

MASTER BARTLEMY

OR

THE THANKFUL HEART. *

By FRANCIS E. CROMPTON.

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(Continued.)

And once more I was a child again ; and I beheld the Good Shepherd, even as I thought of Him when I was a child, coming through the lilies in the grass, with little children, as it were lambs, gathered about Him. He said, "Thou hast learned a while in My school. My child, now see the end of thy learning," and I awoke. It was a blessed dream.

"Only may this work be first finished," said the priest.

"It is finished even now," he said ; and he laid down his tools for the last time.

"It lay complete before them, twelve panels of oak, wrought as men had never seen the like in all the countryside, for the great master had spent upon them all the gathered skill, and patience, and love of a lifetime. Upon each panel the figure of a holy apostle ; and round about a fret of leaves and flowers, as it were for beauty ; and at the foot of each panel a border of corn, for service ; and above each an angel's head with wings, for praise, and in his hands a palm for victory ; and humbly wrought in a hidden corner the sign of the carver's own hand, a heart, as it were for thanksgiving.

"It is finished," he said. "I have not achieved the half I had designed to do ; but He who has deigned to have need of my work, will also call me there, where, having here learned awhile, I may in fuller knowledge make an end."

"And he looked up and smiled.

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