

lapse of five years, even to the minute, the picture was finished. Donatelli thought it a modern miracle, but, strange to say, the public did not, and the picture hung in the gallery practically unnoticed."

"Go on, we want to hear it all," from McDuff.

"Can't you guess the result?"

"I should say Donatelli was rather put out," said the Colonel.

"Quite right, he was. He was more than put out. He imagined himself insulted, so he decided on the best cure for his feelings—revenge. I asked the old Tuscan what form his revenge was to take. He was not sure of the details of this part of the case, but the story ran that Donatelli painted one more picture, again guided by the hand of Providence, and made it such that the first five persons who looked at it, one for each year, you see, should be so fascinated with it that it would be impossible for anyone of the five to live without seeing it once every day, all of them to be viewing it at the same time."

"A strange story," said the Colonel, "and ridiculous, too, but I suppose those superstitious Italians believed it."

"Yes, a very queer story. However, it passed completely out of my head. It was perhaps a year after this that I was in Berlin. I had been going to the gallery pretty regularly, and at last one of the men about the place, Goldsmidt by name, a nice, young, friendly chap, invited me to come into his workshop, and look behind the scenes. This I only too gladly did, and as Goldsmidt was working on a larger frame than he could conveniently handle, I gave what little assistance I could. In some way or other I let it slip out that I was not working and that my resources were getting low, so Goldsmidt told me that if I wanted a temporary job working along with him, he could get it for me. I readily consented, and the result was that I turned up at the gallery next morning with overalls and woollen jacket and was set to work at once.

The first thing we did was to unpack a large box of pictures, donated by some baron or other far up the Rhine. There

were perhaps eight or nine in all. These we removed, placing them on various benches, and standing some up against the wall. They made quite an imposing array, and Goldsmidt seemed undecided which to start on first. However, a monstrous daub representing a shepherdess and flock seemed to strike his fancy, and, while removing the canvas from the frame, he suddenly uttered an exclamation of surprise, at which I hurried over to see what was the matter. It appeared that he had been using a sharp chisel, and, in some way or other his hand had slipped, and the instrument dug into the picture, flaking off a piece of paint about the size of a shilling.

"Instead of exposing the canvas it showed a hard, shiny surface under which, as far as I could see, was more painting. Goldsmidt removed the canvas from the frame, placed it on a table, and told me to help him. Then, beginning at the bottom, together we removed the outer coat of paint, which chipped off easily from the hard transparent substance underneath. The picture we uncovered was evidently a better one than the one above, and Goldsmidt was willing to risk removing the latter, to get the original.

"It was not until we had the picture almost uncovered that we had a good idea of our discovery. A stranger piece of work I have never seen—a man with arms folded across his breast, in one hand a wicked looking dagger. His feet were hidden in long grass, which grew almost to his knees, but it was his face and head that gave him his unique distinction. The mouth was shut tight, but a grim smile seemed to play around the corners of his lips, eyes black and piercing, looking straight at you, ears sharp and pointed at the top in an unnatural manner; his hair, the most peculiar part of him, brushed up into two points above his ears, standing some three or four inches above his head.

"Goldsmidt placed the picture in an upright position, and we backed off to view it from a distance. Then we got some further impressions of the picture we had on hand. The grass growing about his feet gave him a transparent ap-