

OVERBECK TO FRAULEIN LINDER.
ROME, JUNE 1st, 1833.

I was indeed surprised at the message you sent me by Cornelius. At first I thought there must be a misunderstanding, and feared that my last letter had been lost. But Cornelius insisted that the money you sent me by him was a second payment, and I accept the friendly gift. May it be some gratification to you, that without knowing it, you were a tool of God's Providence. I was nearly left without money, as a payment I had counted upon did not arrive. Your money arrived in the right hour, not only to meet my wants, but also to save my weak faith from a great trial. O praise Him with us, my dear friend, the great Giver who remembers our little needs, who at the same time gives temporal and eternal gifts. O when will we learn to understand such love! When shall this heavenly fire which He kindled Himself when He appeared on earth among us, rise to a flame in my heart, instead of glimmering in sparks! I must close these lines and tell you that I was not as considerate of you as you have been of me, for I have hardly worked at your picture, but hope you will have patience with me.

In a letter of the 8th of December, 1834, in which he gives his reasons why the oil painting, although considerably advanced, is not yet finished, he refers to the subject for her album:

"For a long time I carried it in my soul: It represents the Christ-child, who waters the flowers in the little garden of his paternal house. He who came down upon earth to water the great garden of His heavenly Father with His blood. To remind the Christian of the flowers in his own heart, and never to forget that their growth is a gift of His grace from above. To awaken desire after the source of grace the great love of God opens to us in the Holy Sacrament. This is the picture I have in my soul, and if God gives me success in bringing it to paper as it stands in my mind, I hope it may become a little spark for the soul that seeks God. How much more would I like to tell you, not many things, but all in reference to the one and only thing that is necessary, but where shall I begin and where stop? I would be thankful with all my heart could I make you acquainted with the life of some of the saints. What a

world would it open before you, surely you would see what great treasures those lose that persist in a separation from the Catholic Church."

Although Miss Linder had a great desire to possess the painting, she never mentioned it to Overbeck. She had words only of encouragement for him, and sent the rest of his payment before the picture was finished. In the same letter, dated Munich, March 3rd, 1833, she acknowledges her religious opinions. She writes:

"In your last letter, my dear friend, you touch a very important point. Your expressions touched me, for I am fully convinced that they come from a heart that loves its Saviour above all; therefore I feel it my duty to be frank with you; even where, according to your convictions, you have to disapprove my views. For years I liked to hear about our Saviour and His teachings, and I am not afraid to confess that I have thanked the Lord for leading me among Catholic friends, for through them a new and richer life was opened to me. I have thanked the Lord that I was saved from many a prejudice that so many Protestants have against Catholics, and that Catholicity appears to me in a grand and beautiful light, and I refresh myself on all the good I meet with truly hearty joy. Although I confess openly that should I become a Catholic, I would not be one with a sincere soul, for many things in Catholicism repulse me. According to my innermost conviction it would be a denial of the spirit of God, should I not recognize that also in our religion we have part in rich graces. And if this be so, as I feel it, I can think that it was his intention and guidance that I should be born and educated in this faith. O God! how far am I yet from all I could do in my own faith; and how much is there left to be done. I believe, as far as I know myself that I do not close my heart to divine inspirations; if our dear Saviour should want me to serve Him in another faith, He would make me feel it in my soul, and I should not resist. In reference to Clemens Bretano, I must add, that I do not misapprehend that I owe him many thanks, for he has been a severe judge to me, and told me openly what people don't generally tell aloud; I grew fond of him, for under all his wit is hidden a rich and warm heart; but if I knew Catholicism