

Children's Department.

TAKE THE SAFE PATH.

"Take the safe path, dear father: I'm coming after you." Rang out in silvery accents From a dear boy hid from view. His father climbed a mountain Precipitous and wild, Nor dreamed that in his footsteps Pressed close his only child.

His heart stood still one moment, Then rose in prayer to God To keep his boy from slipping In the path his feet had trod; And soon upon the summit His darling child he pressed, With rapture all unspoken, Unto his throbbing breast.

"Take the safe path, dear father," Rings clearly out to-day From many a little pilgrim Upon life's rugged way. They're pressing close behind you, O fathers! take good heed: Their lives will closely copy Your own in word and deed.

"Take the safe path," ye fathers, Nor ever dare to slip The cup that seems so tempting To many a youthful lip. Then, if they follow you, Your children's lives will also Be noble, grand, and true

FROM PEASANT-BOY TO PAINTER.

MANY, many years ago—in 1286—the famous Italian painter Cimabue was passing near an Italian village, called Vespignano, about fourteen miles from Florence, when he chanced to see a little boy seated upon a rough stone, occupied in drawing, with chalk upon a piece of rock, one of the flock of sheep of which he was apparently in charge. Looking in astonishment at the drawing, Cimabue, dismounting from his horse, saw at a glance, from its wonderful boldness and accuracy, that it was no ordinary ability which had enabled the lad to produce it with such apparent ease; so he inquired of him his name, and, convinced that he possessed extraordinary natural genius, further asked, whether he would accompany him to Florence, and there be enabled to cultivate the talents with which he was gifted. Looking up at Cimabue, somewhat in alarm at first, for he was greatly taken by surprise, the lad informed him that his name was Giotto di Bondone, his father being a shepherd living in the adjoining village; that he was entrusted by him with the care of the sheep around him, but if he would come to his parent with him and obtain his consent, he would willingly leave home and go to Florence; for to learn drawing and become a painter was indeed his one grand aim and ambition.

Admiring the boy's dutifulness, and struck by his frank and open manner, Cimabue accordingly agreed to go with Giotto to the village; and arrived there, it was not long before he had learned much about the lad which still further impressed him with his capabilities.

It appeared that Giotto was at this time only ten years of age, and from his earliest years had been remarkable not only for his wonderful intelligence, and for great vivacity and spirit in all his childish doings, but the abilities which he had often shown in rough drawings and designs—now on stones, now in sand, now on the earth—were, even

thus early, well known to the little Italian village, with the people of which he was, too, a great favourite.

Clever, however, as Giotto was looked upon to be by these simple villagers, they had, of course, never been able to know how really marvelous were his gifts; and we can well understand the amazement of his father when no other than the great Cimabue actually asked to be permitted to take his son back with him, and to himself instruct him in his own art; nor can we wonder that, with feelings of gratitude at the great honor done to him, he readily gave his consent to the proposal. And so it was at the tender age of ten that little Giotto left his companions, and his sheep, and all that in his humble cottage home was so pleasant and so dear to him, and went to find him in the studio of his new master in the far-famed city of Florence.

Of the doings of Giotto, from his introduction into the studio of Cimabue, there is not much known; though you can well picture with what feelings of wonderment the lad, so long accustomed only to the humbler occupations of the new home, in which he was now to live, and with what transports of admiration, the young artist beheld the grand paintings by his master, which were to be surrounded by him. It is said, indeed, that one day, soon after his arrival, while alone in the studio, he remained in such a state of ecstasy in front of a certain picture by Cimabue, that he did not perceive his master open the door and enter; and we are told that his feelings were so overwhelming him at this moment, that Cimabue approached him, and asked him why he wept.

"It is," he replied, "because of the sorrow I feel when thinking of the long time that must elapse, before I shall be able to produce such a masterpiece as this myself."

It was only for a little while, however, that such a seeming want of confidence in his own powers was to be felt by Giotto; nor was the high opinion of the shepherd's gifts, which Cimabue had so quickly conceived, to remain long without being unmistakably confirmed; for we learn that within a very short time after his arrival, so remarkable an aptitude for his art did Giotto show, and so perseveringly and rapidly did he acquaint himself with all its mysteries, that he soon equaled Cimabue himself; while in a picture, which ere he succeeded in producing, he exhibited such a true perception of grace and beauty, that he even surpassed his instructor.

It was about this period that Giotto, it is said, on one occasion, painted a fly on the nose of a figure upon which his master was engaged, and this was executed so naturally, that when Cimabue returned to the studio to resume his work, he took it to be real and alive, and naturally raised his hand more than once in order to drive it away, before proceeding with his painting. Such an incident, though trivial in itself, well indicates the marvelous progress which Giotto made under the care of Cimabue; and thus, as time passed on, he continued more and more to perfect himself in his profession, until at length he became so good an imitator of Nature, more particularly in the delineation of portraits, that the stiff and formal mode of painting which was then in fashion, was quite avoided by him and unknown in his works; and even his early pictures excelled in accuracy of drawing and truthfulness to the originals, any which had been executed for two hundred years.

It was not alone as a painter that Giotto now began to distinguish himself in Florence. As an architect and as a sculptor he soon became favourably known, while he was not without some reputation as a poet. Still, it was as a painter that Giotto's fame was principally achieved; and it was as such that, while yet comparatively young, his praises being sounded throughout Italy, at length necessitated his leaving Florence in order to obey the summons of Pope Boniface VIII., to undertake for

him some important works in the church of St. Peter in Rome.

An interesting story is related in connection with this event in Giotto's life, which well shows not only the independent spirit of the painter, but also how conscious and confident he now was of his own great powers.

It is said that Giotto's fame having reached the ears of the Pope, the latter resolved to dispatch one of his courtiers to Florence, in order to ascertain what kind of a man the much-talked-of painter was, and what were his real talents, as he was then on the point of having certain paintings executed in the church of St. Peter; and the Pope's representative was also, consequently, desirous to obtain at the same time, lessons from other celebrated masters, that he might compare their skill with that of Giotto.

Arrived in the city, we are told the courtier proceeded one morning to the studio where Giotto was at work, and having inquired him of the purpose of his visit, and of the manner in which he intended to spend his day, he made him a proposition, which he could not but look upon as a specimen of his skill. Giotto, it is said, who was a very pleasant and courteous man, the courtier took a sheet of paper, and placing his arm firmly to his side to keep it steady, drew, with one stroke of his pencil, which was dipped in red colour, a circle, which was so accurate and exact, that it was wonderful to see; and, indeed, "round as Giotto's O," became eventually a proverb throughout Italy. This completed, he handed it to his visitor, and said, with a smile, "Here is your drawing."

"And am I to have but this? I asked for a design," said the amazed messenger, thinking that Giotto must be jesting.

"Giotto," said the great painter, "I tell you your master needs nothing else from me."

And so at last, though still thinking that Giotto had made him the victim of a joke, the courtier returned home every doubtful whether he ought to submit the insignificant-looking O, with the elaborate design of the other painters which he had procured. He thought it better, however, after all, to send it with the rest, and to state the method in which, without the aid of compasses, the circle had been made; and it was quite well he did so, for the Pope, who himself quite understood the art, saw at once by it how greatly Giotto surpassed all the other painters of his time; and he was not only fully satisfied with it, but sent for Giotto to come to Rome, where he executed not only a few of his works—chief among which was a ship in mosaic, called "The Navicella," over the portico in the grand entrance to the church of St. Peter, which came to be known by the name of Giotto's Vessel.

In the year 1316, when Giotto was forty years of age, he seems to have left the Papal court; and by this time his reputation, combined with his carefulness, had enabled him to become prosperous, and he returned to Florence full of honours and wealth.

It was in 1331, in that city where his earliest insight into his art had been gained, that he undertook that which seems to have been his latest work—namely the design of the celebrated Gothic tower of Santa Maria del Fiore; and it was in this church, after having been made a citizen of Florence, and rewarded in his latest days with a handsome pension, that with all the honour befitting so illustrious a man, Giotto di Bondone was, after his death, two years later, interred.

Giotto—who has been described as being "the master by whom the true art of painting was restored, after having been lost during many years previously"—was a man endowed with natural gifts of the highest order, and it was through the possession of these that he achieved such great fame and riches. Still, in contemplating his life and his work, it should never be forgotten that even such marvelous gifts

as were bestowed on the little peasant-boy needed to be carefully directed and cultivated; and to the good and shrewd Cimabue was the great painter not a little indebted for the eminence to which he attained.

The good accomplished with steel pens is incalculable, but the cost of a box of Esterbrook's is only nominal.

The power which wealth confers, should be exercised in the pleasure of doing good.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT.

ALEXANDER DIXON, Esq.—We note with great pleasure this most popular and business-like gentleman, lately general agent for Ontario, of the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society, of Norwich, England, has been appointed manager for the whole Dominion, as well as Newfoundland.

The Norwich Union Co. has done many good things in their time, but in their selection of Toronto as their head quarters for Canada, as well as in the gentlemen appointed as their officers, they have exercised their well-known sagacity. Mr. Dixon has the confidence of all, for his courtesy, promptitude, and ready accessibility.

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BIRTHS, MARRIAGES and DEATHS.

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Marriage.

DEAKENS SANDERS, April 20th, at the Holy Trinity Church, Gosport, Huron, England, by the Rev. Canon Edrup, Vicar of Brethill Wilt, and the Rev. T. W. Palling, Vicar of Pennoe, Devon, uncles of the bride, Robert Thomas Sanders of Langarne Castle, Carmarthenshire, and of St. Alban Hall, Oxford, to Margaret Elizabeth Sanders, eldest daughter of the Rev. W. H. Sanders, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Gosport, and niece of the Rev. T. E. Sanders, Diocese of Huron.

PRODUCE MARKET.

TORONTO, June 7, 1881.

Table with 2 columns: Commodity and Price. Includes items like Wheat, Do. Spring, Barley, Oats, Peas, Rye, Flour, Beef, Mutton, Hogs, Beets, Onions, Cabbage, Parsnips, Turnips, Potatoes, Apples, Spinach, Rheubarb, Lettuce, Onions, Radishes, Asparagus, Chickens, Fowls, Ducks, Geese, Turkeys, Butter, Do. dairy, Eggs, Wool, Hay, Straw.