An Old Master

By Gertrude Pitt

HEY had met in the first instance filled with an incongruous collection of Frances, and the additional letters were a concession to art)—Francesca had about as much talent for painting as an aborigine, but several of her friends worked at Lavigne's and she found it an entertaining relief from the tedium of home. Besides, she was blonde and petite, and, with her hair becomingly disordered, and attired in a pinafore of green linen, she looked exceedingly picturesque—and was quite aware of that pleasing fact.

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Bernard had serious views about art in those days, and often alluded to his 'Career' (with a capital "C"). Nevertheless, he found time to observe that Francesca was quite the prettiest girl in the studio. He cast many appreciative glances in the direction of the fair head and the green pinafore, and often discovered that he was walking in her direction when the day's work was over.

Sometimes he found her copying in the National Gallery; sometimes she came across him dallying with the sculptures in the British Museum. They danced together at the students' balls, they went to numerous concerts, and feasted gaily, if frugally, at many bun shops. In short, after a decent interval of philandering, they married, and set up house-keeping in St. John's Wood.

Having secured a husband in the paths of art, Francesca wisely gave up painting and devoted her energies to domestic matters and to the care of Bernard junior, when that small but important person made his appearance. Bernard senior still alluded to his "Career," talked gloomily sometimes of thwarted ideals, and made spasmodic attacks at a ideals, and made spasmodic attacks at a "What do you want for it?" said huge canvas which was to bring him Bernard, as if he bought a Pellegrino fame in the future. Meanwhile, however, he made a tolerable income at teaching and black-and-white work.

Of necessity, their way of life was somewhat cramped—like their "modern villa-residence." They had a goodly number of friends, impecunious artists, intermittent journalists, many people of the class which has laid claim to the ancient kingdom of Bohemia on insufficient grounds, but which, nevertheless, has its charms. Sometimes Francesca gave "at homes," when the tiny drawing room was inconveniently crowded, and refreshments were somewhat meagre; sometimes Bernard took her to a theatre, or they spent a day in the country. Also they "collected," although after the affair of the Pellegrino ing it away." their enthusiasm for this form of amusement was somewhat weakened.

It was a bleak evening in the autumn secondhand shop, and the window was for thirty-five pounds!'

at Lavigne's studio in Maida Vale. dingy furniture, old-fashioned prints, Francesca (she had been christened many dusty books, and other articles too numerous to mention. But in the place of honor was a solitary oil painting, with a gaudy plush curtain draped around its frame, as if to show off its manifold beauties. The picture represented a particularly ugly woman, whose complexion indicated a grave case of yellow jaundice. She was holding a still uglier child, with his head at a painful and impossible angle. The label on the frame read "Madonna and Child, by Pellegrino (1340-1419).

Bernard gazed at the picture with the admiration which greater men are apt to accord to anything that is at once ugly, expensive, and un-English. Possibly he would have admired and walked on, but at that moment the proprietor of the shop was standing at his door, and at once seized the opportunity.

"Ah!" he said, waving a dirty hand to-wards the masterpiece, "There's something you won't get a chance of seeing every day. That"—and his voice sank to an awe-inspiring whisper—"that, sir, is a real, genuine Pellegrino." Bernard was not absolutely stunned. For one reason, the name was plainly printed on the label; for another, he had never previously heard of Pellegrino. "Indeed?" he said. "Is it valuable?"

"Well, there's no need for me to tell you that it isn't often a genuine Pellegrino comes into the market. Of course, I won't deny it's a bit dirty, but cleaned up by one who knows the business, and put in a nice, gilt frame—there's an ornament for any gentleman's dining-room, and an ornament that's worth its weight in gold."

every day of his life.

"If I had a shop in Pall Mall, I'd say a hundred, and get it, too. But there isn't much sale for such things hereabouts. I only bought it because I took a fancy to it, as you might say," and he gazed

affectionately at the dingy canvas.
"How much?" asked Bernard, growing somewhat impatient.

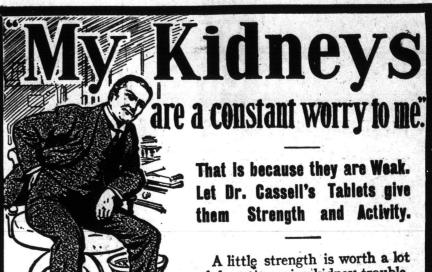
"Fifty pounds, though it's a great

"I'm afraid you'll have to wait some ne. Good afternoon," and Bernard time. turned, though he did not walk away. The dealer came a few steps nearer, and dropped his voice to a persuasive under-

"Well, say forty, though it's like giv-

Bernard shook his head decisively, but he still kept his eyes on the picture.

"Thirty-five, then. I'm robbing my and Bernard was gazing into a shop win- self, but you shall have it for thirty dow in the Bayswater Road. It was a five. Think of it. A genuine Pellegrino



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Presents on the Tree for Boys and Girls

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Candy
Doll
Doll Carriage
Bracelet
Bracelet
Bracelet
Brooch
Building Blocks
Furs
Bicycle
Hockey Stick
Football
Perfume

Some this Christmas, we are giving you this fine Christmas, we are giving you this christmas Tree loaded down with beautiful and valuable presents. Nobody but Uncle Peter has seen what they contain, but on each one has been drawn a puzzle picture that tells what is in it. No. 7 represents Doll Carriage. Now can you guess what Christmas present for a boy or girl is in each of the other nine? Get some one to help you if you like, but write out yourself your answers to all the ten picture. Now first mas present for a boy or girl is in each of the other nine? Get some one to help you if you like, but write out yourself your answers to all the ten picture. Now for any our guess what Christmas Day Uncle Peter, who edits our the Club pin. If you are bright and quick to send in your answers, you can join the "Success Club" to on a gold background. The endless chain of friendship forms the border, the Lamp of Knowledge is at the top, and at the bottom are the Laurel Leaves, emblematic of everlasting reward for good work.

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