reign with Christ in glory."

OUR ARTISTS IN ITALY

LANDSCAPE ART

A representation of Nature, in order to be a true landscape, must be organic. It must not present itself as an aggregation, but as a growth. It must manifest obedience to laws which are peculiarly its own, and through the operation of which it has developed from the moment of inception to that of maturity. And, moreover, that inception must have been near a human heart, that development must have been nourished by vitality derived from human life, and that maturity must be that of the divine unity to which tend all the mysterious operations of organizing energies.

We hold this to be the first essential condition of Landscape Art, the condition without which no rendering of Nature can be Art. Other points of excellence may be unattained. Let this be evident, that the production is an offspring of humanity, and it shall be perceived also that it partakes of whatever immortality the human heart inherits. Herein is concealed the whole secret of the value of pre-Raphaelite Art, and not, as we have been assured, in the faithfulness of its followers to the exact representation of the individual details of Nature. Each wrought from the love of Nature, consciously giving what truth

he possessed, unconsciously giving of his own interior life. Each picture was the child of the painter. Yet, however much the ancient artist may have failed in rendering the specific truths of the external world, we can never attribute his failure to any disregard for the true. His picture never gives the impression of falsehood; and in the most erroneous record of the external there is ever the promise of more truth, and this promise is not that of the man, but of the principle governing the character of his picture.

We think that all works of Art may be divided into two distinct classes: those which are the result of a man's whole nature, involving the affectional, religious, and intellectual, and those which are the productions of the intellect, and from the will. The first class comprises those results of Art which are vital, —which come to us through processes of growth, and impress us with a sense of organization. The second includes those works which are constructed,—which present an accumulation of objects mechanically combined, parts skilfully joined through scientific means.

Earnestness and the definite purpose which is its sign, love which drew the soul into sweetest communion with our mother Nature, giving to him who thus came revelations of the harmonies possible between her and her children, and devotion to his art mightier than ever inspired the Hindoo devotee in self-sacrifice, characterized those who have given all that pure Art which has been alluded to as the true: and such were the majority

of those artists who preceded Raphael.

True, all of those who were devoted to Landscape Art, or who made it a part of their practice to introduce this element into their pictures, often failed in attaining truth; but, by some strange power with which they have invested their landscapes, an impulse is given to the perception, and the essential truth, feebly hinted at, perhaps, is recognized. But as the record comes down through the years, each new picture approximates more nearly to the character of the scene attempted, with, occasionally, (as in the works of Masaccio,) touches of truth absolutely perfect, until at last appeared that man altogether at one with Nature, who reproduced Nature in all its glory, pomp, freedom, and life, as might an archangel. Titian brought to perfection the first great class of Landscape Art, and, of course, in doing so, perfected that department which was the only one as yet developed, and which remains a distinct branch, subject to its own peculiar laws. We refer to the rendering of natural scenery, beginning in the merely and completely subordinate accessory, and ending, with Titian, in the perfectly dignified and noble companionship of the visible universe with man.

We speak of this Art perfected far back, because we feel assured that landscape, as accessory to the historical, has an ideal altogether distinct from that of pure landscape.

It would not be just, perhaps, to regard the law which necessitates this ideal as a law of subordination, although that condition prevails up to the time of Titian. Nature, to the true

man, never presents itself as subordinate, but as correspondently ever equal with man, ever ready with possibilities to match his own. So true is this, that a man's universe, that of which his vision takes possession, is a part of himself, subject to his sorrows and joys, his hope and his despair: to him, the violets, the mountains, and the far-away worlds, throbbing in unison with his own heart-beat, are in some wise the signs or the manifestations of his own soul's possibilities. And he is right. That of the flower which is its beauty, that of the mountains which is their magnificent grandeur, that of the stars which is their ineffable glory and sublimity, is his, is within him, is a part of his soul's life, waxing or waning so in unison with its richness or poverty that wise men mark the soul's stature by the part of it which is akin to the violets, the hills, or the infinite sky.

"The world is as large as a man's head." In that there is a fine hint of a great truth, but beyond that is *the* truth. It is not the mere knowledge of Alcyone that necessitates the sublime. After that comes the wonder. The world is as large as is a man, and its relation to him is marked by a sympathy which acts and reacts with the certainty and precision of law.

The ideal of Landscape Art, used in alliance with representations of the human figure, must, then, be founded upon this immutable sympathy between the landscape world and the human. Thus, in the painting alluded to in the article on Mr. Page, "The Entombment" of the Louvre, the landscape is charged with the solemnity of the hour. No blade of grass or shadow of leaf

but seems conscious of the great event, and the sky reveals, by its heavenly tenderness, that there all is known.

How different in expression, yet how similar in strength, is the landscape of that seeming miracle, "The Presentation in the Temple"! It is clear, confident day,—so pure and perfect a day abroad over the happy earth, that all things lure forth into an atmosphere so unsullied that to breathe it is life and joy,—over an earth youthful with spring, fresh with morning; and hither have come the people to see confirmed the future mother of Christ, now the child Mary. As the maiden ascends the steps of the Temple, a halo surrounds her,—not her head alone, but all the form,—and far away a fainter halo rests upon the hills. Her youth, its purity and half-recognized promise, seem sweetly imaged in the morning freshness and spring-life of the landscape.

We can remember no landscape by Titian which is not in full sympathy with the motives which actuate his groups. It is the unison of scene and act that gives his pictures a unity and completeness never or rarely found elsewhere.

After Titian came painters—among them, mighty ones—who, like Tintoretto, wrought from the external. The elements of the landscape were treated with knowledge and power, but not often with feeling, and very seldom with a recognition of its central significance. One example is so marvellous, however, that we cannot forbear referring to it. Its truthfulness is the more remarkable from the fact that the painter's conceptions rarely were such that any true landscape could be found capable of

harmony with their character. In this picture, "The Temptation of Saint Anthony," one of the Pitti Palace Gallery, Salvator has wrought marvellously like a demon. The horizon and the sky near it are charged with a sense of demoniacal conflict for human souls, and forebodings of defeat and woe.

Yet within this, mantling the remotest depths, there is a sheen of light, a gleam of hope and faith.

In our own times there is little to refer to illustrative of excellence in this branch of Art. Overbeck makes frequent use of natural scenery, and his delicate yet firm outlines repeat, hill and valley and clouds, the sentiment of peace and purity which pervades his noble productions.

Not that there are not produced frequently, and especially in France, works remarkable for truth and power. But, too often, the truths are redundant, and the power vanquishes the sentiments of the group.

One artist in France, Rosa Bonheur, has, however, embodied conceptions so noble, so in unison with the finest Nature, that its most glorious and most significant scenery, rendered with a handling akin to the old mastership, is alone adequate to sympathize with and sustain them. I need but refer to the wonderful view of the Pyrenees in the picture of "The Muleteers," the tender morning spirit of that heathery scene in the Highlands, and that miracle of representation, the near ground, crisp and frosty, of Mr. Belmont's "Hunters in Early Morning."

American Art, as represented in Italy, has few examples of excellence in this branch of painting. Its followers have wrought more persistently in other directions, toward the expression of a class of ideals rarely involving the one which we have attempted to analyze. Yet, occasionally, an artist has appeared, making Rome or Florence his home long enough to win a place, which, when he has departed, is not quickly filled, who has ideas of history and events calling for the record of the palette; or there has been wrought in the studio of some resident painter a composition in which landscape has been employed as accessory.

In many instances there have been produced works which reflect the highest honor upon our country. As it is foreign to the purpose of the present paper to deal with other than the different phases of landscape-painting, we forbear to speak as their merits suggest of the figure portions of the works of Mr. Rothermel, the result of his brief sojourn in Italy. In any passage of scenery, and particularly in sky forms and tones, the expression and character are always such as support vigorously the action of his group. We say vigorously; for Mr. Rothermel, in his Italian pictures, revealed an artistic nature related to humanity in its most agitated moods, as in the "Lear," and in the "Saint Agnese,"—this beautiful picture being, however, a higher conception, inasmuch as in it the spirit might find some rest in the stillness of the maiden Agnese, already saint and about to be martyr, and in the deep blue sky, on whose field linger white clouds, like lambs "shepherded by the slow unwilling winds."

Brief mention was made, in our allusion to Mr. Page's picture of the "Flight into Egypt," to its landscape. This work was executed in Rome, and its peculiar tone excited much interest among the friends of Mr. Field, its fortunate possessor. A beautiful, yet not altogether original idea, finds expression in the foreground group, where Mary, poised upon the back of the ass, folds the child in her arms, the animal snatches at a wayside weed, Joseph, drawing tightly the long rope by which he leads, bends away into the desert with weird energy. In all other representations of this subject the accessory landscape has usually been living with full-foliaged trees, abundant herbage, and copious streams. To indicate the Egyptian phase of its character, palms have been introduced, as in the beautiful picture by Claude in the Doria Gallery, and almost invariably the scene has been one of luxury and peace. But with the event itself all this conflicts. In it were sorrow and apprehension and death. The fugitives saw not then the safety, nor anticipated the victory. In this picture, beyond and before the hurrying group, stretches the immeasurable, hungry sand. A sad golden-brown haze— such as sometimes comes in our Indian summer, when the hectic autumn rests silent, mournful and hopeless, in the arms of Nature— pervades the plain; while on the horizon far away,— an infinite distance it seems, so strangely spectral are they,—rise the Pyramids, just those awful ghosts against the ominous sky!

As different as are the subjects he chooses are the bits of scenery Hamilton Wild introduces in his pictures of life as it

now is. His are more truly historical paintings, although aspiring to no record of the greatly bad and sorrowful transactions of our age. They represent the joy and hope of youth, the cheerfulness and vivacity of the lowly, their pleasantest pursuits, their most primitive customs, their characteristic and often superb costumes; and wherever a passage of scenery occurs, it is always that which has aided in developing the human life with which it is associated.

There is never a discrepancy, nor is unison of sentiment ever achieved by any bending of the truth. His keen sense of harmony never fails to perceive, in the infinite range of tones and expressions of Nature, just that which better than all others supports the character and action of his group. With motives so healthful, it may be less difficult to find that sympathy which Nature cheerfully gives; yet there is a tendency with artists to be enticed away from Nature's joyousness, and especially from her simplicity.

To this temptation Mr. Wild can never have been subjected. The freedom which he manifests is not that which has been won, but into which he must have been born, and with that grew the ability which transfigures labor into play. Unto such a Nature the out-world presents unasked her phases of joy and brightness, her light and life.

Does he seek Nature? No. Nature goes with him; and whether he tarry among the Lagoons, where all seems Art or Death, or in the shadow and desolation of the Campagna, in the unclean

villages of the Alban Hills, or where the shadows of deserted palaces fall black, broken, and jagged on the red earth of Granada, there she companions him. She shows him, that, after all, Venice is hers, and gives him the white marble enriched with subtilest films of gold, alabaster which the processes of her incessant years have changed to Oriental amber, a city made opalescent by the magic of her sunsets. At Rome she opens vistas away from the sepulchral, out into the wine-colored light of the Campagna, into the peace gladdened by larks and the bleating of lambs; above are pines,—Italian pines,—and across the path falls the still shadow of blooming oleanders. She leads away from squalid towns, and gathers a group of her children, —peasants, costumed in scarlet and gold, under the grape-laden festoons of vines, while the now distant village glows like cliffs of Carrara. How lavish she must have been of her old ideal Spain, the while he dwelt in Granada!—the dance of the gypsies; pomegranates heavy with ripeness hanging among the quivering glossy leaves; olives gleaming with soft ashy whiteness, as the south-wind wanders across their grove up to where the towers of the Alhambra lift golden and pale lilac against the clear sky.

We have dwelt thus lengthily upon this primitive and apparently less important branch of Landscape Art for several reasons: from a conviction that its importance is, and is only apparently less; from the fact that from it have been derived all other classes of landscape; and because a comprehension of its scope and purpose aids more than any other agency in

understanding those of the pure and simple Landscape Art.

We have seen Nature ever ready with moods so related to the soul that no ideal worthy of Art might be conceived beyond the range of her sympathies. Even to that event involving all the intensity of human thought and feeling, the last refinement of all spiritual emotion, and a sense of mysteries more sublime than the creation of worlds,—even to the Crucifixion,—Nature gathered herself, as the only possible sign, the only expression for men, then and forever, of the awful significance. The joyfulness of festivals, the pomp of processions, the sublimity of great martyrdoms, the sorrow of defeats, the peace of holiness, the innocence and sweetness of childhood, the hope of manhood, and the retrospection of old age, when represented upon the canvas, find in her forms and colors endless refrain of response.

This truth, that Nature is capable of such cooperation with the human, that she confines herself to no country or continent, and that her expressions are not relative, depending upon the suggestiveness of the human action to which they correspond, but are positive and under the rule of the immutable, enables the artist to evolve the first great class of simple landscape-painting.

Had Art always been real and artists ever true, this consideration must have called forth this class. It being true that natural scenery readily allies itself with representations of the human figure in order to express more perfectly than otherwise possible the ideal, it must be through affinity with that which evolves the ideal, and only by indirect relation to its sign or visible

manifestation in form-language. Then why not found a school of landscape by discarding the human figure as an element of expression? A man comes who is born to the easel, yet who feels no impulse to represent the practical effect upon human faces and limbs of the various emotions, passions, and sentiments which demand utterance. His thought is to hold himself to his kindred by more subtile and far more delicate bonds. He knows that any one can look upon the "Huguenot Lovers," by Millais, and feel responsive; for it occupies a great plane, a part of which may be mistaken for passion. But he feels that the love of Thekla and Max Piccolomini will permit no effigy but that sacred bank beyond the cliffs of Libussa's Castle, whither come no footsteps nor jarring of wheels, but only the sound of the deep Moldau and of remote bells. It is the essence of the ideal which compels his imagination, not the limited and restless circumstance which chanced to occur as its revelator. Then the day uprises as if conscious of his inner life and purpose. Then she gives him breadth after breadth of color, within which is traced her no longer mystic alphabet. How significant are the forms she gives him for the foreground, sweet monosyllables! There are pansies, and rue, and violets, and rosemary. Among these and their companions children walk and learn, and to the child-man, the artist to be, she proffers these emblems. Should he accept her gifts, then all this wonderful world of Art-Nature is open to him. He inherits, possesses beyond all deeds, above all statutes,—as does Mr. Gay, who painted that great, though unassuming,

picture of "The Marshes of Cohasset."

Because Art was not held to the highest, few men have known the elevation of this department of landscape-painting. Too deep or too devoted a life seems to have been required, too constant communion with Nature, or too broad a study of her phenomena. Unfortunately, we have few representatives of this class, in Italy, —Mr. Wild producing only rarely works which to the principles hinted at are precious illustrations. After the remarks we have made, we fear that allusion to the existing facts of painting may be deemed disparaging. Not so; we deprecate such a conclusion. One great and living picture marks the man. To be true to himself and Nature is the first duty, even should he be compelled to stand lifelong with his face towards the west, in order to possess his soul in Art.

One of the pleasantest styles of landscape painting is that where the artist, in a mood of deep peace, sits down in the midst of scenes endeared by long and sweet association, and records in all tenderness their spirit and beauty. Such scenery Italy affords, and the Alban Hills seem to be the centre whence radiate all phases of the lovely and beautiful in Nature. There her forms have conspired with all the highest and rarest phenomena of light to render her state unapproachably glorious.

There has also been given such an artist,—a woman altogether truthful, strong, and nobly delicate; and although several years have passed since she left Italy, her representations of scenery peculiarly Italian are too remarkable to be passed unnoticed.

Indeed, this lady, Miss Sarah Jane Clark, is the only artist whose works are illustrative of a style of simple Landscape Art which unites in itself the love and conscientiousness of early Art and the precision and science of the modern. Her picture of Albano is wonderful,—not from the rendering of unusual or brilliant effects, but from a sense of genuineness. We feel that it grew. The flower and leaf forms which enrich the near ground are such as spring up on days like the one she has chosen. Another month, and new combinations would have given another key to her work and rendered the present impossible. In that real landscape had wrought the secret vitality clothing the earth in leafage and bloom. In its representation we see that a still more refined, a diviner vitality, has evolved leaf, flower, and golden grain. Another fact associated with this painting, as well as with some of its companions, is its character of restraint.

Temperance in Landscape Art is very difficult in the vicinity of Rome. In this picture the scene sweeps downward, with most gentle and undulating inclination, over vast groves of olive and luxuriant vineyards, to the Campagna with its convex waves of green and gold, on which float the wrecks of cities, out to the sea itself, not so far away as to conceal the flashing of waves upon the beach. Daily, over this groundwork, so deftly wrought for their reception, are cast fields and mighty bands of violet and rose, of amber and pale topaz, of blue, orange, and garnet, upon the sea. It is as if an aurora had fallen from Arctic skies, living, changeful, evanescent, athwart sea, plain, and mountain.

Here is sore temptation for the colorist; more, perhaps, than by the wealth and combination of tints, he is affected by their celestial quality. All is prismatic, or like those hues produced by the interference of rays of light as seen in the colors of stars. Gorgeous as are these phenomena, they are also as transitory; and although the scene is repeated, it is with such subtile and such great changes as to remove it from the grasp of the painter who wishes to study his work wholly from Nature. The eye must be quick and the brush obedient, to catch the fleeting glories of those Alban sunsets. Even the imperial hand of Turner could give us only reminiscences.

The allurements to adopt a style of coloring involving these effects must have been great to one whose love of color amounted to a passion. Only a still greater love could have drawn her of whom we speak to the more subdued, but higher plane upon which she stands,—and that must have been a love of truth, and of that which has appealed to her nature through repetition's sweet influences. This is the scene lying in deep repose in open, permanent day. Trees, hills, plain, and sea forget the flying hours. Yesterday they did not remember, serene and changeless as ivy on the wall. So gradual has been the transition, so slowly has the surface of the grain lifted from the rippling blade to the billowy stalk, so continually have the scarlet poppies bloomed since May came, that, to her, this is ever the same beneficent and dear spot, sacred to her soul, as well as fitting type and sign of her pure Art.

The class of landscape-painting which deals with morning

and evening phenomena, and is based upon the fleeting and transitory, is the only one that finds representation at present in Italy. Mr. Brown has developed new and peculiar strength since his return to America, and must require place from his new standpoint. Abel Nichols, whose copies of Claude were so truthful, and whose original pictures ever strove to be so, who through surpassing sacrifice became great, who lived, if ever man has, the wonderful Christ-life, now sleeps the sleep of peace, the last peace, under the sod of the landscape of his nativity.

There remains to be considered a series of undeniably remarkable pictures, executed in Rome by John Rollin Tilton.

This artist's landscapes are remarkable for the conflicting effects which they have produced on the public. They have excited, as they have been exhibited in his studio in Rome, great enthusiasm, and admiration which would listen to no criticism. Until perhaps the present year, which is one of prostration in Rome, his works could not be purchased, each one being the fulfilment of a commission given long before. These commissions were given not by men merely wealthy, but by men widely known for cultivation, discrimination, and for refinement of that taste which requires the influences of Art. On the other hand, men equally as remarkable for their accomplishments in matters of taste have expressed their condemnation of all the paintings of Mr. Tilton, or rather for those executed prior to 1859, and there were those who heaped them with ridicule. In admiration and condemnation we have often shared;—in the

sentiment of ridicule never; for in all attempts there have been the hintings of worthy purpose and a desire to excel.

Those who most despise Mr. Tilton's style and productions are men whose tendencies are to the theories of English pre-Raphaelism. Viewed in relation to those principles, his pictures have little value. The purchasers of them are the men who regard with enthusiastic admiration the evanescent splendors of Nature.

Mr. Tilton's early ambition was to be the painter to fulfil the demands of this latter class. He not only sympathized with it in its greater admiration for "effects" in Nature, but he found associated therewith an enthusiasm which inspired him with unbounded hope and energy.

When he came to Rome, the Campagnian sunsets were found to be representative of the peculiar class of effects which he regarded as the manifestation of his feeling; and so he forthwith took possession of that part of the day which was passing while the sun performed the last twelve degrees of his daily journey. Other portions of the twenty-four hours did not appear to excite even ordinary interest; and whenever conversation involved consideration of scenery under other than the favorite character, he was prone to silence, or to attempts to change the subject. Yet he has been known to speak in terms of commendation of certain sunrises, and once was actually caught by a friend making a sketch of Pilatus at sunrise across the Lake of Lucerne.

The objects in the immediate foreground shared in the neglect which attached to certain seasons. They were ignored as

organized members of what should be a living foreground, and their places were concealed by unintelligible pigment. As to life there, he wanted none: light,—light that gleams, and color to reflect it, were his aim. As an inevitable attending result of these principles, or practices, the structure of the whole landscape was ambiguous. The essential line and point were evaded, and one perceived that the artist had *watched* far more attentively than he had studied Nature.

At the same time the pictures produced in this studio were marked by qualities of great beauty. The peculiarly ethereal character of the vast bands of thin vapors made visible by the slant rays of the sun, and illuminated with tints which are exquisitely pure and prismatic, was rendered with surprising success. On examination, the tints which were used to represent the prismatic character of those of Nature were found to present surfaces of such excessive delicacy, that the evanescence of the natural phenomena was suggested, and apprehensions were indulged as to the permanency of the effects. That noble north light of a cloudless Roman sky did not extend far, hardly to Civita Vecchia, certainly not to England, Old or New; and with a less friendly hand than his own to expose his work, under sight still less kind, there might be presented a picture bereft of all but its faults. Such has been the case.

We here dismiss willingly further recollection of the works to which we have called attention. They are marked by error in theory, inasmuch as they show neglect of the specific and

essential, and by feebleness of system, inasmuch as under no other light than that in which they were painted could their finer qualities be perceived. Yet it is but just to add that these were produced during a state of transition from one method of applying pigments to another of totally different character.

This period of the painter's experience was brought to a close by the better one of a summer residence at Pieve di Cadore, a village among the Friulian Alps. Thither he might have gone merely to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of Titian; for other reason than *that* he stayed in Cadore. He stayed for life, truth, and correction, and he found all. No other place on the continent could have afforded Mr. Tilton the benefit that this mountain village did. Here was no ambiguity, no optical illusion, but frank; ingenuous Nature. The peaks which guarded the valley were clear and immutable. They suffered no conflicting opinions; accident had done little to disguise, their true character, but Nature held them as specimens of the essential in mountain structure. That the lesson of these peaks might not be forgotten, the student finds them copied accurately in nearly every landscape painted by Titian. The magnificent one in "The Presentation in the Temple" was his favorite. The sketches of this period show that the artist's attention was divided between the study of these hill forms and of the luxuriant vegetation of the sloping fields and pastures so characteristic of Swiss scenery. Cadore is most richly endowed in this respect. The hill-sides are burdened with flowers, many of which are large and of tropical

splendor. The green of the broad fields is modified by the burden of blossoms. We have seen against the background of one of these steepest fields what seemed to be a column of delicate blue smoke wreathing up the hill-side. In reality it was a bed of wild forget-me-nots, which marked the course of a minute rill. Under such influences as these, a man born to be a painter, to whom Art is all, whose hand never fails to execute, and whose mind has risen above any erroneous combination of principles which may have checked his progress toward the greatly excellent, must find himself with new strength, a chastened imagination, and broader conceptions of his art.

The results of Mr. Tilton's labors since the summer in the Alps prove that such was the effect upon him. His pictures have of late occupied nearly every class of Landscape Art. The works now wrought in his Roman studio are indicative of great changes in feeling, and are marked by surprising improvements in execution. Yet the individuality of the artist is impressed upon every canvas. The changes to which we refer are these,—foregrounds suggested by or painted from living forms. In one view of Nemi we saw a superb black, gold, and crimson butterfly resting on a flower. Yet these foregrounds require more strength, more "body," more of that which artists achieve who achieve nothing else. We notice far more individualism in tree forms. The ideal tree, that is, the tree as it should be, and the conventional one coming against the sky on one side of the composition, the one bequeathed by Claude, have given place to Nature's homelier

types. The question as to the meaning of passages no longer arises. The lines are drawn with a decision, with a sense of certainty, raising them above all doubt. In the rendering of distant mountains, Mr. Dillon evinces new knowledge of what such forms necessarily imply,—their tendency to monotone and to flatness, yet preserving all their essential surface markings, and their inevitable cutting outline against the sky,—which sharpness Mr. Tilton as yet has only hinted at, not represented. Positive edges are the true.—But we have no further space to devote to these particulars of landscape form. In these Mr. Tilton has many rivals and not a few superiors.

There is left us the pleasant privilege of alluding to an ability which we believe he shares with none, and which enables him to give his present pictures their great value. This is the power to discriminate accurately between the several classes of color,—the local, the reflected, and the prismatic. It will be found on reference to most landscapes, especially those of the English schools, that it is the understanding, already informed on the subject, which accepts as reflected the continual attempts to render this kind of color: they are regarded as indicative. But the eye, which should have been satisfied first, recognizes nothing more than local coloring. Near objects, under broad, open daylight, yield us their local coloring,—as the surfaces of stones, the trunks of trees, and the many tints of soil and vegetation,—yet even here all is modified by reflections. We remember a cliff at L'Ariccia, which, gray in morning light,

became, as evening approached, a marvellous beryl green, upon which some large poppies cast wafts of purest scarlet. Farther away, both local and reflected color lose their power. The rays no longer convey information of surfaces as separate existences. Nature gathers up into masses, and these masses tide back to the foreground colors far removed in character from the near. Vast combinations of rays and atmospheric influences have wrought this change. As we have said, noon gives us the earth clean and itself; but, as the sun declines, flushes of color pass along the ground. Their character we have already described. The particles which fill the atmosphere just above the surface of the earth become illuminated and visible in radiant masses. Farther away there is floated over the mountains a miraculous bloom, a bloom like that upon virgin fruit; and still more remote, upon the far sea, there is a dream of amber mantling the sleeping blue. To render these effects, to give us the illuminated air, the soft green which the mossy sod casts upon the shaded cliff, the precious bloom upon the hills, and the tints diffused along the sea,—to achieve this so completely that there never shall be any doubt, to give us upon the canvas what shall be all this to the beholder, is great, and this Mr. Tilton has performed.

THE EXPERIENCES OF THE A. C

"Bridgeport! Change cars for the Naugatuck Railroad!" shouted the conductor of the New York and Boston Express Train, on the evening of May 27th, 1858. Indeed, he does it every night, (Sundays excepted,) for that matter; but as this story refers especially to Mr. J. Edward Johnson, who was a passenger on that train, on the aforesaid evening, I make special mention of the fact. Mr. Johnson, carpet-bag in hand, jumped upon the platform, entered the office, purchased a ticket for Waterbury, and was soon whirling in the Naugatuck train towards his destination.

On reaching Waterbury, in the soft spring twilight, Mr. Johnson walked up and down in front of the station, curiously scanning the faces of the assembled crowd. Presently he noticed a gentleman who was performing the same operation upon the faces of the alighting passengers. Throwing himself directly in the way of the latter, the two exchanged a steady gaze.

"Is your name Billings?" "Is your name Johnson?" were simultaneous questions, followed by the simultaneous exclamations,—"Ned!" "Enos!"

Then there was a crushing grasp of hands, repeated after a pause, in testimony of ancient friendship, and Mr. Billings, returning to practical life, asked,—

"Is that all your baggage? Come, I have a buggy here: Eunice

has heard the whistle, and she'll be impatient to welcome you."

The impatience of Eunice (Mrs. Billings, of course) was not of long duration; for in five minutes thereafter she stood at the door of her husband's chocolate-colored villa, receiving his friend.

While these three persons are comfortably seated at the tea-table, enjoying their waffles, cold tongue, and canned peaches, and asking and answering questions helter-skelter in the delightful confusion of reunion after long separation, let us briefly inform the reader who and what they are.

Mr. Enos Billings, then, was part owner of a manufactory of metal buttons, forty years old, of middling height, ordinarily quiet and rather shy, but with a large share of latent warmth and enthusiasm in his nature. His hair was brown, slightly streaked with gray, his eyes a soft, dark hazel, forehead square, eyebrows straight, nose of no very marked character, and mouth moderately full, with a tendency to twitch a little at the corners. His voice was undertoned, but mellow and agreeable.

Mrs. Eunice Billings, of nearly equal age, was a good specimen of the wide-awake New-England woman. Her face had a piquant smartness of expression, which might have been refined into a sharp edge, but for her natural hearty good-humor. Her head was smoothly formed, her face a full oval, her hair and eyes blond and blue in a strong light, but brown and steel-gray at other times, and her complexion of that ripe fairness into which a ruddier color will sometimes fade. Her form, neither plump

nor spare, had yet a firm, elastic compactness, and her slightest movement conveyed a certain impression of decision and self-reliance.

As for J. Edward Johnson, it is enough to say that he was a tall, thin gentleman of forty-five, with an aquiline nose, narrow face, and military whiskers, which swooped upwards and met under his nose in a glossy black moustache. His complexion was dark, from the bronzing of fifteen summers in New Orleans. He was a member of a wholesale hardware firm in that city, and had now revisited his native North for the first time since his departure. A year before, some letters relating to invoices of metal buttons, signed "Foster, Kirkup, & Co., per Enos Billings," had accidentally revealed to him the whereabouts of the old friend of his youth, with whom we now find him domiciled. The first thing he did, after attending to some necessary business matters in New York, was to take the train for Waterbury.

"Enos," said he, as he stretched out his hand for the third cup of tea, (which he had taken only for the purpose of prolonging the pleasant table-chat,) "I wonder which of us is most changed."

"You, of course," said Mr. Billings, "with your brown face and big moustache. Your own brother wouldn't have known you, if he had seen you last, as I did, with smooth cheeks and hair of unmerciful length. Why, not even your voice is the same!"

"That is easily accounted for," replied Mr. Johnson. "But in your case, Enos, I am puzzled to find where the difference lies. Your features seem to be but little changed, now that I can

examine them at leisure; yet it is not the same face. But, really, I never looked at you for so long a time, in those days. I beg pardon: you used to be so—so remarkably shy."

Mr. Billings blushed slightly, and seemed at a loss what to answer. His wife, however, burst into a merry laugh, exclaiming, —

"Oh, that was before the days of the A.C.!"

He, catching the infection, laughed also: in fact, Mr. Johnson laughed, but without knowing why.

"The 'A.C.'!" said Mr. Billings. "Bless me, Eunice! how long it is since we have talked of that summer! I had almost forgotten that there ever was an A.C."

"Enos, *could* you ever forget Abel Mallory and the beer?—or that scene between Hollins and Shelldrake?—or" (here *she* blushed the least bit) "your own fit of candor?" And she laughed again, more heartily than ever.

"What a precious lot of fools, to be sure!" exclaimed her husband.

Mr. Johnson, meanwhile, though enjoying the cheerful humor of his hosts, was not a little puzzled with regard to its cause.

"What is the A.C.?" he ventured to ask.

Mr. and Mrs. Billings looked at each other, and smiled, without replying.

"Really, Ned," said the former, finally, "the answer to your question involves the whole story."

"Then why not tell him the whole story, Enos?" remarked his

wife.

"You know I've never told it yet, and it's rather a hard thing to do, seeing that I'm one of the heroes of the farce,—for it wasn't even genteel comedy, Ned," said Mr. Billings. "However," he continued, "absurd as the story may seem, it's the only key to the change in my life, and I must run the risk of being laughed at."

"I'll help you through, Enos," said his wife, encouragingly; "and besides, my *rôle* in the farce was no better than yours. Let us resuscitate, for to-night only, the constitution of the A.C."

"Upon my word, a capital idea! But we shall have to initiate Ned."

Mr. Johnson merrily agreeing, he was blindfolded and conducted into another room. A heavy arm-chair, rolling on casters, struck his legs in the rear, and he sank into it with lamb-like resignation.

"Open your mouth!" was the command, given with mock solemnity.

He obeyed.

"Now shut it!"

And his lips closed upon a cigar, while at the same time the handkerchief was whisked away from his eyes. He found himself in Mr. Billings's library.

"Your nose betrays your taste, Mr. Johnson," said the lady, "and I am not hard-hearted enough to deprive you of the indulgence. Here are matches."

"Well," said he, acting upon the hint, "if the remainder of the

ceremonies are equally agreeable, I should like to be a permanent member of your order."

By this time Mr. and Mrs. Billings, having between them lighted the lamp, stirred up the coal in the grate, closed the doors, and taken possession of comfortable chairs, the latter proclaimed,—

"The Chapter (isn't that what you call it?) will now be held!"

"Was it in '43 when you left home, Ned?" asked Mr. B.

"Yes."

"Well, the A.C. culminated in '45. You remember something of the society of Norridgeport, the last winter you were there? Abel Mallory, for instance?"

"Let me think a moment," said Mr. Johnson, reflectively. "Really, it seems like looking back a hundred years. Mallory,—wasn't that the sentimental young man, with wispy hair, a tallowy skin, and big, sweaty hands, who used to be spouting Carlyle on the 'reading evenings' at Shelldrake's? Yes, to be sure; and there was Hollins, with his clerical face and infidel talk,—and Pauline Ringtop, who used to say, 'The Beautiful is the Good.' I can still hear her shrill voice singing, 'Would that *I* were beautiful, would that *I* were fair!'"

There was a hearty chorus of laughter at poor Miss Ringtop's expense.

It harmed no one, however; for the tar-weed was already thick over her Californian grave.

"Oh, I see," said Mr. Billings, "you still remember the

absurdities of those days. In fact, I think you partially saw through them then. But I was younger, and far from being so clear-headed, and I looked upon those evenings at Shelldrake's as being equal, at least, to the *symposia* of Plato. Something in Mallory always repelled me. I detested the sight of his thick nose, with the flaring nostrils, and his coarse, half-formed lips, of the bluish color of raw corned-beef. But I looked upon these feelings as unreasonable prejudices, and strove to conquer them, seeing the admiration which he received from others. He was an oracle on the subject of 'Nature.' Having eaten nothing for two years, except Graham bread, vegetables without salt, and fruits, fresh or dried, he considered himself to have attained an antediluvian purity of health,—or that he would attain it, so soon as two pimples on his left temple should have healed. These pimples he looked upon as the last feeble stand made by the pernicious juices left from the meat he had formerly eaten and the coffee he had drunk. His theory was, that through a body so purged and purified none but true and natural impulses could find access to the soul. Such, indeed, was the theory we all held. A Return to Nature was the near Millennium, the dawn of which we already beheld in the sky. To be sure, there was a difference in our individual views as to how this should be achieved, but we were all agreed as to what the result should be.

"I can laugh over those days now, Ned; but they were really happy while they lasted. We were the salt of the earth; we were lifted above those grovelling instincts which we saw manifested

in the lives of others. Each contributed his share of gas to inflate the painted balloon to which we all clung, in the expectation that it would presently soar with us to the stars. But it only went up over the out-houses, dodged backwards and forwards two or three times, and finally flopped down with us into a swamp."

"And that balloon was the A. C.?" suggested Mr. Johnson.

"As President of this Chapter, I prohibit questions," said Eunice. "And, Enos, don't send up your balloon until the proper time. Don't anticipate the programme, or the performance will be spoiled."

"I had almost forgotten that Ned is so much in the dark," her obedient husband answered. "You can have but a slight notion," he continued, turning to his friend, "of the extent to which this sentimental, or transcendental, element in the little circle at Shelldrake's increased after you left Norridgeport. We read the 'Dial,' and Emerson; we believed in Alcott as the 'purple Plato' of modern times; we took psychological works out of the library, and would listen for hours to Hollins while he read Schelling or Fichte, and then go home with a misty impression of having imbibed infinite wisdom. It was, perhaps, a natural, though very eccentric rebound from the hard, practical, unimaginative New-England mind which surrounded us; yet I look back upon it with a kind of wonder. I was then, as you know, unformed mentally, and might have been so still, but for the experiences of the A. C."

Mr. Johnson shifted his position, a little impatiently. Eunice looked at him with laughing eyes, and shook her finger with a

mock threat.

"Shelldrake," continued Mr. Billings, without noticing this by-play, "was a man of more pretence than real cultivation, as I afterwards discovered. He was in good circumstances, and always glad to receive us at his house, as this made him, virtually, the chief of our tribe, and the outlay for refreshments involved only the apples from his own orchard and water from his well. There was an entire absence of conventionality at our meetings, and this, compared with the somewhat stiff society of the village, was really an attraction. There was a mystic bond of union in our ideas: we discussed life, love, religion, and the future state, not only with the utmost candor, but with a warmth of feeling which, in many of us, was genuine. Even I (and you know how painfully shy and bashful I was) felt myself more at home there than in my father's house; and if I didn't talk much, I had a pleasant feeling of being in harmony with those who did.

"Well, 'twas in the early part of '45,—I think in April,—when we were all gathered together, discussing, as usual, the possibility of leading a life in accordance with Nature. Abel Mallory was there, and Hollins, and Miss Ringtop, and Faith Levis, with her knitting,—and also Eunice Hazleton, a lady whom you have never seen, but you may take my wife as her representative"–

"Stick to the programme, Enos," interrupted Mrs. Billings.

"Eunice Hazleton, then. I wish I could recollect some of the speeches made on that occasion. Abel had but one pimple on his temple, (there was a purple spot where the other had been,) and

was estimating that in two or three months more he would be a true, unspoiled man. His complexion, nevertheless, was more clammy and whey-like than ever.

"'Yes,' said he, 'I also am an Arcadian! This false dual existence which I have been leading will soon be merged in the unity of Nature. Our lives must conform to her sacred law. Why can't we strip off these hollow Shams,' (he made great use of that word,) 'and be our true selves, pure, perfect, and divine?'

"Miss Ringtop heaved a sigh, and repeated a stanza from her favorite poet:—

> "'Ah, when wrecked are my desires
> On the everlasting Never,
> And my heart with all its fires
> Out forever,
> In the cradle of Creation
> Finds the soul resuscitation!'

"Shelldrake, however, turning to his wife, said,—

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.