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TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

Mother of Mercy! day by day
My love of thee grows more and more;
Thy gifts are strewn upon my way,
Like sands upon the great sea-shore.

Though poverty and work and woe
The masters of my life may be,
When times are worst, who does not know
Darkness is light, with love of thee?

But scornful men have coldly said
Thy love was leading me from God;
And yet in this I did but tread
The very path my Saviour trod.

They know but little of thy worth
Who speak these heartless words to me;
For what did Jesus love on earth
One half so tenderly as thee?

Get me the grace to love thee more;
Jesus, will give if thou wilt plead;
And, Mother, when life's cares are o'er,
Oh I shall love thee then indeed!

Jesus, when His three hours were run,
Bequeathed thee from the cross to me;
And oh! how can I love thy Son,
Sweet Mother! if I love not thee?

-FABER

THE AMULET.

CHAPTER II.
CONTINUED.
SIGNOR DEODATI.

On that day the Scheldt presented at Antwerp a striking spectacle. Many ships which had been detained in the North Sea by the east wind were approaching the city, with their various colored flags floating on the breeze, while, far as the eye could reach, the broad expanse of water was covered with sails, and still, in the dim horizon, mast after mast seemed to arise from the waves as harbingers of an immense flotilla.

The sailors displayed gigantic strength in casting anchor and manoeuvring their vessels so as to obtain an advantageous position. The crews of the different ships vied with each other, and exerted themselves so energetically that the heavily laden craft trembled under the strained cables. From each side a wild and hoarse as the sharp shrieking of the capstan, but joyous as the triumphant shout of a victorious army. These chants, sung in every tongue of the commercial world by robust sailors, seemed, as they were wafted over the river to the city, like the long, loud exclamations of a vast multitude.

The only sounds which could be heard in the midst of these confused cries were the voices of the captains speaking through the trumpets; and when a Portuguese galleon, coming from the West Indies, appeared before the city, a salvo of cannon rose like the rolling of thunder above all other sounds.

The sun shone brightly upon this animated scene of human activity, and broke and sparkled in colored light upon the rippling waves of the broad river.

Hundreds of flags floated in the air; gondolas and longboats furrowed the waters; from boat and wharf joyous greetings of friends mingled with the song of the sailors. Even the wagoners from beyond the Rhine, who had ranged their strongly-built wagons near the cemetery of Burg, in order to load them with spices for Cologne, could not resist the influence of the beautiful May-day and the general hilarity; they collected near the gate of the dock-yard, and entered in their German tongue a song so harmonious and sweet, and yet so manly, that every other sound in their vicinity was hushed.

At this moment an elegant vehicle passed the gate of the dock-yard, and stopped near the German wagoners as the last strain of their song died upon the air.

A young man, and after him an old man and a young girl rickety, attired, alighted from the carriage.

Those immediately around, merchants as well as workmen, stepped respectfully aside and saluted Mr. Van de Werve, whilst glancing admiringly at his daughter. Some Italians of lower rank murmured loud enough to reach Mary's ears: "Ecco la bionda maraviglia."

Mr. Van de Werve ordered his people to await him at the gate of the dock-yard, and passed on, saluting those whom he met, to the place where the Portuguese flag indicated the gondola of Lopez de Galle, which was prepared to receive him. They threw the carpet across the plank upon which Mary was to step in passing into the gondola. Mary, her father, and Geronimo entered the boat; the six oars dipped simultaneously into the water, and, pushed by the strong arms of the Portuguese sailors, the gondola sped rapidly through the waves. Swift as a fish and light as a swan, it skimmed the surface of the Scheldt, and made many a turn through the numerous vessels until it had succeeded in finding an open way down the river. Then the sailors exerted all their strength, as if to show the beautiful young girl what they were capable of in their trade. The gondola, obeying the impulse given it by the oarsmen, bounded forward under each stroke of the oars, and gracefully poised

itself on the waves caused by its rapid passage.

Complete silence reigned in the gondola; the sailors looked with timid admiration upon the beautiful countenance of the young girl. Mary, with downcast eyes, was persuading herself that Geronimo's uncle would undoubtedly consent to their union. The young man was absorbed in thought, and yielded by turns to joy, hope, and fear. Mr. Van de Werve contemplated the city, and seemed to enjoy the magnificent spectacle presented by Antwerp when seen at a distance, and which, with its lofty towers and splendid edifices, rose from the river like another Venice.

Suddenly Geronimo rose and pointed in the distance, exclaiming, joyously, "See, the Il Salvatore!"

Mary, glancing around, eagerly asked: "Where? Is it the vessel bearing a red cross on its flag?"

"No, Mary, it is behind the ships of war; it is that large vessel with three masts—on its flag is a picture of the Saviour: Il Salvatore."

While the gondola rapidly sped on its way, the eyes of all were fixed upon the galley, in order, if possible, to distinguish the features of those who stood on deck.

Suddenly Geronimo clapped his hands, exclaiming, "God be praised! I see my uncle."

"Which is he?" inquired Mr. Van de Werve.

The young man replied, joyously: "Do you not see standing on the fore-castle five or six passengers who wear parti-colored dresses, with plumed hats?"

In the midst of them is a man of lofty stature, completely enveloped in a brown cloak. He has long white hair, and his silvery beard looks like snow-flakes resting on his dark mantle. That is my old uncle, Signor Deodati."

"What a superb-looking old man!" exclaimed Mary, in admiration.

"In truth," said Mr. Van de Werve, "as well as I can judge at this distance, his appearance is very striking."

"My uncle inspires respect wherever he goes," said the young man, enthusiastically. "His sixty-five years appear on his brow as an aureole of experience and wisdom; he is learned, good, and generous."

As he was saying this he cried out: "Ah, he recognizes us! He salutes us; he smiles. At last, I see him after four years of separation. My God, I thank thee for having protected him!"

The young man's joy was so great that Mary and her father were also moved.

"So lively an affection for your uncle does you credit, Geronimo," said Mr. Van de Werve. "God loves a grateful heart; may He grant you to-day the desires of your heart!"

But the young man did not hear these words of encouragement; standing in the gondola, he waved to his uncle as if endeavoring to express to him by signs his joy at seeing him.

The gondola approached the galley, which slowly ascended the Scheldt in a favorable wind and with a rising tide.

The light boat soon gained the large ship. Before the ladder lowered, Geronimo caught the cable of the galley, and ere Mary had recovered from her terror, he had reached the deck and was in his uncle's arms.

Mr. Van de Werve mounted the ladder cautiously, and approached Signor Deodati, with whom he exchanged the most cordial salutations.

Mary remained in the gondola; she saw Geronimo embrace his uncle repeatedly; she rejoiced to perceive that the eyes of the old man were filled with tears of emotion. She was still more happy when she saw the affability with which her father and Geronimo's uncle conversed together, as though they were old friends.

Very soon the Signor Deodati descended into the gondola to accompany Mr. Van de Werve and Geronimo to the city.

The Flemish cavalier introduced his daughter to the Italian noble.

The old man gazed upon the ravishing beauty of the young girl in speechless admiration. Mary's lovely features were illumined by an enchanting smile which moved the old man's heart; her large blue eyes were fixed upon him with so soft and supplicating an expression that the Signor Deodati, extending his hand, murmured: "E la graziosa donzella!" (The beautiful girl!)

But Mary, encouraged by his look of affection, and unconsciously urged by a mysterious instinct, extended both hands to the old man, who folded her in his arms and pressed her to his heart.

Geronimo, overjoyed at the reception given to Mary by his uncle, turned aside to conceal his emotion.

"Iddio vi dia pace in nostra patria! May God grant you peace in our country, Signor Deodati!" said Mary, taking the old man's hand. "Come sit by me; I am so happy to know you. Do you think me bold; Geronimo has spoken so much of you, that I have long respected and loved you. And then, in our Netherlands we always welcome a stranger as a brother."

Signor Deodati seated himself by her as she desired, and as the gondola returned to the city, the old man said in surprise: "But you speak Italian like a native of Lucca. How soft and musical

my native tongue sounds from your lips!"

"There is my teacher," said Mary, pointing to Geronimo.

"That is not true, my uncle. Her modesty causes her to mislead you. Miss Van de Werve speaks equally well both Spanish and French, nor is she ignorant of Latin."

"Can that be so?" asked the elder Deodati, with an incredulous smile.

"That is nothing extraordinary in our city of Antwerp," said Mr. Van de Werve. "Most ladies of noble birth, and even merchants' daughters, speak two or three foreign languages. It is a necessity rather than a pleasure for us; for since the people of the South will not or can not learn our tongue, we are obliged to become familiar with theirs."

The Signor Deodati, as though a new and sudden thought passed his mind, seized his nephew's hand, and fixing his eyes affectionately upon him, said in a calm tone: "I am pleased with you Geronimo. Young as you are, you have conducted prudently the affairs of a large commercial house; you have acted as an experienced man; in order to please me, you have denied yourself pleasures which are so seductive to youth. Taking the place of your father, I have kept a vigilant eye upon you, and it gladdens my old heart to know that I have in my successor a virtuous cavalier and a prudent merchant. I know your desires, my son. Be not disturbed, but hopeful. I undertook a long voyage only to recompense you, if possible, for your gratitude."

He arose, and said to Mary: "I am loath to leave you, my dear young lady; but I have a few words to say privately to your father. You will excuse me more readily, as I yield my place to Geronimo."

Saying this, he walked with Mr. Van de Werve to the extremity of the boat, where both seated themselves upon a bench.

Trembling with fear, hope, and joyous anticipations, Mary and Geronimo watched the two parents, endeavoring to divine from the expression of their countenances the result of their conversation.

At first both were perfectly calm; by degrees they grew more excited; the derisive smile on the lips of Mr. Van de Werve betrayed the bitterness of his feelings, as the Signor Deodati in a decided manner counted on his fingers.

They were discussing the great affair—the dowry and inheritance. Their only thought was money!

Geronimo turned pale as he saw his uncle shake his head with evident dissatisfaction; and Mary trembled as she noticed the displeased expression of her father.

The private conversation lasted a long time, and still took no favorable turn; on the contrary, the two old men ceased speaking, as though displeased with each other.

Signor Deodati addressed a question to Mr. Van de Werve, to which the latter replied negatively.

Both then arose, and approaching Geronimo and Mary, sat down in silence. Their countenances betrayed vexation and mutual displeasure.

The young man, with tearful eyes, looked inquiringly at his uncle. Mary bowed her head, but her hearing bosom gave evidence of the struggle of her heart.

For some time there was a painful silence in the gondola. Mr. Van de Werve contemplated his daughter, who seemed overwhelmed by sorrow. Signor Deodati was deeply moved by Geronimo's earnest gaze.

The Italian noble was the first to break silence. "Come, sit," he said, "let us make these young people happy."

"With all my heart, Signor; but what will you do? My daughter is descended from an illustrious house; she must live in the world in a manner to do honor to her birth; as her father, I have duties to fulfill which I cannot disregard."

"Poor Geronimo!" said the Signor Deodati, in a tone of compassion, and with a deep sigh. "You would accuse me of cruelty, would not you? and this lovely young girl would hate the old man for his insensibility. It was not for that I crossed the seas in my old age."

He reflected a few minutes, then extending his hand to Mr. Van de Werve, he said: "My lord, I wish to show my good-will. I accept entirely your conditions, and in recompense for my sacrifices I ask only your friendship. Shall our children then be happy?"

Mr. Van de Werve grasped cordially the hand which was extended to him, and said to his daughter: "Mary, embrace this good gentleman; he will be your second father."

Mary cast herself into the arms of the old man; a cry of joy escaped the lips of Geronimo; even the sailors, although they comprehended but little of what they saw, were touched.

Whilst they were yet exchanging felicitations, the gondola swept around the point of land which had concealed the city from view, and Antwerp, with its thousand vessels, its lofty spires and noble edifices, lay spread out in all its majestic beauty before the eyes of Signor Deodati.

A cry of admiration burst from his lips.

"O che bella città! What a beautiful city!" he exclaimed. "What is that

magnificent tower, which like sculptured lace lifts its beautiful spire proudly to heaven, and like a giant looks down upon all others? What are those singular buildings whose rounded cupolas and pointed roofs so far exceed in height the surrounding houses? Oh! let the gondola float with the current; your city enchants me, and I wish to enjoy the view for a few moments."

Mr. Van de Werve gratified the curiosity of the Italian gentlemen by pointing out to him the remarkable buildings of the city, saying: "Before you now is the new city constructed at his own expense by Gillibert de Schoonbeker—a man to whom Antwerp owes its later increase and the creation of countless streets and houses. Those large and massive towers, in which you may notice loopholes, and which stand immediately upon the Scheldt, were the ancient fortifications of the city. That small, graceful spire is the Convent of Faucon; it is called here, Our Lady of Valkenbroek. Yonder, near the river, is the church of Borgt, the oldest temple of our city; for in 642 a wooden chapel stood on the spot, and in 1249 it was consecrated as a parish church, just as it now is. That lofty edifice at the foot of the gigantic tower of Notre Dame is the entrepot of Spain. Every nation has its own manufactories and magazines, where every one may claim the protection of his flag. The massive, unfinished tower belongs to the church of Saint James; the original plan was to elevate it above the spire of Notre Dame, but the work has been long discontinued for want of funds. Do you see, a little further on, that square building surmounted by a dome? It is the palace of Fugger, the Croesus of our times; he was elevated to the nobility by Maximilian on account of his wealth. Furnishing money to kings and nations, he sees gold daily pouring into his coffers, and if God does not interfere, the royal power will bow before that of the opulent banker. On the right you have the church of Saint Andrew, and near it the convent of Saint Michael, where our Emperor Charles stays when he visits his good city of Antwerp."

While the gondola was skimming over the surface of the water, and Mr. Van de Werve was explaining to Signor Deodati the various edifices which were worthy of remark, there stood upon the shore, at a corner of the dock-yard, a man who coolly followed the boat with his eyes, and who endeavored to comprehend what was passing in the gondola, and to discover what might be the emotions of the young man and the young girl who were seated within it.

Notwithstanding the fine weather, the man was enveloped in an ample cloak, and wore a hat with broad brim, over which fell a purple plume. His doublet was of gold cloth, and his breeches were of brown satin. At his side glittered the jewelled hilt of a sword.

He was of lofty stature, and his whole bearing indicated noble birth; his style of dress and black hair and eyes attested his Italian origin. The most remarkable thing about his person was a long narrow scar across his face, as though he had been wounded by a sharp blade. The mark was not disfiguring, particularly when his features were in repose; but when he was agitated by some violent passion or uncontrollable emotion, the edges of the scar assumed different hues, and appeared of a dull white mixed with red and purple.

At the moment of which we speak his eyes were fixed upon the gondola with an expression of irritated jealousy, and his lips were strongly contracted. The color of the scar had changed with his increasing emotion, and it was of a deep red. He stood so near the water that his feet touched it, and thus he prevented any one from passing before him and witnessing the tumult of his soul.

Even the peculiar expression of his countenance did not betray the current of his thoughts; but certainly he was pre-occupied by no good design, for his whole demeanor bespoke a wild despair and burning jealousy.

For some time he watched in the same attitude the course of the gondola, which drifted with the current, until he saw the oarsmen seize their oars, and he supposed they were about to land.

Then his whole frame shook convulsively under his efforts to control his emotion. He became exteriorly calm, the scar on his cheek paled, and in an unconcerned manner, with a light step and bright smile, he walked along the wharf to the spot where he supposed the gondola would stop.

Geronimo, who had seen him approaching, sprang upon the bank before the boat was moored, and ran to him with singular haste. He took his hand, and said in an undertone: "Ebbene, caro mio Simone? Have you obtained the money, Simon? My uncle has arrived. Should he discover that the money-vault lacks so considerable a sum, you and I are both lost. But you have the money, have you not? You will give it to me to-day?"

"Pity me, Geronimo," said the other, sighing. "Various fatal circumstances render all my efforts unavailing."

TO BE CONTINUED.