

have wasted too much time already, so I shall begin to-morrow, and you will help me."

"Help you," I said, and Raffaello laughed the liquid laugh of his race, as he linked his arm in mine and together we went home.

That evening we sat in the purple twilight, musing, while the soft tinkle of a mandolin and the echo of a man's voice singing an amorous Italian strain came to us, mellowed by the distance; and a crowd of merry-makers passing beneath our casement saw the face of Raffaello framed by the jasmine flowers and called to him; while a dusky eyed creature flung up to him the pomegranate flower she had worn at her throat.

Raffaello smiled, a smile half scornful, half tender, and left the blossom lying neglected where it had fallen; for no woman's face or smile, among the beautiful women of Florence, had ever moved his pure serenity of heart, though many admired him, and had plainly shown their admiration.

I spoke that night on this very subject, and I remember, he answered in his characteristic fashion.

"There is but one woman in this world that I have ever loved, and that woman, peerlessly beautiful with a fair English beauty, as pure as an Easter lily, was my mother. When she lay dying she commended me to the care of that other Mother, the Virgin Mary, and made me promise never to forget her, nor cease to love her, the Spotted One. I have not forgotten that promise, and prefer the divine love to that selfish, vain attachment which men call human love."

I have said before that he was very devout, and our conversation, no matter where or when it would take place, if we two were alone together, would inevitably turn upon religion. By some people my companion would have been deemed a fanatic, but every one who has come in contact with them knows that the Italians are an innately religious people.

To see Raffaello and myself, standing with uncovered heads (he insisted upon my complying) while the bells rang the Angelus hour might have, nay, would have, caused comment in any other country, but passed unnoticed in Florence.

The days that followed were busy ones for him, and knowing that he wished to be undisturbed, I went quietly about my own affairs during working hours. Our evenings we would spend at church or reading, for my fellow artist would never work by artificial light, and laid aside his brushes and colors when the sun sank behind the hills.

In the still church, with its ruby lamp which swung before the tabernacle, I would feel strangely at rest, while he knelt before the small altar of the Sacred Heart, like a figure carved in stone, so still, so rapt was he.

Now at this distant date, now that the Church calls me her child, I believe that God designed our friendship as the means of turning me from the path of blindness, as the instrument of my conversion; and surely no man had a fairer example than had I in the life of my friend, a creature whose very gifts, had they not been united to so pure a soul, would have proved his own destruction.

One evening, when we came out of the shadowy church, Raffaello said: "I will show you my work to-night. It is finished, but I am not satisfied."

He entered the studio first, and procured a light, then took up his brushes and tubes of paint.

"You may be able to suggest some improvement. Now look!"

He lifted up the curtain which hung before it, and I stepped a little further back.

I was amazed. There was the "Ecce Homo,"—there was the masterpiece, and to my eyes it seemed a marvellous thing. It shone out like some beautiful unmet gem, a work far beyond what I had imagined it would be, and so I told Raffaello as he stood looking upon it, with a strange expression upon his face.

He did not answer. He poised the blender, heavy with burnt sienna, and without warning, and before I could prevent the action, had swept it across that peerless picture, and a meaning less daub blotted out the sacred lineaments.

"Raffaello!" I cried, in horror. He dropped the curtain over his work and faced me. His own face was white beneath its olive tint, and the brushes snapped beneath the fierce grasp of his slender brown fingers.

and now you reproach me," I said, watching his face closely as I spoke. The flush of passion had faded and left him weary-looking, but the light of passion still burned in his eyes.

"Listen," he cried, springing up from the low couch where he had flung himself, and grasping me by the arm, "I will paint another which will not be a failure. The new picture, the new 'Ecce Homo,' shall hang above Peronelli's statue in the church, and then my work in the world will be complete. The picture will not fail, for I will pray with more fervor to Him, and He will help me!"

"My dear Raffaello, if the new picture surpasses the work you destroyed to-night, it will be divine."

"Divine! That is it! A mere mortal endeavoring to paint divine beauty, divine tenderness, and divine agony! Presumption! I am a fool and have been ungrateful to you, my best friend!"

"That was our first and last quarrel, and the matter was never mentioned between us again. He began another 'Ecce Homo,' and, as before, I left him to his work, untrammelled by my society. Again the days fled away, but the time he gave to his employment was much longer than it had been before. We still frequented the church during leisure hours, and he always knelt before the Sacred Heart. Often I have imagined that I saw the 'Ecce Homo' hanging there before him, and then it seemed strangely out of harmony to my mind for both to be there at the same time—the beautiful pictured face, and the creature who had blended those exquisite tints upon the canvas.

The memorable, long-awaited evening came at last. It gives me pain to write this passage of the story, for it brings back painful remembrances. Again, as on that other night, we stood before the curtained picture. Raffaello was flushed and excited. With one nervous hand he brushed back the curtain, and I saw his work.

At this moment I feel again the choking sensation that rose in my throat, and I know my heart beat painfully.

"It speaks," I said huskily, and he gave a smothered, satisfied sigh. We both stood gazing upon that wonderful work, silent, and then Raffaello spoke:

"I feel as if I had done my best, and I have worked hard upon it. I have tried to do it justice."

He went close to the picture, and as he turned his face toward me again I was struck by the great delicacy of his features. Raffaello looked worn, and there were deep shadows beneath his lustrous eyes; but the painting drew my attention again, and I said nothing.

Such beautiful tenderness, such agony shone in that pictured face that I am not ashamed to own that something like tears dimmed my eyes. Every line was perfect, and the entire work was replete with, and seemed to breathe forth, all the intensity, the passionate love which the young artist entertained for the divine Original.

"It breathes," I whispered, "my dear Raffaello, you will be famous. Your dream has been realized. It is sublime, and I feel honored and happy to have been the first permitted to glance at that peerless face."

"You think I could not improve upon it?" he asked wistfully.

"No. It is perfect, and I am proud to clasp the hand that executed it."

He gave my fingers a swift pressure, and I could see that he was moved by my scant words of praise. I did not tell him half of what I thought. I could not tell him how the expression of that face had shaken my composure; how the eyes followed and haunted me with their unspoken agony.

Nothing remains of that beautiful work now but a memory which to me, at least, is most painfully vivid.

Raffaello had dropped upon one knee with an almost adoring look upon his face.

"Look at it, just once again," he cried, joyously, "and then we will go to His altar, and I shall thank Him there."

his expression of purity and serenity, gazing down upon those devout worshippers.

I could have wept at the thought of losing him, but outwardly I was very calm.

"Then we shall no longer be David and Jonathan," I remarked, and Raffaello pressed my arm.

It was he who had given us the names one day, after he had read to me the story of the two young men who loved each other with love "passing that of woman."

"We shall always be the same, though our paths be different," Raffaello replied, and I saw that his eyes were dim with tears. "We shall always love each other—like David and Jonathan of old."

His voice trembled, and just as we reached the church door, he turned and faced me, grasping my hands in his, which were cold as ice. "Dear Edgardo, I shall pray for you to-night—pray that you will embrace the faith, my best, my truest and sincerest friend."

We entered the dimly lit church, where there were but few worshippers, and he went to his usual place before the statue of the Sacred Heart, while I remained in the rear, enveloped in shadow.

I watched him as he knelt in prayer, his head bowed upon his hands which rested upon the narrow railing, and the sculptured fingers of the statue outstretched above his head, as if in the act of blessing the young devotee.

From Raffaello, my eyes wandered to the main altar with its tall candles and sweeping draperies, and the flowers which filled the vases and made the air heavy with their sweetness.

From the vestry a black-robed priest noiselessly came forth, and he too knelt in voiceless prayer. I watched him idly, though I could not see his face until he looked toward the spot where my friend was kneeling motionless. I noticed how boyish looking the clergyman was, and wondered how any one, so young as he appeared to be could give up everything in the world and bury himself, as it were, just as life was opening for him. I followed his glance, and saw that Raffaello had not changed his position, and then my eyes returned to the priestly figure, who at that moment made the sign of the Cross, and stole away as silently and softly as he had come.

The moments had not seemed long to me, yet I intuitively knew that the hour had grown late and took out my watch to note the time. The obscurity prevented me from seeing the position of the hand, so I moved further toward the altar before which swung the gold lamp, and by the light of its red beam- ing saw that it was later than I had imagined.

I did not like to disturb Raffaello at his devotions, but I knew that he was worn out from his long labor, and needed rest. I went up and gently touched him on the shoulder. He did not seem to feel the pressure of my fingers, so I pulled him gently by the sleeve.

He swayed lightly but did not relax the firm grasp of his hands upon the railing. I was growing impatient and shook him, this time a little roughly. The fingers slipped from their place, and like a lily that falls to broken, Raffaello sank back into my arms, mute—his countenance illumined with a smile of exquisite happiness, and his lustrous eyes wide and staring—dead.

I knew that it was death, his slender hands were so cold—a dreadful coldness which sent its chill shaft to my heart. My eyes burned, the blood rushed throbbing to my brain, and there, with those unseeing eyes turned to mine, I, the stolid, the unimaginative Englishman, wept, as I have never wept since, as any woman might weep over her beloved dead.

Kindly hands assisted me in the work of preparation for burial. Raffaello's many friends heaped flowers upon his coffin, and their eyes grew dim when they rested upon his still form. On the day of his burial, the wonderful painting, the "Ecce Homo" for which he had given his life, hung above the altar of the Sacred Heart, where he had wished to see it; and dark-eyed women sobbed heart breakingly, and men brushed the tears from eyes unused to weeping, as it shone down upon them from the wall.

Raffaello had died of heart failure, brought on by excessive and too close application to his work which was too great a burden for his delicate constitution to bear.

When robbing him for the grave I found resting upon his breast a small golden heart, attached to a chain of Italian workmanship. Upon the triangle were engraved the words: "Cuore di Gesù"—the words which had been full of sweetness to him. The pendant heart, with its delicate chain, I now wear, and it has never been removed since that day—years ago—when the waters of baptism were poured upon my head.

When the time comes for me to die I ask that it be left untouched.

This is the story which I set out to tell you—the story of a man who "was in the world, but not of the world," whose love was all given to that Divine Heart, whose emblem he had worn.

The "Ecce Homo" had been all that Raffaello had dreamed, and to me it has seemed to speak with those lips which let fall such golden truths in the days of His glorious mission upon earth.

upon and studied the "Ecce Homo." It was not for fame nor gold that he had labored upon it, but rather from love of that divine Face, to which painters had never done justice.

The body of my companion, Raffaello Anati, has long since returned to dust, but the memory of his chaste and holy life, the remembrance of his beautiful personality, remain with me until death shall still the throbbing of my pulse. With these remembrances also remains with me that visible link binding me to the old days in Florence, the precious golden head, bearing the words I had heard Raffaello breathe tenderly so many times—"Cuore di Gesù."—Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

"QUESTION BOX."

Father O'Connor in Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times.

Less variety and a tendency to return to some of the questions previously disposed of marked the queries answered at St. Teresa's last Sunday evening by Rev. Joseph V. O'Connor.

C. A. H. asked if the Church granted a divorce to Napoleon Bonaparte or sanctioned his marriage to Marie Louise of Austria.

The answer was "no" to each question.

"Irishman" took exception to remarks of the lecturer on a previous evening, which he interpreted as favoring women's suffrage.

He was told that there is no valid argument against the fitness of the female sex to vote.

Mary L. F., who had been given lay baptism by a Catholic nurse when in danger of death in infancy, asked if she is a Catholic.

A person baptized by a Catholic under such circumstances is not bound because of that fact to become a Catholic without previous instruction as to the doctrines of the Church. All Christians are, however, bound to hear the Church.

"What was St. Valentine a real saint and what had he to do with love letters?"

He was a priest and martyr. It is related of him that he was in the habit of distributing pious mottoes and short prayers, which he transcribed with his own hand.

"I thought that Catholic saints did not believe in marriage."

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament. There are very many canonized saints who sanctified themselves in the marriage state.

A Catholic Student of the University of Pennsylvania "asked several questions concerning what appear to be conflicting duties owed to his Church and to his college."

"Does the Archbishop prohibit Catholics attending the U. of P. from joining the Greek letter fraternities?"

The general principle is that societies not formally condemned are tolerated by the Church. There is, however, a non secret Greek letter fraternity, and it may have a "chapter" at Pennsylvania.

"Is it proper to attend the chapel exercises before lectures, as required by the dean?"

Attendance at college prayers as mere obedience to the discipline of the institution is not considered a denial of the faith, especially if you are known as a Catholic. Soldiers, sailors and others are not guilty of sin in being present at compulsory service.

P. B. W. (1) "If the Church is infallible, it seems strange that no one knows where infallibility resides. Sometimes it's the General Council with the Pope as the first Council of Nice; next, the Council with the Pope, and finally, the Pope without the Council."

No Catholic has ever questioned the infallibility of decretal decrees of General Councils approved of by the Pope. The Council of Nice referred to was presided over by Papal legates and its decrees approved by the Pope.

"Nobody seems to know how, when or under what conditions the Pope is infallible. We must wait for an infallible council to define the infallibility of an infallible Pope."

Catholics have a clear idea of a Papal definition *ex cathedra*. Cardinal Newman thought that the conditions and accompaniments of a Papal definition of faith were subjects for conciliary examination. The Vatican Council which has only been suspended will take up this subject.

"The Church of Rome acknowledges her own limitation when she says she is only infallible in the exposition of truth already revealed. If truths are revealed we do not need infallibility. It is absurd for men to declare God's word infallible, as if God needed human authority."

Revelation needs an infallible interpreter, if it is to be revelation, i. e., the certain knowledge of God's meaning conveyed to individuals. The Bible contains God's revelation, but private and fallibly interpreted it is made to signify a thousand contradictory things.

"Confession was not made a sacrament until the Fourth Council of Lateran."

That Council's act was to make it obligatory at least once a year, and such an act presupposes the existence of the sacrament.

humble and sure confidence that our sins are really and truly forgiven is a consolation far greater than the salutary pain we feel in confession. As to the use made of the secrets of the confessional, can an instance of such be shown in all the centuries of the Church's history?

"Episcopalian" thought it rather late in the day for the Church to complain of the Church of England having a sovereign as its head, when the Church of the Middle Ages acknowledged Constantine, Charlemagne and other Emperors who appointed Bishops including the Bishop of Rome. "Christ is the only real head of the Church, and next to Him is the civil ruler or government of a Christian nation."

The Catholic Church has never recognized spiritual jurisdiction in a temporal sovereign. Kings and Governments may nominate Bishops and other Church dignitaries, but cannot appoint them or give them spiritual jurisdiction. This has always been the faith of the Catholic Church before and after the "Reformation."

Christ is the invisible head of the Church. This does not prevent His appointing a visible head, as He did St. Peter, who was commissioned to feed—that is, to rule,—the whole flock, clergy and laity, including Kings and Emperors.

The Beautiful Hand—A Legend.

There was a dispute amongst three ladies as to which had the most beautiful hand. One sat by a stream and dipped her hand into the water, and held it up; another picked strawberries until the ends of her fingers were pink, and another gathered violets until her hands were fragrant. An old haggard woman passed by asked: "Who will give me a gift, for I am poor?" All three denied her; but another who sat near unwashed in the stream, unadorned with fruit, undressed with fragrance gave her a little gift, and satisfied the poor woman. And then she asked them what was the dispute, and they told her and lifted up before her their beautiful hands. "Beautiful in deed," said she when she saw them. But when they asked her which was the most beautiful she said: "It is not the hand that is washed clean in the brook; it is not the hand that is tipped with red; it is not the hand that is garlanded with fragrant flowers; but it is the hand that gives to the poor which is the most beautiful." As she said these words her wrinkles fled, her staff was thrown away, and she stood before them an angel from heaven with authority to decide the question in dispute.

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