



A Story of Grace Versus Nature



HERE is a tradition current in Spain, which is one of the least singular of the tales afloat about the great painters. One day Rubens was in the neighborhood of Madrid, and, visiting a monastery of very austere observance, remarked, not without surprise, in the humble and poor choir, a painting exhibiting admirable talent.

This picture represented the death of a monk. Rubens summoning his scholars, showed them the picture, and asked their opinion concerning it. All agreed it was a work of exceeding genius.

"Who can be the author of this work?" asked Vandyck, the cherished pupil of Rubens.

"There is a name at the bottom of the picture, but it has been carefully rubbed out," replied Van Thueden.

Rubens begged the favor of an interview with the prior, and asked the name of the artist whose production he admired so much.

"The painter is no longer of this world," replied the Abbot.

"Dead" cried Rubens "Dead"! And no one knows his name, no one ever hinted it to me, no one ever told me his name — which should be immortal — a name before which my own would have paled. And yet, "my father," said the artist with a flush of pride "I am Paul Rubens."

At the sound of that name, the pale face of the prior was animated by a singular warmth. His eyes flashed, and he looked at Rubens with a strange glad look — a faint glimmer of pride flashed across his face, but it lasted only an instant. The monk then looked down, crossed his