

Fra Angelico.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Art is true art when art to God is true. And only then. To copy Nature's work without the heavens that ran the world through...

THE TWO BRIDES.

BY REV. BERNARD O'REILLY, I.D.

CHAPTER IX.

IN ANDALUSIA.

Ronda, July 4, 1860. My Dear Husband—We have been now over a week in this most delightful place, and the rest, the mountain air, the delicious climate and the healthful atmosphere...

Your father's generous forethought had provided us with the beautiful residence from which I write to you. It is an old palace of the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, which has been allowed to fall into decay...

As you know Andalusia so well, dearest Louis, I shall not attempt to describe what I found the country and the people to be to my American eyes. But as your father says that you have never seen Ronda and its romantic neighborhood...

The house we occupy adjoins the Alameda, or public walk, which itself skirts the brow of the hill, or gigantic mass of rock, on whose top Ronda is built.

One of these, at the narrowest and lowest point, is a single arch thrown over the chasm in the time of the Moors, and over which, they say, there was formerly an aqueduct.

Allow me, however, to describe our new home and its immediate environs. It is a very spacious edifice, containing two distinct parts—one for winter residence, and the other for summer.

So, my rooms are gems, and from them I can go into the garden in the vest court-yard, or step out beneath the shady walks of the Alameda, where I can enjoy blowing invigorating breezes that are ever blowing round the mountain crest, or fast my eyes on the gorgeous scenery, while dear father recalls the stirring incidents connected with the history of Ronda under the Romans as well as under the Moors.

But I must not dwell on this at present; many opportunities will doubtless be afforded me to give you my impressions of the people and the country, as I become acquainted with them. The peace which fills our new mountain home, and the enchanting aspect of nature and society...

around us, only carry me back hourly to Fairy Dell and its dear inmates, while the rumors which come to us from across the Atlantic of increasing agitation and impending civil war, fill my soul with deep anxiety for all my loved ones, for you in particular, my own twin-soul.

As soon as the steamer had reached Malaga, we were agreeably surprised to find that Diego and his father, Don Ramon, had been waiting there for our arrival. Indeed, they had come a week beforehand to make sure that the villa which Don Ramon has rented for us, about a mile from the city, was in perfect repair, and provided with furniture, servants and all kinds of provisions necessary to our comfort.

We arrived about two o'clock in the morning. It was a lovely moonlight night; and I had slept soundly the night before, and retired very early while we were on our way from Cadiz. I was up and on deck when they were boarded by the custom-house barge. In it, unknown to your father, came the Marquis and his son. Rose and the girls were still in their state-rooms, and your father and I were sitting in a cozy room on the quarter-deck, he explaining to me the various points of interest on the shore.

Without directly questioning Rose on her feelings toward your father, I could believe her heart.

"It is all so new, mamma," she replied; "and you know I am only a child. But, indeed, dearest mamma, I am neither unhappy nor disturbed. I miss dearly all our poor people around Fairy Dell, and I miss my dear father, but I have not a word to say against him, and I am sure he will be the happiest and proudest father in Spain; and Diego, when he kissed my hand, whispered that he owed to it a gift far more precious than life.

"Is this just to your parents, Rose?" I said. "Are you, then, the blind torn fondly away from the home you were born in, and to live nameless and to sing loveless far away from its kind?"

"Oh, no, not that, not that, darling mamma!" she said, burying her head in my bosom. "You know I could not mean anything unkind to you or papa, or to dearest grandpapa. Only, what suggests to me a life-long separation from the sweet nest in which I have been so tenderly reared, and from the mother under whose wing I have been so carefully protected, and I could do nothing but kiss my child and weep with her."

"I am natural that you should feel as you do, darling," I said, when I could command myself sufficiently to speak. "You only suffer as I did at your age and when looking forward to a separation from my mother."

"Ah, she was like you, dear mamma, and while her eyes seemed to seek some far-off land, she was thinking of the home she was to leave, and of the father who was to be parted from."

"What's it, my own darling?" I said. "Has anything disturbed you? You were strangely troubled a moment ago, and now you seem strangely happy."

"I cannot account for it, mamma," she answered; "but the first sight of Mr. De Lebrija filled me with unaccountable and sudden terror. And as I placed my heart and my life just now in the hand of God, to be disposed of as He wills I felt my whole soul overflowing with a peace and a contentment so heavenly sweet that I am sure He will have a care for me."

And now let us join the gentlemen."

From that moment the child has behaved admirably. From the moment she sought nor avoided the company of her affianced. The old Marquis was, and is still, for fixing an early day for the marriage; but your father, acting as the head of the family, and speaking in your name and mine, insists that the written contract of affiancement drawn up by him, and subscribed by Don Ramon, expressly stipulates that Rose shall be left free, when of proper age, to ratify or reject the promise made in her name.

Moreover, unless I am sadly mistaken, Rose was much touched by the homage paid to her as the affianced bride of Don Diego de Lebrija. She could not resist overhearing the half-whispered compliments and complimentary remarks which were addressed to her as she moved about by his side.

When our company had left, which they here do at a very early hour, I kept Rose with me. She was excited, flushed, and nervous, though evidently pleased with the way she had spent the evening. Don Ramon, on asking that I should not be so long in coming, in her presence, that he was the happiest and proudest father in Spain; and Diego, when he kissed my hand, whispered that he owed to it a gift far more precious than life.

My dear father—You will see by the last week's papers, which are sent to you by express, that our worst fears are about to be realized. The seceding wing of the Democratic party met in Baltimore on the 23d of last month, adopted the most extreme Southern platform, and all but put forth a proclamation of open rebellion.

The election of Lincoln has become a moral certainty, now that the Democrats have split up into three distinct and hostile camps. The seceding wing, which they are now openly taking in South Carolina, as well as here and throughout most of the Slave States, for the forcible dissolution of the Union.

The country is covered with a vast network of electioneering canvassers, low demagogues, political knaves, and fanatics, who agitate and excite the passions, and let in a flood of their evil party. Political passion, when it runs high, is always bitter enough; but to the intense passions which excite every class of our people is now added the fury of theological hate.

"And you shall have in me as devoted a son and trusty a fellow-worker as ever man had," he said with his proudest look, and grasped my hand warmly.

"I have had him well watched," Gaston answered. "He, rather, the many true friends you and grandfather have among our workmen, keep their eyes and ears open. They have already, and of their own accord, agreed to watch all his movements. For they have proofs that he means to use us for his own ends, and to ruin us, if he cannot."

"I regret to inform you that our workmen are sadly wrought upon by agitators and intriguers of both parties. The colored people are kept in a continual ferment, and what with their nightly prayer-meetings, and what with the frequent appeals to their anti-slavery sympathies, they are becoming fractious and idle. Last night I had to tell Mr. Williams that I should no longer put up with his neglecting the proper duties of his office to meddle so actively in politics. I gave him to understand that any further intermeddling, either with my colored workmen or their white associates, must be followed by his immediate discharge from my employment. As all were equally free who labor-

ed for me, or lived under me as tenants, I said, so I could not allow the brotherly and neighborly feelings that had, until now, made us all feel like one family, to be tampered with by anybody.

The next morning Rose was brighter and happier than I had seen her since we left home. The Marquis saw her and called in the afternoon, and proposed an evening ride through to Velaz de Malaga, where they have one of their largest domains. The weather was so lovely that your father thought the ride would benefit me, besides enabling the girls and myself to see one of the most beautiful countries in one of the most fertile tracts of Andalusia.

No wonder, when we arrived at Velaz in the twilight, that I found the girls all enthusiasm over what they had seen and what they had heard. Rose's eyes fairly sparkled with pleasure, and her delight had evidently heightened that of her lover. Of our doings in Velaz I must tell in my next. But I cannot defer any longer, dearest Louis, telling you that, although the mild temperature and pure air of Ronda have done me much good, I do not comfort myself with the hope of a speedy recovery. Should the physicians pronounce my case hopeless, I shall insist on returning to you without a moment's delay. Indeed, indeed, your presence is to me more than the loveliest climate of the most consummate beauty, nor live without you."

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As you see, Gaston is assuming all the duties and responsibilities of serious manhood. Without losing any part of his characteristic simplicity, or of the artless and innocent ways that show how pure-hearted he is, the boy is very decided and firm in practical matters, uncompromising whenever his religious belief or his political principles are concerned, but most respectful towards the conscientious convictions of others.

He is just now pressing me very hard to know if the right of concession from the Union is one of the rights reserved by the original States on ratifying the constitution of 1787, and becoming by their final act members of the Federal Union. His own knowledge of law and his careful study of our own history has created a serious doubt in his mind as to the justice of treating the secession of State as rebellion, and as to the right of the Federal Government to punish seceders as rebels. It is not that he approves of the steps taken at present in South Carolina and elsewhere, or that he has any leaning toward the side of those who would break up the Union and found a separate polity, based on the permanent enslavement of an entire race. He has too much of your blood in his veins not to be an American of the Americans, loving freedom for its own sake, and hating with his whole heart every form of oppression. But he also dislikes utterly the fanatics of the Quincy Williams school, who would set the entire south on fire to free the slaves, and would then refuse to admit them to social equality, and all the charities of public and private life.

"There's so many of our own poor colored people," Gaston was saying to me the other day, "whom I know to be far above me in the right of God! There is Joe Porter, my old playmate, who learned to read and write with me, with dear mamma as our teacher. She also taught us our catechism, prepared us for our first confession and communion. We received the Divine gift together, as you may remember, sir, and I heard mamma say when that blessed day was over, and we came home after renewing our baptismal promises, that she saw Joe Porter's face shine like the face of an angel as he approached the altar, and as he read the promises aloud in the name of the colored communicants. I know that boy as well as I do, and I am sure he would die rather than do or say what he thought wrong."

"And his mother is just such another beautiful soul," I said. "I believe she never lost her baptismal innocence."

"Just so, papa; and there are others among our colored people who are equally an ornament to the faith they profess. Of course dear mamma is herself too good and holy not to be drawn to such beautiful souls as Sally Porter, and not to draw them to herself as well. Indeed, old Sally is mamma's prime counsellor in everything that relates to the spiritual advancement of our people; and all our white neighbors, at least, of our own faith—are always running to Sally about matters of conscience."

"Well, my boy," I said, "you cannot be surprised at that. We have been nurtured in the belief that by baptism we are all born anew of the blood of a God, and that whatever natural or social inequalities may exist between the white child and the negro child baptized at the same font at the same hour, they are, in the supernatural order, before God and His angels, true brothers thereafter, for all time and eternity. And hence these colored people are treated by our family, not only when they are in our house, and every where, as if they were most truly our brothers."

"Thank God that is so," I replied. The question of alliance by marriage between the two races has never given us any trouble at Fairy Dell. Nature has established the color itself a sufficient barrier. The church teaches and exhorts us to be true brothers."

A STORY WITH A SERMON IN IT. During the Jubilee exercises last month at the Church of St. Alphonsus, St. Louis, Mo., Rev. Father Cook, C. S. C., preached a series of discourses upon the Sacraments, among which was the following under the title of Confession—

Father Cook commenced by saying that not many years ago a certain priest of the order went out to travel, inognito, for his health. He took with him some instruments for scientific purposes. He took sick at some place in Germany and died. Not being known, by name or profession, to any one, an investigation of his effects was made by the city officials, in order to find out who he was, if possible, and what to do in the premises.

Among other things found in his trunk was a little box. They found a screw in the box and opened it. The burgomaster picked it up, opened it, and threw it from him in horror, and ran for his life. Others did likewise. The box was closed and the trunk locked up. The mayor said no one should go near it, as the devil was in the box—he had seen him, horns, hoofs and all.

During his illness the priest had sent for a brother of his order to nurse and attend to him, but who did not arrive until after his death. He called for him, and was told that he was dead—was in that room and the devil was in the trunk.

He gained access to his friend's body and effects, opened the box and demonstrated to the terrified Dutchman, that they had been looking at a harmless little insect through a magnifying glass. Truly, as they saw it, it looked terrible; its proportions all magnified many hundred times made it a monster. Thus we all make mistakes and are terrified where no cause for alarm exists. Catholics and non-Catholics, all the same, by looking at things through the magnifying glasses of our prejudices. We all have a horror—a dread of confession. The circumstances that surround us, together with our faults themselves, keep us away from the confessional, from the feet of the priest.

Every one who looks in the Scriptures must see that God intended—laid down a law that we must tell our sins to some one—all, all our sins. It is, moreover, a law of being. Man can not be happy unless he confesses his sins to his fellowman. I appeal to your own experience. Sometimes we will tell to a trusty friend what we will not confess to others, but we yearn to confess to some one. This is a modified form of confession, but not what the Church enjoins and teaches.