

cance, gentleness, devotion, and recollection do I contemplate in the image of the Blessed Virgin! What brilliancy—what exemption from all earthly cares and earthly sorrows—in the face of the angel? See how, on the noble countenances of these apostles, the 'one faith' and the 'one love' is revealed in different forms and features. And there, Christ, the Man-God, combines divine dignity with human meekness: who does not feel—who does not see, that God has there manifested himself in human form to man—that man is more than dust, and that virtue is the only thing that gives true nobility to men, and makes them like unto God?"

He was silent for a few moments. 'When I look on my poor flowers and fruits, my dear Angelica,' he mournfully resumed, 'I fear that your father will not be satisfied with me, and that, perhaps, I have laboured in vain.'

'Not satisfied with you!' eagerly exclaimed Angelica, 'he will be overjoyed, astonished, enchanted, to find you, thus unexpectedly, so superior an artist.'

Her mother however was uneasy, and told how much the father was taken with Gerhard, and how delighted he was with the picture which he had sent him. Baron West required to see it.

'It is really most beautiful,' said he. 'I acknowledge that I am far inferior to Gerhard. He has chosen for himself a nobler department of the art, than my talents allowed me to aspire to; the human figure, though it were only the lovely figure of a little child, is the noblest work of God upon this earth. All other creatures, fruits, flowers, and insects, bear, it is true, the impress of His wisdom and goodness, and make known His beneficence; but man was created to the image of God, and is of heavenly race. I therefore reverently yield the palm to Gerhard's work.'

He walked up and down the hall for a few moments.

'A thought strikes me,' he suddenly exclaimed, 'which may surprise your father, and, perhaps, still gain the victory for me. As you may see from my two little pictures, I have devoted my study to the painting, not only of fruits and flowers, but, also, of insects; and, certainly, unless my friends and acquaintances deceive me, I have succeeded most satisfactorily. Now I remember, that your father used to have a great aversion to flies, because he feared they would soil his beautiful picture, or their golden frames; and though he is so good and benevolent that he would not hurt the smallest of God's creatures, yet he would often pursue a fly with a sort of frenzy, whenever he happened to see one here in the hall, and never rest until he had succeeded in capturing it. Many a time we used to amuse ourselves at his expense;

but he always took our tricks in good part. My idea is, to paint a fly on Gerhard's picture, which will not injure the piece, but, on the contrary, enhance its value. Flies are fond of resting on milk vessels, and the painted fly will so deceive your father, that he will imagine it to be alive. He will treat it as his enemy; but I choose it now as my advocate, and friendly intercessor.'

The mother and daughter approved his plan. They left him alone, and he at once set himself to his work. The fly appeared so perfect, that Angelica, herself, when in summoning him to dinner, she looked at the picture, thought it was a living fly she saw.

In a fortnight's time, the father returned, late one evening, to his family. They told him nothing of the arrival of the Baron, who was staying with some of his relatives in the town. Next morning, as the father was sitting at his work, in his cap and dressing-gown, and painting busily, Baron von West walked into the gallery, accompanied by Angelica and her mother.

Bergheim welcomed him cordially, though his arrival, at that precise time, was not very agreeable to him. He already looked upon Gerhard, the painter, as his son-in-law; and he feared that the nobleman might prove a formidable rival, and, that Angelica might not be as willing to marry Gerhard, as she had hitherto appeared. He resolved, therefore, to shew Gerhard's beautiful picture, at once, to the Baron; and, then, when the great perfection of the work was duly acknowledged, to declare to him, that he had fixed on the author of that piece, as his destined son-in-law.

The Baron gave the picture its due praise. Bergheim expatiated upon its beauties, one after another.

'I appeal to yourself,' said he. 'Are they not a lovely little pair? Are not these little heads, with their smiling faces and curling locks, literally angelic? So happy, so content, are the little ones with their bowl of milk, that they appear to have no other wish in this wide world; and seem to say to us, 'Thus happy can your dear little ones be, if you do not torment yourself with empty cares.' The whole piece is finished in faultless style. That earthen bowl, with its brilliant varnish, is dearer to me than a real vessel of massive gold; and even that lackered spoon, almost overflowing with milk, which the little girl seems to be raising to her lip, slowly and cautiously, lest she should spill it, is'——

He suddenly stopped, for at that moment he discovered a fly on the rim of the spoon.

'Ah, ha!' said he, 'what are you doing there? What brought you here? Has the painted milk enticed you? You shall not escape unpunished.' He pulled off his cap, and endeavoured two or