

IN HIS OWN
IMAGE
FREDERICK BARON CORVO



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1914. Probably
poisoned.

IN HIS OWN IMAGE

By FREDERICK BARON CORVO



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*Nè Dio, Suo Grazia, mi se mostra altrove,
Più che 'n alcun leggiadro e mortal velo;
E quel sol amo, perche 'n quel si specchia.*

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI. SONN. LVJ.

CONTENTS

Spring

	Page
I. ABOUT THE FANTASTICAL FRA GUILHELMO OF THE CAPPUCINI	3
IJ. ABOUT THE HOLY DUCHESS AND THE WICKED KING	12
IIJ. ABOUT THE CHEEK OF FRA SEBASTIANO OF THE CAPPUCINI	15
IIIJ. ABOUT THE MIRACULOUS FRITTER OF FRAT' AGOSTINO OF THE CAPPUCINI	19
V. ABOUT THE ORIGINAL FRITTER OF SANGIUSSEPPE	26
VJ. BEING AN EPICK OF SANGIORGIO, PROTECTOR OF THE KINGDOM	35
VIJ. WHY THE ROSE IS RED	66
VIIJ. ABOUT THE WITCH'S HEAD AND SANTIGNAZIO OF LOYOLA	82
VIIIJ. ABOUT SODOM, GOMORRAH, AND THE TWO ADMIRABLE JESUITS	97
X. ABOUT SOME KINGS	112
XJ. ABOUT PAPA FERRETTI AND THE BLEST HERESIARCH	119
XIJ. ABOUT THE LOVE WHICH IS DESIRE AND THE LOVE WHICH IS DIVINE	122
α. WHY CATS AND DOGS ALWAYS LITIGATE	125
β. ABOUT DIVINAMORE AND THE MAIDEN ANIMA	130

Summer

	Page
XIIJ. ABOUT DOING LITTLE, LAVISHLY	145
XIIIJ. ABOUT DOUBLES IN GENERAL: AND SANVENANZIO AND SANTAGAPITO, IN PARTICULAR	168
XV. ABOUT THE AFORESAID, AND PADRE DOTTO VAGHEGGINO, S. J.	187
XVJ. ABOUT THESE TALES, THE KEY AND PURGATORY	207
XVIJ. ABOUT SOME FRIENDS	228
XVIIJ. ABOUT THE PENANCE OF PAISALETRIO	252
XVIIIJ. ABOUT OUR LADY OF DREAMS	273
XX. ABOUT THE FOUR THINGS NECESSARY	295
XXJ. ABOUT THE PREFACE OF FRA CHERUBINO	303
XXIJ. ABOUT THE INSISTENCE OF SANGIUSEPPE	311
XXIIJ. ABOUT A VEGETABLE PURGATORY	323
XXIIIJ. ABOUT WHAT IS DUE TO CONTRITION	336

These Six Tales were printed in THE YELLOW BOOK in 1895-6. It has been deemed advisable to include them in this instalment: but it should be remembered that they were related a year before the Spring and Summer Sections.

I. ABOUT SAMPIETRO AND SAMPAOLO	347
IJ. ABOUT THE LILIES OF SANLUIGI	354
IIJ. A CAPRICE OF SOME CHERUBIM	368
IIIJ. ABOUT BEATA BEATRICE AND THE MAMMA OF SAMPIETRO	378
V. ABOUT THE HERESY OF FRA SERAFICO	391
VJ. ABOUT ONE WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIANS LOVE ONE ANOTHER	409

*"Hic est quem legis,
ille quem requiris."*

MART.

Spring

*“Primavera, gioventu dell’ anno:
Gioventu, primavera della vita.”*

In His Own Image

I

ABOUT THE FANTASTICAL FRA GUILHELMO OF THE CAPPUCINI

I SAID that, at sunset, Toto would drive me to Rome; for I intended to hear mass at San Giorgio *ad Velum Aureum* in the morning, being the festival of England's Protector Regni.

Toto conveyed the news to my boys in this form, — that *la sua eccellenza* was going to adore Sangiorgio in Rome, on the morrow, he being the god who looked after my magnificent country; and to Guido and Ercole was given the charge of decorating the breakfast-table with English roses, ready for my return.

We started after Ave Maria. This boy fancied himself immensely, when officiating in an English dog-cart; and he looked divinely smart in dark blue, makroskeles, with tan gaiters buttoned. That kind of blue, with Toto's kind of brown, is fine. I learned the blend of him.

On the main road I espied a significant cappuccino trudging along before us. Coming up

About the Fantastical Fra

to him, I recognised Frat' Agostino, and I asked for the pleasure of giving him a lift. He said he would ride as far as L'Arricia; so I took the reins, and Toto bundled him into the machine, afterwards climbing up behind, supercilious, and nostrils quivering. He did not admire cappuccini; and he loathed this one, whom he held to be a sneak of sneaks for getting him into trouble about a certain baggage called Fiammina. (She was all that!) I don't blame Toto much. I cannot. For, wherever we went, a parcel of hussies buzzed about him, like hornets round honey; and Toto was a human being,—a fact which it is sometimes difficult to believe. But the circumstances of this particular affair drew from me a flagellation so sound and solemn (all anglican rites being duly observed) as to impress Frat' Agostino, who was present on the occasion in an official capacity, with the notion that we English regarded the function as possessing something of a sacramental nature — indeed, he spoke afterwards of the twig as the outward and visible vehicle of inward invisible grace! Heptakaideketes took the thrashing in his habitual sweet-tempered way, and bore me no malice for shedding his blood. He said that he knew himself to have been wrong; anyone could see that with half an eye: and, if he escaped punishment, he would become a sinner of vast dimensions as time went on; and then there would be flaming divels to whip him in sæcula. It

Guilhelmo of the Cappuccini

was far better as I made it. Naturally, he preferred to be flayed by me, because I was his patron who wished him well into the bargain, *and never disgraced him before the youngsters*. But Frat' Agostino — well, he was cappuccino, — antipaticissimo — and that was all about that!

This friar was an anæmic little creature, with a black beard, hollow chops, gorgonzola-coloured fangs, a carrion breath, and a voice of brass. After roaring the customary compliments, he began to cover the floor of my dog-cart in a phthysical manner and to give me the news of the day. He said that he had been the round of his patrons with a few salads from his garden; and, producing a green and frowsy crumple from his bosom, he begged my acceptance of it, adding that the larder of his convent was empty. At once, I made the customary offering.

There is a part of the road between Velletrj and Rome, where you turn up to Città Lavinia, which is said to be haunted by the horrible apparition of a coach with headless driver and headless steeds. While passing the spot, I inquired whether Frat' Agostino had ever seen this spectre. He replied that he had not: and, bitten with an itch of inane modernity, he tried to raise himself in the regard of what he called a fashionable young man (meaning *me*), by uttering ordinary ignorant scoffs at supernatural exhibitions.

About the Fantastical Fra

“But, fraticello,” I said; “Fra Guilhelmo of your own convent has seen the grisly thing, and told me of it with his proper lips not two weeks ago. He described it with minutest detail, also his glorious triumph over his tremors; and I always believe everything that a priest tells me, on principle, you know.”

“Oh! — Fra Guilhelmo!” — the cappuccino chuckled; “but we never believe him! Why, he’s the most fantastical liar, and the butt of our community! Haw-haw! When I leave you, ask Toto to tell you about Fra Guilhelmo and the earthquake. I myself, on that subject, had better hold my peace, lest I sin against charity; but, for Toto, it is another matter. (Sqwawk!)”

When we reached the shrine of Madonna, on the right, before entering L’Arricia, Frat’ Agostino blessed us, and alighted, giving thanks for his ride. Toto offered up the stale salad at the shrine, pushing it through the grating; and he climbed into the cart with the charming reflection that some poor old biddy might be glad to think that Madonna had sent her a supper. As we passed the church on the left, he asked leave to go in, to say five *Ave Marias*, because he felt as though he really needed them.

After leaving Albano, we drove silently for some distance across the still Campagna. The sun had set in a conflagration of yellow and violet and yellow; and now the moon arose, majestic, magical, a monstrous pearl afloat on an olive and

Guilhelmo of the Cappuccini

primrose sea. It was a moment of romance. I felt that the slow recitativo of Toto's admirable counter-tenor would provide a backbone for my emotions.

I said, "Break silence, Toto;" and I rolled a cigarette. I was about to enjoy.

The lad looked straight between the ears of Amfitrite. (Amfitrite is the white mare.)

"In obedience to the command of Frat' Agostino of the Cappuccini, I will recite the history of Fra Guilhelmo of the same convent.

"La sua eccellenza will remember the little earthquake which happened here, very early in the morning, a few weeks ago; and of course you know that earthquakes have sharp edges. I mean, the earth will quake on this side of the road, but not on that. I mean, that they do not happen all over the world at the same time. Here, the ground will shake: there, no. It has an edge I say, this earthquake; and la sua eccellenza will know exactly what is necessary to be understood. Well, then! This earthquake had a sharp edge: and, as it moved along under the convent of cappuccini, the edge was in the middle; that is to say, the building, which contains the cells of the frati, was shaken very sharply, but the quire of the church, which is at the other end, was not shaken at all.

"It was six o'clock in the morning, when the Padre Eterno remembered that Fra Guilhelmo deserved a good shaking; and, at that moment,

About the Fantastical Fra

the friar sat at the table in his cell, writing the lecture which he was to read before his novices that same day; for, you know, he is the novice-master, and blessed am I who am not one of his novices. His crucifix hung upon the wall before him; and Fra Guilhelmo, having had his eyes made badly by his parents, pored over his writing with his head close to the Feet of Il Santissimo Salvatore. You have seen Fra Guilhelmo, sir?

“The other frati were singing office in the quire; a few novices had been left to sweep the stairs; and, just as two of these had reached the door of Fra Guilhelmo, suddenly Domeniddio shook the ground.

“The crucifix, of which I told you, swang outward from the wall: Fra Guilhelmo felt a sort of heave, and took a tap on the forehead at the same time. As he started, and raised his head, again the earth quivered, and the crucifix swang towards him, as before.

“Fra Guilhelmo became a jelly. He leaped to his feet. He was mad with terror. But, in an instant, he had a tale all ready and complete. He can always explain. No; I do not know who provides his explanations. Not his angel-guardian: and of that I am most sure: but never yet has Fra Guilhelmo been caught ignorant of causes. Ah well! Out he pranced into the corridor, putting on his spectacles, his heart fat with fright; and behold two fearful novices standing

Guilhelmo of the Cappuccini

close by a window, as any decent person would be standing during an earthquake.¹

“ Fra Guilhelmo remembered that much is due to the dignity of a novice-master ; and, approaching the lads with a majestick air, he said, ‘ Re-joice, rejoice, my children ; for I have just spat upon and defied Sathanas, who assaulted me, being enraged at the damage which I shall do him with my lecture this forenoon.’ Then he made them enter his cell, continuing, ‘ Mark well, my children, what I say, that you may learn to withstand the fiery darts of the Wicked One, as I have done this day, by the Grace of God, the intercession of La Sua Madre Immacolata, and the assistance of Beato Fra Francesco ’ (who has no more to do with cappuccini, sir, than has Amfitrite, except, perhaps, to weep over them). The friar went further. ‘ I was sitting on my stool, preparing my lecture ; and I had just written down a spiritual maxim which, when exemplified in the spirit of holy obedience, by you, my children, for whose edification it is intended, will form an effectual defence against the attacks with which the foul fiend our enemy ravages the citadel of your chastity. Enraged at

¹ Decent persons, of whom Toto Moidalchini is the chief, argue thus : if the earthquake be severe, the roof, floors, and interior walls, being the weakest parts of a house, will fall first. If the earthquake be pernicious, why then all will go. But the outside walls will stand longest, and there may be a foothold there. So decent persons rush to an outside wall, *i. e.*, one with a window in it, as being safest.

About the Fantastical Fra

this impregnable bulwark erected by me, between your young souls and his infernal onset, Sathanas rushed from the bowels of the earth up the inside of my wall; and, amid sparks of fire and the crackle of thunder, he dashed my crucifix into my face, intending to spill my brains over my writing, so spoiling my lecture: and this I have seen him do twice.'

"Don't laugh, sir! Keep it in, till I have told you about the novices.

"Those miserables were frightened out of their wits; for, indeed, Fra Guilhelmo can be most terrifying. One stood speechless, staring at the crucifix. The other took him by the ear, putting him outside the door, still frozen with horror: then, returning, all in a moment, he kneeled down by Fra Guilhelmo; and, beginning *Confiteor Deo Omnipotenti*, without any more ado, he made a general confession of all the sins which he had ever committed, from the creation of the world until the end of time. While this went on, the other novice recovered his senses, and made several attempts to enter the cell, wishing also to confess; and confess he did, as soon as the first was shriven.

"Not till then was Fra Guilhelmo free to publish his exploit; but the other frati, having been in the quire where the earthquake did not pass, and also, having had some experience of Fra Guilhelmo's improvisations, laughed at him, and were inclined to scoff; indeed, the Fra Guardiano

Guilhelmo of the Cappuccini

talked about giving him a penance for gammoning his brethren with childish fables, and called him a cock-brained beast. But when Fra Guilhelmo brought the two novices to swear that they had felt the convent shaken by Sathanas his rage, this Guardiano, who is the hard mean vulgar bit of dirt called Fra Sebastiano, began to think that he might be doing an injustice to Fra Guilhelmo. But several masses were waiting to be said, and there was no time for many words just then.

“However, when that Fra Guardiano had finished his duty at the altar of Santantonio, the widow of the son of Ricardo stopped him to inquire whether any damage had been done to the convent by the earthquake which, she said, had tossed her out of her bed just in time for mass.


“And so the mystery of the conflicts between Sathanas and Fra Guilhelmo was laid bare, to the amusement of the peoples, the nations, and the tongues.”

About the Holy Duchess

IJ

ABOUT THE HOLY DUCHESS AND THE WICKED KING

HERE Toto drew up at a lonely place where the road was rather narrow. The sky was of that dark luciferous blue, cold, vast, profound, spangled with pale stars, which you can only get on the Roman Campagna, late in spring. It was chilly, and I asked Toto why he stayed.

“But, sir, don't you know that this is the place where la santa signora duchessa,  requiescat in pace, refused a salutation to the Wicked King.

“Bomba was his name, a fiend from hell, stained red with women's blood and gangrened with the salt of tortured murdered children's tears. Yet he was the friend of Papa Ferretti, and it is hard to understand why the Santo Padre should have a were-wolf for His friend.

“In the war-time my father often drove la santa signora duchessa along this very road, for there was no iron road then; and often they met that king coming to his camp from Rome.

“When my father saw the royal outriders he would draw up the carriage at the roadside and

and the Wicked King

bare his head; and if there were any gentlemen in the carriage with la santa donna, her husband, or her sons, they would alight, and stand, holding their hats in their hands until that king had passed. But la santa signora duchessa was proud and brave, and she never let it be supposed that she was aware of any kings passing along that road, for she glanced high, and her face was as hard as though it were cut in cameo.

“That fiend marked her beauty and her haughtiness, and one day, at this very place, he stopped his chariot, and he bowed to la santa donna, looking straight in her face. She did not move an eyelash.

“Then that king stood up in his chariot, and bowed to her a second time, holding his hat in his hand.

“Sir, then, la santa signora duchessa, looking disdainfully into his very eyes, put up her parasol, and held it between her holy face and the face of the wicked king.

“And Bomba went green with rage. He cursed his coachman for stopping, though he himself had ordered so. And he flung back on his cushions and was driven away.

“My father always stopped here, after that, to say his *Gloria Patry* twelve times in honour of a brave and noble lady who disdained a wicked king. But she was English, as you know, sir, therefore she had no fear.

Holy Duchess and Wicked King

“✚ May our Lord grant her that cool place for which she always yearned.

“And, sir, I have said my *Gloria Patry* twelve times while you were looking at the stars.”

He chirruped to the mare, and on we flew.

The Cheek of Fra Sebastiano

III

ABOUT THE CHEEK OF FRA SEBASTIANO OF THE CAPPUCCINI

“**Y**OU do not love cappuccini, Toto?” I said.

“Well, sir, to tell the blind and naked truth, I prefer other Religions. Of course there must be some good cappuccini, for there are always some good people everywhere. I am sorry for them for being cappuccini; but it is not their fault; for, more often than enough, one cannot help oneself. But it does surprise me that there should be so many unenlightened persons collected together in this one convent.”

I asked why he had called the Guardiano a hard mean vulgar bit of dirt?

“For an exquisite reason, sir. Listen? Last summer, behold an artigiano who came seeking work. You know that these cappuccini have a little hill behind their convent, with the *Via Crucis* along a winding path; and at the summit, a large Calvary of bronze, which, they pretend, can be seen from a distance of fifteen miles.

“The artigiano discovered this bronze to be rotting away, the surface having been left without protection; and the damp air had bitten

About the Cheek of Fra

it with a kind of rust, grey-green, — a very serious matter.

“To the Fra Guardiano, he explained the damage, saying, that, for preserving the piece, it would be necessary to clean off all the rust, using a very virtuose lotion; and next, to polish the bronze till it shone like the nimbus of San Michele Arcangiolo. Also, to keep it like that, he said it must be well rubbed with an oily rag once a week until the consummation of the world. Lastly, he offered to do the work with his own hands, asking, in return, for food and lodging and spiritual direction as long as he should be employed by the convent; but for no money, for he despised it; and, moreover, the work was a pious one which would gain him the good graces of his angel-guardian; and, at the time, he had the humour to amuse himself in that way.

“The Fra Guardiano smelt advantage in the acceptance of this offer. He jumped at it, and closed a bargain, telling the Signor Caio to collect his tools; also, to come to the convent at Ave Maria of the next day, when he should be lodged in the guest-house.

“Early on the morning after, Fra Sebastiano came with impudence to this artigiano, saying that he had been thinking, and he had remembered that there were several strong novices in his convent who could do the work, supposing that they knew the way: and this cappuccino

Sebastiano of the Cappuccini

with his face of brass was not ashamed to ask the Signor Caio for the secrets of his handicraft as a free gift, that is to say, of the sovereign lotion which would clear the bronze Calvary of decay. It was a case of a rich man — rich by beggary — robbing a poor man who earned a living with his hands and brain.”

Toto snorted, and cracked the whip viciously.

“Well,” I said, “and what did Signor Caio do?”

“Do, sir? Why he did what you would expect of a man of uona gente. He laughed with open scorn in the face of that wretched cappuccino; and then he wrote down for Fra Sebastiano, very carefully, instructions for the making of that very virtuose lotion; also he wrote full and exact direction for completing the whole work, so that not even a clumsy boor of a novice could make a mistake by any chance. Yes, to that Guardiano asking, he freely gave the means of breaking his bargain; and then he shook off the dust of his feet at him, and retired to seek work in another place, and of honest men.”

“But do you mean to tell me that your cappuccino used the knowledge gained in this disgraceful manner?” I asked.

“Of course he did, sir. He has not a fine conscience, he knows nothing of honour; he will buy, sell, bargain, and cheat, like any Hebrew

The Cheek of Fra Sebastiano

grocer: he is cappuccino, priest of God, and I call him a hard mean vulgar bit of dirt. Luckily all cappuccini are not of his species. Generally they are lumps of clown, like Fra Guilhelmo and Frat' Agostino?"

"Hallo," I said, "Fra Guilhelmo I can understand, but why do you bring in Frat' Agostino?"

Frat' Agostino of the Cappuccini

IIIJ

ABOUT THE MIRACULOUS FRITTER OF FRAT' AGOSTINO OF THE CAPPUCCINI

“**W**ELL, sir, they are as like as two little drops of water, those two. Let me offer another story to la sua eccellenza, that it may be seen whether I err in saying ‘lumps of clown,’ or no.

“On the festa of Sangiuseppe, they were to have fritters for dinner in Frat' Agostino's convent, where there is a custom for all to go kitchen-wards when the brother cook begins to fry the batter; and, when one side of the fritter has been gilded; each friar takes the pan, and flings its contents into the air to turn it, and catches it deftly on the other side. If they are clumsy or knotty-fingered, the fritter falls to the floor, and then they have to eat it all gritty and slimy. Oh, it is good sport to see them, I do assure you, sir!

“Well, and soon it came to Frat' Agostino's turn; and, because his sleeves were tight, not being Franciscan sleeves, you know, or perhaps for another reason, — while the frati all stood round, Frat' Agostino made a mess of his fritter.

About the Miraculous Fritter of

“These shrimps of men always wish to do gigantic things; and Frat’ Agostino wanted to hurl his fritter higher than any other friar, so he seized the pan which held the half-fried batter, and gave a tremendous heave. Everybody saw the batter in the pan; and then all eyes flashed upward to the vaulted roof to see it fly. Certainly, the fritter left the pan, and Frat’ Agostino gripped the handle, and waited.

“Well, he waited, and everybody waited; but the fritter went neither up nor down. It only went.

“There was no longer any fritter.

“After an interval, the frati lowered their eyes from the roof; and there stood Frat’ Agostino staring upward, resembling a grotesk. But there was no fritter. They turned the kitchen topsy-turvy. Such a garbuglio was never seen. The fritter of Frat’ Agostino had disappeared.

“Oh, it was a miracle, without a doubt; and, what was more, that precious Fra Guilhelmo had seen it done.

“‘My brethren,’ he exclaimed; ‘give thanks unto the Signor Iddio, to the Stella del Mattino, and to Beato Fra Francesco; for this community has merited a vision of the gods; and to me, most wretched and yet most favoured sinner that I am, is it given to unfold the marvel. You all have seen what a perfect fritter had fallen to the lot of Frat’ Agostino; the one side creamy, white, and luscious, the other delicate, crisp,

Frat' Agostino of the Cappuccini

golden, and dripping with fat oil! Far too fine a fritter for a miserable mortal man dwelling in a vale of sin and sorrow! Such ambrosial food is fitted only for the gods on high! Therefore, when Frat' Agostino tossed it to the stars, as an oblation having a sweet savour, the eyes of my soul were opened, and I saw the Direttore della Sacra Famiglia, the Scudo Potentissimo per i difensori della Chiesa di Cristo, the Gran Patriarca Sangiuseppe, sitting in sadness on his throne, without a fritter for his festa, — he, the original inventor of fritters, too!”

“Stop, Toto!” I cried. “Do you say that Sangiuseppe invented fritters?”

“Patience, sir; and presently I will make the statement good. But now Fra Guilhelmo continues, ‘With one wink of his august eyelid, Sangiuseppe invited the attention of San Gabriele Arcangiolo to that paragon of fritters. And, as it soared aloft from Frat' Agostino's pan, the tremendous Archangel of the Annunciation swooped, and seized, and bore it triumphantly to Sangiuseppe in paradise. O fortunate fritter! How blissful is your lot! Snatched from all the miseries of this wicked world, to rest, for endless ages, immutable, inviolate, unutterably serene, upon the bosom of Sangiuseppe!’”

“This beats all,” I said. “Fancy making out that Sangiuseppe is dyspeptick!”

“Ah, I do not know what *dyspeptick* is, unless it means *uncertain in the temper*; and every one

About the Miraculous Fritter of

knows how difficult it is to do business with Sangiuseppe.

“Well; then the Fra Guardiano called Fra Guilhelmo a bubbolone, and put an eight days’ silence on him: but the fact remained that the fritter was gone, no one knew where; so they cooked another, and went to dinner in the refectory.

“I need not say that Frat’ Agostino felt very much elation, giving himself the airs of a grocer’s wife on a holiday of obligation. It was not every friar who could do such a trick with a fritter as he had done, and before a whole convent, too! So, though he was absolutely ignorantly innocent, nor believed the rubbish vomited by Fra Guilhelmo, still, all the same, he looked upon himself as being something of a marvel; and he did not omit to let the other frati know it.

“When these cappuccini had devoured their food, they went to make their Visit to Il Santissimo in the church. While leaving the refectory, Frat’ Agostino had the misfortune to break a plate, walking with his nose cocked high, and sweeping the end table with his cord. He wears boots, you know; not sandals like a real friar: and so he stamped the plate to pieces. He had to pick them up again, which made him late in church. After Visit, Chapter; and, when all were seated, Frat’ Agostino went on his knees in the middle of the room, and confessed in public his disgrazia, exhibiting the broken plate.

Frat' Agostino of the Cappuccini

“Fra Sebastiano was very pleased to have the opportunity of taking this friar down a peg or two, especially at a time when he was so puffed with pride; and, after condemning him, in the usual way, to wear the sherds of broken pottery on a string around his neck for four and twenty hours, and to beg his next three meals from his brethren, — from each plate a scrap of egg, or fish-skin, or stalks of green, or cheese-rind, — he added the command, on holy obedience, that Frat' Agostino should lie prostrate on his face, while the community enjoyed its half-hour of recreation.

“Frat' Agostino stretched out his arms and legs, flung himself forward on the floor, flat; — and *howled*.

“It was an awful howl.

“Next, he wriggled his legs, and twitched his arms, and scabbled with his fingers in the dust.

“You could not see his face; for the big stiff capperuccio of his habit, which generally hangs down the back, had flopped up and covered his head. But, from under the brown hood, there came continually, a moan, a squeak, and a howl, a moan, a squeak, and a howl; and always the arms and legs kept squirming.

“Fra Guardiano, thinking this to be a display of naughty temper, began to speak severely, bidding Frat' Agostino to behave himself. But, seeing that that abased friar continued to emit unearthly noises, and to welter in the folds of his

About the Miraculous Fritter of

gown, somebody suggested that it might be a fit which troubled him. Then Fra Guardiano went to him, and stirred him with his foot, saying sharply, 'Frat' Agostino, — Frat' Agostino!'

"Instantly the noises ceased; and Frat' Agostino tempestuously stuttered, '*Confiteor Deo omnipotent-ibeatae Mariae sempervirginibeato Michaeli archang-lobeato Johanni Baptistae-e-e-e-e-sanctis apostolis-Petro et Paulo omnibus sanctis et tibi pater qui a peccavi-nimiscogitationeverboetoperemeaculpa meaculpa mea maximaculpa-a-a-a-a-a* — oh, yes — and since my last confession, father, I have fallen into the sin of pride — u-pépépé — I'm damned, I am, — yes I'm damned if I'm not — I was proud because San Gabriele Arcangiolo took my fritter — it was mine — mine — mine — iiiiiif! — I'll never look at another till I'm dead — I wish with all my heart I'd never seen one — o-dododododo! — But I was proud, father — yes, proud as Lucifer — aaah! And I'm found, out — found out. O Dio mio — Dio mio — and I'm punished — yes, I'm punished — with an accursed incubus who is sent to clutch my flesh — ahi-ahi-ahi! — O father, behold me damned forever — a-u — a-u — a-u — a-u — a-u — and here's a dead devil — erré erré erré — oh, like ice — a-riding on my neck —'

"The frati sat aghast, and sweat poured down their faces till their beards dripped, — dripped upon the floor, sir; for surely the idea of a dead devil is altogether horrid!

Frat' Agostino of the Cappuccini

“The Fra Guardiano, also, had much fear; but when he had blessed himself very fervently indeed with an entirely opulent sign of the cross, he took hold of Frat' Agostino, and pulled him up from the ground.

“And, lo! a nasty — cold — flabby — fritter — sticking to the nape of his neck.

“Then it was seen how, in endeavouring to fling his fritter higher than any other friar, Frat' Agostino had only tossed it over his head, into his own gaping capperuccio, where, of course, no one had ever thought of searching for it.”

About the Original Fritter

V

ABOUT THE ORIGINAL FRITTER OF SAN GIUSEPPE

I LAUGHED heartily. It is a curious thing that the very funniest tales in all the world should be those which concern holy persons and holy things, — the clergy, for example.

The humour of seculars has a narrow range. It can be, and has been, reduced to a handful of simple formulæ. But there is a spontaneity, an illimitable variety in ecclesiastical stories, to which I respectfully direct the attention of my unknown colleagues of the quill. I rigidly exclude, however, narratives of a certain brand, which are invented by the class of clergy technically designated “holy men,” and recited, with the nuts, at clerical dinner-tables.

The mind of the clerick is—and thanks be to all gods for that same—a cramped and uncultured one. Its operations are concentrated upon one sole point, viz., the salvation of souls in general, and of its own in particular. Hence the gyrations of clergy of the calibre of Fra Guilhelmo and of Frat’ Agostino (who represent a proportion of their profession, and who, apparently (but, I am sure, ignorantly), take delight

of Sangiuseppe

in bringing ridicule and disrepute upon the most respectable traditions) are as amusing to the English connoisseur (I do not say British, because I want to exclude Kelts, and to include my English cousins of America) as the antics of any other foreigner.

Yes! There you have it! The clergy (of whom I am, in private life, the least) are foreigners. They belong to a kingdom not of this world. And, as foreigners, I find them extremely diverting.

But I reminded Toto of his assertion that Sangiuseppe was the inventor of fritters.

“Yes, sir; and indeed he was.

“Now there was Madonnina, — oh, but beautiful beyond my power to tell, just like an evening lily, with truthful, peacock-purple eyes, and shining hair coloured like a field of rye at harvest-time, and being but fourteen years and three months old. Her parents, Sangioacchino and Santanna, had betrothed her to Sangiuseppe, who was grave and in his prime; because his staff had bloomed with almond-blossoms, showing that the Padre Eterno looked on him with favour.

“On a night in spring, but earlier in the year than this, Madonnina went to the well in the lily-garden; and, as she went, the flowers bowed down to break their hearts in perfume, and to kiss her little feet.

“Stars gleamed in the water. All was very still.

About the Original Fritter

“Madonnina was seated on the marble steps. She was making her meditation.

“Presently, a gentle breath stirred. Roses and violets offered odours in their rustling petals.

“Greatest angels came into the garden; and they kneeled before their queen.

“There was San Gabriele Arcangiolo like an arcidiacono, all in silver; huge, and white, and young with silver hair.

“There was San Rafaele Arcangiolo like a pilgrim, with his staff and fish.

“There was San Michele Arcangiolo like a warrior; and his armour was all gold.

“The first of these archangels held a sceptre, like a lily of blue gems. The others bore a cushion, with a lily-diadem of pearls.

“You can see that cloudy whiteness like milk across the sky? Well, sir; that is the army of angels, far away. But, on this night of which I speak, it reached right down to the earth as well, millions upon millions, all in white; some carrying the stars in lanthorns; and some with arciliuti and quinterne for a serenade. They kneeled, from earth to heaven, behind the Santi Arcangioli, Gabriele, Rafaele, and Michele.

“And, to the first, Madonnina said, ‘O archangel, what is your name?’

“He answered, ‘Gabriele is my name; and I come on the part of the Padre Eterno.’ Then,

of Sangiuseppe

San Gabriele Arcangiolo said, '*Ave, Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus Fructus ventris tui, Jhesus:*' as the Santo Spirito had taught him in paradise.

"And the angels sang in chorus, very, very low, 'Ave — Ave — Ave —'

"Madonnina trembled, being only a little girl; but she was wise—so wise; and nothing did she say.

"San Gabriele Arcangiolo whispered, 'O Virgo virginum, have no fear; for the Padre Eterno loves you well. And I am to tell you that, if you will, you shall be made the Mother of Cristo Liberatore. His name will be Gesù: He is the Son of the Padre Altissimo: and He is King in *sæcula sæculorum*: amen.'

"Madonnina desired to do the Will of the Padre Eterno above all things: but she was a girl: and she wanted to know. She said to San Gabriele Arcangiolo, 'But I am a maid; and Sangiuseppe has but now betrothed me.'

"San Gabriele Arcangiolo answered, 'Madonna, the Santo Spirito will embrace you with His Power, and you shall be Madre di Dio e sempre Vergine. O Maria Santissima, think of the Might of the Padre Onnipotente, Who built the world, and of Whose wonders there is no end. In proof of this, know that your cousin, Santelisabetta, has conceived in her old age; and, in three months' time, she will bear San-

About the Original Fritter

giambattista, to be the prophet of that Son Whom my Sovereign wills to have of you.'

"At this, the gracious Madonnina gave consent; and a gentle Dove, gold-feathered and having silver wings, flew down from paradise, and nestled in her snow-pure breast.

"Then, San Rafaele Arcangiolo and San Michele Arcangiolo crowned her Regina Angelorum, with the lily diadem of pearls.

"San Gabriele Arcangiolo invested her with the sceptre resembling a lily of blue gems.

"The marble steps of the well became her throne.

"The rose-bush was her baldaquin.

"And angels kissed the violets before her little feet.

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"When this embassy had returned to paradise, Madonnina gave thanks to the Padre Eterno for His Grace, and made an oblation of herself, lifting up holy hands. Then she went to visit her cousin, Santelisabetta; for she wished to talk, as ladies do, concerning the admirable words of San Gabriele Arcangiolo.

"Santelisabetta lived next to the church, in a little town on the hills; and, when Madonnina, bearing her Divine Burthen, entered the house, the six-months child, which Santelisabetta had within her, kneeled down and adored Il Santissimo Salvatore. So Santelisabetta knew, in that moment, that the Madre di Dio and Il Santis-

of Sangiuseppe

simo Bambino were there; therefore she did not salute Madonnina in the fashion of cousins, but she kneeled upon the threshold, saying her 'Ave Maria — and what honour — and what condescension to a poor sinner like I am!'

"Madonnina had no pride. She could not have. *Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te.* She sang *Magnificat Anima Mea Dominum*; and the two mothers, the old and the young, each wept in the other's arms for joy."

Toto was silent for some minutes.

I saw the lights of Rome along the road. "What about the fritters?" I said.

"Yes, sir; the fritters. Well, Santelisabetta's baby was born at midsummer, and they called him Sangiambattista. And, six months after, it was Christmas; and then Cristo Liberatore deigned to descend into the world.

"Soon, Santelisabetta brought her son to worship the Son of the Santissima Vergine, at the house of Sangiuseppe, who was the Protector of the Madonnina and of Il Santissimo Bambino, he being a joiner by trade.

"Santelisabetta and Sangiambattista arrived at about nine of the clock, and worshipped until ten; and, afterwards, the babies played, and the two mothers engaged in holy conversation.

"Now you know, sir, that ladies talk unceasingly, without feeling tired, or thinking how the

About the Original Fritter

hours slip by. So when eleven o'clock came, and the Madonnina did not call Sangiuseppe to his dinner, he remembered that she had her cousin with her, and perhaps that would make her a little late. Therefore he went on with his work.

“When twelve o'clock came, the church-bell rang; and he said his Ave Maria; and then he took the liberty of peeping into the house.

“There sat Madonnina and Santelisabetta, talking — talking.

“‘Ah well,’ Sangiuseppe thought; ‘she does n't see her cousin every day, and it will be a change for her.’ And the good man returned to his bench.

“At one o'clock, he was faint with hunger; also, ready for his siesta; and he took another peep. There was no sign of dinner; and continually the ladies talked.

“Sangiuseppe would not intrude upon Madonna for all the world. His business was to take care of her, not to worry her. So he hunted about the kitchen to see whether he could find anything to eat; and the first thing to catch his eye was a pudding, incomplete, but evidently meant for him, in honour of his festa. Madonnina had whipped eggs, and put them in a bowl with flour, and salt, and cream; and there they stood.

“Sangiuseppe carried that bowl into his workshop, and began to sup the pudding with a spoon.

of Sangiuseppe

But there was something wrong with it. To begin with, it was icy cold, never having seen the fire; and Sangiuseppe knew not how to cook it.

“A buon cavalier non manca lancia, and a god is not the person to despair when in a difficulty. Sangiuseppe at once put on his thinking cap. Here he was, in his workshop, with a mess that cried to be cooked. He could not go back into the house with it, in case the creaking of his new shoes might disturb Madonnina and her guest. He looked about him for a little while; and, at last, he saw what he would do.

“There was a fine wide shovel belonging to the stove where he heated his glue. He cleaned it very carefully with fresh shavings. Then he took the shavings and some chips, and made a bright little fire between some stones, outside the door of his workshop. He crept round to the oil-cask, and filled his shovel with fresh oil; and, then, he sat down on a block of wood before his fire, having the shovel in his left hand, and the bowl of batter in his right.

“First, he held the shovel on the fire, till the oil bubbled and boiled; next, he poured the batter into the shovel; and, when it was gilded on one side, he turned it over with a clean splinter. Last of all, he held the world’s first fritter in the pan with another clean splinter, drained off the oil into the grass, stamped out the fire with care, and, lo, a delicious fritter, gold, and crisp, and succulent, to reward his pains!

Original Fritter of Sanguiseppe

“ That is why I say that Sanguiseppe invented fritters ; and, also, that is why all the world honours him by eating fritters on his festa.”

We swept up to the Gate of St. John.

Here, I took the reins. I never could get that boy to learn short cuts through the city. We talked through Merulana ; but when I branched to the left before Santa Maria Maggiore, there was silence, until we reached my lair on Banchi Vecchi.

After supper, and writing up my notes, I tried a new huqa, a lovely thing sent from Smyrna by Biasio C——. It was sweet, so long as I eyed it ; but when I began to read the papers, Toto had to squat by the bowl, with a scaldino, to keep it lighted.

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

VJ

BEING AN EPICK OF SANGIORGIO, PROTECTOR OF THE KINGDOM

THE next morning, at nine, we were at San Giorgio *ad Velum Aureum*.

Among the herbs on the floor, there was an unusual quantity of rosemary and thyme; and the scent was delicious. I brought an arm-full of pure primroses, to scatter round the altar of Sangiorgio. I showed to Toto the bulla, tied on the baldaquin of the basilican altar, without which no priest, save the Santo Padre, may officiate there. The eunuchs of the papal quire misbehaved, as usual, in a box on the epistle-side. What an annoying mass it was! Just a series of florid soli, during which the disengaged singers sat and chatted at the back of their tribune, took snuff, and apparently made up their betting books, while the conductor smacked time with a roll of music. At the beginning of *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, a priest came from the sacristy to say a low mass at the altar of Sangiorgio: and, in his wake, we promptly skipped. Here, we worshipped the relicks, — most admirable relicks, — the head of the lance of Sangiorgio, a large piece of red silk from the cross of his pennon,

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

and his veritable skull; the last having a facial angle as undoubtedly as Greek as that of the Hermes of the Heraion. Toto had not seen these treasures before. His gorgeous eyes dilated, and he was ardently appreciative. The *Gloria* of the basilican altar ended at the moment when we finished hearing our low mass, — say twenty-two minutes. By waiting for the *Ite* of the high mass, we should be detained till noon-day: so we left the basilica before ten, considering ourselves in luck for a change; and in a few minutes we were driving fast along the Appian Way.

I asked Toto whether he had anything to say in honour of Sangiorgio.

“Oh, yes, sir; but many chapters! Why, my beloved Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires would speak of nothing else, unless I made it necessary! And he told his history to me so many times that I can sing it to you in his proper words; only, he made me promise that, whenever I should so sing, I should first say that I will not swear that it is true. For one cannot say, for certain, of Sangiorgio more than this, that he was a brave young knight who slew a dæmon-dragon in the sea, and, afterward, was robbed of the breath of his breast, by the sword of a wicked king, who wished him to renye his Christian Faith.

“Also, the said Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires told me that people of antick times had so much veneration for this megalomartyr, —

Protector of the Kingdom

that is to say, for the grandeur of this god, Sangiorgio, — that they went further than Holy Mother Church allows; for they invented splendid histories about him, and added these to his veritable Acts; until, at last, no one knew how much was really true, or how much false. Then the Santo Padre feared lest the soul of Sangiorgio should take a damage from insidious flattery; and so He ordered him to think of nothing but the eternal welfare of the illustrious English Race, which is as powerful on the sea as was Sangiorgio in those antick times. (Did you not let me see the mighty ships of England at Civita Vecchia? Have I not seen Sangiorgio's rose-red cross upon them? Yes, sir. Therefore I am not ignorant of those things.) Well then, and the Santo Padre, called Gelasio, said, also, that every writing about Sangiorgio must be burned; and that no more was to be known of him, for sure, except what I have said; — brave — young — knight — invincible on the sea — slayer of the dragon — megalomartyr — protector of the English Race. But yet, though you may burn books, you cannot burn the memories and mouths of men; and, therefore, many histories of Sangiorgio remain; and perhaps they are true, perhaps false: but, as to that, said Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires, there is no knowing.

“ Now that is clear to *la sua eccellenza*; and this is the history of Sangiorgio which Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires sang to me: —

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

“✠ Scuto Bonæ Voluntatis Tuæ: alleluia:
Coronasti eum Domine: alleluia:

“I cannot tell you to what race Ser Giorgio belonged; but, if you journey southward to the Three-Tongued Island, at length you shall attain a maritime port upon the sea-shore, called Catania. And, there, you take a ship; and, always facing the right side of the rising sun, you sail across the sea, until you reach a foreign kingdom where many islands are; and, there, the Isle of the Seraphim, is where Ser Giorgio lived and died.

“No one knew whence he came; for, when he was a little tiny babe, a sailor of those islands found him, with his girl-mother, in a drifting boat, and brought him to the king as treasure trove. And the king gave him to a priest who served the chapel of Madonnina, called Sedes Sapientiæ, that he might be well bred in holy works and ways.

“His hair was like an orange in the light of noon; he had a skin of cream; and eyes — but, Eyes! When you saw them first, they were cool, and half-shut; but they looked you through and through. When you saw them longer, you found yourself to be as foolish as a jay. But, when you knew them well, they opened, large, and wide, and clear; and, in their shining depth you saw the spark which no man dare to strike. And their colour resembled a brown almond bright with morning dew.

Protector of the Kingdom

“Ser Giorgio spent his boyhood by the sea, where pure salt air gave grace, and hardihood, and courage. Nor was the genius of his generous soul untrained in the hidden wisdom which the high gods have, and give to few. For, often at night, Ser Giorgio would lie alone, upon the summit of the giant headland riding on the sea, and listen to great angels, whispering, each to other in the winds, those mysteries which no man can learn from written books. At day-dawn, plunging from the height, he saw the waving weeds, and shells of the sea-floor, and all the marvel of the deep. Returning to the shore, he wrang the salt sea from his hair, and went to say his Ave Maria at Madonnina’s shrine; which same sweet Mother often left her Son, and stepped down from her picture painted on the chapel-wall, and called the Sedes Sapientix, who deigned to teach the young Ser Giorgio holy things.

“So the stripling lived, until he came to seventeen years of age: and, then, the king grew jealous; for, already, people looked upon Ser Giorgio as a god, seeing his strength, his fearlessness, his youth, his goodness, and his majestic gait. And there was something more. The king had cast his eye on that girl-mother, whose white arms had borne the little tiny baby in the drifting boat: but never had he dared to harm her for he feared, as all men feared, the blinding splendour of Ser Giorgio’s eyes.

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

“Not many years before, a witch had sold her soul to Sathanas for gold: also, she had bargained with that arch-dæmon that he should arm her with the evil eye, so that all who looked on her should turn to stone. Thus she was safe from robbers who might try to steal her gold. She was the eldest of five sisters, witches all. Two lived in the desert. The other two lived with her, in a secret cave, far away across the sea; from whence she cast spells, and sent hot fevers floating through the world, blighted the vines, blasted growing corn, and poisoned wells and water-springs.

“So the wicked king armed this hardy, valorous youth, Ser Giorgio, with antient arms, — a battered helmet, a broken sword, a rusty shield, and nothing more, — and sent him on a quest, to find, and slay, the horrid witch; for he thought to rid himself, by this means, and without shame, of the only champion who stood between the mother of Ser Giorgio and his desire.

“But, before the young knight started on his quest, he went and called on heaven to be his aid, laying his antient arms before the altar, in the chapel of the Madonnina by the sea. All night he kept vigil, and prayed; and, when day dawned, the Madonnina, called Sedes Sapientiæ, stepped down from her picture painted on the wall. Mighty angels and archangels came in her

Protector of the Kingdom

train; and she said, 'O knight of mine, you go to battle against Sathanas. Have you no fear?'

"Ser Giorgio answered, 'No, Madonnina; supposing that you wish me well.'

"The Madonnina said, most certainly she wished him well; and, as a proof of her goodwill, she bade the archangel-prince, who stood at her right hand, to doff his golden helmet. This, she placed upon Ser Giorgio's head; and gave him news that, all the time he lived unstained by mortal sin, and wore the helm of San Michele Arcangiolo, all mortal eyes and dæmon's eyes were blind to him. Then, at his queen's command, the archangel-prince standing at her left hand, whose name was San Gabriele Arcangiolo, stooped down, and bound upon the stripling's eager feet gold shoes with wings, that, bird-like, he might walk the high air over land and sea. Then, her hand moved above the antient rusty shield; and, underneath her hand, there sprang a rose-red cross, while the shield shone silver white as crystal over snow, for joy because the Madonnina blessed it. San Michele Arcangiolo gave Ser Giorgio a sword, also a lance which had a pennon white as the soul of a boy who wears his chrismal robe; and, on the pennon, the rose-red cross was signed, the same as on the shield. And, last of all, the Madonnina took off her own white mantle, broidered blue; and, with her holy hands, she clasped it on the breast of her young knight.

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

“But Ser Giorgio cried, ‘O Madonnina, will not your favour grant me one thing more? It is true, Maesta, and my lords these princes, that you have given me a lance, a sword, a golden helmet with curved crest, winged shoes, the rose-red cross upon my shining shield, and your own mantle, which, surely, angel-hands have woven on the looms of heaven, in spring-time, from petals of forget-me-nots and lilies; — all these, O Madonnina, and my lords these princes, you have given freely: yet I lack mail to shield my breast, and I crave of you a knightly belt and spurs of gold.’ Ser Giorgio spoke so, boldly, to the queen. He knew that he had but to ask, — and have.

“The Madonnina answered, ‘O knight of mine, in all my armoury, there is no breast-plate better than that which shields your brave heart now.’

“‘But, Madonnina, now, my breast is bare!’ Ser Giorgio cried.

“The Madonnina answered him again. She said, ‘O knight of mine, Innocence is the breast-plate that you wear; and, not the fieriest dart forged by the arch-dæmon, can pierce the fence of youthful and inviolate innocence. Yet, — mark me well, — it must be worn unceasingly; for, once put off, it cannot be put on again on this side of the grave. And the belt and spurs of gold will be the guerdon which I give to my true knight — when he has won them.’

“With these words, the Madonnina blessed Ser

Protector of the Kingdom

Giorgio again, smiling upon him, and giving him a white rose of paradise; and, at her smile, the bordures of the silver-shining shield blossomed with roses carved in gold.

“The vision faded; and the Madonnina, called the Sedes Sapientiæ, went back into her picture painted on the wall: angels and archangels returned to their own place, where San Michele Arcangiolo set Santeligio, armourer and goldsmith of the gods, to work on a helmet, lance, and sword, in place of those lent to Ser Giorgio. The chariot of the sun rode high above the pure salt sea, upon whose shore Ser Giorgio stood, with hair most beautiful to see, and shining with the purple light of youth, equipped with arms, and ready for his knightly quest.

“Angels clustered along the golden ramparts of the Città di Dio, to watch this stalwart champion considering his plans. Ser Giorgio was wise, as well as young and brave. He always marked the seven, to cut off one. And presently, he mounted up the giant headland riding on the sea; and, striding to its summit, he raised his head, and cried, ‘Hola! San Rafele Arcangiolo! Hola! Hola!’

“The archangel-comrade heard Ser Giorgio’s voice, and spread his wings, and floated down, as feathers flit upon the breeze. He said, ‘You do me honour, O Ser Giorgio; for you have gained the good will of my queen; and, when

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

the favoured of the queen of angels needs my aid, in all things I am bound to serve him, saving the Will of Domeniddio.'

"The stripling answered, 'My knightly quest lies on a dangerous road; and my enemy is hidden from me. Show me the horrid witch whom I am sworn to slay. Be my companion in my journey; that, in peace, and health, and joy, I may return again. Kurie eleeson. Christe eleeson.'

"San Rafaele Arcangiolo said, 'O fearless knight, I will go with you all the way along your dangerous road, most willingly, and bring you home at length, in peace, and health, and joy: but I may not tell you where the witch lies hidden, for all the glory of the quest is yours.' And, saying this, the huge archangel put off the radiance of his princely state, and took the shape of a slender squire, having rose-red hose and a tabard, white as snow, whose blazon was a rose-red cross, that he might serve Ser Giorgio, as, formerly, he served the young Tobia.

"A hundred miles away there stood a solitary tree, scared and riven by thunderbolts, a hollow, withered tree, upon a desert waste, all scorching sand and flinty rock. Within this tree, there lived a pair of sisters of the horrid witch, wrinkled, and grey, and horrible. One of these hags had a single eye, shrivelled and watery; the other none. But this one had a tusk, a single tusk:

Protector of the Kingdom

the first was toothless. One hag depended on the other; for the first, with her one eye would sight a prey, and make the second tear it with her tusk. To these the noble knight Ser Giorgio came, having no fear; and from one hag, he snatched the horrid tusk; and from the other hag, he snatched the evil eye: and so he had them at his mercy.

“Then, while they shrieked and champed their gums with rage, he spoke, and offered restoration of the eye and tusk; but on condition that they should first reveal to him the secret cave wherein the hell-cat of a deathly witch, their sister, could be found.

“Base curs will alway sell their friends, turning traitor to avoid affliction. They wish to be on the safe side, — the side which pays the best, and gives no pain. Therefore these hags hastened to betray their sister’s hiding-place, saying that Sathanas, the arch-dæmon, kept her far away, in Africa, where he had given her a secret cave, with many black dæmons and hobgoblins for her servitors, who burrowed long tunnels in the ground, and, by those roads, conveyed her poisons through the world.

“When he heard this, Ser Giorgio stooped down, giving back the eye and the tusk; then he mounted in the air, borne upward on the wings of gold which San Gabriele Arcangiolo had bound upon his eager feet; and, ere the hags had time to see him with the eye, or grip or tear

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

him with the venomous tusk, the knight was speeding swiftly over land and sea, upon his quest. San Rafaele Arcangiolo, shaped like a slender squire, went with him for a guard, leading him on. He wore the mantle which the Madonnina gave,—the Madonnina whom he used to worship in her picture painted on the chapel wall, and called the Sedes Sapientiæ,—and so he sped his swift unerring way through the high air, all that long journey into Africa. There, he found the dark and slimy cave wherein the horrid witch who sold her soul to Sathanas was hiding with her other sister-witches.

“Ser Giorgio raised his silver-shining shield; the Madonnina’s smile had made it shine for joy because she blessed it. The outside bore the rose-red cross; the inside showed a picture, mirrored bright and clear as in a glass. And, upward—always upward, to the inside of his lifted shield Ser Giorgio looked, that, so, the evil eye of that dread witch should cast no spell on him.

“He saw the sisters sleeping on a couch made of the multitudinous bodies of fat toads. Black cacodæmons and hobgoblins fanned hot fevers in the air, with weary beatings of blistered wings of bats. Each witch was clothed with scaly skin; and at their finger-ends were claws of brass. He watched them in the brilliance of his shield.

Protector of the Kingdom

“The horrid witch, the slave of Sathanas, slept with a sister on this side, and on that; and, in the mirror of his silver-shining shield, Ser Giorgio saw the image of that awful face which turns all men to stone. It had no skin.

“The festered flesh was bleeding raw, and green. The shapeless features twitched unceasingly. Grey vipers writhed and tangled in the hair. A huge white toad sat dribbling on the brow. And, fearful, wide, wild, horror lay behind The stony glaring of those lidless eyes.

“Then, like a falling star, the young knight’s sword — the sword of San Michele Arcangiolo — struck off the head of the bloated witch; while in the act, Ser Giorgio seized it as it fell, and gave it to his slender squire, mounting in air, borne upward on the wings of gold which San Gabriele Arcangiolo had bound upon his eager feet. Neither the cacodæmons, nor hobgoblins, nor the sisters of the horrid witch could see him, for he wore the curving-crested helmet of San Michele Arcangiolo; and he flew so mightily upon the wings of gold, that he escaped their rage, and rending of the air with brazen claws.

“So he left the dark and slimy cave; and, rising to the clouds, he flew — he flew — he flew — and scoured away across the sea.

“Sathanas, thwarted here, breaks out there.

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

So it will be till the consummation of the world, when San Michele Arcangiolo will chain him fast for ever in the lowest pit of hell. And, while Ser Giorgio was gone to slay the horrid witch and take her head, Sathanas made an onslaught on that isle where the Madonnina's shrine stood by the shore, sending there the dæmon called Apollyon, to make the people sin.

“ Out of the sea, he rose, all fierce and grim ;
a monstrous lizard, having iron jaws,
and snorting fearful gusts of smoke and flame ;
whose snaky length was armed with iron scales,
and writhed along the waves for full a mile.
And he demanded of the king that worship and
that service which is paid to the Signor Iddio
on His Throne.

“ The king refused ; for, though a proud and wicked man, also full of lust, he called himself a Christian.

“ At this, the dragon breathed a pestilence across the land ; and all the horses perished where they stood ; then he sank the slow length of his iron coils beneath the boiling waters of the sea.

“ Next day, the hideous lizard climbed the giant headland riding on the sea ; and once more he called upon the people to save themselves by means of mortal sin. Met by refusal, the monster roared with rage, and blew a pestilence

Protector of the Kingdom

across the land which slew half all the cattle; then he sank beneath the boiling waters of the angry sea.

“The third day, Apollyon came again, and crouched before the king. Crowds stood near, all pale and sick, because the dragon said no word, but sighed continually; and, at each sigh, the earth shook, and a gust of hot wind with a noisome stench blasted them, striking fear of death into their hearts. And they said to the king, ‘Surely the gods amuse themselves in paradise, forgetting us, their clients, leaving us a prey to Sathanas. If we resist this dæmon, we and our cattle die, and our land is desolated. Therefore, O king, speak courteously to him. Ask him to take a gift, and go away, leaving us in peace. To-day, we are in his power. To-morrow, the gods may remember us, and look upon us, and help us; but, to-day, we must help ourselves.’

“The king spoke courteously to the dragon, asking what gift must be given to buy his favour.

“The loathsome monster claimed a gift of all the little girls of fourteen years, that he might suck their hearts to quench his thirst.

“But the people wept, crying for mercy, offering any gift but that; and, the more they wept and cried, the more the dragon raged, sickening them with the hot stench of his breath, making them mad with fear, till they consented to this frightful sacrifice in order to appease his anger.

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

“ Their eyes went blind with tears they could not shed ;
their bursting throats ached with a powerless rage :
and there they stripped their children by the shore,
all tender little maids of fourteen years,
and bound them, helpless, on the rocks, around
the giant headland riding on the sea.

“ The dragon spumed along the heaving foam,
to drink their blood.

“ Despairing fathers saw those gentle bodies tremble, turn by turn, crushed in the hot clutch of Apollyon, whose burning lips sank, sucking out the heart, between the dainty upward-pointing breasts. They saw the struggle, and writhing quiver of soft white limbs, of little rounded arms, which, yesterday, were nestling in some loved embrace. And, now, they saw their darlings still, and cold, and pale, as winter's snow.

“ From rock to rock, from maid to maid, the dragon darted all that day ; till nightfall showed a fringe of pallid broken flowers along the shore ; and then he sank the slow length of his iron coils beneath the boiling waters of the outraged sea.

“ Mothers went wild that night ; and lovers raved against the Signor Iddio on His Throne,
against the Madonnina and her Son,
against th' unhearing gods in paradise,

Protector of the Kingdom

against th' angelick hierarchy of heaven,
because these things were done. Oh! they
forgot
that christian men need never fear the fiend ;
for Sathanas, when boldly faced, will fly :
therefore he must be spat upon, defied
if need be, even unto death, and worse ;
for th' amaranthine crown, which heroes wear
in paradise, outweighs the bitter pain
that wins it, here. And, further, they forgot
that, yielding to the menaces of Sathanas,
to-day, makes him free to come again with
fresh demands, to-morrow.

“ So, when the sun rose, all the sky blushed red
to see the spoils which the dragon had won from
christian men ; and Apollyon came once more,
rearing grinning jaws above the sea.

“ Now that king had a daughter, a lovely little
maid of fourteen years ; and when his people gave
their children to appease the dragon, he kept her
hidden in the palace, thinking that Apollyon,
who may be quailed and quelled, but not
cheated — as Sathanas, his lord, may be defeated,
but not deceived, being himself the master of
deceit — would have slaked his thirst upon the
hecatomb of yesterday.

“ But the dragon came, demanding that the
king's young daughter should be brought and
bound, that he might suck her heart as he had
sucked the hearts of all the other maids, or, in

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

default, he said, the island should be overwhelmed, engulfed, washed out by the sea.

“And, even with these words, he heaved his horrid length above the water, high into the air, and, falling forward with a thunderous crash, striking the surface with a belly scaled with iron, he made huge waves rush up the beach right to the terror-bound feet of those who stood, transfixed with fear and shame, to parley with him.

“San Rafaele Arcangiolo urged Ser Giorgio on, and gave him swifter speed across the sea. He flew — he flew — he flew on the wings of gold which San Gabriele Arcangiolo had bound upon his eager feet.

“Then that king brought his daughter to the shore, and stretched her on a rock. She flushed as rosy-white as any pearl. He strained her arms to right and left, and bound them in the shadows of her hair. He laid her little feet among loose strands of weed above the surface of the sea. The slim young maid lay still. Her jacinth eyes were wet with tears, and the sweet upward-pointing breasts quivered with little sighs.

“Apollyon grinned to see this delicate morsel; and, to inflame his lust of blood, he coiled his monstrous lizard body, with iron jaws, and armed along its length with giant fish-scales all of iron, around the rock on which his victim lay; feasted and fed his burning eyes and brain, gloating over this deli-

Protector of the Kingdom

cious maid, till he flashed into flame and lashed the boiling sea, eyeing her from a distance, that he might rush in, at last, to clutch her, cleaving the waters with sinuous tail; and, plunging lips deep in her soft flesh, suck out her heart's blood.

“ But, behold! behold! Between the infernal dragon and the wild-rose maid, the great Ser Giorgio came!

“ He flew on the wings of gold which San Gabriele Arcangiolo had bound upon his eager feet. The mantle of Madonnina streamed in the wind, kissing the rose-red cross of the pennon of the lance that swung from the socket at the heel. He wore the golden curving-crested helmet of San Michele Arcangiolo. On his left arm, he bore the silver shining shield, whose bordures bloomed with golden roses, and which shone for joy when the Madonnina smiled and blessed it with the rose-red cross. And in his strong right hand he brandished his resistless golden-hilted sword. He came between the infernal dragon and the maid.

“ And as Apollyon foamed along the surface of the sea, his eyes fell on the rose-red cross Ser Giorgio bore, signed on the silver of his shining shield.

“ And terror took the dæmon.

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

“Ser Giorgio swung his sword,— the sword of San Michele Arcangiolo, — raining slashing blows upon that iron-scaled neck, and slew the infernal dragon of the sea.

“Then he unbound the gentle maid, the daughter of the king, yet, in his reverence for womanhood, he gave her not the pain of seeing him, but flew with her to her father on the shore, — father dazed with shame, and fear, and utter joy. And while the maiden swooned, Ser Giorgio revealed himself, raising the golden curving-crested helmet of San Michele Arcangiolo for an instant, while the thankful people found a voice, and gave a loud ovation shouting, ‘Io! Io!’ to the victor.

“But Ser Giorgio, again invisible, passed swiftly through the throng, and went to bend low his high knee before the altar of Madonnina, called the Sedes Sapientiæ, in her chapel by the sea.

“First, to San Rafaele Arcangiolo, who served him as a slender squire, he offered thanks for companionship and service on a dangerous quest; and for bringing him home in peace and health and joy.

“Next to San Gabriele Arcangiolo and San Michele Arcangiolo, he gave the helmet and the lance, the sword and the shoes with wings of gold, which those fair princes lent; and he offered thanks to them for their strong aid.

Protector of the Kingdom

“ Then, last, but best of all, he rendered grateful praise to her who gave him wisdom and a valiant heart, — the Madonnina in her picture painted on the wall, and called the Sedes Sapientiæ: also, he returned that admirable mantle, which hands of angels wove on looms of heaven in spring from petals of forget-me-nots and lilies. And he said ‘ Madonnina Mary, tell me; have I won that belt and spurs of gold?’ She answered, ‘ O strenuous youth, O vehement knight of mine, have patience. Once more, I claim your service. Once more you must bear arms for me against Sathanas. And, when you see me sitting on my throne, in the kingdom of my Son, then you may ask me for the belt and spurs of gold; for, then, you will have won them.’

“ So, having paid his duteous respects to her whom Il Santissimo, dying on His Cross, gave to Man for Mother, next, Ser Giorgio embraced his earthly mother, smiling at him through the tears which loving women shed for joy, and held his strong arms round her, while she babbled of her pride in her boy’s bravery, murmuring praises to the gods who guarded him in his dangerous quest, and brought him back to her in peace and health and joy.

“ Next day, the king would have Ser Giorgio show himself, and say what honour, or what reward would pay him for his arduous toil. And, by the throne, there stood the king’s fair daughter,

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

radiant in silver sown with pearls, and sweet and fresh and pure as a wild-rose.

“Ser Giorgio looked upon her loveliness; and he offered her the white rose of paradise, which the Madonnina gave him when she smiled and blessed his silver-shining shield in her chapel by the sea.

“The princess took the rose of paradise, worshipping it with her lips; and, then, Ser Giorgio asked the king to give him, as his meed, that gracious maid, his daughter, for a bride.

“And the king agreed; but, being a wicked man whose plans the youth had spoiled, he cursed Ser Giorgio, deep down in his heart.

“That night the king could not sleep; and, to him, raging with disappointment, came Sathanas, who said, ‘O king, have you resolved to leave your pleasures, and to serve the silly gods who never let you follow your own will, but keep you strictly lest you should enjoy the good things of my store? This knight of yours, this Giorgio, has slain my witch whom I had bought with gold; also, my slave Apollyon: and you will reward him with that delicious maid, your daughter, who was meat of mine. What do you gain by this? Nothing! Your bed is bare! The woman for whom your heart is sick, is safe, and rests secure, protected by her son, this Giorgio. There is no warm embrace to clasp you; and, yet, you give your daughter to this

Protector of the Kingdom

boy, who keeps you from your heart's desire. And all because he slew my slaves, forsooth! Know, silly king, that I have many millions more, each more powerful than Apollyon, or than that witch. These, I will send, to blight your vines, to blast your growing corn, poison your wells and water-springs, kill all your cattle, rob you of your crown, and make you gnaw your wasted flesh for food, and beg for any death to free you from your pain: unless you swear allegiance to my will, and serve me as your god.'

"Before the threats of Sathanas, the wicked king cowered down upon his bed. He forgot that the sign of our salvation, waved in the air, will drive the arch-dæmon down to endless fire; for he was drunk with lust, and the sin of jealousy was like a chain about his mind. He whimpered, that he knew not what to do! — He lusted after the mother, and he loathed her son! — Also — he was a miserable man. — But, what could he do? —

"Sathanas answered him, 'Adore me, and obey my will.' And, sinking low his voice, — so low, indeed, that it was not a voice, nor a whisper, nor even a thought suggested, but a picture, and a scroll, which only the eye of one man's mind, and that the king's, could read or see, — Sathanas and his royal slave pondered over many cunning stratagems, till the day dawned; and they conspired,

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

“ against the Signor Iddio on His Throne,
to rob the Madonnina of her knight,
to slay Ser Giorgio by a shameful death,
to get his mother for the lustful king,
his bride to go, a maid, to Sathanas.

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“ That day was chaunted the epithalamium of
the very noble knight, Ser Giorgio, and the wild-
rose daughter of the king. All day long, the
populace rejoiced and feasted; and they crowned
the intrepid youth and his young bride with
roses, till the sun went down.

“ Ser Giorgio sat by the seashore, between his
mother and his maid. He spoke of the Madon-
nina’s promise of a belt and spurs of gold. The
stars grew bright in a violet sky. In silence,
revel died.

.

“ Then, Sathanas appeared before the wicked
lustful king, and said, ‘ The hour is near. Arise :
fulfil your oath to me ! ’

.

“ The youthful knight was mounting on his
bridal-bed, to taste the loveliness of that white
wild-rose maid which the might of his strong
arm had won. But, even as he felt her heart
quiver with love so near his own, and kissed the
freshness of her nestling in his ardent breast, San
Rafaele Arcangiolo came flying down the moon-
beams’ silver shining in the room, who said,

Protector of the Kingdom

‘Arise, Ser Giorgio, and go to win your belt and spurs of gold. I take your mother and your bride to be my care; and, you may know that, under my protection, they are safe from every evil thing. Therefore, go in peace, knight of my queen, and have no fear.’

“Ser Giorgio veiled the ivory of his skin beneath the tunic which he wore in peaceful days. It was as white as snow; and, on the breast, his mother’s hands had sewn his badge, the rose-red cross. He buckled the white straps of the sandals on his insteps, and half-way between his ankles and his high uncringing knees. Striding to the threshold, he encountered sudden-sent messengers, who said, ‘The king commands your illustrious presence at his council hall; for news has reached him that an antient foe, having heard of the damage done by the infernal dragon, has deemed the time a fitting one for invasion of the kingdom.’

“Ser Giorgio followed the heralds. At the court, the wicked king was waiting on his throne, surrounded by his councillors, all wise old men, the wisest in the realm; though none had wisdom, or valour, or insight, deep as that which tingled in the young Ser Giorgio from heel to crown. This, they knew well: and, in their stress, they asked advice of him, as of a god.

“San Rafaele Arcangiolo brought to the shore a little swift-sailed boat. In it, he placed the

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

mother and the bride beloved of Ser Giorgio. He set the sail. He took the rudder; and a legion of gentle sweet-eyed angels softly fanned with large white rustling wings, driving the boat, with a heron's speed, across the sea.

“The council, summoned on pretence, sat many hours; and when the wise old men had freed their minds of many words, Ser Giorgio spoke two, showing how any enemy might be met, and crushed.

“Suddenly, the king started, and he cried, ‘Behold, the angel-guardian of the kingdom, who deigns to cheer us by a vision of his glory, that he may help us in distress! Oh, come, let us adore and worship, giving thanks!’ And he pointed to a form resembling a mighty angel, which stood before them in the council-chamber.

“The king and his ignorant wise old councillors kneeled down; but Ser Giorgio vehemently cried, ‘Here is no angel, but a fiend, O king! For I have often heard that Sathanas has cunning by which he can transform his horrid shape into the resemblance of an angel, deceiving many! Therefore, arise, O king, and you wise councillors, and spit upon this cacodæmon!’”

“But the wicked king and his deceived councillors bade the bold knight to favour his tongue, and let his elders know their duty, seeing that he was but a boy of seventeen years. Also,

Protector of the Kingdom

they asked, by what signs such a youth as he could surely tell whether this vision were an angel or a cacodæmon?

“Ser Giorgio answered, ‘That I am but a lad, is true; yet, there have been old men glad when some little child would lead them home; and to mere babes wisdom is revealed, but hidden from the wise and prudent. And, for the signs by which I know this fiend — my heart is pure, my eyes are keen, and clear, and innocent of sin; therefore, humbly, I would dare to look, boldly, upon the Vision of the Face of God in all the Immortal Splendour of His Majesty, Whose high archangels are my friends, and my companions, every day; but, when I pierce into the eyes of this infernal dæmon, he winces at my glance, and shifts his own. Can a lad, as I am, cause the eyes of angels to flicker with fear? Also, he stinks of sin. If you would see a proof — ’

“The candid boy lifted his hand, and waved the mystic sign of our salvation right in the dæmon’s face.

“There was a flash of fire, a roar as of thunder, and darkness for a moment. When the self-shut and blind eyes of the king and of his grave courtiers looked again, Sathanas was gone; bare was the porphyry pavement where he lately stood.

“Yet Sathanas is a foe who comes continually; and continually the christian warrior fights to

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

drive him back. And to those eyes which gazed on emptiness, Sathanas, by magick art, appeared in angel form once more.

“For guards, the king cried; and, at his signal, a band of armed soldiers occupied the council-chamber, menacing Ser Giorgio, who, unmoved by any fear, unflinchingly defied the dæmon, and his tool and slave, the king.

“But that king, mindful of his oath to Sathanas, said, ‘O Ser Giorgio, you speak blasphemy against the angel-guardian of our kingdom, meriting death. Yet, seeing that you are a youth, and rash, also the slayer of the dragon, you shall not die, if you consent to kneel, now, and worship this angel.’

“Ser Giorgio looked upon the armed guards with scorn. To the king, he said no word in his disdain. He raised his brave hand high, and waved the mystick sign of our salvation in the dæmon’s face.

“Once more flashed fire: darkness followed an angry war of thunder: and Sathanas was gone. But, in a moment, he showed himself again on that same porphyry pavement where he stood before.

“Then the king cried against Ser Giorgio, in his wrath, ‘It may be that you have no fear of death, O youth; but think of your beloved mother — of your beloved bride. And hear me swear that unless you will obey, and on your knees adore this angel, I will have your blood,

Protector of the Kingdom

first; and, then, the blood of those whom your dead arms cannot protect. More; for, before they die, outrage the foulest shall defile them — your mother shall be mine; and your young bride — this night, I'll fling her as a plaything to my slaves!'

"Ser Giorgio neither blenched, nor faltered. The brave true-hearted boy shot arrows of scathing scorn out from the blinding splendour of his eyes. He said, 'O wretched king, vain is your rage. My mother and my bride are in the hands of God, where torment cannot touch them: and this I know; for San Rafaele Arcangiolo holds them safe, who, with his angel legion, is their sure defence against all evils with which Sathanas, your master, makes you menace them. To me, your threats will bring eternal glory: my sons and my sons' sons will bear my blazon through the ages when your very name's forgotten. And, therefore, I undauntedly rejoice to die for my Lord and Leader, Jhesus Christ, and for His rose-red cross.'

"Here was a white-robed hero, always vigilant, faithful unto death, dauntless, superb, indomitable, victorious. He lifted stainless hands and fearless eyes to heaven, and he whispered, 'Madonna Mary, pray for me, that I may win my belt and spurs of gold.'

"Stung to fury by defeat so dire, the wicked king commanded, and the sword of the carnifex struck off the head of the very noble knight,

Being an Epick of Sangiorgio

Sangiorgio, that mighty champion invincible by land or sea, who slew the dæmon-dragon with his strong right arm, who bears his blazon of the rose-red cross for evermore signed on the silver of his shining shield, beside the sea of crystal near God's throne, where Madonnina gave her paladin, the mantle woven on the looms of heaven by angel-hands in spring from petals of forget-me-nots and lilies, the martyr's sceptre all of golden palm, the hero's crown of amaranthine laurel, and the belt and spurs of gold.

“ The wicked king became a prey for dæmons. Worms fed on his living flesh, while Sathanas ruled his kingdom.

“ The Madonnina, painted on the chapel wall, and called the Sedes Sapientiæ, would stay no longer in that dæmon-dominated land. She flew on angels' wings across the sea; and, beyond those hills at Genazzano, is her shrine, where angels hold her picture till this day, safe, and inviolate, in middle air.

“ Safely, with a heron's speed, across the sea, to this same shore, San Rafaele Arcangiolo and his gentle sweet-eyed angel-legion brought the little swift-sailed boat. And, where the antient city of Ardea stands to-day, — city which gave Sangiorgio's blazon and his illustrious progeny to Rome, — the mother and the bride of the very

Protector of the Kingdom

noble knight, Sangiorgio, lived not many years, in exile, by the sea; and then they both went home unto our Lord.

“✠ Scuto Bonæ Voluntatis Tuæ: alleluia:
Coronasti eum, Domine: alleluia:”

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“That, o chare puer,” I exclaimed, “is an Epic which deserved declamation to stringed instruments.”

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As I descended from the cart, I asked, “By the bye, Toto, what became of the witch’s head?”

“Well, sir; briefly, this. San Rafaele Arcangiolo cut it up into little bits like dice, covered them with fig-leaves, and gave them to Santignazio of Loyola in a fig-basket. But I will tell you that history some other time.”

Why the Rose is Red

VIJ

WHY THE ROSE IS RED

BREAKFAST was ready, under the magnolia-tree. I like these late-spring breakfasts in the sun.

Guido and Ercole had executed a masterpiece in their simplicity, with three great bowls of beaten brass, one in the middle to support my book, one each at the opposite corners of the table, all filled with damask roses of the darkest purple, fresh, and breathing liquid odours as of cloves celestial! I gave the creatures compliments, and sat down to breakfast. Cocomeri ripieni, Port Salut, olives, perfumed oranges, pitch-flavoured wine, — delicious!

At the end, Guido and Ercole went away to fetch coffee. Toto, who had been shedding his city clothes, and getting his breakfast, came and stood by the left side of my table. I happened to reach for another mandarin, and I saw him with the corner of my eye.

Good gracious! The boy was livid, stiff and stark, convulsed with silent rage. I never saw such a fury. But, of course, I took no notice. I was going to have an emotion by and bye; and I

Why the Rose is Red

became as demurely watchful as my yellow cat Annia.

When Guido and Ercole returned, I saw Toto's right fist clench till the knuckles grew quite pale, and Guido let the coffee-pot fall onto the grass. Toto snarled, "A — po — plex — y," in a turgid undertone.

I dislike imprecations, and I said, "Sh;" while Guido ran to the house for another pot of coffee.

While I was sipping it, and using a cigarette, I made the following secret observations: —

(α) Guido, who is Toto's very delicately slim and agile little brother of thirteen years, with the most beautiful white to his eyes like chrusoberul, stood on the right side of my table, turned to alabaster, looking wildly on the face of Toto, and with tears streaming down his cheeks;

(β) Ercole — a lusty bronze Roman with the visage of Iuvenis Octavianus — stood, a little behind and to the right of Guido, presenting an image of horror of the unknown;

(γ) and, across the table, Toto glared like — the witch's head.

.

I went to take a look round my studio.

Toto followed, "Permission to forsake la sua eccellenza during ten minutes," he asked. I nodded forward. He tore away like one frantick. From the terrace, I watched his tremendous legs stride headlong down the Via Livia to the city.

I played about for a little by myself, and re-

Why the Rose is Red

solved to have a lazy hour doing nothing at all.

But here came a most shocking thing.

In the studio there is a large glass door which opens upon a little terrace, giving a lovely wide vista of the city below, then the Campagna, and beyond that the sea, fourteen miles away. At the side of the terrace a stair leads down into the garden.

Darkening this doorway, Toto towered on high, with the hair of Guido in his right hand, and the hair of Ercole in his left. He forced them down upon their knees, and they wept piteously, and, antiphonally, they cried to me:—

“V. Oh, pardon!”

“R. Pardon!”

“V. Ah, we did not know!”

“R. We did not know!”

“V. To la sua eccellenza, we wished to give pleasure!”

“R. To la sua eccellenza, we tried to give pleasure!”

“V. But it was our evil day!”

“R. If la sua eccellenza would only believe!”

“V. Oh, pardon!”

“R. Pardon!”

I became very angry. I am very cutting, in my rages. I said, “Go away, little sillies!”

They expected to be killed, I know. They were quite heart-broken, plainly. They got up and went away. Toto was for following, but I

Why the Rose is Red

recalled him. There was a hideous bulge on his stomach. He had got some lump stowed away beneath his shirt at his waist.

“Beast,” I said, “what is the meaning of this? What have those rudikopaide done that you should make me such a scene?”

“Sir, they repent; and they ask for pardon.”

“Oh, yes! — pardon! — But for what crime? — They’ve broken something. — I know it! —”

“No, sir. But for the insult.”

“Heaven be my aid and grant me final perseverance!” I cried, “what are you driving at?”

“The insult, sir; and they shall take their penance now,” he turned away, looking positively rhadamanthine.

“Toto! — Come back! — Don’t dare to move! — Here, go to the throne, and pose — like this!” I seized a little cast of the Hebe from Virinum in Carinthia and shoved it forward, musing over the inscription incised on the front of the right thigh, A. POPLICIVS. D. LANTIOC. TI. BARBIVS. Q. PL. TIBER.

Then I shut the doors and attended to the lighting of the model. He threw his vesture behind a screen, emerged, mounted the throne, considered the Hebe for a minute, undulated deliciously, and stiffened into the pose, — a horrid one, but one that served my purpose. I had my lion in a leash, and I began to fiddle with a charcoal stick on a bit of brown paper.

After ten minutes, I said, “Are you cold?”

Why the Rose is Red

Toto stirred not from his stony stillness; but his answering voice proceeded from a whisper to a roar, like this —

crescen - - - - - *do*
*p**p* “No, sir:” — *p* “Hot:” — *f* “Awful:” — *ff* “Burning.”

“You have taken a fever, my lad,” I said; “driving over the Campagna last night, I suppose.” I went and felt his flesh. That was normal: also, his pulse.

“No, sir; but the insult!”

“Look here, Toto,” I said; “if you will drop your beastly elliptical Latin manner of leaving every important thing to my imagination, and will try to express yourself like an Englishman for once, you will improve my temper. Dash it all, boy, what do you mean?”

“Sir, the insult!”

“Per Cristo! What insult? Two words now!”

“Sir, in the pip of an apple — the Roses!”

“Well! And the Roses?”

“They were Red, sir! Oh!” (with another roar) “they shall bleed, — those boar-pigs, — they shall bleed!”

“Silence!” I cried. “Come here!”

He descended the throne, and came to me. Fauno Furibondo — that’s what he was! There was something of terrible in this boy. You could see his heart-beats. I looked upon him with disgust.

Why the Rose is Red

“Dress,” I said.

He retired behind the screen. I must chain this lion more securely.

I made him kneel at my feet; and I took his throat in my two hands.

“Now lend me both your ears,” I said. I saw attention concentrated in his eyes. “I think the Roses on my table to have been entirely exquisite. Simpaticissime! I am pleased with those Roses. Understand?”

He looked at me with unfeigned amazement; and, oh, how earnestly I watched the changes in his expression!

“I think Guido and Ercole to have very beautiful souls, or they could not have invented so beautiful a decoration for my table.”

He thought me guilty of mockery. I saw anger in his glance; and I throttled him a little.

“Pax!” I said. “I mean what I say. I am delighted with those Roses.”

Two emotions coursed processionally through his eyes. First, penitent appeal. Second, veneration.

“Tell me, Toto; what is that under your shirt?”

He put his hand into his bosom, and drew out a very nasty, coiled-up thing.

“What is it?”

“Sir, the sinew of a bullock.”

“Where did you get it?”

“Sir, I ran down to the butcher for it.”

Why the Rose is Red

“What do you intend to do with it?”

“Sir, I intend to flay the hides off Guido, my brother, and off Ercole of Rome, in order to appease la sua eccellenza who is so deeply wounded by vinegar-sons-of-wine that he has no words left wherewith to curse them.”

I throttled him again. “For putting Red Roses on my table?”

“Yes, sir.”

Without speaking, I looked long through the eyes into the soul of this amazing creature.

Then, I said, “Toto, I am a child; a baby; knowing nothing. I must have a teacher to make me understand. — What is the sin of Red Roses? Tell me?”

“Sir, it is the supreme insult, to offer Red Roses to an Englishman.”

“Why?”

“Sir, the Red Rose is stained with blood — the blood of Holy Innocents. Therefore, it is a badge of infamy.”

“Oh,” I said. “Very well. And you are going to flay Guido and Ercole?”

“I am going to flay Guido and Ercole.”

I released his throat.

“Toto mio,” I said; “what good will those kids be to me without their skins? I prefer to give them their penance myself.”

“Sir, if you will take that trouble, it will be better so. But, very humbly, I ask you to forgive them also.”

Why the Rose is Red

“Yes, I forgive them freely.” He bent down and kissed my ring. “Bring them to the anti-camera, now; and treat them very, very kindly. If you make them unhappy any more, I will kill you. Remember!”

Oh, such pathetick little abjects came in! Distressed ones, who, having innocently insulted the lord whom they adored, only wished to die; for they had forfeited his favour for ever; and their hearts were broken! What an emotion!

I made the three boys sit down on stools. I was going to be impressive, and so I sat on the high chair. I said, “Guido and Ercole, you have offered me an insult: but you did it in innocence; and you are truly contrite. Is that so?”

“Oh, sir, yes!”

“Then, for your penance, you must promise to believe what I am going to tell you. Do you promise?”

“Oh, sir, yes!”

“Then listen. All through my life I have loved Red Roses. Therefore, you did not offend me by putting Red Roses on my table. But now I have learned that an Englishman ought to hate Red Roses, and not to love them. So I am converted, and you must never offer me any more red roses.”

“No, sir, never, sir!”

“Well then, you are forgiven. And because

Why the Rose is Red

I like you to be happy, we will all make an expedition to Velletri, to-morrow."

"Oh, sir!"

"And, for his penance, Toto, who committed the sin of anger because he wishes me well, must tell us why the Red Rose is a badge of infamy."

As though a tap had been turned on, Toto began to intone rhythmick cadences.

"When the Padre Eterno made the world, He resolved to plant a garden; and He sent one of the seven angels with a mete-yard of gold, to mark out a fine situation by the river-side, where were gentle hills and dales.

"He marked out this garden in the shape of a square, one thousand and five hundred miles each way, enclosed by an impenetrable hawthorn bush, white and pink, with flowers and fragrance on the inside, and piercing thorns without. Round the four sides of the garden went this hawthorn bush, one hundred and seventy-three cubits high, and one hundred and seventy-three cubits deep.

"The Padre Eterno planted groves of trees, all in beautiful order: orange-trees, and almond-trees, and apple-trees, and lemon-trees, and cherry-trees, with the blossoms always on the one side, for pleasure to sight and smell; and ripe fruit always on the other side for pleasure to the taste.

"The hills He crowned with pine-forests; and He decked their slopes with little olive-groves. Here were vineyards of white and purple grapes. There were palms and poplars by the brooks.

Why the Rose is Red

Along the pools, He placed osiers and willow-trees and bulrushes for bordures: and He made great lawns of fine green grass as soft as the fur of cats, where the young Lord Adamo might rest under shady trees. Each lawn was surrounded by bushes of a different kind; and on each lawn were different kinds of trees and different kinds of flowers. One lawn was bordured by syringa-bushes and adorned with wall-flowers, and heliotrope, and golden-rod. Another lawn was bordured by blue hydrangea bushes, and studded with poppies and meadow-sweet. A third lawn was bordured by bushes of rosemary, and ornamented with southernwood and lilies; and there were white peacocks, and peacocks purple in their pride. Under the walnut-trees were hyacinths, under the sycamore-trees were primroses, under the mulberry-trees were asphodels, under the cedar-trees were forget-me-nots, under the chestnut-trees were daisies, under the oak-trees were violets. On the pools, great white lilies floated; and, at their marges, were iris and marigold, and moss.

“ Oh, a beautiful garden !

“ Yet the Padre Eterno was not content. What He had done was very good, according to the Scripture; but it was not His best. He had not done His all: and He wished for one more flower to be the queen of the garden. So, under the oak-trees, He planted a thorn; and He starred the thorn with a bloom having five petals,

Why the Rose is Red

tender as wings of butterflies, white as the soul of a little child, and having a heart of purest gold.

“Then the Nine Quires of angels came singing through the garden; and, in a blossom of magnolia, they collected odours from the lily, and the violet, and the hyacinth, and thyme and wallflower and orange-blossom and meadow-sweet and southernwood and rosemary. And the Padre Eterno poured the perfume from the magnolia-chalice over the new white flower, and called it Rosa Mystica. He appointed the Sixth Quire of angels, that is to say, the Dominations, to guard and tend it night and day.

“These things having been done, the Padre Eterno put the young Lord Adamo into His garden. And, in order that he might not be alone, He made him sleep: and while he slept, He gently divided him in two pieces, a large one, and a small, but each piece alive by itself though belonging to the other. The large piece of the Lord Adamo was called Man; and the small piece was our Mother Eva, who is Woman. But Sathanas, who always goes against Domeniddio in everything, was very angry when he saw this; and he struggled with the Padre Eterno, to prevent Him from dividing the Lord Adamo. And so the pieces came in different shapes, being unevenly divided: there is more of man than of woman; and the one always longs for the other; for, until they are joined together, neither the

Why the Rose is Red

man nor the woman is complete and perfect, as the Padre Eterno designed.

“That was in the first hour. Then came the business of the animals; and, when that was finished, the Lord Adamo and our Mother Eva walked in the beautiful garden, tasted the fruit, admired the flowers, and loved each the other well under shade of trees.

“On the lawn of lilies there were two strange trees: the one a quince-tree which was called the Tree of Wisdom; the other a tree of blood-red pomegranates, which was called the Tree of Life. Who ate the fruit of one, knew all the wisdom that the world has ever known or shall know. Who ate the fruit of the other, became immortal like the gods. And the Padre Eterno had forbidden the Lord Adamo and our Mother Eva to touch those trees, though they were free to use all the rest of the garden at their will.

“At the fifth hour the sun was in his strength, and the Lord Adamo left our Mother Eva sleeping under the great quince-tree, and went down to the water-side for coolness.

“Sathanas saw his opportunity. He came into the garden shaped like a serpent covered with green scales, having the head and bosom of a woman, black as the pit. He coiled around the trunk of the quince-tree, and he whispered to our Mother Eva, sleeping, while she thought it was a dream, advising her to eat the quinces, and to gain wisdom.

Why the Rose is Red

“ At the sixth hour the Lord Adamo came up from the water, cool and fresh. He could not see Sathanas, who was too cunning to let himself be caught by Man.

“ But our Mother Eva rose up in her sleep, and she mounted on a coil which the serpent made for her, till she could reach the quinces in the tree. And, in her dream, she plucked quinces, and she ate them; she gave quinces also to the Lord Adamo, saying that they would make him wise; and, in his admiration, he ate them too.

“ So, tempted and deceived by Sathanas, they disobeyed. Then, to the Lord Adamo and to our Mother Eva, came wisdom in an overwhelming torrent. Every good thing they had known before, and now they knew every bad thing as well, and they had much fear (for knowledge brings fear), thinking of the anger of the Padre Eterno when He should know their sin.

“ They wandered through the garden, hand in hand, weeping, weighted with all the wisdom that all men have ever had or shall have. Also, they wept because they knew that they had stripped themselves of the favour of the Padre Eterno, and were naked and unarmed against Sathanas.

“ While they wandered weeping, the sun began to lose his power, and at the seventh hour the Lord Adamo and our Mother Eva found themselves again upon the lawn of lilies. But what a change! What ruin! And what horror! For

Why the Rose is Red

the peacocks had broken all the snow-white lily-blooms, and trampled down their slender graceful stems, and all the serpent's trail was strewn with violets crushed and dead.

"Suddenly soft music from a distance floated through the trees, and the Lord Adamo and our Mother Eva shivered with fear, knowing the Padre Eterno to be walking in the garden, and they hid themselves in the bushes of rosemary.

"Ah! who can hide from the Signor Iddio Onnisciente? Then, for their penance, the Padre Eterno drove the Lord Adamo and our Mother Eva out into the wicked world, and the garden of paradise faded like a dream.

"But the angels of the Sixth Quire kneeled down and confessed, saying, 'O Padre Celeste e Domeniddio, we have sinned, and yet we know not how, for the Rose which You deigned to give into our care has changed, — changed though we never ceased to watch it, — white were all its flowers, white as the soul of a little child, and behold, now, Maestà, some are as red as blood.'

"The Padre Eterno answered: **⚡⚡⚡** O DOMINATIONS, TO WHOSE CHARGE WE HAVE GIVEN THE ROSE, YOU HAVE NO BLAME. SATHANAS HAS STAINED OUR GARDEN WITH SIN. FOR, BY DISOBEDIENCE, MAN HAS GAINED WISDOM, AND WISDOM BRINGS SIN. AND THERE SHALL BE MANY NATIONS OF THE MAN: THEY WILL BE WISE, AND THEY WILL SIN. AND THE NATIONS WILL SEPA-

Why the Rose is Red

RATE THEMSELVES THROUGH THE SIN OF ENVY ; AND EACH NATION WILL MARK ITSELF BY SOME SIGN THROUGH THE SIN OF PRIDE. ONE NATION WILL WEAR THE VIOLET FOR ITS SIGN ; AND THE VIOLETS WILL BE CRUSHED BY THE SERPENT OF DECEIT. ANOTHER NATION WILL WEAR THE LILIES FOR ITS SIGN ; AND THE PEACOCKS OF PRIDE WILL TRAMPLE DOWN THE LILIES OF HUMILITY. AND YET ANOTHER NATION WILL WEAR THE ROSE FOR ITS SIGN ; AND CRUELTY WILL STAIN THE WEARERS OF THE ROSE. STRONG SHALL THEY BE, AND SOME STRONG WITHOUT MERCY OR PITY. THEY WILL LIVE ON THE LIVES OF THE WEAK, OR FEEBLE, WHOM THEY MAKE THEIR SLAVES ; THEY WILL STAIN THE WHITENESS OF THE ROSE WITH THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS. YET, NOT ALL WILL SIN, FOR THOUGH SOME WILL CHOOSE THE EVIL, MORE WILL CHOOSE THE GOOD, AND THERE REMAIN WHITE ROSES FOR THE NATION WHICH WE SHALL CHOOSE TO CROWN WITH GLORY AND HONOUR, AND TO WHICH WE SHALL GIVE DOMINION OVER THE WORKS OF OUR HANDS, BENEDICAT VOS OMNIPOTENS DEUS ❖❖❖ PATER ❖❖❖ ET FILIUS ❖❖❖ ET SPIRITUS SANCTUS.'

“Then the garden of paradise was carried up to heaven, on the wings of the Nine Quires of Angels. And, once in the life of every man an angel of the Sixth Quire brings to him a White Rose for remembrance, that the mystery of its fragrant purity may remind him of that lost gar-

Why the Rose is Red

den where the gods are waiting for him, if he wills to come." ¹

¹ Toto never knew, and never shall know, that the Red Rose is the badge of the Duchy of Lancaster, — a duchy infested by as naturally unkind a race of people as the Spaniards. But I try to have a due regard for the fitness of things, and, in my opinion, the Badge of the Red Rose suits the Duchy of Lancaster quite well. I refrain from recording personal experiences, and content myself with the remark that, until a few years ago, Lancashire Cotton Mills were run by night as well as by day, two sets of children being employed, and forced to slave their little lives out in terror of the overlooker's cane. These innocents were pauper children, imported by contract from the West and South of England, and they only survived amid their appalling surroundings for an average space of five years (c. f. evidence of Robert Owen before Royal Commission of 1817). When I reflect that, while the world rang with shouts of English triumph after Waterloo, a Lancastrian section of the House of Commons was found to oppose Bills,—introduced by Sir Robert Peel, for preventing children, under nine years of age, from working more than seventy-four hours each week,—I feel very thankful that the White Rose—the pure prime-rose, for example—is the Rose of England, and not the infamous local Rose of Lancaster, dyed Red with the Blood of Innocents, victims of minotaur-manufacturers.

About the Witch's Head and

VIIJ

ABOUT THE WITCH'S HEAD AND SANTIGNAZIO OF LOYOLA

RIDING along the road to Velletri, I reminded Toto that something remained to be said to make a tidy ending for the tales of yesterday.

“True, sir. Well then! When Sangiorgio had killed the dragon, as I have said, San Rafaele Arcangiolo left him, and returned to his own place.

“That prince had taken the head of the witch from Sangiorgio, because it was not advisable to leave such a dreadful thing in the world. Also, it was a trophy, a spoil, won from the enemy: and, when you have conquered your enemy, it is right and proper to strip him of any weapons which he might use against you at another time. What good would a victory be to you, if you left him those? Therefore, if you be a man of peace, as every strong man is, be sure to disarm, as well as to crush, your foe; for, only so, can you remove temptation from him, and make certain peace secure. Well. And so San Rafaele Arcangiolo wrapped the head of the witch in a rhubarb leaf and brought it into paradise.

Santignazio of Loyola

“ He had not yet determined what he would do with it; for he considered that it was his first duty to make a report to San Michele Arcangiolo, the Great Prince commanding the armies of heaven, concerning the behaviour of the very noble knight, Sangiorgio, in face of the Enemy. So after paying the usual visit of compliment to La Sua Santita, Sampietro, at the gate, he walked across the gardens, to the citadel where San Michele Arcangiolo keeps quarters.

“ It was about an hour after sunrise, by the dial; and San Michele Arcangiolo, having finished breakfast, was engaged, with Santeligio, in looking over two suits of arms which hung on the wall of his ante-chamber. They were the suit which he had lent to Sangiorgio, and the suit which Santeligio had made to take their place.

“ The god and the archangel fingered both the helmets: not a dint or bruise sullied the shining metal, not a feather was feazed from the high curved crests. They balanced the unsprung lance-shafts: not a flaw was found. They tried the temper of the sword blades, looping point to hilt, and letting it fly back straight and true. They tested the keenness of the edges, slashing at feathers floating in the air, and cleaving them in twain. And San Michele Arcangiolo said, ‘My compliments to you, O Santeligio. You are a master-armourer, indeed.’

“ Just then San Rafaele Arcangiolo entered. He was plainly bursting with intelligence; and, hav-

About the Witch's Head and

ing saluted, he cried. 'Ah, well, my Lord Prince, that was a good fight down there in the world! It would have done you good to see it; for that stripling has shown himself to be a mighty man of valour. Your highness remembers Davidde Re when he was yet young, before the Padre Eterno called him to be king? Well! Just such another as he, is the very noble knight Sangiorgio! Without a shade of fear, strong as a young lion, ruthless as flint! Also pious! Also wise! Knows his own mind! When he knew what was wanted, he made plans. After he had determined on his course, nothing moved him from pursuing it. In Africa, he slew the horrid witch. (I have her head, here, in this rhubarb leaf.) Then he flew like a swift favonian wind across the sea, and killed Apollyon, who, in the form of a dragon, was menacing his home. Yes, you, Altezza, would be proud of that youth; as I am! We shall hear of him again, without a doubt! He will do well!'

"'But, the head of the witch?' San Michele said.

"'Here,' San Rafaele Arcangiolo replied. 'I thought it well to bring the beastly thing away, for fear it should do more mischief down there.'

"'Quite right,' San Michele Arcangiolo said. 'It would become an *occasio proxima*, for certain. And it is absurd, as well as sinful, to leave edged-tools within the reach of fools and children. But what shall we do with it here?'

Santignazio of Loyola

“San Rafaele Arcangiolo suggested that they should hack it out of shape, and chop it into little bits, so that it could never be recognised.

“‘Very good,’ San Michele Arcangiolo said. ‘Pass me that sword, if you please, Santeligio. Thank you. And will your highness take the other? So.’

“‘But what about Santeligio?’ San Rafaele Arcangiolo said. ‘You, Lord Prince, and I who speak, are inviolable, because, since our creation, our eyes have always been immortal, but Santeligio was once a mortal goldsmith; and, perhaps, it would not be good for him to see the horrid thing. We cannot do with any stone gods up here; and Santeligio is such a superexcellent armourer that we can’t afford to take a risk of losing him!’

“‘Most certainly we cannot,’ San Michele Arcangiolo agreed. He asked Santeligio to be so good as to take a stroll in the court-yard, for a few minutes, until the head of the horrid witch had been mangled beyond recognition. So Santeligio went out to take the air; and the two archangels shut and barred the door.

“Then San Rafaele Arcangiolo shook the rhu-barb leaf, and let the head of the witch roll to the floor. He took up the golden-hilted sword which Sangiorgio had used in Africa, while San Michele Arcangiolo grasped the new one: and the two princes sliced and carved the bane into strips of flesh and bone, each strip being

About the Witch's Head and

about ten top-joints of thumb in length, and the breadth of a thumb-nail's moon in depth and width. Then, they cut cross-wise, dividing the strips into dice, measuring the breadth of a thumb-nail's moon each way; till nothing of the head was left, except a heap of little bloody bits. San Michele Arcangiolo had had figs to his breakfast, and the fig-basket was lying empty on the table; therefore the archangels spooned up the bloody dice with their sword-blades, till the floor was clean and the fig-basket full. They covered it with fig-leaves, so that none of the bloody dice were seen; and they hid it in the folds of a mail-shirt which hung in a cupboard of the room, and which was never likely to be interfered with by any personage of other rank than archangel.

“All these things having been accomplished satisfactorily, the world went round and round in its usual manner; the Regno di Dio continued to be as it always has been, is, and ever shall be; and San Michele Arcangiolo and San Rafaele Arcangiolo went on attending to their duties.

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“Now, after many hundred years, there was a foreigner. He was a soldier, a galantuomo, and something of paino. In a war, he took a broken leg from a cannon-ball; and a clumsy surgeon mended it so badly that the leg was always crooked. So the galantuomo caused it to be

Santignazio of Loyola

broken again, and mended again; for he knew that ladies would not love him with a crooked leg. But it was of no use. The leg never became straight. And the galantuomo, who was called Santignazio of Loyola, had much anguish in his mind, as well as in his leg. And he found himself to be so ugly that he hid, and pined away in secret, making himself miserable and ill, because he could not be a soldier, galantuomo, and paino, any more.

“And, in his wretchedness, he gave his mind to pious thoughts; and, then, Madonna showed him favour, saying that, if the other ladies did not like his crooked leg, she had no objection to it; also, that, if he could not be a soldier in the world, there was nothing to prevent him from being a soldier of her Son, fighting His battle against Sathanas. And she spoke such heavenly words to Santignazio of Loyola that he became a priest, and set himself to found a Religion, in the manner of Beato Fra Francesco, and of Beato Fra Domenico, and of Beato Padre Benedetto, and of Beato Padre Agostino; but, because he was a fighting man by trade, he made his Religion on the model of an army, of which he should be the general. He called it Compagnia di Gesù; and its business was to wage war on Sathanas and his host, doing all the dangerous work which other priests could not do. And Papa Farnese found the idea to be a good one; and He blessed the Compagnia

About the Witch's Head and

di Gesu and Santignazio of Loyola as well. These are the Jesuits, sir; as you will know: and that was the beginning of them, quite proper, and most respectable.

“At the end of his life in the world, Santignazio of Loyola was allowed to enter paradise. He wore a black habit with ferraiuola, like a secular priest; and he carried a scroll on which was written an | † S in a glory with three nails, and

AD MAORM DI GLEAM

and, round his thigh, he wore the chain of wire to pinch and prick him, and to give him pain.

“Sir, have you ever noticed that a Jesuit cannot sit in comfort, except on the edge of a chair? Also, how he shifts his eyes, and jerks his legs? That is because of the chain, sir, on his thigh. Oh, I know; for I have watched these Jesuits talking to the ladies, sitting on this side and on that; twitching back again, crossing and uncrossing their legs, and wriggling like quiet serpents when they believed no one to be looking. And, once, I watched the bully, Padre Cuni, go to bathe. He did not know that I saw. He thought himself to be alone; and he undressed like that. But I was lying, with my soul, along the branch of a tree, hidden in the leaves above his head. I watched him unfastening his buttons and his tapes; and I saw him take the wire-chain off

Santignazio of Loyola

his thigh. He offered *Deo gratias*, as he took it off; and there were red marks in the flesh, where it pinched and pricked him. Oh, yes! I know many things! While he washed his head and arms, I slipped down from my tree, and sneaked the chain, and fitted it on my leg. Cristo di Dio! How it pinched! On the fat of the thigh, sir! It was as though my leg were down the gullet of dæmon, sir; and his fangs nipping my flesh, all hot and numb with angor; for my leg is rounder, and more spacious, than the shrivelled leg of Padre Cuni: and the chain was tight—but, tight! Then I climbed into my tree again, and watched the rusty crow come up from the lake, to dress. When he put on the chain, he said, ‘Dio mio, I offer it up to you!’ And I laughed, sir—

“Santignazio in paradise? Yes. Well then!

“He did not make a blinding sensation there; though, of course, he is a very great saint, and, no doubt, means well. He was not considered a dazzler, like Beato Fra Francesco, for example. Indeed, he was hardly a success; because he was unsociable, having an air of abstraction, never answering questions directly; and the other gods were not quite certain how to take him.

“You see, sir, this was the fact of the matter. Down here in the world, he was the General. Also, the Black Pope. His commands had to be obeyed. When he said to this Jesuit, ‘Do

About the Witch's Head and

this;’ the thing was done. When he said to that Jesuit, ‘Go there;’ the Jesuit went as though Sathanas rode him. Santignazio had almost begun to regard himself as being indispensable down here; and he had much fear lest, while he was in paradise, his Compagnia di Gesù should find itself like an army without a leader, and upset all his little plans.

“As though any one man was ever necessary anywhere, sir, while the Padre Eterno sits upon His Great White Throne!

“Having this silly notion in his mind, Santignazio of Loyola used to leave the other gods in their content, and go away to a lonely place on the ramparts, to nurse his dolour in his leisure time; and, during scores of years, he would look down at his Jesuits in the world, being anxious to see how they behaved.

“Sir, never cross a bridge until you reach it. Look for trouble, and trouble you will see. Whether you look for it, or no, the Padre Eterno will send you some; and that is for the health of your soul. But where is the benefit of looking for trouble on your own account? I do not know; and, therefore, I cannot say.

“Well, then, Santignazio of Loyola made up his mind that the Compagnia di Gesù was going to misbehave; and, so it misbehaved: and he took two troubles instead of one; first, the fear of misbehaviour, second, the consequences of misbehaviour. Which was absurd.

Santignazio of Loyola

“For, as soon as their first General had left them, the Jesuits said to themselves, that, if the Compagnia di Gesù wished to become a power, the best way to set about it was to get round the women and children: these being secured, the men would follow, if only for the sake of peace, they said. Therefore, they made schools everywhere; and they taught the children to be sneaks. That is to say, they made the little ones look each for the faults of others, and tell tales; and they wrote down all the tales in secret books; so that they could alway know what kind of a child each boy, or man, or girl, or woman, had been. Then, they taught the children that it was only a venial sin to tell lies which excused themselves or their friends; and they did not teach them that all wilful liars will burn in flames for ever and the day after. But they gave the children lollipops and ribands; and the little fools pretended to be perfectly happy, and to love their benefactors well.

“Also, the Jesuits made themselves very agreeable to the women, especially to those who were rich or powerful, giving them flattery, and oily compliments, or the masterly bullying which women respect; and they looked not so severely upon female sins, as did other priests or confessors. So the women of the world found Jesuits to be most intelligent men of the world, and no difficulty at all to deal with; also saintly; and they ran after them; and they used them for confessors be-

About the Witch's Head and

cause they were smooth and easy-going; told them everything they wished to know, more even than they told to their husbands or their lovers; sneaked about other women's little weaknesses, and so on, and so on; until the Jesuits knew so much that their heads were turned with pride and vanity, being only human heads when all is said and done; and then, when they were giddy and top-heavy, Sathanas saw his chance, and came along, and pushed a lot of them over the precipice into — you know where.

“Now, sir, a woman is a piece of the divel, fat and flaming, — you may see it on the arras at Deira, if you do not believe me; — and the man who is rash enough to play with those combustibles will burn his fingers. Look at me! Well, you know all about me, sir! But then I am not a priest, nor even a sub-deacon like Niccolo. And I know this, that, if I were a priest, I would no more have anything to do with a mortal woman, — no, not the very holiest of them, — unless the grating of my confessional barred her off from me, than I would fling the Sacred Host to swine. I say that. I!

“Well, then, let us return to the paino in paradise.

“Santignazio of Loyola saw the mess and muddle which the Compagnia di Gesù were making of his plans; and he was sharp enough to see that, unless something could be done, the Jesuits would soon wither and die in the stench

Santignazio of Loyola

of evil fame. He saw, plainly, that the spiritual weapons with which he had armed them for the interminable conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, though good enough in their way, were not suitable to this occasion; and he resolved to find some better ones without delay.

“Prayers, and the discipline, they had; a little, but not too much, fasting; also, the vows, the chain of wire, and the Madonna of the Street. But, plainly, something else was necessary. Oh, without a doubt! Well now; there was San Michele Arcangiolo over there. A soldier. Yes. Surely he must have a lot of spiritual armour lying about his quarters! Surely he could spare some little thing! If it were only a feather! What better protection against the shafts of Sathanas could the Jesuits have than the invulnerable plumage of an archangel! The very thing!

“Santignazio of Loyola left the ramparts, and limped in the direction of the citadel, being determined to take the opinion, and the contributions, of the Great Prince, San Michele Arcangiolo.

“On his way across the greensward, he met San Rafaele Arcangiolo, who inquired what ailed him: for his highness observed Santignazio of Loyola to have something, more worrying than usual, on his mind.

“The tale was told; and San Rafaele Arcangiolo declared, without any hesitation, that, in a cupboard of the ante-chamber in the tower of San

About the Witch's Head and

Michele Arcangiolo, would be found a remedy which could not be more suitable if it had been made on purpose. It had been hidden there for many years. There was no particular use for it. In fact, they would be glad to get rid of it; and, if Santignazio of Loyola cared to have it, he would be very welcome.

“Saying these words, and others like them, San Rafaele Arcangiolo led the way into the ante-chamber. From the folds of the mail-shirt which concealed it, he took the fig-basket containing the head of the witch carved into little dice, and covered with fig-leaves. He explained to Santignazio of Loyola what it was, and what were its horrible powers; and he gave it to him to do what he pleased with.

“Santignazio of Loyola had much joy. He hardly knew whether he stood on his head, or his heels, so great was his delight; and he rushed off, helter-skelter, to the lonely station on the ramparts, from whence he had been regarding the anticks of his Compagnia di Gesù.

“At that moment, there chanced to be a chapter of Jesuits assembling in Rome; and black robes long, and black robes short, filled the streets and clustered round the Church of Gesù, precisely as you have seen a parliament of crows meet in a meadow in the autumn.

“Santignazio of Loyola waited while the mass of Santo Spirito was chanted, and until the whole Compagnia di Gesu was gathered in the neigh-

Santignazio of Loyola

bouring convent, closely packed together: and, then, he opened the fig-basket; and he cast down, into the hearts of his Compagnia, the little bloody dice of the witch's head, in countless thousands. Also, as the world went round and round beneath him, he flung the little bloody dice of the witch's head into the hearts of Jesuits whom he discovered in foreign lands; and, when no more dice remained, he threw the fig-leaves, and the fig-basket torn into tiny shreds like relicks.

“Whenever one of the little bloody dice of the witch's head touched the heart of a Jesuit, that heart was turned to stone. It had no more the feelings of a human heart. It could no longer pity, or love. It was as hard as stone.

“It was stone.

“They gathered together the fragments of the fig-basket, and mended it. It was a fine pattern, they said, showy and capacious; and they had many copies of it made, wherein much money was collected.

“And the fig-leaves, in their shameless modesty, they used for statues, and things.

“Now, sir, you know why Jesuits are as they are.

“Unable to love, unable to be loved.

“Unable to pity, unable to be pitied.

“Inhuman collectors!

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Witch's Head and Santignazio

“Not all like that? True, sir, not all. But more than many.

“And you must remember three things. First, Santignazio of Loyola may have missed his aim sometimes. Second, there have been one or two new Jesuits since then. Third, the witch's head was only of a certain size, and there may not have been enough of the little bloody dice to go round.

“And a fourth thing to remember is this,—once upon a time there was a man who sold his Master for thirty lire. He was called Giuda, cognominato Iscariote; and he was one of the Apostles.”

About Sodom, Gomorrah, etc.

VIIIJ

ABOUT SODOM, GOMORRAH, AND THE TWO ADMIRABLE JESUITS

“**O**F course not, sir. I have said the same again and again about the Cappuccini; if you would only try to understand me. Why, there would be no Jesuits at all, supposing that they were all of the species of those: for the Padre Eterno has a singularly short, sharp way of dealing with things decayed and stinking. As long as there is a grain — only a grain — of goodness in a person or thing, He is so merciful that He will give it every opportunity to grow into two, or nineteen, or seven and thirty grains. But, when the last grain of goodness goes, His Mercy goes too; and He just wipes the altogether rotten bad worthless thing off the face of the earth, all the same as Ilario, wiping a dish, wipes it, and turns it upside down. It is finished.

“Well, then, as long as ten good Jesuits or ten good Cappuccini remain in the world, the Padre Eterno respects the Religion of Santignazio, or the Religion of Matteo-Something-of-Low, for the sake of those ten.

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

“Why ten? Well, sir; I will tell you out of the Sacred Scripture.

“There was the Signor Patriarc’ Abramo, a man entirely well thought of by the Padre Eterno, Who deigned to ask Il Santissimo Salvatore to go down into the world, attended by San Michele Arcangiolo and San Rafaele Arcangiolo, to take a message to the Signor Patriarc’ Abramo, and to accept his hospitality. That good man was very pleased to see them; and gave them veal, mines-tra, lessò, arrosto, e fritto, also pasta, also milk; everything of the very best which could be cooked in half an hour. When they had finished eating, they delivered their message: and, then, they brought the Signor Patriarc’ Abramo to the ridge of the hill on which his palace stood; and they showed him two cities on the distant plains, asking whether he knew anything about them.

“The Signor Patriarc’ Abramo put down the two waxen torches which he carried in honour of these Personages; and he answered that the cities were cities of ill-fame, where the people gave themselves to luxuries.

“Wherefore, Il Santissimo Salvatore said the angel-guardians of those people had returned to paradise, bringing shocking reports, and saying that the place was not a fit place for them; and the Padre Eterno had sent to know whether things were as bad as that, intending to destroy those cities altogether.

The Two Admirable Jesuits

“ Having said this, Il Santissimo Salvatore, attended by San Michele Arcangiolo and San Rafaele Arcangiolo, gave an ‘A riveder La’ to the Signor Patriarc’ Abramo, and went down the hill into the plain toward the wicked cities.

“ But the Signor Patriarc’ Abramo ran after them and stood in their way, saying, ‘ O Santissimo Salvatore, will You destroy the good as well as the wicked? Perhaps there are a few good people there — just a little few! Are You going to burn them with the sinners? Would that be a proper thing, O Eternal Judge?’

“ Il Santissimo Salvatore said that He would spare those cities of luxury, if a handful of fifty good people could be found there; or five and forty, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or even ten.

“ But there were not even ten. Just a mere four. A man and three women; and one of those a fool. And Il Santissimo went down, and brought them away in safety, and then the Padre Eterno hurled lightnings like rain, and burned up the wicked cities into pumice-stones and bitumen.

“ So I say, that there must be at least ten good Jesuits, and ten good Cappuccini alive in the world to-day; for, if there were less than ten, the Padre Eterno would put the good ones into a stricter convent, — the Certosa, per esempio, — and then destroy the said Religion of Santignazio and the said Religion of Matteo-Something-of-

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

Low, with a flash of fire, all the same as He destroyed the wicked cities.

“Well, sir, and I, who speak to you now, — I — Teodoro — know where two of the ten good Jesuits are at this moment. The first is called Padre Ciangli, and he lives in Rome. The second is a foreigner called Padre Francesè, and he also lives in Rome. They are two of the ten who save the Campagna di Gesù from destruction by the holiness of their words and deeds.

“It was Niccolo, my brother, who told me the history of them; and he knows, because he is there.

“He says that Papa Pecci has a wonderful love for the Collegio Romano, desiring it to be the greatest college in the world. Therefore, He has made a law that the professors who teach theology must teach it from a book called *Summa Theologia*, which was written by a god called Santommasso many hundred years ago. The Santo Padre will die for that book, says 'Cola; such is His admiration for the same.

“Santommasso was a son of Sandomenico; and the professors of the Collegio Romano are sons of Santignazio of Loyola; and, says 'Cola, they dislike to teach the theology of a rival who is their superior in sanctity as well as in antiquity.

“But, for all that, the Santo Padre must be obeyed; and, if those Jesuits were to make any

The Two Admirable Jesuits

difficulties about teaching that Summa Theologia, says 'Cola, Papa Pecci would just make a little stroke with His pen, and there would be no more Jesuit professors at the Collegio Romano, but Benedictines wise as owls, or Dominicans, brothers of that same Santommasso.

“Therefore, says 'Cola, because they did not wish to lose their situations at the Collegio Romano, the Jesuits resolved to make the best of a bad job, very much against the grain, and teach the Summa Theologia of Santommasso; and they did so, just as far as they found to be convenient, and no further.

“Well, then, Padre Ciangli is a friend of Papa Pecci, — a very great friend indeed, who has given Him good advice many times. You know, sir, that during long years La Sua Santita has chosen to shut Himself up in His palace on the Monte Vaticano, from which station He will not move on any account, not even when it is Sol in Leone, and, of course, as long as He keeps Himself like that, He can neither see with His own eyes, nor hear with His own ears; nor can He surely know what goes on in the City and the world. He must trust to what other people choose to tell Him. He knows Padre Ciangli to be a man of undeniable probity. Therefore, He makes him speak of everything that happens outside the Palazzo Vaticano.

“One day, says 'Cola, Papa Pecci chanced to inquire how the Jesuits of the Collegio

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

Romano were doing with the Summa Theologia of Santommaso; and Padre Ciangli answered that they were doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances; for, he said, being Jesuits, with a theologia of their own, they had to learn the Summa Theologia of Santommaso, before they could teach it; and this was a very bitter pill, for which they thanked La Sua Santita.

“And then he went on talking of all things and some others, and presently, says 'Cola, he told Papa Pecci that there was a certain little Padre Francesè of the Compagnia di Gesù, who knew the Summa Theologia of Santommaso by rote, from egg to apple, and was altogether mad about it, rejecting all other species: for which reason the Black Pope had put him away in an obscure little village, where he had nothing to do but to say mass, baptise, catechise, confess, communicate, marry, anoint, viaticate, and bury a matter of fifty rusticks, hoping, in this way, to keep him from doing more than enough mischief with his madness for the Summa Theologia of Santommaso.

“When He heard this, says 'Cola, Papa Pecci took twelve large pinches of snuff in honour of the Santi Apostoli; and He passed the box to Padre Ciangli, chuckling as though His heart would break, so keen was His joy at hearing of a Jesuit who nourished a devotion to the Summa Theologia of Santommaso, as vast, as fervent

The Two Admirable Jesuits

as His Own. Also, He made Padre Ciangli go incontinent with a message to the Black Pope, commanding this little Padre Francesè to be summoned to the Palazzo Vaticano without delay, because the Santo Padre had an important thing to say to him.

“In course of time, Padre Francesè came to Rome from his foreign village; and he was brought into the private cabinet of the Santo Padre on a Sunday, after supper. He was speechless. He could only kneel down and weep, says 'Cola, so profound was his humility; but Papa Pecci was very kind to him, and gave him a good glass of red wine, and patted his hand, and made him sit on a stool, all quite happy and comfortable; and He blessed him so many times, that, at last, the good little Jesuit became less shy and timid; and then La Sua Santita was free to pick his brains, and to find out how much he really knew of the Summa Theologia of Santommaso.

“Once started on his favourite subject, the diffidence of Padre Francesè fled away; and he spoke words of wisdom with authority, as one who knows. Such grace and charm was found in his discourse, that the Santo Padre sat as though enchanted. All night La Sua Santita listened; for it was evident, says 'Cola, that this little Jesuit was under the special protection of Santommaso, who had deigned to show him all his god-like mind.

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

“ And the very next day, Padre Francesè was appointed by Brief, Professor of Theology at the Collegio Romano.

“ Well, says 'Cola, that was all as it should be. But Padre Ciangli got into the bad books of his superiors for bringing Padre Francesè to the notice of Papa Pecci, and was ordered confine himself to his cell in the convent at the Gesù, as a punishment for chattering with unbridled tongue. Meanwhile, at the Collegio Romano, there was the Brief. Nothing could be said against that. And Padre Francesè ascended the chief pulpit, and lectured on the Summa Theologia of Santommasso.

“ Now it was the habit of these Jesuits, says 'Cola, to teach the Summa Theologia of Santommasso, just as Santommasso had written it, until they came to a point where it differed from their own Theologia; and then they taught their own Theologia, and neglected the Summa Theologia of Santommasso.

“ But very different was the behaviour of that dear Padre Francesè. He, says 'Cola, taught the Summa Theologia just as Santommasso had written it; and, when he came to a point where it differed from the Jesuit Theologia, he just trampled on the Jesuit Theologia, and taught the Summa Theologia of Santommasso; because he had read his Brief, and he knew what Papa Pecci expected of him.

“ The superiors of the Collegio Romano thought

The Two Admirable Jesuits

him horrible. But, says 'Cola, they knew him to be simplicity itself; and, in three days' time, they appointed him Spiritual Father of the Collegio Romano; which means that he had to sit all day, in a little room at the top of the stairs, to give advice to students bringing him their confessions or spiritual difficulties; and, of course, while he was doing that, he could not lecture, which, says 'Cola, was precisely what they wanted. Jesuits are accustomed to sudden changes; and Padre Francesè was a good Jesuit, so he obeyed his orders, while the old professors occupied the pulpit of Theology, and affairs were as they were before Padre Francesè left his foreign village.

“So a week passed; and, says 'Cola, suddenly Papa Pecci remembered that He had not received a visit from Padre Ciangli, for some time; and He sent a flunkey-of-the-cloak-and-sword to fetch him.

“‘Where have you hidden yourself, carino, all this time?’ Papa Pecci said.

“‘If you please, Santita, I've been naughty; and they gave me confinement to my cell, by way of penance,’ Padre Ciangli answered.

“‘Ah, bad one! At your age too! Oh, fy! — But what was your crime?’ Papa Pecci asked.

“‘Well, Santo Padre, if You must know, I told You about our Padre Francesè; and they said I was a gossip and a chatterbox,’ Padre Ciangli answered.

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

“ ‘But that’s all nonsense?’ Papa Pecci said. ‘Why you did Us a great service. That dear Padre Francesè is a jewel—a treasure. We were delighted with him; and We appointed him to be professor of theology in the Collegio Romano, We did. We won’t allow them to shut you up any more, Padre Ciangli. No. Certainly not. You are far too valuable to Us. Yes, you are. Tell your father-rector that Leo, Pater Patrum, XIIJ, commands you to come here every day till further notice. But there,—perhaps it will be more civil if We write a little note to him. Paper? Yes.—Pen? Ah, there.—Ink? Thank you.—Pounce?—Now then.’

“And, says ’Cola, Papa Pecci wrote a little note, of a kind which prevented Padre Ciangli from being shut up again.

“When He had finished writing, Padre Ciangli said,—

“ ‘But, Santita, didn’t I hear You say that You had appointed our Padre Francesè to be professor of theology?’

“ ‘Utique,’ Papa Pecci replied.

“ ‘Then when will he began to lecture?’ Padre Ciangli asked.

“ ‘Naughty Padre Ciangli!’ Papa Pecci said. ‘See what you have missed by being confined to your cell. Why, Padre Francesè has been lecturing since Tuesday! To-day is Saturday; and he will lecture again on Monday, We suppose.’

The Two Admirable Jesuits

“‘Pardon me, Santo Padre,’ Padre Ciangli said. ‘Padre Francesè lectured on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, from eight o’clock till ten o’clock in the morning. At noon on Wednesday, he was appointed Spiritual Father; and, since then, he has purveyed spiritual direction and advice, in a little room at the top of the stairs, while another one of our fathers has occupied the pulpit of theology. Forgive me for contradicting You, Santo Padre; but, when one sees the Pope ill-informed, I hold it to be a duty to make Him well-informed.’

“‘Hm-m-m,’ Papa Pecci said. ‘Are you certain of your information, carino?’

“‘Perfectly certain, Santita,’ Padre Ciangli answered.

“‘Ve-e-e-ry well!’ Papa Pecci said. ‘Now this is some Jesuit trick; and We are going to beat the bottom out of it. Just go outside, Padre Ciangli, and bring to Us Monsignore del Lupo.’

“So Padre Ciangli went and found Monsignore del Lupo, the Majordomo of the Apostolic Palace (you remember the affair in the porch of the Fiorentini, sir? Ha! Ha!), who, says ‘Cola, is as clever and cunning a man as ever lived, subtile as a serpent, and harmless as a kitten. And Papa Pecci told him to go to the Collegio Romano, and say to the father-rector that La Sua Santita knew all his little capers, and commanded him to take Padre Francesè from the

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

situation of Spiritual Father, which situation any used-up old fogey was competent to fill, and to put him back again into the situation of professor of theology, which he was to hold at the pleasure of the Sovereign Pontiff and of no less, and with the strictest injunctions that he should preach the Summa Theologia of Santommasso, the whole Summa Theologia of Santommasso, and nothing but the Summa Theologia of Santommasso. Also, says 'Cola, Monsignore del Lupo was to say, that Padre Francesè must come to the Palazzo Vaticano, every Sunday and Thursday, to talk to the Santo Padre. And, lastly, the father-rector would be kind enough to remember that, if La Sua Santita caught him at his games again, He intended to send a couple of red hats to the Collegio Romano, one for Padre Francesè, and one for Padre Ciangli, and to give them His Own title of Protector of the Collegio Romano for the remainder of their lives; and, then, where would the father-rector be?

“So now, you know, sir, why my brother Niccolo (who is himself a student at the Collegio Romano) is right when he boasts that bishops value the students of that college before the students of any other university. You see they have Padre Francesè there.

“But I have another little word to say about Padre Ciangli.

The Two Admirable Jesuits

“La sua eccellenza will know the Jesuits to be very fond of getting legacies, —so fond, that they take no shame at touting for them; and they hang about the dying for an opportunity of squeezing them. Of course it is a very good thing to leave money for masses for your miserable soul, or for the poor. If you can afford to do so; well. If not; it does not matter. But, of your own free-will, you must give, without suggestion; for the Padre Eterno only listens to the man who gives cheerfully. The good gifts are those which you give unasked; and a gift, obtained by begging, counts to neither giver nor receiver.

“Well, Padre Ciangli did not like to see his brother Jesuits touting for legacies. Indeed, he did not want the Compagnia to be rich in money or in lands. He thought they were better poor, like the fraticelli, for he remembered that Il Santissimo was poor —but, poor! Therefore, this good Padre Ciangli laboured to persuade the Jesuits, his brothers, to give up begging for legacies; and, when he found that they persisted, in spite of all the beautiful words he said, he did his best to discourage rich people from leaving their money to the Jesuits. A very holy man, he was, in truth!

“Now there was a Signor Inglese who lived in Rome. He was rich and grand as the sun. He had no wife, nor child, nor any family, nor friend. The Jesuits soon found him out, and behaved to him with the greatest politeness.

About Sodom, Gomorrah, and

“ One morning, he was in perfect health. In the evening, he took a pernicious fever. And, on the third night, he lay a-dying.

“ The Jesuits wondered what would happen to his wealth; for they had not known him long enough to talk to him about his testament.

“ They brought a notary, with ink, and pens, and parchment; and they clustered round the dying man, ready to put in writing any words which he might choose to say. He was raving in a delirium, shouting obscenities according to the custom of all very holy persons in their fevers; but the doctor said that his senses would be given to him again, at the moment before the grey angel cut the thread which bound his body to his soul.

“ And so they waited, watching for a legacy.

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“ Padre Ciangli heard of this; and he hurried to the palace of this Signor Inglese as fast as his legs would carry him.

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“ Just at the moment when he came into the room, the dying man became calm, and demanded a suck of a citron. The doctor brought it.

“ One of the Jesuits made him a little bow, saying, ‘ Sir, we are your good friends from the Chiesa di Gesù; and you are going to die. Here

The Two Admirable Jesuits

is the notary; and we are your good friends from the Chiesa di Gesù.'

"The dying man exerted himself. He could only say, 'All I have to the Chiesa di Gesù.'

"The notary wrote it, and put a pen in his hand, that he might sign the will.

"He signed it.

"As he wrote the last letter of his name, Padre Ciangli said very solemnly, 'What! All to the Son, and nothing to the Mother?'

"The dying man wrote, after *Gesù*, — *e Maria*. And the grey angel cut the thread there; and he died.

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"Sir, the Jesuits got no legacy that time; for the wealth of the Signor Inglese went, according to his last testament, to the Chiesa di Gesù-e-Maria, which is a church not belonging to the Jesuits at all, but to a religious Order whose name I do not know.

"And the Jesuits gnash their teeth at that delicious Padre Ciangli."

About Some Kings

X

ABOUT SOME KINGS

WHEN we arrived at Velletri, breakfast was prepared at a respectable albergo. Vittorio and Otone, with Ercole, had ridden in advance to look after that, and to get their food. These three attended to my wants; while Toto, and his brother Guido, Ilario, and Desiderio took refreshment.

Afterward, I slept for a couple of hours; and the boys went to amuse themselves in the gardens of a palace having most wonderful marble stairs and loggie, while Toto came with me, to wander about the city, and to look at the girls. Several wore their hair in a pretty fashion, — curls drawn high in a mound through a wreath of violets, from which a black lace veil flowed behind. I don't know what Toto thought of them, because he was grave, and did not speak; but I do know what they thought of him, because they said it out loud. It was not singular.

In a quiet back-street, I became transfixed. Over the doorway of a large building, I saw a sculptured tablet which bore a coat-of-arms and an inscription. The device was the royal

About Some Kings

blazon of England, with crown, supporters, mottoes, all complete. The inscription taught me that this college was founded by no less sublime a potentate than Henry VIIIJ; by the Grace of God and the favour of the Apostolick See, of the sub-urban diocese, Cardinal-Bishop of the Holy Roman Church, Vice-Chancellor; and, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith.

I gave way to my emotions. And because I enjoyed them thoroughly, I imparted them to Toto, at full length. He accepted them with the greatest gentleness; saying, when I gave him a chance, that his grandfather had told him the histories of that King, and of those others, having received the same from the father of his father, whose sister had known the brother of the King whose name was over that door, and who, himself, had had charge of a vineyard belonging to that same Cardinal-King. Wherefore, he knew many things.

I bade him cherish the things he knew until the evening; because I wished to be alone with reminiscent thoughts inspired by my experience in that narrow quiet back-street of Velletri.

At the albergo, later, I drank a little wine and ate a piece of bread for merenda: while Toto ran through the city to collect six of my seven divels: and, before sunset, we started homeward. Ercole, with Otone and Vittorio, rode a quarter

About Some Kings

of a mile in front; Desiderio, with Ilario and Guido, close behind; and Toto on my left hand.

When we smelt the open country, I gave leave; and he said, —

“The father of the father of my grandfather spoke to him when he was a little boy, and the father of my father spoke to me when I was a little boy; and he told to me the histories which his father had told to him. That is what I am telling to la sua eccellenza now.

“Formerly, there was a king in England; and, in his youth, he had been a sailor. Also christian.

“Sailors have no cunning, being simple and honest. It is the sea which makes them so. If you prefer men like that; well. If not; they offend you, and you go away.

“And, in those days, the people of England had the misfortune to be hereticks. So, when this sailor became king, he wished to make his subjects christian; and he gave orders.

“But religion is one of those things which you cannot have by giving orders: and the hereticks rebelled against their king. He was a sailor; honest, and simple, as I have said. He could not understand why his orders should be disobeyed. And he insisted all the more. But the hereticks were strong; and they drove their king away into another country: and they took a heretick king to be their governour.

About Some Kings

“The true king sent his son, called Giacomo, to fight and win his kingdom back again, but the hereticks forced that prince to fly for his life to the foreign country where his father kept his exile.

“After a time that king died; and this Giacomo became the true king. He, also, sent his son, called Carolo, to fight and win his kingdom back again, but again, the hereticks prevailed, driving that prince back to his father, who lived in Rome.

“Then that king Giacomo died, and this prince Carolo became the true king of England. But he was sad, heart-broken by failure, and there was no spirit left in him. He also lived in Rome, instead of fighting for his right; and there he gave himself to drunkenness and lechery.

“When the false king in England heard of this, he said that, if king Carolo could be kept like that, he would never be able to make himself unpleasant by coming after his crown; and the false king sent hereticks to Rome, in secret, with bags of gold, telling them to buy courtesans, and to convey these to the true king Carolo, to cheer him, and to make him spend his whole life in drunkenness and lechery; so that he might get a bad name among his friends, and that news of his habits might be carried to the people of England, to make them hate him for his wickedness, and never fight for him again.

“Yet, sir, what true man will blame that unhappy king Carolo? Not I, for one; nor the father

About Some Kings

of my father, nor the father of the father of that. I grieve for that king; and, if I had been alive, I would have sat upon his doorstep until I could have seen him, and then I would have cheered him, and have told him how kings should comport themselves. But I curse the false king — you, also, sir? What happiness! But I might have known that, even though you had not said a single word. And it would be like carrying indulgences to Rome, for me to have suggested such a thing. Sir, in truth, the false king was one of the bastards of Sathanas, taking after his father. He was a Tempter, a proximate occasion of sin to the true king Carolo. Therefore I curse him!”

Toto reined up at the roadside, and spat scorching curses over a hedge at the Elector of Hanover.

“ Well, sir, and those hereticks came into my province, looking for beautiful women; and they kidnapped the wife of the grandfather of my grandfather, also the sister of him; taking them to Rome, because they were more beautiful than any women ever seen; and giving them, as courtesans, to king Carolo.

“ The sister escaped before he touched her, and ran away across the mountains to her home. There she went into the convent where she died.

“ After two months the wife of the grandfather of my grandfather returned also. She was ashamed. She came at night to her husband, like Pompilato in the Credo, quite unfit for the

About Some Kings

society in which she found herself. She said that she had sinned, because she was poor; and she had earned gold enough to buy many vineyards, and she kneeled down to her husband, giving him the bag of gold, and she prayed for pardon.

“Sir, he loved her. And he remembered that Il Santissimo showed mercy to Santamaria Maddalena, being truly contrite. He took his wife and the bag of gold. He brought them to a deep pool of the river. He bade her to cast her sin from her, with the bag of gold; and, when it sank into the dark water, he put his arms round her, and kissed her, and took her for his wife again.

“When her child was born, she died; but the boy lived; and he was the father of the father of my father.

“When king Carolo died, they buried him in Rome, and because there were no heirs of his body born in wedlock, Enrico his brother became the true king of England. But this king was a bishop, and a cardinal-duke as well, and, therefore, he did not want to make himself irregular by fighting for his kingdom, shedding blood. He said that, in the sight of Him, with whose Sanction kings do reign, he was the king of England, —and that was the truth. —But, seeing that his people did not want him, being content with the heretick king which they had chosen, he would never trouble them, nor wear his crown. But,

About Some Kings

all the same, he maintained that he was their king ; and so he called himself until he died, and was buried with his brother and his father, kings both, in the church of San Pietro on the Monte Vaticano ; where you may see the tomb of these three kings guarded by two grieved English boys in marble, and may read the names and styles of them, engraved in fine letters at the order of the Santo Padre.

“Well, sir, it was told to this last Majesty of England about the grandfather of my grandfather, and his wife and the boy, and the bag of gold. And the Cardinal-King had him in honour, and deigned to give the largest vineyard of the diocese into his charge, by which he lived in comfort all his life ; and, also, he saved money enough to buy a vineyard in his own province for the boy who was the father of the father of my father. And there is my last word, sir. It is not a story, but a history of a verity ; and I have told it to la sua eccellenza as I had it from the father of my father, who had it from the father of his own father.”

We rode at a quicker pace for some distance. I pondered over the strangeness of things.

Ferretti and Heresiarch

XJ

ABOUT PAPA FERRETTI AND THE BLEST HERESIARCH

I SAID that I could find no words in which to curse the turpitude of the false king, who had robbed king Carolo of his crown, and blasted his reputation, helping him to descend from his high estate, and to live, a monument of evil fame, for endless ages.

I said that the sins of king Carolo could not be named in comparison with those of the false king.

“No, sir,” Toto said. “And there was no one to say a sharp word to that false king. Sometimes, when a man is altogether wicked, or only stupidly wicked, the Padre Eterno puts it into the mind of someone to go and say a word so sharp that it cuts him clear away from his wickedness, or from his stupidity; and, then, everything goes well. But, for the false king, there was no one.

“Have I ever recited the case of the heresiarch who was corrected by a sharp word from Papa Ferretti? No?

“Well, then, behold an heresiarch who came to Rome. He had great fame in his own country, being learned, and suave, and of an elo-

About Papa Ferretti and

quence to make a cow attentive. He was of a skinny little figure, with a pimping little face, having uncertain eyes, and little tufts of white whisker in front of his ears. He wore, at all times, a carnival-habit of black, with buttons all up his little legs, and a black skirt like a ballerina, also a black coat of priest, and a marvelous mitre, high, and round, and swelling, and polished, with a curly brim, all black, — wherefore all the little ragamuffins ran after him, expecting him to do tumbling, or other diverting tricks, in some piazza.

“Because he was in Rome, he needs must do as the Romans do; and, by some means or another, he was admitted to an audience of the Santo Padre.

“Papa Ferretti treated him very kindly, allowing him to speak of many things; but He saw him to be vain and insincere. Therefore He gave him words of wisdom, and good advice, in the most courteous manner possible.

“When the audience came to an end, that heresiarch, with his impertinence of bronze, demanded that the Santo Padre should bestow His Benediction.

“‘But, Signore,’ Papa Ferretti said, ‘how can We give you Our Benediction?’

“The heresiarch answered Him, ‘Santità, do You not bless Your children?’

“‘Certainly We bless Our children,’ Papa Ferretti said; ‘but you have not the happiness of


The Blest Heresiarch

being one of those. How then can We bless you, as We bless them?’

“The heresiarch answered that, having come to Rome, he would like to be able to return to his own country, saying, that he had been honoured by the Benediction of the Santo Padre. He was not particular about being blessed in the form with which La Sua Santità blessed His children. But, surely, surely, he might have a Benediction of some kind.

“‘Very well,’ Papa Ferretti said; ‘kneel down, and We will bless you.’

“The heresiarch kneeled down.

“The Santo Padre waved the signs of the cross at him; and blessed him, as though he were incense, using this form,  *Ab Illo benedicaris in Cuius Honore cremaberis.*”

About the Love which is Desire

XIJ

ABOUT THE LOVE WHICH IS DESIRE AND THE LOVE WHICH IS DIVINE

THE evening grew in glory as we rode, a sky all rose and lavender, with purple hills floating in a mist of gold. A voluptuous sense of beauty, and serenity, pervaded me.

“Toto, tell me about Love,” I said.

“Sir, to serve you.”

He meditated during a minute.

“The eyes of *la sua eccellenza* have seen *Madonnina* in many shapes. Among these, you have seen her as a Mother, nursing her little Baby. That is Joy. You have seen her in a *Pietà*, with her Dead across her knees. That is Grief. And you have seen her with her splendid Son standing by her throne, being of the age of fourteen years. That is Love: and He is called *Divin Amore*.

“There is another *amorino*, who is sometimes mistaken for that One: but, in reality, he is a *dæmon*; and he is called Desire. In appearance, they are the same; in action, they are the same. But in effect they are not the same.

“It is a matter of heart.

And the Love which is Divine

“One or the other comes into your heart; and, there, he makes his home. It depends on your own will, whether you admit him, or no. If you keep him out, your heart withers away, till it might as well be the heart of a Jesuit. If you admit Desire, you regret it afterward. If you admit Divin Amore, you do the best action of your life, and you are never sorry any more. Yet, it is a difficult task to tell the one from the other, and to decide which shall be your guest; unless you can persuade your angel-guardian to give you good advice. For, at first, they come to you in the form of a little child, sweet, innocent, and asking for a home. You take in this little child, and show him kindness; and he returns your fondlings and your kisses and caresses, till you love him so that you find you cannot do without him. In your heart, he grows to boyhood; and, on the sly, when you are not looking, he makes weapons,—arrows, and a bow, like an archer,—and wings bloom upon his arms, so that he may fly away, and leave you, when the moment comes: but, of this, you have no knowledge. And, then, at last, he gains his full strength; and he is vigorous, and terrible; and he arises in his majesty; and, with his arrow, he wounds your heart, and strikes you down, his victim and his slave.

“When he has flown away, your heart burns, and craves a medicine to heal its wound. And you search for this, holding out your hands,

Love Desire and Love Divine

weeping, yearning, until you find relief. And, only now, can you be certain of the god whose wound you bear.

“The wound itself is the desire for happiness. And, if the god, who gave it, was Desire, then you will strive and struggle for the happiness of yourself, and of yourself alone. But, if Divin Amore has wounded you, then there must be another beside yourself; and, for that other, you will gladly strive, gladly suffer, gladly die, or very gladly live, which is the hardest thing of all.

“Desire is Selfishness. Divin Amore is Sacrifice.”

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Cats and Dogs always Litigate

XIJ

(a) WHY CATS AND DOGS ALWAYS LITIGATE

“**D**ESIRE makes you greedy for food, avaricious for money, or power, or houses, or vineyards, or farms, and a lecher, hot with lust for women.

Desire was the lord of Giuda detto Iscariote, who sold his Master for thirty lire; of the prince in antick times who fed his fishes with the flesh of living boys and girls, to please his palate with their fine rich flavour; and he was the lord of Sathanas, making him so proud that he rebelled against Domeniddio, striving to dethrone Him, and to take His Closed Crown.

“That was very long ago; and this was the manner of it. First, Sathanas was Chief of the Second Quire, that is to say, of the archangels. And, one day, it happened that the said Sathanas robbed the mirror which belonged to La Suprema Maestà e Grandezza. Looking into that mirror, he saw his own reflection, all of the most magnificent and noble, as you might expect. The more Sathanas looked, the more splendid did he find himself.

“Then came Desire, sweet and innocent, asking for a home.

Why Cats and

“After a few years, Desire had become a power; also, he had made his weapons: and, at last, he let his arrow fly into the heart of Sathanas.

“The wound itched, till Sathanas knew that nothing on earth could satisfy him. Looking daily at his image in the mirror, it was easy to persuade himself that his beauty deserved a better fate than that of being just the Chief Archangel, and no more. After that, he took no rest until he had persuaded half of the other angels and archangels to agree with him.

“Then, with Desire, the terrible, always goading him, he laid a plot to drive the Padre Eterno from His Throne: and, using bones, and stones, and other enchantments, he took the shape of a dragon, many miles in length, and having a hundred heads. In this guise, he came suddenly upon the Court of Heaven. There was not time to beat him back, for he gave no warning.

“But, in an instant, the Holy and August Personages changed their shapes into the shapes of little creatures such as no one would suspect; and they hid in caves under the holy mountain, till the time should come for dealing with Sathanas as he deserved. The Padre Eterno took the shape of a white ram, as Lord of the flock. Madonnina became a fish, in honour of her Son. San Michele Arcangiolo became a raven, that grave and noble bird. San Gabriele Arcangiolo took the shape of the heron which gave its name

Dogs always Litigate

to the city of Ardea, in order that he might fly swiftly as the messenger of the Padre Eterno. And, in like manner, the others changed, as well.

“ But Desire, the terrible, drove the hundred-headed dragon, Sathanas ; and he came ramping round the holy mountain, hunting for his prey. He saw the heron ; but he did not know it to be San Gabriele Arcangiolo ; and he passed on. He saw the raven ; but he did not know it to be San Michele Arcangiolo ; and he passed on. When he came near the white ram, he did a silly thing, for he knew not Who it was ; and he was passing on : but the Padre Eterno hurled lightnings at his hundred heads, smiting him with thunder-bolts, till he was bruised and beaten down.

“ Then, the Holy and August Personages resumed their Proper Shapes, hastening back to heaven, and making preparations for a battle-royal.

“ First, that He might know His enemies from His friends, the Padre Eterno, by an Act of Will, turned the rebel-angels and archangels black, and red, and brown, and green ; while the company of heaven shone all yellow-gold and silver-white. To San Michele Arcangiolo, He gave the rank of general-in-chief, who led his radiant army forward chanting *Quis ut Deus!*

“ Now, when the Padre Eterno blasted Sathanas with lightnings, the fire of them dried up the little brook where Madonnina was hiding in the

Why Cats and

form of a fish ; and, as a fish, without water, dies, she changed her shape again, taking the appearance of a snow-white cat, gentle, superb, and gratia plena. Desire, the terrible, marked this ; and it made him think. He shook Sathanas to his senses, and made him do away the dragon shape and form himself like a black dog. In an instant it was done. Then Desire made Sathanas to know that the snow-white cat was, possibly, a Personage ; and that to capture her, and to keep her as an hostage, might enable him to come to terms with the Padre Eterno, — perhaps, even, to win that rank and power for which he had rebelled.

“ So, when, the snow-white cat began to move away with dignity, and to ascend the holy mountain, showing neither haste nor terror, the black dog barked with fury, and hemmed her in. But she sprang upon a rock near by, and swelled her tail, and arched her back, and spat upon him ; and, being altogether most terrific, she kept her foe at bay. When the black dog presumed to come too near, she struck him in the face, and made him yowl. All that the fool could do was to jump about and bark around her station, until his army should come to his assistance.

“ Meanwhile, San Michele Arcangiolo made short work of the rebels. He drove them out of heaven and chased them down the holy mountain. They resembled a torrent, all black, and red, and brown, and green, flying before the irre-

Dogs always Litigate

sistible might of legions shining silver-white and yellow-gold. Squadron after squadron of the rebels, in disorder, dashed by the little rock; too terrified and too confused to listen to the frantic calls of Sathanas; until, at last, the triumphant host of heaven swept along: and, then, the snow-white cat sprang upward, changing into the glorious form of the Madonna. At this the angels waited while they said their *Salve Regina*, and legions of them bore her, on their wings, to her throne in heaven. Other legions continued in pursuit, driving the black dog Sathanas, and his minions, to another mountain very far away, where the earth opened to engulf them. There San Michele Arcangiolo took Sathanas, in his own shape (which is the shape of an archangel, but of a different colour, being black, and red, and brown, and green, having a hundred cubits of height, and wings not of feathers, but of skin like the wings of bats and dragons), and he chained him in the lowest pit for a thousand years, with the chain of Selfishness and Pride, which Desire had made him forge.

“From these histories, la sua eccellenza will understand why cats and dogs should always litigate. And, also, you will know about Desire, the sweet, the sly, the terrible.”

About Divinamore and

XIJ

(β) ABOUT DIVINAMORE AND THE MAIDEN ANIMA

“ **A**LTOGETHER another Personage is Divinamore.

“ He, also, comes to you, looking so sweet, so dear. He, also, grows to boyhood, working secretly the while in the home which you have let Him make with you. When His wings have blossomed, and His full strength is on Him, He, also, lets His arrow fly into your heart, and makes Himself your Lord; giving you a wound so dire that you must spend your life to ease its pain.

“ But, as the wound of Desire receives relief, — but never a cure, — when you labour for yourself; so the wound of Divinamore can be made to cease from aching only when you search for pain, and loss, and trouble for yourself, that some other may have happiness. And, sir, — it is a strange thing to tell you this, though it is the naked truth, for Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires said it, and he is not a liar, — the more base, or treacherous, or unworthy, be the person for whose happiness you labour; and the more anguish, or shame, you seek to take upon your

The Maiden Anima

shoulders; so much the more will you win relief from the aching of the wound of Divinamore.

“Sir,— in two words,—

UNDER-GO, OVER-COME.

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“Now I will speak of Divinamore and of the maiden Anima; also of their victory over Desire.

“Anima was a little maiden, white as an almond, fresh as a young carnation. She lived in the world, alone with her sisters.

“Divinamore stood up there in paradise, near the throne of Madonnina. Serene in the vigour of his youth, He was as beautiful as spring.

“He looked upon the lovely maiden; and He wished her well.

“Since she was a baby, He had watched her; and, one day, He saw Desire go and ask her to give him lodging in her heart. She was only a little girl; and Desire seemed only to be a little boy.

“Divinamore saw Desire wind himself about her, till she yielded gladly to him. He saw Desire grow potent, and prepare his weapons, while the maiden bloomed. He saw Desire arise in his full length, and strike his arrow in her heart. Then He knew that Anima must own Desire for her lord.

“Divinamore became very sad; for He loved Anima, and wished to have her for His own.

“Wistfully He looked to His Mother for advice,

About Divinamore and

being the Best of sons. Then, Madonnina taught Him; and she spoke, and said, 'My Son, only he can win the maiden Anima whose heart is pierced by the arrow of Divinamore.'

"Then He drew an arrow from His quiver; and He struck it deep in His Own Heart, giving Himself the wound of Divinamore for the sake of the maiden Anima.

"All day, His wound tormented Him: and, when the night was dark, He spread His plumage, and descended swiftly, silently; and He came to the maiden Anima, as she lay sleeping on her bed, dreaming dreams with which Desire had filled her. And He took her in His arms, and whispered in her ear, saying that a god was come to give her happiness, and to win her for His Own.

"The maiden Anima heard Him. She was glad; for she longed for admiration above all things. And, though she could not see Him, for the night was dark, she had great happiness in the fragrance which He breathed, and in the god-like loveliness of form which she could feel, and in the youthful ardour of His embrace; but, chiefly, when she told herself that her beauty had made her the beloved of a god.

"Every night, for many nights, He held her in His arms; and she never saw Him; for He always vanished before the break of day.

"Every day, for many days, she longed for Him, because He gave her happiness.

The Maiden Anima

“ And every night, for many nights, He prayed to her to be His Own true love.

“ Often she asked Him for His name ; for she was proud at thinking that she had a god for her lover, and she wished to tell her sisters of this honour.

“ But Divinamore answered that true love went hand in hand with perfect trust ; wherefore, she should trust Him, and never seek to know His name.

“ This gave her no content: in secret, she resolved to satisfy her longing.

“ There came a night when Divinamore lay sleeping by her side. She rose ; and went to fetch a lamp, that she might feast her eyes upon Him : for she did not love Him truly, but only for the honour and the happiness she had of Him. Here was selfishness, caused by the arrow of Desire.

“ And when she brought the lamp, she saw the Lad who lay upon her bed ; and she trembled very greatly, because she knew her Lover to be Divinamore Himself: and, as she trembled, a little drop of oil fell upon His shoulder from the burning lamp ; and He awoke ; and before her eyes, He vanished, going back to paradise, because Anima had shown herself to be unworthy.

“ Then she wept, and moaned her loss, until her sisters ran to know the reason of the noise. To whom Anima answered, that Divinamore had deigned to love her, and to visit her by night

About Divinamore and

in secret, but now He had deserted her, and for that she wailed. But the envious sisters scoffed, saying that she lied; and, not Divinamore, but some lewd hob, some stripling of the farmyard, was her lover. Therefore they gave her blows, and drove her out into the world, calling her a liar, and a wicked girl.

“Desire was her lord. It was he who made her suffer. She thought only of herself; and she longed for Divinamore to return, and give her happiness.

“But Divinamore loved her truly: and, though He might not let her see Him, nor grant her the happiness of His embraces, until that He had conquered her, and had made her give Him perfect trust, yet the wound of His own heart forced Him to resolve to labour alway for her welfare, to spare her pain, and that she might gain happiness in another way.

“And, as she wandered, homeless and forlorn, Divinamore went with her; and she never saw Him.

“By His Mother's throne, He left His quiver and His bow. He stripped Himself of all His god-like panoply. He came into the world, in secret, to serve His beloved Anima as her slave. When she climbed the rocks of the mountain, He went before, lifting sharp stones from her path, until His arms were aching. When she passed through forests, He thrust back thickets, and tore a road through thorny briers, until His hands

The Maiden Anima

were bleeding. Across the streams, He laid His young body for a bridge. He shielded her from storms, placing Himself between her and the sting of blasting rain.

“All the time, she was wailing to herself that it was not a fitting thing for a maiden who had had the honour of the embraces of a god to be, as she was now, homeless and forlorn. Surely this was not what she deserved, seeing that she was not a common wench. So, by degrees, she forgot the happiness of her Lover’s arms, and longed for fortune and for fame.

“Then, Divinamore led her, though she never knew He was her Leader, to a distant country, where the people took her for the most beautiful maiden ever seen, and worshipped her.

“She could not speak their language; but she understood their gestures; and she knew that they admired her loveliness. To herself, she said that here, at last, was the place where fame and fortune would be found.

“Divinamore remained in the outskirts of the crowd, where Anima could not see Him. Swiftly, He went from one man to another; and, as He passed, He whispered, in each ear, that the maiden was fit to be a queen. And, as the whisper dropped into each ear, men turned to view the whisperer; and they saw no one but a Lad, Whose delicate skin was tanned by sun and rain, and blue with bruises, Whose hands and feet were sore through travel and toil. They could

About Divinamore and

not think that He had said those words: and they took them for a sudden thought, and not a voice. They shouldered Him aside. He fell beneath their feet. They trampled on His weary limbs. But, anon, He raised Himself, and went on, unabashed, whispering that Anima was fit to be a queen.

“At last, they caught Him in the act; and they demanded who He was that dared to speak of Anima.

“He said, ‘I am called Divinamore; and I love her.’

“They mocked Him for a fool, asking what might be the measure of His Love?

“He said, ‘I love the maiden Anima more than I love Myself.’

“They jeered at Him, spitting in His face, and beating Him upon His breast. Unwilling tears streamed from His lovely eyes. His flesh quivered in agony. But He did not quail.

“They dragged Him to the middle of the crowd; and thrust Him face to face with Anima; to whom they bowed respectfully, making signs to ask whether she knew the Lad.

“But Anima perceived that she was held in honour; and Desire, her lord, made her happy in this honour, desiring continuance of the same. Therefore, when she saw the Lover, Whose arms had once embraced her, in His sorry plight, she was ashamed of Him; and she threw her head backward, denying that He was anything to her.

The Maiden Anima

“ But Divinamore cried, undauntedly, that Anima was fit to be a queen; for He knew her thoughts: and He had bound Himself to serve her at all costs, by reason of the arrow in His heart, which made Him choose to suffer, if that only He might win happiness for His beloved.

“ ‘Give her a royal robe,’ He cried, ‘a crown, a sceptre, and a throne.’

“For His persistency, they beat Him on His breast and back, tearing His tender flesh, until eight rods were broken. Into His forehead, they thrust eleven sharp spikes of barberry. But He cried the louder, ‘Give her a royal robe, a crown, a sceptre, and a throne.’

“ They tried to test the measure of His love, saying, ‘If that You love the maiden Anima more than You love Yourself, what will You sacrifice that we should crown her queen.’

“ Instantly, He answered, ‘A limb for every sign of sovereignty.’

“ Then, with great respect and honour, they led the maiden Anima to the palace; and there they dragged the Lad who claimed to love her.

“ In the doorway, they felled Him to the ground. Her lord, Desire, filled Anima with pride; so that she trod upon the crushed and broken body which, formerly, had been her joy.

“ They made the Lad stand up; and they signed to Anima that she should mount the throne. She ascended the steps, and took her seat. They

About Divinamore and

nailed the right foot of Divinamore to the threshold.

“They placed a crown upon the head of Anima. They nailed the left foot of Divinamore to the threshold.

“They placed a sceptre in the hand of Anima. They made Divinamore stretch His right hand straight and high; and they nailed it to the lintel.

“They robed Anima in royal robes, woven from the wings of butterflies. They made Divinamore stretch His left hand straight and high; and they nailed it to the lintel.

“Anima sat as queen.

“She saw the Victim, who had sacrificed Himself to give her glory, strained stiff, as on a rack, before her eyes; His hands and feet transfixed by nails, His brows bleeding at eleven wounds, His body torn by eight rods, and his Heart pierced by the arrow of true love.

“Divinamore was come to the end of His pilgrimage. He had given, to His beloved, the happiness that she craved. He had reached the threshold of His love's abode. From that threshold, His eyes fed upon her beauty. And, there, nails held Him fast.

“But Anima was a crowned queen, and, in her heart, were happiness and pride.

“Madonnina in paradise looked at her with anger. She seized the quiver and the bow, which Divinamore had left beside her throne. She

The Maiden Anima

fitted an arrow on the string. She shot at the proud heart of Anima.

“So sure was her aim, so swiftly did the happy arrow fly, mindful of its errand, that it cleaved its way into the very wound which, formerly, Desire had made. There, it purged the maiden’s heart from every taint of selfishness which had held her in bondage to Desire.

“And behold a marvel!

“For now the heart of Anima was pierced by the arrow of true love; and now she had no happiness in regal state, purchased with so dear a price. She only longed to suffer for Divin-amore.

“She left her throne, and ran to Him. She prayed that He would say what she must do to ease His pain.

“He looked upon her with dimmed eyes. His body drooped in languor. He was dying.

“She was kneeling at His feet; but He could not raise her: for nails held His hands.

“He murmured that He gladly bore the torment of His wounds, if that they gave her happiness.

“But she said that she would not see Him suffer; and that she wished to cast away her royalty, to set Him free.

“She said that the nail in His right foot had bought her throne; but she would not have it at that price. She stooped down, and drew out the nail.

About Divinamore and

“ She said that the nail in His left foot had bought her crown ; and she cast away the crown. She stooped down, and drew out the nail.

“ She said that the nail in His right hand had bought her sceptre ; and she cast away the sceptre. And, having raised herself, she drew out the nail.

“ She said that the nail in His left hand had bought her royal robes, woven from the wings of butterflies ; and she cast away the robes. And, having raised herself, she drew out the nail.

“ So she renounced her royalty.

“ She had nothing, now, which she could offer to Divinamore, except herself, and her true love. She wondered whether He would consider these to be worthy gifts.

“ She hid her face in her hands.

“ In her shame, she trembled.

“ She did not dare to hope.

“ She feared that He could never love her any more, seeing how that she had made Him suffer. But she waited : and, with her tears and kisses, she healed the wounds of the nails, the bruises of the rods, the gashes on His brow.

“ Divinamore was free. The vigour of His youth returned.

“ In His arms, He took His beloved Anima. She felt Him burn, she saw Him shine, with true love.

“ The royal robes, woven from wings of butterflies, which she had cast away, were lying at her

The Maiden Anima

feet. Her Lover signed the cross upon them. The butterflies, who had given their earthly plumage for those robes, came back from paradise; and, on their radiant wings, Divinamore and the maiden Anima ascended from the world.

“Before the throne of Madonnina the maiden kneeled; and she prayed for pardon, to the mother, for the sufferings of the Son.

“But Divinamore raised her.

“She flung herself into the furnace of His love. And in that fervent heat, she changed into a butterfly having wings as white and fragrant as an evening lily.

“And Divinamore wears her on His heart, for ever, as His Own true love.”

Summer

*Æstate, pueri
si valent, satis
discunt.*

MART.

About Doing Little, Lavishly

XIIJ

ABOUT DOING LITTLE, LAVISHLY

IN early summer, at the very beginning of my explorations along the eastern coast, something happened to rouse me from that lethargy into which temperamental indolence had let me slip, after my life's great disappointment.

For three weeks, I have been busier than any seven and thirty bees; thoroughly enjoying toil. Allowed to consume latent energy, I taste relief.

In this walled-city of 3016 souls, — I will never give its name, lest puny tourists, having no necks, should come to mar its quaint and dignified simplicity with bicycles, curved spines, and chequered stockings on gross legs, — the clergy are persons of extreme discrimination. Observing something of capability, they had the wisdom, and the grace, to give it scope. Therefore they merit admiration.

The matter has been the designing of an ecclesiastical procession. That service is performed here every year on the Festival of Corpus Dominj; and, this year, finding me, with my assistants, staying in this wonderful little walled-city, — I will never give its name, — and

About Doing Little, Lavishly

hiding a talent under a bushel of misanthropy, the clergy had compassion.

It was Monsignore Argo Ermogene who began civilities. Having seen me with my seven divels daily, at the mass of dawn, this White Son of Hermes paid prompt visits to his new parishioners. I found him to be simpaticissimo; first, because of the angelick beauty of his gentle eyes and the rose-leaf delicate mobility of his thin lips; secondly, because he recognised the singular perfections of my creatures, their serene reserved nobility of port, their bright gravity of regard, and the antick breeding of their mien. He was one of the few brave souls who are not afraid to honour their Creator by frank admiration of His noblest works. And, when he had discovered of what unhappy species was the man to whom he spoke,— a man who hates, loves, and excruciates, sick of forced aseity,— this diplomatick prelate treated of things ecclesiastical, in general, and of the Infiorata of— let us say Città Senzanome,— in particular. Lastly, he asked me, point-blank, would I lend my boys, and design the pageant of the year?

So, for three weeks, I have been utterly happy in being useful: and, to-night, my procession has passed in the beauty of holiness from the Duomo, up the steep street of the Angels to the antient Church of The Four Holy Crowned Ones, through the Gate of the Seven Sleepers, to the Convent of Friars Minor, along the

About Doing Little, Lavishly

Avenue of Cypresses, and by the Gate of Santa Sumforosa to the Dominican House in the Street of the Seven Martyred Sons; thence, returning to the Duomo:—a matter of a mile, covered in two hours of bliss beyond all expression (to me).

I could not do much. I am aware of some of my limitations. I attempted little; but I reserved no cache of wit or gold, nor avid energy of soul or sinew, to give perfection to that little. I knew myself to be the very last person in all the world likely to satisfy Il Santissimo, or His worshippers. Yet, for this very reason, I grasped the opportunity of exemplifying the proverb, *Εἰκὸς γίνεσθαι πολλὰ καὶ παρὰ τὸ εἰκός*.

Three weeks ago, I chose beautiful children from the schools, youths and maids, men and women, from trade-guilds and confraternities, six handsome courteous young officers from the citadel. To each, I gave the character of some god, some angel, with raiment and emblems proper to their estate. It was not an occasion for using ancient frumpery. I wanted all things new: and, having drawn designs, chosen textures, and cut out antick garments in accord with knowledge gained from minute secret study, I had them made. I rushed away across Apulia to Rome; where I bought jewels; and gilded rosy discs embossed upon the rims with god-like names, for haloes; and also wings—real

About Doing Little, Lavishly

large wings — to spring from and to cover with feathery plumage the backs of boys, and to grace their waving arms, so that they might float along the way with the lightsome gait of God His birds. I took nothing that I found. I drew designs, and had them made.

A procession is not a snake of frowsy nobodies huddled in couples, who scurry nervously, shamefacedly, impudently, along the middle of the road, unblushingly whining through their noses, to the Omniscient, disgraceful ditties.¹

A procession is a visible act of worship, and demands display. Also, Holy Mother Church ordains liturgical hymns of splendour incomparable — unsurpassable. Therefore, I displayed a dignified procession on both sides of the street, with recognisable living effigies of renowned personages, who chaunted *Pange Lingua* without end. Each subject was separate from the others; each group displayed alone, coming slowly and with imposing gravity, along the wide bare strips of road-side, leaving clear the open decorated middle. On the foot-pace, citizens knelt in

¹“ Hail sainted Mungo, hail!
Our city’s patron, hail!
Thy loving help shall ne’er
Thy faithful children fail.

“ Mungo! By thy sweet name
Our little ones we ’ll call;
Often on them and us
Let thy rich blessing fall!”

About Doing Little, Lavishly

crowds, or at windows, gay with arras and verdure. Straight lines of lanthorns stretched across the streets, to aid the sunset and the stars,—straight lines, uncrossed, without the degradation of a foul festoon.

Last night, all instructions had been learned, all rehearsals finished; and this wonderful little walled-city gave itself a cleansing so complete that no conception of its scope can be formed by cold Northerners who soap in daily tubs. Wells and the waterfall yielded liquid purity to lave the streets. Under rocks, beyond the walls, the river whitened with the merriment of scrubbed swimmers. And in the Duomo and Santi Quattro Coronati, souls were purged by penance. At Ave Maria, bullock-carts came in from all the country-side, loaded high with greenery, and stacks of wild-flowers, and the spoil of gardens. Through the short night these were sorted by their colours. At dawn, traffick being stopped, an artigiano drew in chalk, upon the road, armorials, ten cubits in width on diapered fields with bordures. After mass, citizens filled these designs with petals of appropriate hue, and foliage, well watered, working all the day; and, at sunset, there was a carpet of flowers, twenty cubits wide and a mile long, laid up the middle of the streets, on which, yet undefiled by any foot, borne by His priest, the Maker of the flowers should deign to go. This is the carpet, famed throughout Apulia, which

About Doing Little, Lavishly

gives its name to the Festival of Corpus Domini in this walled-city, — the Infiorata of Città Senzanome. I have not the happiness of any share in that. The procession alone was of my small design.

At Ave Maria, bells clanged, and cannon boomed; and the procession left the Duomo.

In the centre (not at the end), Monsignore Argo Ermogene, attended by arcidiaconi, bore the Host in an ostensorium, beneath a canopy whose six poles were supported by six warrior-saints, each in his proper mail: to wit, San Giorgio, argent, a cross potent gules; and San Maurizio, gules, a cross potent argent; San Vittorio, azure, a cross potent or; and Sant Esuperio, vert, a cross potent or; San Martino, gules, a cross potent or; and San Teodoro, or, a cross potent gules. All round and round the canopy went a guard of angels, floating to and fro on winged arms — twelve youths playing *Pange Lingua* on majestick twenty-four-stringed arciliuti, and twenty boys who carried lamps, or offered incense, or scattered flowers.

In front of these came those of the company of heaven who are patrons of the city: — On the left, Santa Sumforosa and her Seven Martyred Sons, San Primitivo, San Giustino, San Crescenzo, San Giuliano, San Nemesio, San Stacteo, Sant' Eugenio, waving palms and wearing tunicks, white with a stripe of purple, and purple-strapped sandals: — On the right, my

About Doing Little, Lavishly

seven boys, presenting the Seven Sleepers, Children of Light, San Massimiano, San Martignano, San Costantino, San Dionusio, San Giovannino, San Serapione, San Giamblichio, each in a silken kithon of white from knee to shoulder, open on the right, girded with golden girdles, their listless heads low, garlanded with white poppies, carrying palm-plumes and white poppy sheaves.

In front of these : — On the left, the Four Holy Crowned Ones, San Severo, San Severiano, San Carpofero, San Victorino, each in a toga of vermilion dye, diademed with parsley, and bearing palms : — On the right, San Paolo with his sword and palm, San Pietro with his palm and keys. All these wore haloes, which marked their state.

In front of these, came the confraternities of Sangue Preciosissimo, in white and red ; of Santo Spirito, in parti-coloured red and yellow ; of Madonna, in white and blue ; of Buona Morte, in black ; all with liripiped hoods, and hanging scalloped sleeves. They bore banners, bannerols, and standards. Brothers and Sisters of the Third Orders went before them, in habits, grey, or white and black ; and were, in turn, preceded by the regimental band of Bersaglierj playing *Pange Lingua*, and by the crucifers and thurifers of the Duomo and of Santi Quattro Coronati.

After the angels round the canopy of the Host, glided pale sisters of the poor with tapers.

About Doing Little, Lavishly

Then went a crowd of clergy, friars and monks in holy habits, seculars in copes, escorting the Lord Archbishop, and chanting *Pange Lingua* without end. As the procession passed, the citizens rose from their knees, and followed in serried ranks behind the Signor Sindaco and his counsellors.

I watched the pageant wind along the ways. After the last Benediction, the city has given itself to fire-works, and to dance, and song; while I have entertained my Seven Sleepers, in their habits as they lived, to a supper in the garden. They were very wide-awake now; and tired, — but, tired! Natheless, merry to the hair of their curly heads, and rightfully: for, in truth, when one has done fine things, one may not think of hell.

In the starlight, young eyes glittered, and white teeth gleamed on peaches. Never was complex crescentine beauty so discreetly manifested, as in this dim garden, where black cypress soars into the eternal star-sown blue, furnishing grey-green lawns with outlines, indefinite, mysterious, with infinite, imperscrutable distances. Against the retirement of this back-ground, the long contours of limbs, of old ivory, or having the transparent nacreous pallor of the flesh of turbot, and the modelling of supple forms, accented by clinging of silk, or revealed by a

About Doing Little, Lavishly

kithon's falling folds, undulated in inconstant curves.

I watched the Seven very vigilant Sleepers eat and drink their fill; indulging, for once, in commensation, to avoid the seven and thirty painful sensations which one experienced in the teeth of one who looks on while others eat. With the effort of giving the boys the unusual treat of a cigarette apiece, I became alert enough to listen to their chatter. It is one of the greatest intellectual luxuries, in all this banal world, to listen to the enjoyment of delightful youth wearing its crown of gold, to the natural conversation of well-conditioned boys, naif savages who live under a discipline of rigour mitigated by sundry hours of freedom utter and entire. At least, that is my present opinion, which I trust may be unchanged when I am permitted to grow older and wiser.

Toto distributed cigarettes, and returned with the box. He strewed himself on the grass by my chair, and put his chin on his hands, looking up at me to read thoughts, to anticipate desires. I was silent and dark to him.

"I find this antick garment to be convenient enough, sir. Why don't we wear such things now?" he said.

"Shows too much of you," I answered.

"That is a thorn thrust into my eyes, sir: I did not know that there was too much of me," he said, with pique.

About Doing Little, Lavishly

“Not for me,” I hastened to explain, “but for people of a kind.”

“Yes. There are some fools,” he meditated. “Then the garments are useless, sir? It is a pity; for they must have cost a bag of money. May I know, sir?”

I said that the silk was chinese of the finest; and that one had to pay for fine things.

“You have spent many bags of money, sir?”

I agreed. And frowned when I thought about them.

“Too many, sir?”

“No. Of course not. Not too many; but many. And there will be no more for the present,” I said.

He nipped the lighted end from his cigarette, and laid the remainder by.

“Then, sir, let us wear these garments inside your walls, and in the country where fools are few. So we shall need no new clothes, nor shall we ruin you until you get some money.”

I laughed. “No pockets in a kithon,” I said.

“Pockets, sir? Why, here is the very finest pocket that I have ever seen!” He sat up, and thrust hand and arm into his bosom, through the open right-side of the kithon. “Can you put all your arm into any of your pockets, sir? No, indeed. But I can into this one; and the belt keeps all secure. The handkerchief-of-my-nose has been there all night, sir; and, if I draw the buckle a little tighter, I could even

About Doing Little, Lavishly

keep my small cigarette quite safely. Look, sir!" He rose on his knees, and tightened the strap with judged moderation, high round the flexible flatness of his waist. "Oh, yes, sir. Do let us wear these garments, sir; ah, now, do!"

Toto, like this, was irresistible, — irresistible as an Irish girl.

"Then, sir, we will return these periapts before they take a damage." (These were little gold bullæ, hollow balls of about the circumference of a florin. The lower half unscrewed, and would serve as a receptacle for some tiny treasure. They were worn on a slim gold chain round the neck, hidden in the breast of the kithon. I copied them from a genuine example of century IJ. A.D.; and had them made.)

"No," I said. "I have caused your names to be cut on them, with my raven; and all of you are to keep them for remembrance."

"For remembrance of what, sir?"

"To pray for the giver."

He took the jewel from his throat, and handed it to me, standing very stiff and stark.

"Beast," I cried, "then you won't pray?"

"I want nothing to remind me of my pleasures," he said.

"Urchin of distraction!" I ejaculated. "Then take it as a reward for behaving like a very good boy. And speak to the others for me."

"Many thanks, sir." He lowered his lips and kissed my ring. Then he turned. "Attention!"

About Doing Little, Lavishly

he cried. Half a dozen limber youngsters froze into rigid marble statues in the cypress shades. "Don Friderico is so gracious as to make us presents of these golden periapts, in reward for good behaviour. In return, we promise to recite Ave Maria, and the rest, three times every night and morning for his intention. Who ever forgets, will strip to my lilac twig. Understand? Well, then, come and render an action of graces to la sua eccellenza."

They crowded round me with such beautiful, unveiled eyes. I explained the bullæ to them, and showed how they unscrewed. Toto immediately vanished, running toward the villa.

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It is delicious to give presents, I think. Dainty little Guido nestled against my feet. His colourless hair, his dark, colourless pallor, lent enchantment to the stainless whiteness of his bluish-shining, chrusoberul eyes. He screwed, and unscrewed his bulla.

"I think I will ask the friar of Toto for a small relick. And it shall hide in this gold ball on my breast alway, to keep me holy," he meditated, as Toto returned with a something of satisfaction, of triumph on his brow.

"A relick?" Toto said. "Yes; very excellent, o 'Dino mio. I have one already: but I shall demand from Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires yet another,—a relick of Sangiorgio,

About Doing Little, Lavishly

whom I adore because he is Protector of the English. Yes, I will have that, if I am allowed to choose. And thou shalt have one of Santamaria Maddalena, patron of our dear Don Friderico, 'Dino mio.'

I asked what relick he had already. He sent the boys away before he answered.

"What but seven hairs of your head, sir?"

I felt my pate. "I never gave you those," I said.

"You did not give them, sir; but I went into the house and took them."

I tugged a handful of hair, in perplexity. "I wear no wig, Toto."

"No, sir; but there is always your comb." He left me, and joined the others, who were playing within call.

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There was no sound in the sleeping city, now. The night was warm as an embrace; no moon: but heaven a miracle of starry splendour. I find much of unapproachable, of precious, in these great stars of the summer night. I leaned back in contemplation.

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A loquent silence brought my eyes to earth.

There was going to be a fight, or, at least, a pale. I encourage both; and I said, "Let me see."

Ercole and Desiderio stepped aside, disclosing

About Doing Little, Lavishly

Toto and Vittorio at defiance. Vittorio awaited assault with grave unconcern, hand on hip, in the exact pose of the great serene gumnandropais, in that bliss-full *Primavera* of Alessandro Filipepi. He had supreme and just confidence in the superiority of his more than four cubits, and in the merit of his indomitable sinew. Toto faced him, tense and glaring, resembling the slender Wrestler of Herculaneum about to spring. Then Vittorio shot out arms (at the biceps his circumference measured fourteen top-joints of thumb), and, catching Toto by the os ilii, heaved him over his head. But my agile Perseus of Cellini (the Waxen Sketch in Palazzo del Bargello, not — oh, not — the Bronze Abortion in the Loggia de' Lanzj) was master at that game. There was an instant's vision of grace describing an aerial curve, and an almost imperceptible manœuvre. Vittorio turned: but Toto, also, had turned in air, and alighted on his feet. With swift spring he flung himself upon the Greek, knees gripping ribs, torso towering high, pressing back those mighty shoulders; and, at the sudden resistless shift of weight, Vittorio fell to the ground.

“One point all,” I said, “and enough for to-night.”

I rose. Kithones were belted on, and five of the Seven Sleepers sent to bed. But, to the two who strove, I said, “Reasons?”

Each looked at the other.

About Doing Little, Lavishly

“Toto considered me to have spoken insufficiently of *la sua eccellenza*,” Vittorio said.

“Vittorio considered me to have spoken more than sufficiently of *la sua eccellenza*,” Toto said.

Here was a lark!

The garden was too cool for a story from heated persons in silk kithones. I drove them indoors, and busied them with the scaldino to keep alight my huqa.

“What have you said, Vittorio?”

“I was so happy to have my golden bulla, sir, that I described *la sua eccellenza* as being like a king giving with both hands.”

“And Toto finds that to be objectionable?”

Toto gave a contemptuous sniff.

“Speak!” I said.

“Vittorio, sir, is a good enough little thing,” (Toto was about as high as his pythian throat;) “but he has no discrimination. He pays you a compliment, meaning well; but the compliment is clumsy, because it lacks fine justice.”

“O, sir,” Vittorio protested, “I do assure you that I said the very best words which I could find in my mind!”

“Errè! Errè! Atom! Other minds hold other words, sir; and Vittorio has not said those, sir.”

“Then what were your words, Toto?” I asked.

“Sir, I said that the actions of *la sua eccellenza*

About Doing Little, Lavishly

in the matter of the procession, and especially in the matter of our presents, reminded me of the actions of San Gabriele Arcangiolo."

"And I answered that it was a matter of un' eccellenza, and not of an archangel," phaidroneos interrupted.

"Wherefore, I hurled the blasphemer to the earth," Toto proclaimed.

Lurid demonstrations flashed over the huqa.

"Pax!" I commanded. "Explain your parable, Toto; that wisdom may enlighten the mind of Vittorio."

"Wisdom is the daughter of Experience and Remembrance, and those personages are not related to Vittorio."

"Explain, explain!" I commanded fiercely.

"Yes, sir, I will explain; indeed I will. Well, then, sir, and Vittorio, San Gabriele Arcangiolo is a prince whose admirable motto is *Do little; and do it lavishly*. It is plain that his highness has taught these words to la sua eccellenza; for no one ignorant of them could do what you have done in this walled-city. O, I have seen with these my eyes; and I know."

"Then you consider the procession to have been suitable?"

"More than suitable, sir. It was unnecessarily suitable; just as lentils are better than beans, barley than lentils, yet beans are good enough. There would have been a fine procession here, if you had been in England, sir. There was a fine

About Doing Little, Lavishly

procession here a year ago. There always has been a fine procession here, for many hundreds of years. But, this year, comes *la sua eccellenza*, all sad, with half-shut eyes of a dreaming prisoner, who has no interests in this walled-city, has never seen it before, possibly will never see it again, who cares neither for stick nor stone nor soul of it, and who is quite unnecessary to its welfare; yet, on a sudden, dreams have died, and opened eyes look brightly at reality; and you spend bags of gold, and run here and there, all day and night, and work — but, work! — to the astonishment of all, save of me — Teodoro; because I know that San Gabriele Arcangiolo has said, ‘*Eccellenza*, do this procession. Do this little thing. And do it as lavishly as I, who am an archangel, have done in the case of other little things.’”

“What other little things?” I asked, to keep myself from falling on sleep.

“Well, sir, there was the case of the three boys who sang as they blessed the Lord in the furnace of fire.”

“Does Vittorio know that history?”

“In part, sir; but not the part of Toto,” Vittorio distinguished.

“Then tell him, Toto, and tell me.”

“Sir, and Vittorio, you shall know of a wicked king who lived in antick times. He was called Nabuchadonosor Re; and his heart was full of pride. Praise did not satisfy him; honour and

About Doing Little, Lavishly

admiration did not fill the chalice of his desire; he wished for nothing less than to receive the adoration which is due to Il Santissimo. Therefore, in the courtyard of his palace, he set up an image of himself carved in gold; and he placed musicians with their instruments near by; and he made an order that, when the band played at noon of the dial next day, all the citizens must come and perform a genuflection before the golden image.

“This was done: and Nabuchadonosor Re sat at his window, watching to see that his order was obeyed. The guardians-of-the-publick-safety went into all the houses, driving out the people, young and old, and rich and poor. And crowds came, and passed before the statue, and performed their genuflections; and Nabuchadonosor Re began to feel perfectly satisfied.

“But, after noon, there came three boys, blooming with virtues, driven by the guardians-of-the-publick-safety, and, when they passed the statue, they put out horns at it; they even shot out the middle finger of an open hand in ultimate contempt; but they did not kiss their fingers, and they made no genuflection.

“Nabuchadonosor Re went mad with rage, desiring to do these boys the worst of mischief, because they hurt his pride. Therefore, he threatened them with the fire of unlucky wood; but they only laughed at him, and said his order was a stupid one which they would never obey. Genuflect to Il Santissimo, yes; also, to His

About Doing Little, Lavishly

Cross on Feria Sexta in Parasceve; also, to our Lord the Pope, and to a bishop throned, because these are His ambassadors. But, genuflect to just a common king,—who asked? No, no! Not all boys are fools! Not all, Vittorio, not all!

“Nabuchadonosor Re put both his thumbs down hard; and carnefices came, who seized these three brave boys, and tied their arms behind their backs, and their hats upon their heads, and wound tight cords over their shirts and brakai from their shoulders to their ankles, so that they lay like babies swaddled on their boards. Also, Nabuchadonosor Re directing them, other carnefices heaped up logs and fag-gots of trees which bear no fruit, high as the window of the wicked king, adding barrels of pitch, and barrels of oil, to make a memorable bonfire. They lent it light from torches; and, when the red flames roared, three pairs of carnefices took each pair a boy by his shoulders and his heels, swung him to and fro with all their might, and sent him flying into the heart of the fire. And, so fierce was the heat, so uncontrollable the blaze, that, in the very act, furious flames licked up those carnefices, and spewed them out as ashes. And Nabuchadonosor Re looked on from the window of his palace.

“Other personages, also, looked on from another palace.

“High above the stars, San Gabriele Arc-

About Doing Little, Lavishly

angiolo was sitting in a loggia on the wall of gold, amusing himself with Sant' Iurcamiele Arcangiolo, the Prince of Hail. These two sons of oil, whose station is near the Lord of the whole earth, were telling holy tales, like this one; when there came a whiff which made archangelick nostrils quiver, and voices still.

“ ‘Does your highness smell fire?’ Sant' Iurcamiele Arcangiolo inquired.

“The other answered that he did smell fire. ‘I suspect some careless divel has left open the door of the Brown Kingdom,’ he said.

“But Sant' Iurcamiele Arcangiolo was peering out of the loggia. ‘No,’ he shouted, ‘it is those people in the world who disturb us with their mischief. See!’ He pointed down to the palace of Nabuchadonosor Re.

“The two archangels looked, and they saw the carnefices light the fire, and the brave boys, bound and helpless, lying near. At the same instant, the Signor Iddio Onnisciente deigned to give illumination, and made these princes to understand everything that they saw. And the Prince of Hail said, ‘I can't stand this! Those boys must not be burned!’ His highness, no doubt, remembered the proverb which says, *Man is dearer to the gods than to himself*. Sant' Uriele Arcangiolo came flying with the Book, in which he shewed that the death of these three brave boys was not yet due. Sant' Azraele Arcangiolo came flying also, saying that he had

About Doing Little, Lavishly

received no Order to take away the breath of their breasts.

“‘This is my affair,’ Sant’ Iurcamiele Arcangiolo said. ‘I shall go and be a storm, blasting that fire with my hail, that I may make the wicked king look silly.’

“‘No,’ San Gabriele Arcangiolo shouted, for he had an idea. ‘Not you, but I, will go.’

“Sant’ Iurcamiele Arcangiolo stared at his brother in amazement. ‘But your highness is the Prince of Fire,’ he said, ‘and this is a matter of extinguishing a fire, not of lighting one.’

“‘Just so,’ San Gabriele Arcangiolo assented. ‘Everyone knows that water puts out fire, and that the Prince of Hail can beat a bonfire black till not a spark remains alive. But let me go, who am the Prince of Fire, to cool those flames of earth with the intenser whiteness of the Fire of God, and so astonish those little hop-o’-my-thumbs down there with a two-fold miracle, all ad maiorem Dei gloriam.’

“And the great archangel dived, swifter than swiftest heron grounds, dived right into the heart of the fire, at that same instant when the carnesfices hurled aloft the three brave boys.

“The fire of earth cooled at the presence of the Prince of Fire; and, when the three brave boys, invoking the Lord Abele, fell down therein, being bound, helpless, and ready to die, San

About Doing Little, Lavishly

Gabriele Arcangiolo put the Fire of God into their hearts, and lifted them, and showed them how that they need have no fear, for the flames of earth could have no power to touch them, so long as, in their hearts, they cherished the Fire of God; and, to give them cheer, he said, '*Trium puerorum cantemus hymnum quem cantabant sancti in camino ignis benedicentes Dominum.*' And, erect among the flames, as in a garden of tiger-lilies with canopies of yellow jasmine, and taught by the archangel, Anania, Azaria and Misael, chaunted '*Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino, down to et laudabilis et gloriosus et superex. altatus in sæcula,*' resembling young priests who chaunt honey-voiced hymns in thanksgiving after sacrifice.

“That is the history of San Gabriele Arcangiolo, Prince of Fire. He does little. Any archangel can put out a fire. It is a simple thing for those personages. Sant' Iurcamiele Arcangiolo, Prince of Hail, could have saved those three brave boys quite easily. But San Gabriele Arcangiolo must needs put himself to the inconvenience of doing a little thing lavishly, of doing what was unnecessarily suitable. And,—mark me well, Vittorio,—all the same, our Don Friderico has done what was unnecessarily suitable in the matter of a little procession, and in the matter of our presents; and he has done this little as lavishly as San Gabriele Arcangiolo, appearing in his proper person, would have done. All of

About Doing Little, Lavishly

which I told thee, before conquering thee in the the garden.”

As for me, I found the ingenious subtilty of the compliment to be so unnecessarily suitable, that, having sent the boys to bed, I wrote it down.

About Doubles in General: and

XIIIJ

ABOUT DOUBLES IN GENERAL: AND SANVE- NANZIO AND SANTAGAPITO, IN PARTICULAR

AT dawn, we left Manfredonia. (Manfredonia is not the walled-city mentioned in the preceding tale. That was in another province.) I prefer to do my summer travelling before the sun is hot. The boys wore garlands of woodruff and roses, in honour of San Barnabo. The Normans have left their mark upon this region. But that which the Greeks of earlier ages made, is ineradicable. At every turn it confronts you. The violet fragrance of it scents the very air. As we meandered through olive groves, with the sea on our right, Toto pondered.

Presently he proclaimed, "Yes, sir: it is quite plain that the Padre Eterno keeps a set of moulds in which He shapes our figures."

"Make that good," I said.

"Well, sir: you were speaking to that garzoncino of the fishermen on the shore, last night. You have seen him well? Then, sir, was he not the living image of our little Ilario? Had he not the same slight shape, the same dead pale skin


Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

with straight brown hair, the same thin red lips, the same long green eyes of a little cat, the same sad, sweet regard, the same plaintive minor voice of flute? Had he not the same thin delicacy of build, thighs flat on the inside as of one who rides well, wrists and ankles which I could break across my knee? Have you not seen how smooth and swift his movement was? Is he not the very same as our Ilario in everything, except the something, of I know not what, that makes him not Ilario, but the garzoncino of the fishermen? Yes. Yet he is not the brother of Ilario. Ilario's brothers are not like him, being ruddy and robust, as you know. Nor is he the cousin of Ilario; nor even of his blood at all: but born and bred in this province, where we have never been until four days ago. Yet you will witness that the Padre Eterno has used for him the same mould as that which He used for making Ilario. And I call him a Cat-boy, as I call Ilario a Cat-boy. Mi-au!

“Also, in these strange places through which it is your will to go, I have seen other people who seem to me to be like some other people whom I have seen in other places; but where I cannot say, because I do not know. That is why I assert that we are all made in moulds. I do not speak of our souls; for each one is a special work, and no two are alike: but without doubt the Padre Eterno makes our bodies in sets, to save unnecessary trouble and expense; and He scatters us

About Doubles in General: and

over all the world, so that, when the ultimate day of judging comes, it will be an easy job for San Michele Arcangiolo to sort us, and to rearrange us.

“Oh, yes. I know all about twins. Beatrice,  requiescat in pace, gave them to me. But this is not a matter of twins. It is a matter of persons who have never met before, belonging to several races, living always many many miles apart; and, yet, as like in their shapes as two white roses on a bush.

“And there is something else. You have seen the fabricator of figures in gesso, at work, pouring the stuff like cream into the mould, leaving it till it becomes hard enough to stand alone, and drawing out the figure, white and beautiful as the gods in the studio at Corvicastra. Well, then, la sua eccellenza will know the first figure to be the best, because the mould is new and clean. The figures which come out of that mould after the first, are not so true; and they continue to come out false and falsier, because the mould is worn with use, and clogged. The moulds of the Padre Eterno are similar. The first shape which He makes is a masterpiece, altogether the finest of its species; as Ilario is, whom you have chosen for the faultless correctness of his singular sad delicacy; or my brother Guido, chionoblepharos. The second is like the first, for it came out of the same mould; though it is not so fine, because the mould is new no longer; and that is the fisher-

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

boy. And there will be others still less fine, but in another region which I have not seen: all the same I know them to be somewhere; for the Padre Eterno is not a wasteful hog like Otone, who threw away the glasses of photography which you had spoiled, instead of saving them for a cover to a melon-patch in time of frost.

“And so we are all made in moulds, in sets; and there are many histories of the most diverting character, in which are described the sentiments, and the adventures, and the deeds of persons who, by chance, have been thrown into the company of their Doubles; that is to say, of persons whom the Padre Eterno has shaped in the same mould.

“Now there was the case of the two martyrs.

“I told you, last summer, that there were many millions of boys in paradise, when I spoke of Sansebastiano and of Sampancrazio and of Sanluigi the Jesuit. Well: and now I shall tell you of two other boys, martyrs both.

“The first one was called Sanvenanzio. He endured dreadful sufferings, down here in the world; almost as dreadful as the sufferings of the patron of Vittorio the Greek, of whom I will speak another time. But Sanvenanzio was much admired in paradise, for his courage, and for the obstinate dauntlessness which made him insist upon offering his body to the pagans, allowing them to mangle it for days and weeks, that Domeniddio might have the greater glory.

About Doubles in General: and

Also, he made a good impression on the gods by a certain haughty mien with which he walked, or played in the gardens, or did his duties, plainly showing him to be of buona gente, and well-brought-up. Also, he was clever, smart, fearless, good-tempered, blithe as a bird, — altogether, a very nice boy, well-thought-of by everyone; for which I should like him to be my friend. He was not a Roman of Rome, worse luck, his family being a respectable one of Camerino. Nevertheless he had a rich dark skin of the colour of golden wine, the same as the healthy Ercole of la sua eccellenza. With this, he had eyes resembling brown velvet, with brows of the same, straight and continuous, and a beautiful small round head covered with little rings and curls, — oh, but lighter than his skin, — of the yellow-silver colour of a pale and shining straw, like that of the Lord Adamo on the arras at Deira. This looked very noble and singular when he wore his halo, which was red as blood, because he was a martyr; and it gave him such a grand and brilliant aspect, that all the gods considered him to be simpaticissimo.

“Of course, he never lacked companions; for he was that kind of boy which everyone finds to be adorable, and is pleased to see. He spent most of his play-time with Santafilomena and Santagiulia, the one a Roman, the other an Hebrew, because they were martyrs as he was: and he preferred little girls who have dark hair

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

and white skins, which is only right and natural, seeing that he had light hair and a dark skin. Always choose, for your female friend, your opposite in colour, if you are wise, sir. Well, and after he had amused himself in paradise for three and twenty years, or thereabouts, suddenly, something happened.

“ Sanvenanzio had been passing a happy afternoon in the apple-orchard, with his two friends Santaflomena and Santagiulia. While the sun was hot, for it was August summer, they sat in the shade, eating apples and telling holy tales like this one; and then Sanvenanzio stretched his full length on a bed of southernwood, and took a siesta. While he slept the girls made chains of blue-bells, till the Ave Maria rang. Then, the three knelt down to say their prayer, for it was out of Easter-tide; and Santaflomena and Santagiulia wreathed their flowers round the glowing limbs of Sanvenanzio, and put a garland of blue-bells on his yellow-silver hair, and bracelets of blue-bells on his arms, and a necklace of blue-bells round his throat; and they laughed and sang because they were so happy, being young, and gods in paradise. Presently they took to running races over the soft greensward beneath the apple-blossoms; and Santaflomena and Santagiulia were left behind, because girls always glue their knees together when they try to run; but Sanvenanzio ran like a boy, — that is to say, striding with the full length of the leg, — and he went

About Doubles in General: and

out of sight like a swallow, and hid behind a tree which was within a stone's throw of the Gate, waiting there until the girls came up, all out of breath, and laughing when they found him.

“ While these things were being done in paradise, another boy was undergoing martyrdom down there in the world; and he was called Santagapito. As soon as he had finished dying, his angel brought him to paradise; and Sampietro opened the Gate, while the quire struck up the hymn, *Invicte Martyr, Unicum Patris secutus Filium: Victis triumphans hostibus, Victor fruens cœlestibus*. When the new god came through the archway, all the huge angels bowed profoundly, and Santaflomena and Santagiulia went to kiss his hands, and to give him a good-day; while his angel-guardian brought his halo, red as blood, from the Duomo, with a diadem of laurel, and a branch of xanthine palm entwined with lilies which Madonnina keeps for martyrs who are also maids.

“ Sanvenanzio stood still, stiff, rigid as a statue carved in corinthian bronze, staring at Santagapito. He shook himself, breaking the chains of blue-bells, strewing them on the grass. He rubbed his eyes, and stared again, and caught his breath. Then he stepped up to Sampietro, and plucked Him by the orfrey of His cope, saying that he did not feel quite well.

“ ‘ Um-m-m-m-m! Fever?’ Sampietro said.

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

He drew off His glove with the jewels on the back, and stroked the skin of Sanvenanzio.

“‘No. Not fever,’ La Sua Santita was pleased to say. ‘Tell Us what ails you, caruccio?’

“Sanvenanzio answered that something was the matter with his eyes, and his head was giddy. Sampietro stooped, opening the stripling’s eyelids with thumb and index finger, and looking into the pure clear depth within. There was no disorder to be seen, and He began to doubt of Sanvenanzio, thinking that, perhaps, this might be some jape on the youngster’s part. You never know where you have a boy, sir, as you yourself have said more than seven and thirty times.

“‘Look here, Sampietro,’ Sanvenanzio said. ‘I know you think that I am playing a trick upon you. But, by the holy plane-tree, Santo Padre, you are mistaken this time. The fact is, I can see strange things here, which I take to be delusions of the dæmon; and I do not like them.’

“Sampietro asked what kind of things: worms, or rats, or bats, or toads?

Sanvenanzio pointed to the group on the greensward by the gate. ‘Look there,’ he said.

“‘Well? What is there to startle you in that?’ Sampietro asked.

“‘But, is there something there?’

“‘Bless the boy! Of course there is!’

“‘Sampietro, — am I Sanvenanzio, or not?’

“‘Certainly you are Sanvenanzio.’

About Doubles in General: and

“ Sanvenanzio flew into a violent rage. ‘ Then, Sampietro, by the zone of Kuthereia, *what is that?* ’ he stormed.

“ At this noise, the angel-legions dressed by the right, leaving Santagapito in the foreground. The boys glared each at other. A pretty situation! Sanvenanzio furiously glowered at Santagapito. Santagapito furiously glowered at Sanvenanzio. They resembled two muscular young cats, about to spring. Other gods came crowding round, looking from one lad to the other, and from the other to the one, in utter and complete amazement.

“ ‘ This is awe-full! ’ Sampietro said. He took off His tiara, and gave it to an acolyth, while He wiped the sweat from His brow, using His gremial, instead of the fanon provided for such purposes. His Holiness went on to say, ‘ Here are two boys, as like as two little brown almonds. Sanvenanzio, We have reason to know, seeing that We admitted him three and twenty years ago. And Santagapito is a new god who has just arrived. Every feature of these two, from heel to crown, is so beautiful, that they appear to have no face in particular by which We might distinguish. And, which is Sanvenanzio, or which Santagapito, We are unable to declare—in fact, this is a case of the Pope ill-informed; and unless the Pope be speedily well-informed, you lazy good-for-nothing loafers will get no judgment *ex cathedra* to-day. Now

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

then!’ And Sampietro gave way to one of his tempers.

“Sancassiano came out of the crowd, remarking that he had had some experience of dealing with boys, having kept school down there in the world.

“‘Ah, yes,’ Sampietro said. ‘An excellent idea, Our good Sancassiano! Pray give Us the benefit of your experience. Come and sit on this stool near Our throne; and do try to get to the bottom of this monkey-trick.’

Sancassiano took a seat at the feet of La Sua Santità; and their angel-guardians led the pair of striplings forward, while all the gods, and many million angels stood round in a semi-circle. Sanvenanzio and Santagapito hissed one at other through clenched teeth. Only their angel-guardians stopped them from gripping throats.

“‘Now, you boys, behave yourselves, and look at me,’ Sancassiano said. And they looked at him.

“‘Let all the other gods turn away their eyes,’ Sancassiano continued. And the other gods turned away their eyes.

“Then Sancassiano made signs to Venanziello, — who is the angel-guardian of Sanvenanzio, and resembles him in appearance, except that his arms are wings and that he has a hundred cubits of height, — that he should cover his lad completely with his feathers. Venanziello obeyed. Sanvenanzio was lifted high in the arms

About Doubles in General: and

of his angel-guardian, and shrouded in white plumes.

“Sancassiano gave leave; and the other gods turned round and looked again. On one side, they saw an angel who towered above their heads, holding a little something-hidden in his great wings. On the other side, they saw another angel who confined a furious stripling between his feet.

“Then Sancassiano cried, ‘O divj e dive di Dio, what do you call this boy?’

“And they answered, ‘Sanvenanzio.’

“‘Hide your eyes again,’ Sancassiano said. And they hid their eyes.

“Then Sancassiano made signs to Venanziello that he should change places with Agapitello, — who is the angel-guardian of Santagapito, and resembles him in appearance, except that his arms are wings and that he has a hundred cubits of height, — and that he should put his lad down between his feet; also that Agapitello should take up Santagapito in his arms, and bury him in his plumage.

“Then Sancassiano cried a second time, ‘O divj e dive di Dio, what do you call this boy?’

“And they answered, ‘Sanvenanzio.’

“‘Yah, fools!’ Sancassiano said.

“Agapitello put Santagapito between his feet, alongside of Sanvenanzio, who was confined between the feet of Venanziello; and the lads menaced each the other as before; and the crowd

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

looked on this side and on that, resembling so many imbeciles.

“ ‘Dear Sancassiano, this is terrible,’ Sampietro said, having viewed the whole performance.

“ ‘Leave me alone, if You please, Sampietro,’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘But look here,’ Sampietro persisted, ‘they both are gods! That is certain; otherwise they would be in another place. One is Sanvenanzio, who is an old friend of Ours. The other is Santagapito, all brand-new. But which is which? That is the question.’

“ ‘Am I managing this business, or is La Sua Santita?’ Sancassiano demanded.

“ ‘Oh, you, dear Sancassiano, by all means,’ Sampietro replied.

“ ‘Then be so kind as to allow me to manage it in my own way,’ Sancassiano said. And he ordered Venanziello and Agapitello each to measure his own boy; while he wrote down the measurements on the back of an old plenary indulgence which was lying near.

“ ‘Height?’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘Sixty-six top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“ ‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

“ ‘Finger-tip to finger-tip?’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘Sixty-six top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“ ‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

About Doubles in General: and

“‘Chin to top of head?’ Sancassiano said.

“‘Eight and a half top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

“‘Round chest?’ Sancassiano said.

“‘Thirty-seven top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

“‘Inner length of leg?’ Sancassiano said.

“‘Thirty-four and a half top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

“‘Round knee?’ Sancassiano said.

“‘Eleven and a half top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

“‘Round calf?’ Sancassiano said.

“‘Twelve and a half top-joints-of-thumb,’ Venanziello said.

“‘Ditto,’ Agapitello said.

“‘This is shocking!’ Sampietro murmured.

“‘Let us have no more hawky-pawky! Now, you boy there, what do you call yourself?’ Sancassiano said, pointing with his style to Sanvenanzio.

“‘Sanvenanzio,’ Sanvenanzio answered.

“‘And you?’ Sancassiano said to the other.

“‘Santagapito,’ Santagapito answered.

“‘Age?’ Sancassiano said.

“‘Fifteen,’ Sanvenanzio answered. Venanziello nodded forward.

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

“ ‘Fifteen,’ Santagapito answered. Agapitello nodded forward.

“ ‘From what place?’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘Da Camerino,’ Sanvenanzio answered. Venanziello assented.

“ ‘Da Praeneste,’ Santagapito answered. Agapitello assented.

“ ‘Where are your clothes?’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘I was stripped naked for my martyrdom,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘Also I,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘Recite the Acts of your Passion?’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘I shouted at the dirty pagans that I was a Christian,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘Also I,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘Of course you did!’ Sampietro said. The boys bowed to La Sua Santita.

“ ‘The first day, they scourged me with wild-rose-runners; at night, in the prison, my angel healed my wounds,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘Also me; and they left me in my dungeon for four days without food,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘They burned my breast with torches,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘And mine with embers; also, they scourged me again,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘At night, we healed them,’ Venanziello and Agapitello said.

“ ‘The next day, they hanged me by the feet,

About Doubles in General : and

head downward, over a smoky fire to choke me,' Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘ Also me,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘ Oh, the rascals ! ’ Sampietro muttered.

“ ‘ We held them in our arms, and fanned the smoke away,’ Venanziello and Agapitello said.

“ ‘ The next day, they poured boiling water on my belly,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘ At night, I healed his scalds,’ Agapitello said.

“ ‘ The next day, they smashed my face with iron bars, and broke my jaws, and all my teeth,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘ Also mine,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘ At night, we mended them,’ Venanziello and Agapitello said.

“ ‘ The next day, they tried to drown me in the cloaca,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘ I held his head above the filth, and gave him lavender to smell ; afterward I cleaned him,’ Venanziello said.

“ ‘ The next day, they put me in a cage with three black lions,’ Santagapito said.

“ ‘ Also me,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘ We made the lions behave like kittens,’ Venanziello and Agapitello said.

“ ‘ The next day, they tied my ankles to a horse’s tail, and dragged me through thickets where brambles and thistles grew,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘ At night I cured his scratches,’ Venanziello said.

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

“ ‘The next day, they dashed me over a precipice,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘I caught him,’ Venanziello said.

“ ‘The next day, they drew me, like a harrow, over rocks and stones,’ Sanvenanzio said.

“ ‘At night I healed the bleeding gashes of his flesh,’ Venanziello said.

“ ‘The next day, they struck off my head with a sword; here is the scar,’ Sanvenanzio said, pointing to the white line round his throat.

“ ‘Also mine,’ Santagapito said, showing his scar.

“ ‘Here is the sword,’ Venanziello said.

“ ‘Here is the sword,’ Agapitello said.

“ ‘Bravissimo! Bravissimo!’ Sampietro shouted, waving the keys.

“ There was silence.

“ Sanvenanzio and Santagapito no longer glared with defiance. They stretched out their arms, looking each into the other’s eyes with love and admiration. Their angel-guardians saw that all bad blood was gone, and loosed them from restraint. Hand in hand, they faced Sancassiano.

“ Sancassiano sat, and gnawed his finger-nails. The gods murmured in perplexity.

“ ‘We are no wiser than before, O dear Sancassiano,’ Sampietro said.

“ ‘Pardon me, Santo Padre,’ Sancassiano answered; ‘one thing is evident. Sanvenanzio admits that the flesh of his back was torn to ribands, when the pagans dragged him over

About Doubles in General: and

brambles and sharp flints. This was not done to Santagapito; but, instead, they poured boiling water on his belly. Here, then, is a difference; and, by the different scars upon the bodies of these boys, shall we be able to decide which is Sanvenanzio and which Santagapito.'

“‘Ma che!’ Santagapito interrupted. ‘Did you not hear that my angel-guardian healed my scalded belly, and made my flesh all sound and sweet after each day of my torment? How then can I show those scars? Also, the body, which I wear in paradise, is new, and formed of the Fire of God. I left my earthly dust to lie beneath my altars in the world, where Christian men shall plead my merits, asking my intercession to obtain gifts for their bodies and their souls. You, Yourself, Sampietro, cured the sick, down there, even by the passing of Your shadow. Surely, I can follow Your example, giving greater glory to Domeniddio, by manifesting the power which La Sua Maestà has deigned to grant to me. Therefore, I cannot show You scars, save this one round my throat; and, that I wear, because it cut my path to paradise. But Sanvenanzio is also scarred, as I am, round the throat: and, if You will not take my word, nor his, it seems that You will have to seek some other way of finding which of us two is rightly called Santagapito and which Sanvenanzio.

“‘The stripling is apt, and speaks reasonably, O dear Sancassiano,’ the Santo Padre said.

Sanvenanzio and Santagapito

“ But Sancassiano appeared more worried than ever. He was completely at a loss: but, being a schoolmaster, he could not bear the notion of defeat before a pair of boys. His halo was cocked awry, and he nervously nibbled his style-tip, while the gods, standing round, shifted their feet, and discussed the situation, in that babbling undertone which crowds use when waiting for the voice of authority to decide.

“ Then there came a little chirrup from the front row, saying, ‘ If you please, santo signor professore!’ It was Santafilomena mewling like a little cat.

“ ‘ Well, little girl?’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘ If you please, santo signor professore, I know,’ Santafilomena answered.

“ ‘ And what do you know, my child?’ Sancassiano asked.

“ ‘ I know which is Sanvenanzio,’ Santafilomena said.

“ ‘ Then tell me which is Sanvenanzio,’ Sancassiano ordered.

“ She came out of the throng; and, going up to Sanvenanzio, she took him by the hand; and she said, ‘ If you please, santo signor professore, this is Sanvenanzio.’

“ ‘ Tell me how you know that, my little deary,’ Sancassiano said.

“ ‘ If you please, santo signor professore, and Santo Padre, and all you divj e dive di Dio,’ Santafilomena answered, as she made a pretty cour-

About Doubles in General

tesy to the gods, 'Santagiulia and I spent the afternoon with Sanvenanzio in the apple-orchard; and, while the lazy creature took a nap, we made chains and wreaths of blue-bells; and, when he woke, we hung them on him. There are the blue-bells on the floor: he broke them with his naughty temper, when he saw Santagapito. He is my great friend, you know; and we have played together since the day on which he came to paradise. And I know well the yellow-silver colour of his hair, for I have often rumbled it when playing with him. That other lad has hair as red as virgin gold, quite different to the colour of my friend. Stoop down, boy,' she said to Sanvenanzio.

"He lowered his head.

"Santafilomena plunged her fingers in his ruffling curls, and drew out the petals of a broken blue-bell, which she exhibited with triumph before the eyes of all.

"And the gods, having said their *Deo Gratias*, shouted with joy, 'Brava! Bravissima! Santafilomena! Sharp girl, that! Evviva! Evviva!'"

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

XV

ABOUT THE AFORESAID, AND PADRE DOTTO VAGHEGGINO, S. J.

“ I NEED not tell la sua eccellenza, that Santagapito and Sanvenanzio were firm friends from that hour. They resembled Sampancrazio and Sanebastiano, who arrived a few years later, being leal, loving, and just what brothers ought to be — but never are. Santafilomena, chionochrotine with dark hair, remained the friend of Sanvenanzio, with his pale hair and his tawny skin ; and Santagiulia, chionochrotine with dark hair, became the friend of Santagapito with his tawny skin and his hot hair like a flame : all of which is precisely right and proper, as you would expect it to be in paradise, and, oh, so superior to this blind world, where we match our colours. And I could talk all day, and all night as well, speaking of the adventures and the jokes, and the sports of these four gods ; but, now, I will recite the history of a stratagem by which they made a little Jesuit look ridiculous, curing him of the sins of avarice and vanity.

“ He was parroccchiano of Santo Pozzo in the province of Selce, and he called himself Padre

About the Aforesaid, and

Dotto Vagheggino. His superiors had put him there, because he was as clever at earning money as any seven-and-thirty Hebrew grocers; and money, by which power can be bought, is more dear to a Jesuit than anything else in the world.

“Santo Pozzo was a squalid enough village in a desolate province. All the men were sots; and all the women, lewd. But, in the church, there was a shrine of Santo Pozzo, most antick, and very precious and magnificent, where the Padre Eterno was often pleased to heal the sick, and to grant other admirable graces.

“Padre Dotto Vagheggino was not the kind of man to make himself miserable on account of sots and harlots. He had no time to attend to those; for he wished to bring multitudes and multitudes from all the world, to worship at the shrine of Santo Pozzo; knowing that pious persons, who came on a pilgrimage to ask favours from a god, do not think about their money, but give it freely to the priest who guards the shrine, hoping that a sacrifice will secure for them the grace which they desire to gain. And, for a few years, foreigners filled the squalid village; and the coffers of Padre Dotto Vagheggino brimmed, so that he became rich enough to pay the expenses of the parish; and also, every month, he sent a good bagful of gold to the Black Pope at Fiesole. It was good business that he did. But, suddenly, the pilgrimages ceased. People in other provinces left off thinking about Santo

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

Pozzo; and Padre Dotto Vagheggino earned less money than he liked. So he resolved to have made a fine new statue of Santo Pozzo of flesh-coloured marble, very rare and precious, meaning that it should attract foreigners with fat purses, into which last he thought he might contrive to slide a sticky finger. And the statue was carved in Rome, and blessed by Papa Pecci Himself: truly, it was a work of art, altogether splendid. When Padre Dotto Vagheggino measured it, he found it to be so large that by no means could it be brought into his little church. Wherefore he took the idea of building a basilica on a hill above the village, — an immense basilica, costing bags and bags of gold, — in which a new shrine of Santo Pozzo could be made, where the new statue could be placed in pomp and dignity.

“But the torrent of pilgrims had dwindled down into a little rill. And all were poor. Padre Dotto Vagheggino’s pocket was empty. No one seemed anxious to fill it. What was to be done? He sat down to make a meditation. In the first place, he considered how that Love is the most powerful thing in all the world. Not the Love which is Divine — all very beautiful and well enough in its way, but unsuitable for men of the world, of course; but the Love which is Desire — ah, yes, take care of number one, and charity begins at home. In the second place, he considered that, in this world, women are very power-

About the Aforesaid, and

ful; and that in number they are more than men. Also, that their hearts are like dried tinder. And then he smacked his knee, and considered, in the third place, that if he could give women something to love, he would win them to his side, and they would thank him for the pleasure they received, and would give him bags of gold in return. Conclusion — what could he give to women to love? And there he found a difficulty. And for many months he pondered over the conclusion of his meditation.

“He travelled through the country, preaching everywhere of Santo Pozzo; but no one took any notice of his words; and no one gave him alms for the building of his vast basilica. People seemed content to remain in their own provinces, and to worship the gods whose shrines were at their very doors.

“Now, on his travels, this scheming Jesuit noticed that, in every church where there was a picture of Sansebastiano, women, old and young, princesses and contadine, ancient hags and matrons, marriageable women and delicious little girls, flocked together like droves of geese, cackling their prayers, because the beautiful figure of Sansebastiano in his picture inflamed their hearts, sometimes to madness, sometimes to death. But, more particularly, Padre Dotto Vagheggino noticed that they gave their jewels, or their corals, or their gold and silver pins and necklaces and bracelets to buy candles for his

Padre Dotto Vaghegino, S. J.

shrine, thinking of him all day, dreaming of him all night, hoping to recommend themselves to that fair youthful god, and to have the strong embrace of his protection, and their hearts warmed by spiritual favours.


“Then Padre Dotto Vaghegino thought that he could see the way to conclude his meditation; and he bought a picture of Sansebastiano for his own church.

“The girls and women of Santo Pozzo rushed to pray before this picture, falling in love with Sansebastiano according to the custom, and going home to dream. But the females of Santo Pozzo were few in number, also poor; and no more money came to Padre Dotto Vaghegino than sufficed to buy the pasta for his table, and to keep him in the favour of his superiors. Women of other provinces did not worry the Sansebastiano of Santo Pozzo with their prayers, for they had his picture in their own parishes. The men stayed with their women, as they always will; and Padre Dotto Vaghegino saw that the time had not yet come when he might fold his hands and rest. He was quite certain that he had found the conclusion of his meditation; and he considered, day and night, in order to discover the step which led to it, till he became thin and poorly, and the hair of his head dropped off, so that it looked like a bladder of lard.

“All the time, Santagapito and Sanvenanzio had

About the Aforesaid, and

been looking over the ramparts of heaven, to watch this Jesuit; just as I, sir, would sit and watch a lizard who wriggles and writhes to climb out of a slippery-sided bottle into which it may have cast itself. It made them very sick to see a holy priest busily neglecting the souls in his parish, — souls for which he would have to render an account, whenever the Padre Eterno should deign to call upon him. And Santagapito and Sanvenanzio went and kneeled down in the Duomo, asking of La Sua Maesta leave to use their wits for teaching Padre Dotto Vagheggino a lesson, by making him a laughing stock and a thing of ridicule, all for the health of his soul.

“The Padre Eterno graciously asked what good that would do; to Whom Santagapito and Sanvenanzio answered that this Jesuit, though cursed with an itching palm and a gross self-conceit, had, also, some sense of humour, as well as a good heart to acknowledge himself wrong, when once he grasped the fact. So they desired to bring him into ridicule, and to let him see that even the wicked world despises and mocks a holy priest who grabs at gold like an Hebrew grocer. Then, they said, he would have an opportunity of laughing at his own folly, and of amending his silly sinful habits. And the Padre Eterno was pleased to say, ‘ WE GRANT THE REQUEST.’

“That night, sir, Sanvenanzio left Santagapito in the garden, playing with Sampontico and

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

Santrufone with Samrespicio, boys like himself; and he came down to Santo Pozzo in the province of Selce.

“ In the priests’ house, there was a little room with a little window which opened in the church, high in the side wall of the apsis. A person in this room, who looked down through that little window, would see the high altar below him on the right hand; and, opposite, the other side wall of the apsis blank as death. Here, the Jesuits came to say their litanies, or office, or private prayers, and Padre Dotto Vagheggino was kneeling at the little window, with his beads unsaid, worrying his dolour, and staring at the blank wall across the apsis. It was past bedtime, and the church was dark.

“ Sanvenanzio came down quietly, having made himself invisible; and he stood, floating in the air, by the blank wall in front of Padre Dotto Vagheggino: and, while that Jesuit stared into the darkness of the church, Sanvenanzio became radiant and resplendent as the stars before his eyes.

“ Padre Dotto Vagheggino had shouted frothy fervorini about miracles for many years; but never, yet, had he beheld a vision of the gods in his proper person. He said to himself that if this apparition were reality, and if other witnesses could see it, then his fortune would be made. He pinched his cheek. Oh, he was wide awake undoubtedly! His eyes did no deceiving.

About the Aforesaid, and

His supper had been a light one. Yes. This was undeniably one of the gods from paradise. He looked more earnestly through his little window. Sanvenanzio did not move; but his eyes sparkled white in his skin of wine-colour. Padre Dotto Vagheggino saw a tall straight healthy boy of fifteen years, having shining hair, and strong stark body and limbs, dark as Domeniddio made him. His left hand rested on the pommel of a sword. His right was proudly raised to wave a branch of palm entwined with lilies. He wore a laurel diadem; and, round his halo, red as blood, the Jesuit could read these golden words:

DDVVSVENANTIVSATHETACHPSTIINCLYIA

“Padre Dotto Vagheggino’s eyes were bathed in the beauty of this vision. In his throbbing brain he formed a plan. Let any one who would, possess a Sansebastiano. Here was a most uncommon and most splendid god, to whose presentment, in a picture, all the female world would bring their hearts and purses. Yes. A picture of Sanvenanzio. Yes. Where could such a thing be found? And was he a proper saint? Well, not improper — but — — The Jesuit whipped out his neglected breviary, and ran his finger down the kalendarium — ‘um — um — January — February — March — April — May — yes — the eighteenth day of May,’ he ran over to the

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

Mattins of the eighteenth day of May. 'Um — Um — Yes, surely! — Three Proper Lessons, and three Proper Hymns! Per Venere! *Venanzio da Camerino, a stripling of fifteen years, having been accused, before Antiocho, who was governor of Camerino under the Emperor Decio, of professing the Christian Faith, of his own will surrendered himself at the garrison-gate of the city: and the rest. A very great saint indeed! One of the early martyrs of whom we hear nothing nowadays! Quite respectable! A treasure! A veritable antick! Gloria Patri thrice, in honour of Sanvenanzio! Gloripatrietfilioetspirituisanctosicuteratinprincipioetnuncetsemperetinsæculasæculorumamen* gloripatrietfilioetspirituisanctosicuteratinprincipioetnuncetsemperetinsæculasæculorumamen! Oblessed Sanvenanzio, pray for me; — pray for me; and for my basilica!'

“And, on his knees, he prayed, and feasted his eyes, and prayed, and prayed, till Sanvenanzio faded with the dawn, going back to paradise.

“Padre Dotto Vagheggino needed not to use his bed. He could not rest till he had set his new scheme afoot. He roused the sagrestano, and made him prepare vestments and an altar. When he had said his mass, he breakfasted — an uovo in bianco, two olives, a flask of red wine; and, before the sun had warmed the

About the Aforesaid, and

world, he ran with the utmost speed of his legs to a painter in the village whom he had marked to have skill, superb ambition, and exalted faith. To him, Padre Dotto Vagheggino said that he required a picture surpassing any work of art, of any age or country; and he described the form, the pose, the singular bright beauty of the god which he had seen. He took the painter, with his paints and brushes, to an empty room near by the church, giving him a canvas, white and large, on which to set the masterpiece; and, there, he shut him up in secret. Many hours did Padre Dotto Vagheggino spend, speaking of his vision: and, at last, he managed to inflame the painter's mind so, that he conceived a true and splendid composition, showing the holy martyr as he is in paradise. And, when the Jesuit was gone away, the painter made innumerable drawings according to the description given, until his soul was satisfied. And the last he showed to Padre Dotto Vagheggino, who fell upon his neck and kissed him, saying, 'Hail! Maestro! You are a true artist; and you have set down that which was in my mind!'

"Having had his brushes, and his canvas, and his tinctures, blessed with holy water, the maestro took a charcoal stick; and right across the unsullied canvas he wrote this incantation *Divo Venanzio aiutatemi*. Over this he set his drawing; and, having laid a palette, he began to paint.

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

“Every night, when Padre Dotto Vagheggino told his beads, looking through the little window in the church, Sanvenanzio was envoyed from paradise by his angel-guardian, and showed himself by the blank wall, as before. But he only stayed a minute, or two minutes, now; lest Padre Dotto Vagheggino should become familiar, and presume to take a liberty; for he knew the man.

“Every day the Jesuit desired to see the painter at his work; but this maestro begged that he would wait till the picture should be in a fit condition to be seen. Padre Dotto Vagheggino fumed with impatience; but he waited: and, one day the maestro opened the door of his secret studio. There, in shadow, the picture was displayed. It presented Sanvenanzio, of the size of life, all ardent, in a blue profundity.

“Padre Dotto Vagheggino hopped about the room, making a loop with his index-finger and his thumb, peering through the same, considering the masterpiece from every point of view. Then, he cried for joy, saying, ‘Yes, dear maestro; it is fine indeed! It gives me supreme consolation! At last, at last! You have made a great success! How pleased the simple female folk will be! Hail! Maestro! Now let us set it over there, and view it in another light.’

“So they moved the picture into full sunlight; and the Jesuit continued, ‘Bravo, bravo! Here is a splendid work! How bold are the

About the Aforesaid, and

lines! How rich are the colours! Exactly as I saw him! Immense! Immense! But do you know, dear maestro, I think his hair was just a little lighter. Perhaps you will be kind enough to make that alteration!’ And then he went away about his business; and, all day long, the maestro laboured to make the hair look lighter.

“At night, Sanvenanzio showed himself as usual; and, in the morning, Padre Dotto Vaghegino thought that the breast should be made a little broader. This was done. The next day, he found the flanks to be too narrow. The maestro added width to the flanks, against his will. The next day the Jesuit required that the legs should be made fatter. This was done. The next day he wished to have them shortened. This was done. Having caught a brief glimpse of Sanvenanzio at night, in the morning he said that the spaces between the first and second toes were too large. The maestro obeyed his orders meekly, though he knew that every alteration wrecked the noble contours, dulled tinctures, flattened features, spoiled the work; and, when he was alone, he cursed the impudence and the svariamento of the Jesuit, his patron, out aloud.

“Then, the night came, when Sanvenanzio remained in paradise; and Santagapito descended to Santo Pozzo in the province of Selce, to stand where his brother had stood by the blank wall of the church, before the eyes of Padre Dotto Vaghegino looking through the little window; but,

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

though he stayed a quarter of an hour, he kept his halo dim; and the Jesuit did not notice the golden letters,

DVV SAGARTVSMARTYRÐ·INVICTVS

In the morning, when Padre Dotto Vagheggino went to see the picture in the secret studio, he said, 'Maestro mio, do you know, I am not quite satisfied with that hair: it is far too pale! What I want you to get, is a purrothrixine colour like a phlox! Do you understand?' So the painter laid a palette with fresh tints, and painted the hair anew till it resembled flames.

"For three nights, Santagapito showed himself; and then he came no more. But, every morning of a month, Padre Dotto Vagheggino demanded alteration in the picture, trusting to his memory when he saw no visions. The figure was all too robust and plethorick, bursting with the two reds, — beef and wine, — he said. It resembled a great fat, vulgar, full-blooded plough-boy. Look at that hupogastrion! Look at those broad hips! Look at those clumsy haunches — at those sturdy, stumpy legs — at those cramped toes like a clenched fist. Where could grace or spirituality be found in the grossness of such a garzonaccio? All this must be changed. He would not listen to the maestro. He knew precisely what he wanted: he intended to have it; if not from this, then, from another painter who

About the Aforesaid, and

would obey his betters! So, he excited himself, seizing brushes and paint of the blackest black, daring to work on the canvas of the maestro, defiling it with thick lines, dashes, scribbled smears, and splotches!

“Oh, the vanity of that Jesuit! All that there was to be known, he knew. The rest was nothing. He would teach everybody, everything. Would *la sua eccellenza* be pleased to have a goat capering in his studio and teaching him his art? You would kill me, who know something, if I dared.

“Then you will find this painter to be *simpatissimo*, when he cried on kind Madonna, asking mercy, demanding what he had done to deserve the anguish of seeing his good paints wasted, and his good work spoiled. But Madonna continued to be silent. She sat up there, and smiled, knowing that these torments would purify the soul of that maestro; and Sanvenanzio with Santagapito had promised her that he should not have to suffer more than enough; also, that when the Jesuit had learned his lesson, then they would give rewards to the maestro whom he crucified with his selfish and conceited tyranny. And, by night, to that maestro, they brought a little golden key having a ball of rock-crystal at its handle; that into it he might plunge his tired eyes, and refresh them with glimpses of the gods. Secretly, they placed this gold and crystal key upon his easel; and when the maestro found it, and looked upon it, in the morning, he saw

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

sights such as he had never seen before, except in dreams; and he knew that some kind god regarded him with favour, giving him a key which unlocked paradise, as a refuge for his pain. So he said to himself that he would obey that Jesuit usque ad nauseam; and, if his patron desired to have a frightful picture, a frightful picture he should have. It mattered nothing to the painter.

“For many days he toiled, with Padre Dotto Vagheggino always at his ankle, suggesting this line, ordering that shadow, insisting upon the other colour; until, in time, the picture showed a scraggy gristly sneak, so long and skinny, so lanky, and so knotty-jointed, and so muddy-coloured, that the painter sometimes wished for death to ease him from the sickness of his mind’s eyes. But then, he used the gold and crystal key.

“All the same, Padre Dotto Vagheggino swore that he saw a masterpiece, and he sent letters to the neighbouring parishes to make known that, on a certain day, a marvellous and most miraculous picture would be exposed for the veneration of the faithful, at Santo Pozzo in the province of Selce. Also, he promised to deal very generously with the painter, and to make his fame illustrious through all the world. But that maestro was a timid misanthrope. Also he loathed the work which he had been forced to do against his knowledge and against his will. Wherefore, he gave a writing to Padre Dotto

About the Aforesaid, and

Vagheggino, asking as a favour, that his name should not be named, and begging for oblivion as his sole reward. But the Jesuit romped on his own sweet way, preaching in many places, near and far, praising the painter and the work, inciting multitudes to come to Santo Pozzo, on a pilgrimage, at the festa when the picture should be shown.

“The day arrived, Padre Dotto Vagheggino placed the picture in a new shrine, all magenta velvet with festoons of paper roses, green, and blue, and violet, and orange, most Jesuitical, with paper lamps and candles burning on all sides. Women flew in flocks to Santo Pozzo, with their men following at their heels. They filled the church till you could not see the floor for their head-cloths and their hair. The men crowded in the chapels, and packed themselves round pillars. Padre Dotto Vagheggino made them sing some hymns which he himself had made: and then he drew aside the curtains which veiled the wondrous picture.

“When the men had looked, they turned and ran away to the nearest spaccio di vino, saying nothing. There was nothing to be said by men, except blasphemy. And blasphemy in a church is sacrilege as well.

“When the women looked, they shivered.

“‘É, the nasty thing!’ one said.

“‘It’s a nigger with a single leg!’ another said.

Padre Dotto Vagheggino, S. J.

“ ‘The grey angel with his sickle come to fetch me!’ an old hag screamed, and she was carried away in a fit.

“ ‘What is it?’ a little girl whimpered.

“ ‘Oumf! It makes me heave! I shall give Cecco a monster if I look at it!’ a fat mother said.

“ They shivered again, and stampeded out of the church. Women, who had come from distant places, went to take refreshments at the osteria. The women of Santo Pozzo slapped their babies, and, sitting in the shade, they gabbled of necklaces and hair-pins.

“ Padre Dotto Vagheggino was left alone, spying through his peep-hole into an empty church.

“ His picture was a horror, and his scheme had failed.

“ Santagapito and Sanvenanzio were watching him from paradise, and they let him have a good hour of miserable disappointment. Then Sanvenanzio said, ‘Tino, let us go and teach this Jesuit his lesson.’ They made themselves invisible and, having mounted their angel-guardians, they descended silently into the empty church, where they floated in the air above the hideous picture; and there they flamed out, radiant and resplendent as the stars, making the hundred tapers flicker and burn blue.

“ And Padre Dotto Vagheggino, kneeling at his little window, saw a vision of such immortal splen-

About the Aforesaid, and

dour that wish and appetite in it were hushed to rest; a vision of two tall straight healthy boys of fifteen years, having strong stark bodies and limbs of dark wine-colour as Domeniddio made them. Each left hand rested on the pommel of a sword. Each right was proudly raised to wave a branch of palm entwined with lilies. The head of one was covered with little curls, oh! but lighter than his skin, and of the yellow-silver colour of a pale and shining straw. The head of the other was covered with little curls, also lighter than his skin, and tinted like the red of virgin gold. The two wore diadems of laurel, and, round the halo of the first, as red as blood, that Jesuit saw the golden words,

DVVSVENANTIVSAHEIACHOSTIINCXIA

and round the halo of the second, red as blood, the golden words,

DVVSAGARTVSMARTYRDI'NVICTVS

“From the darkness of the stern, young faces, holy eyes shot white-hot silver scorn at Padre Dotto Vagheggino, holding him transfixed.

“Then Sanvenanzio slowly stretched out his splendid arm, and pointed at the Jesuit’s stony heart with the palm branch twined with lilies.

“Santagapito also, and he said, ‘Vain, sinful priest, attend! What of the souls for which you must account?’

Padre Dotto Vaghegino, S. J.

“Sanvenanzio answered him, as though they chaunted anthems, ‘All the men are sots, and all the women lewd!’

“Santagapito said, ‘Eaten up by avarice and self-conceit, you crave for admiration, for power, and for gold.’

“Sanvenanzio responded, ‘You have left your Master’s flock a prey for the foul fiend, so that you might be free to fish for gold, for power, for admiration!’

“Padre Dotto Vaghegino would stutter some excuse.

“Santagapito said, ‘Silence, base priest, base juggler! You, higher than angels, yet must listen humbly to the voices of the gods. Think of your miserable estate. You laughing-stock! You thing for ridicule!’

“Sanvenanzio responded, ‘You knew me not at my first apparition. You had to seek my history in your book of offices!’

“Santagapito said, ‘As for me, you never even heard of me, but took me for my brother Sanvenanzio!’

“Sanvenanzio responded, ‘Yet, though you do not know your own, you dare to teach another man his trade!’

“Santagapito said, ‘Busybody and meddler that you are, parcel of conceit and money-grabber, learn to remove the rocks that blind your own eyes before you look for specks in the eyes of other men!’

Padre Dotto Vaheggino, S. J.

“Sanvenanzio responded, ‘Learn also, that neglect of your priestly duties will earn for you shame and contumely in the world, and eternal damnation in the world to come. Repent of your past. Seek the kingdom of Domeniddio and His Greater Glory, first ; and all things that your heart desires will be given to you, according to the Evangel.’

“Then the heavenly voices ceased, and the two young gods faded from the world, going back with their angels into paradise.

“Padre Dotto Vagheggino came down from his little window, and he lay prostrate before Il Santissimo in the tabernacle for many hours, saying in a broken whisper, very humbly, *Kurie eleeson, Christe eleeson, Kurie eleeson*, and the Seven Penitential Psalms, with Litanies.

“And he learned the lesson taught by those severe and loving gods so well, that Santo Pozzo has its great basilica on the hill, wherein the statue of flesh-coloured marble is worshipped every day by a thousand grateful tongues ; for Padre Dotto Vagheggino made of Santo Pozzo a holy place, where no man is a sot, no woman lewd.”

The Key and Purgatory

XVJ

ABOUT THESE TALES, THE KEY AND PURGATORY

LYING on his back, on the wooded slopes of Monte Saraceno, Toto lavished the long rose-brown sinuosities of youth: the right leg here, stretched out in a straight line with his body; the left, there, flexed at the knee, leaning away in strenuous abandonment. His arms framed the density of his hair; his head and throat fell back and upward to the sky.

In a low-slung hammock, I was gazing, through the dark green foliage of a cedar, into the fathomless profundity of blue. The mid-summer air was soft, here in the cool shade, and breathed a scent of spikenard.

“Well, sir, Frat’ Innocente-of the-Nine-Quires has told me many tales. I was a little child then, like Guido. That friar was my friend; and he wished me well. Therefore, he taught me to watch the world with diligent eyes, but especially the people who are on it. That is why I am able to say that such a thing is so, because — or that such a thing will be so, because — He said that I should learn wisdom by observing people without their skins. Also, he said that,


About These Tales,

at times, I must go away in loneliness, and think, and listen to the wind, or to the sea, or to the voices of the trees and of the flowers, or to the whispers of the earth. This I have done, and I do: therefore I know many things which no man has told to me. Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires had visions of the gods, also conversations with the same, face to face. Everybody knows it to be so; for truly, sir, he is a holy man: and he told me of these, secretly. If he had not told me, there would have been few histories for la sua eccellenza, and those not of the most fine. But he did tell me; and I have learned his veritable words: some, I do not understand fully; but they are beautiful, and they are his. People say he is improvisatore, and most illustrious. Improvisatore, indeed! They have not seen the personages of whom he speaks; and they do not understand that he speaks only of personages whom, having seen, he knows. You have called me improvisatore, also, sir: and you are wrong. All that I tell you is not improvisation. It is simply the histories which I have from Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires, given in his proper words; or, in my own words, descriptions of what I know, having seen, having heard. There is nothing more. I am not Domeniddio, Who can create things from nothing. I must have grapes and clean feet, before I can make wine. Without them I make no wine. The things of which I

the Key and Purgatory

speak are there ; and, when I look, I see them : and, — being your own improvisatore, O dear Don Friderico, — I tell you what I know, after seeing.

“ Dreams? O, yes, — but, dreams. And that is Our Lady of Dreams. You have seen her, in her picture in the chapel at Deira. She sends a dream-angel to put wisdom into me, and to show me things by night. Yes, often. But not when I am wicked. No. Therefore I worship her. *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et Benedictus Fructus ventris tui Jhesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc, et in hora mortis nostræ: amen.*

“ Where to find? In various places, sir. Per esempio, when you do not want me — perhaps you will be painting that deaureate Desiderio for Divin Amore, — perhaps you will be sleeping, — perhaps you will be at home reading to la signora duchessa — oh, sir, — pardon, — oh, what have I said, — oh, dear Don Friderico, pardon —  requiescat in pace — —

“ Well, sir, when you do not want me, then I slip into whatever water may be near ; — it must be deep, sir, and still ; a sea, sir, or the lake ; and I dive headlong down deep, making neither noise nor splash, opening my eyes wide, — but wide. Having gone to the depth of my spring, I stretch ; I become all stiff ; and, very slowly, I float up to

About These Tales,

take breath. But, while I am down there, my eyes pierce the shadows of the depths, and I see; there are voices, and I hear them sing. I drink secrets with my eyes and ears. My body does not know, does not feel: it is a log, straight and stiff, feet and hands stretched far and wide. Then I breathe strongly in the sun, hanging still in the water. I spring over, and down, many times, until I tire of diving. By day, sir, it is a cool green world under the water; by night a black-blue world with silver in it. Afterward, I gain the bank, and I spread myself in the sun like one crucified, until my face is dry; and I stare into the sky, or the sun, or the moon, or a star which I shall choose. It is a yellow world then, sir, or a red, or pearl-coloured, or a blue. And, if the wind sings, I lend my ears. Then I nail myself face downward, stretching hands and feet far and wide; and I breathe the breath of the earth. All the time, I keep my eyelids open to the full, and fixed, and stedfast; till I see new things, as well as things that I have seen before. And so I learn. But this is only the beginning: for the things are always hazy, and the voices faint. Still, I have caught wisdom with my eyes and ears; and, after, I make it clear, select that which is worth keeping, and store it in my mind. When I have put on my cap, and my sandals, and my thulakoi, and my shirt, then I lie down under some tree, to think.

“Verses? Oh, yes; it is all music that I hear.

the Key and Purgatory

They sing, these personages of the water — of the wind.

“ Like plain-song? No, but something like.

“ Then like what? Ah, sir, I do not know what you want me to say.—Well, then, like angels, very grave and solemn; or like sad druids or naiads.

“ Nonsense?

“ Listen, sir! You will take a book, and read, as fast as you can turn the pages. I must spell each letter slowly, till I hear it, before I know it. You dip cut feathers in the ink, and your hand writes of itself, oh, but pages in an hour! And tiny, — tiny! I can write *Teodoro* and *Toto*; and what more, when the feather sticks, and ink comes down like puddles on the paper. You paint the gods on planks and canvas, as they are in paradise. You pinch the ball of a box: you pour venom from blue bottles over glass in the dark; and you make little me come there, leaping, or wrestling with that beast Otone, or lying at my ease taking my siesta, just as I live. I cannot do the deeds of *la sua eccellenza*: but I do not call the said deeds nonsense because I cannot do them. There they are. I know they are, because I have eyes which see them. Why should I call them nonsense, then? Also, I have some wisdom of my own. I tell you that I won it from Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires, or from angels, or from water, or from wind, or trees, or sea, or sky. You know it, because I tell it to

About These Tales,

you, just as these personages have put it in my mind. Oh, yes, people call it nonsense; but they are people,—quite respectable; but they do not know things. And *la sua eccellenza* is of another species.

“Yes, well; the key of gold and crystal,—that is what I said about the painter. The gods amused him with a key of gold and crystal. And—? Well, I am telling you about it now.

“After I have caught the seeds of wisdom with my eyes and ears, I must fix my eyes wide open, and lie still, and think. Then, wisdom blossoms; and I see and hear, clearly and distinctly, those things which, at first, were hazy, faint, or shapeless. But, I must be glaring at a clear distinct thing, all the time. Only that way, I can plainly see or hear: and, what I plainly see or hear, that I say. I called it a key, but the gold part is not important. It was beautiful, therefore I said it. But it was the bright clear crystal which had significance: for, when the painter looked stedfastly into its shining depths, he could see the gods as they live; and have much joy; just as I have joy when I look into that large crystal ball which stands upon your writing table at home. So, the thing became a key by which the painter, tormented by that Jesuit, might unlock the gate of another world, and peep in there at his will; and, peeping, forget his pain.

“No, I cannot always use that crystal ball,

the Key and Purgatory

because I dare not move it from your writing table. But I can see what I want to see in other things; not quite so well as in the crystal ball, but well enough: and these I use when I am in strange places, such as this. These things must have depth and brightness. Either will do for me; but depth is better. Eyes are very good; and the flavian eyes of Desiderio suit me better than all other eyes, better even than the pure eyes of that dove, my brother Guido. That is why I make the creature ride astride my knees, when I recite histories in these forests. I wrap him in my arms, and hold him still, and I look into his eyes. What I see there, is told by my lips. O, eyes of a glorified cat! O lovely eyes! Eyes clear as the golden wine of Nido di Corvo!

“Beatrice? Well.—Formerly.—Not now.—Sir, my throat aches when I think.—Excuse me.—✠ Requiescat in pace.

“Then there is water. If I look at a dew-drop, or a rain-drop on a flower, or into still water, or into ink in my palm, then I can see those things. Or a point of brightness will make my wisdom blossom; a light on metal, or on a pebble, or on glass,—I have seen things on the spectacles of *la sua eccellenza*,—or a leaf, if that it be a bright spot in shade. I am looking at a little speck of blue through this dark cedar, now. That is why I can speak.

“Not believe me?

“But you shall believe me! I will die, here,

About These Tales,

before your eyes. Then you will believe. I will die, now; and you shall see and hear.

“No. Not that. Am I a fool? But give me those eyes of Desiderio near mine,—he is asleep, there, behind you,—and I will let you hear me die. Yes, sir, do now! Ah, do! Dangerous? Not at all. Nothing is dangerous. Are there no gods, sir? And I will not venture near the Brown Kingdom. Only to purgatory, and back. You can call me when you choose. It will be easy, sir; and most diverting for you. Also, you will believe. Yes, sir! Say that I may!”

Desiderio was dragged out of a siesta, and made to lie on his back, with his hands under his neck, his head down, his throat raised. Toto lay, breast downward, in the same line, but behind Desiderio's head, his elbows planted firmly, his chin in his palms and his eyes directly above the eyes of my xanthomeirakion. There was a space of about four top-joints of thumb between them. They were close beside my hammock, and I lowered myself till I was exactly on their level. The brown eyes of Toto were opened to their full extent, the brows a trifle contracted, all quite rigid, but with no suspicion of constraint. Just resolute alert expectancy. No more. Desiderio had a little lazy smile playing on his half-open rosy lips. He was evidently no novice at this game, of which I had never known. He appeared to be

the Key and Purgatory

aware of drowsy pleasures in store. As time fled, the pupils of his strange eyes dilated, becoming very large and black and velvety; and the yellow irides shimmered like threads of amber, edging stainless white. For some minutes there was perfect motionless stillness. Then Toto began to speak, very gravely, very slowly, with pauses, varying in duration, between his phrases, and using a monotone of minor shade.

“O most courteous angel, — my guardian, — my leader, — my governour, — my guide, — and my defence, — my most wise counsellor, — and my most faithful friend, — teach me, — rule me, — guard me, — guide me, — along the right road — to the place — where — I would go.

“I live. Take me through the Gate of Death.

“Take me away.

“I wait.

“O, take me in your arms, and carry me away.

“I want — to move to you.

“I — cannot — move — to you.

“Cord binds.

“Angel!

“Lift.

“Ah — Let us go. — Now.

“Wait?

“I will wait.

About These Tales,

“The Grey Angel!

“My arms there — and hold?

“Yes.

“Now!

“Drop!

“Rush! Blackness! *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et Benedictus Fructus ventris tui, Jhesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc, et in hora mortis nostræ: amen.* Blackness. Glimmer. Stop.

“No. I will not move.

“Brown cave. Shadows moving. Dim tapers. Rush and splash of falling water. Low tunnel there.

“If I move, I may fall into some pit.

“A light? Thank you.

“Ready.

“Lie down in this car?

“Cramped. Hard.

“Head low. Shade candle.

“You will go behind the little car, and push?

“Roof of tunnel just above my head.

“R-u-s-h.

the Key and Purgatory

“ Tunnel.

“ Onward.

“ Clank — clank — clank.

“ Rocks of the roof are low.

“ Walls enclose me.

“ Onward.

“ Rush.

“ Walls widen.

“ I cannot see the wall on the right.

“ Raise — candle — look. Pf!

“ It is gone out. Stop.

“ Light it, please. Ah.

“ The roof has gone out of sight. Brown rocks, wet, streaked, patched, with lumps, with veins, that shine. In front, new opening — hole in wall of brown darkness.

“ Ready.

“ Plunge on. Brown darkness.

“ Shades enclose me.

“ Water drops — runs.

“ My neck is cramped by stooping.

“ On.

“ If some rock of the roof be low enough to strike my head in this swift rush, my neck will break. A jerk will snap it.

“ On.

“ On.

“ Beautiful walls.

About These Tales,

“ I am glad that I came.

“ Brown rocks streaked with veins all white,
or patched with lumps of glittering grey.

“ Air cold as death. Water drips.

“ In brown darkness, eyes are dazzled by
shaded light.

“ On.

“ No sound, except the crash and clang of the
rushing car. Now and then, a distant booming
thud. Gusts of blasting wind. I feel the warm
breath of my angel, at my back. I know his
arms are round the rushing car.

“ On.

“ The roof has lifted.

“ Please, let me see.

“ Fissure overhead.

“ Little brown hole before.

“ Deo gratias! I can shift — stretch.

“ Below, darkness, reflection of my candle in
water. It rushes back in smooth torrent. Are
there any fishes?

“ Ready? Yes.

“ Plunge.

“ On.

“ Little gap. Brown darkness.

“ Brown nothingness.

the Key and Purgatory

“ Cannot pierce it.

“ Solid wall of brown.

“ As I dash at it, it always goes in front.

“ Is — this — Death?

“ Not three minutes since I left the world!

“ Well now!

“ I like this.

“ You have been here often. I, never.

“ On.

“ Let me see all.

“ On.

“ Never mind how I feel.

“ On.

“ Let me see all.

“ On.

“ Light a-head.

“ Slower.

“ The walls grow wider.

“ The light comes nearer.

“ Pass. Light on empty car. Shadows waiting near. Each holds glimmering spark.

“ Slower.

“ Oh! slow!

“ Tunnel branches. Smoke. Sulphur.

About These Tales,

" Speed on.

" On, to right, with a jolting rattle and crash,
I fly.

" Lower head.

" On.

" Where does the smoky sinister tunnel lead?
How dark!

" And the stench! To the Brown Kingdom!
Ah! Hasten.

" On.

" On.

" Cold.

" Dark.

" Darkness yields — yields.

" Rough-hewn rocks.

" Streaks glittering grey.

" Slower.

" To the left.

" Stop.

" That was a fine swift ride.

" Here are empty grey cars, — dim lights —
shadows moving.

" I follow in your footsteps.

" Stoop.

" To the right. Narrow passage.

" The floor is rough, — wet.

" I refuse to fall.

the Key and Purgatory

“Walls rocky — fissured — streaked — patched.

“The passage winds.

“The roof is high — low.

“I follow.

“How can I see without the sun, down here.

“This little candle is the light.

“No. I have no fear.

“Dust lies thick like grey snow.

“A long puddle. The roof drips. I am wet.

“A vast cave. The roof is too high. Walls far away. Rough.

“Seamed with water. Streaks. Patches. Glittering grey.

“Wonderful!

“Danger?

“What?

“The Lake? Oh, let me see the lake.

“Is that brown bottomless abyss a lake?

“Bridge?

“How deadly cold!

“There are shadows! Shadows rise and sink!

Hands!!

“Faces!! They are People!!!

“A girl! I saw a girl!

“Oh! Let us save them!

About These Tales,

“Why not yet?

“When will it be time?

“Who are they?

“Passions?

“May I pray that they may be cooled soon?

“*Libera, Domine, animas servorum Tuorum, sicut liberasti Noe de diluviis. Amen.*

“Poor souls, in the dark silence, and the ice-cold water.

“I shall come here. Oh, yes!

“Yes, ready.

“A grey ladder.

“Light fixed to my head. Hands free.

“I follow you.

“The rungs are cold.

“Dare I look down. No. Up. Up.

“Squeeze through a little gap.

“Another ladder

“Up.

“Foothold shallow. I do not leave one rung till I have gripped the next.

“Through this gap.

“Rest.

“Another ladder.

“Up.

“Longer. Difficult to climb.

“Gap.

the Key and Purgatory

“ Another ladder.

“ Slanting over brown darkness.

“ Water streams down on me.

“ I am skin wet.

“ Climbing a chimney.

“ Ouf!

“ Deo gratias.

“ High passage. Windy. Dry. Cold.

“ Dim lights flicker in brown darkness.

“ Shadows wave in the air. They sway in the wind.

“ People!

“ Look at the old woman! Look! A priest!

“ What are they?

“ Good — soaked in silliness — vanity?

“ And?

“ Hang here in the wind till dry?

“ Wait, please. *Requiem æternum dona eis, Domine; et lux perpetua luceat eis.* Yes. Ready.

“ Down this passage.

“ Down.

“ I stumble on rough brown rocks — dull-shining dust.

“ Narrow — and low.

“ Down.

“ Down—— ”

(Toto was absolutely rigid. His eyes were fixed, intense; they did not wink, nor flicker. I

About These Tales,

scribbled the slow, deliberate utterances which, at intervals, he made. I very keenly watched him.

Desiderio, also, was devoid of movement. The smile was faded from his face. His eyes were open wide, but had fallen upward and inward, showing much white, little iris, less pupil. His breast heaved gently and regularly. He was asleep, undreaming.

I doubted whether I would go down to the tents, for a shower of rain was coming on.)

“ — difficult to walk.

“ Warm.

“ Slowly.

“ Foot-way slants from right to left.

“ Slippery grey dust.

“ Slant steeper.

“ Wall on my right. Touch it always.

“ Steep.

“ Left leg long. Right leg bent.

“ Down.

“ Hot.

“ Cannot see left wall.

“ Touch right wall.

“ Crawl along species of edge

“ Slipping dusty edge.

“ No. I have no fear. — But let me look over the edge.

the Key and Purgatory

“Madonna mia! A precipice!

“Dull red flames below. People burning.

“Boom. Hot wind. Wait, please, while I pray. *Libera, Domine animas servorum Tuorum, sicut liberasti tres pueros de camino ignis ardentis: amen.*

“Yes. Ready. I follow you.

“I am trembling. I cannot help.


“No. I have no fear. I trust you.

“Crawling — slowly — — edge of an abyss —

“The edge slides. Narrow edge.

“Rocks — stones — shining dust — slip — pass — and fall over — when I move. They fall. They fall. How far down?

“If — I — fall — ”

(This was the most creepy moment of my life. I know the cataleptick apprehension of a fall, too jolly well. “ Toto, Toto, come back!” I cried.)

“I come.

“Angel! I must go home.

“Ladders.

“Down a slanted hole.

“Cool.

“Water streams down.

“Down.

“Another ladder.

About These Tales,

“ Down.

“ Down.

“ Ground.

“ The great cave. The cold lake.

“ Brown. Dark.

“ Along a passage. Narrow. Wet. Cold.

“ Speed.

“ Cars again.

“ I crouch inside.

“ You are behind me? I feel your breath.
Your arms are round the car.

“ Ready.

“ Plunge forward. Through cold air. Over
rushing water.

“ Clank — clank — clank.

“ Crash.

“ The car runs smoothly. With noise. With
breathless speed. On. The roof is high — Low
— On — Walls wide — — narrow. — On — Brown
rocks flit by — On — White streaks — Patches of
glittering grey — On — Darkness — On — Dark-
ness — — — Glimmer ahead — On. Flickering
lights. Near — On — Nearer. Nearer. Stop.

“ Leave the car. Stretch. Shadowy figures
in the dark.

“ Glimmering sparks.

“ I have no light now.

“ Ah! Angel —

“ Lift me. Let me look back.

the Key and Purgatory

“ How brown and grey !

“ Yes. Ready. Hold me tightly.

“ Rush. All black.

“ All is gone.

“ Rush — Up — Black — Black — Oh, I would not have missed this for a thousand lire ! — Up — Rush — Black. Rush. Grey. Up. Light!

“ Ouf ! ”

(Rhudickoneos bounded off the ground, shook himself, rubbed his eyes, and pushed back his hair.)

“ Sir, how warm it is ! But, — warm ! And raining ! Per Bacco, look at the rain ! How long was I away, sir ? Nearly two hours ? Fancy that now ! Did I say things ? Oh, look at the pages ! Well, well ! — Desiderio ! Monster of sloth, awake ! Carry the books of la sua eccellenza. And the tobacco.

“ Sir — my arm ! ”

About Some Friends

XVIJ

ABOUT SOME FRIENDS

IT was my birthday; and I was going to treat myself to an aubade.

People are very cruel to me in the way of neglect. No one ever loved me well enough to take trouble to find out that which would give me pleasure. No stranger in the street ever said to me, "O, sir, why are you so unutterably sad?" Friends do not to me, as they would that I should do to them. There is some impenetrable mail of ice about me, which only one dead heart ever has been warm enough to melt. Sometimes, very rarely, when I speak long and late at night, the ice wears thin. Then, kind eyes look at mine, astonishingly unlidged; and kind voices say, "Oh, if only we had only known!"—Well! why don't confounded people try to know: and know? That is not difficult, when one desires.

Here was my birthday; and I knew that no one, excepting I myself, would care to remember it, — till afterwards: so I resolved to make myself the modest offering of an aubade, without squeaks, for once; and I had ordered two viole, a violon-

About Some Friends

cello, a basso-di-camera, and three arciliuti; for I can hardly suffer trebles of voice or string since Claudia, my Augusta, died — died — Domeniddio! You know what voice of lark You coveted for Your quire, — and robbed from me —

Toto awakened me at earliest dawn; and I moved into the clear cool darkness of the terrace of this villa by Termoli, to taste olives picked (and pickled in lime-water) the night before, nuts and purple figs, blood oranges and black grapes, with wines, pitch-flavoured, or with honey fit for Ganumedes. Yes; Toto had remembered my birthday, and had spread my breakfast with more exquisite elegance. The wines were in rock-crystal bowls, wreathed with aloysia citriodora. The fruits lay in several heaps on cushions of fresh flowers: grey-green olives on blue hydrangea, purple figs in a white cup of magnolia, nuts on heliotrope, red-gold oranges on milky meadowsweet, black grapes blooming on the petals of white roses that faintly blushed. Each cushion was hemmed in by a bordure of verbena, and glittered with the diamonds of early morning dew. I found the intoxicating odour, and the colour, to be adorable.

The antelucan sky showed one wide flush of violet barred with rose, and the sea, translucent opal of black-purple having gold stars in its heart. In the garden, where dew-drops sparkled on orange-trees and cactus clumps, a little lower

About Some Friends

terrace and pier of marble gleamed like a snow-drift floating on the sea. While I ate, my seven gifts of the Santo Spirito raced through the shadows of the garden.

.

I dallied with olives. There was no sound, save the Prime of amsels and of thrushes, and the laughter of happy boys.

.

The flaming rim of the sun dawned on the horizon. Beams of vast brightness shot through the rosy mist. Glowed the sea, like that unconsidered green-blue gem, aquamarina, set in gold. Emeralds lit among the deeper recesses of the pine-trees. A white peacock generously displayed, here, clouds of lustre of the pearls in his pride.

.

After water, air; and the boys were taking the sun. Ercole yawned on the pier-head against the sky, like the statue of Brutus his favourite, carved in corinthian-bronze. Desiderio, all pale-gold with buttercup-yellow hair, moved on to the lawn with towel a-trail, found a comfortable situation in the young sun, and fell on sleep. Near him, paced to and fro my pure Greek, the strong magnificent violet-shadowed Vittorio, model fit for Andrea Mantegna, arm in arm with the huge and ruddy Goth, Otone, ablaze with health. The little tender Guido of chrusoberul eyes, and his

About Some Friends

slight glaukos friend, Ilario, delicately dangled slim frail limbs in the sea from pier-steps, cooing each to other like white doves.

Toto mounted to my terrace, announcing arrival of musicians, who attended behind a cactus-hedge, below.

I gave him a nod, saying, "Sing, you."

He dropped two directive words over the parapet; and a sense of musick floated upward, —just a vibrance, — arpegij, low, and full. The boy's breast rose, gathering the clean breath of dawn; from that glorious throat he poured the marvellous quiet counter-tenor of his jewelled voice, resonant, restrained, in a little folk-song, full of sun, and ending in a trillo appassionato. This is something like :

"The Rose is sweet; but has the prickly Thorn :

"The Thorn cannot exist without the Rose.

"I saw the Rose; I did not see the Thorn,

"That hid away behind the sweetest Rose.

"I plucked the Rose; then wounded me the Thorn,

"That stood as Guardian to the sweetest Rose.

"O Rose! I'm like to die from Prick of Thorn !!

"The Thorn was thine !!! Then heal me now, O Rose !!!!

.

More musick followed, some known, some unknown: but all low, and full, and very sweet. I leaned over the parapet, and watched the sunrise.

About Some Friends

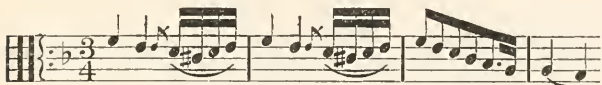
Presently, from hidden strings, there welled a Chant sans Paroles of Tschaikowsky. Finding it sympathetick, (although an English adaptor of the musick-halls, devoid of themes, has robbed its motif for a coster-ditty), at the fifth bar, I despatched Toto silently to secure its three-fold repetition.

While the notes rippled, swelled, or cadenced, Desiderio stirred in his sleep upon the lawn. When basso-di-camera finally pronounced the motif in reluctant minor, he sat up, opening amber eyes. After dying of harmony, the musick woke again, to take Desiderio captive. Narrowly I watched him. Here was a thing both new and strange. Some mysterious power (Personage, as Toto would say) was his master now. Not I. This was not a drowsy Himeros, any longer. He sprang to his feet, with glittering eyes like constellations, and gleaming limbs of gold. Some magick, born of musick, held him entranced. He had no more a will, but swayed responsive to the song of the strings. At the tempoprime of the twenty-eighth bar, he found his feet; at the second farewell to melody, he stepped to the centre of the lawn. With wonderment we looked at him. His eyes returned no glance. His soul was stilled, feet fixed, limbs tense, form motionless.

But, at the third outburst of the song, eispnoe transfigured Desiderio, and he lived. The spirit of sweet sounds enchanted him. He danced like

About Some Friends

a feather in a dream — danced like a fairy on a leaf — danced like zephyros on a flower. His flickering feet, like yellow butterflies, played a gentle *allegretto grazioso e cantabile*

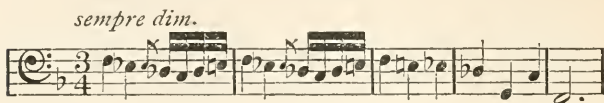


upon the daisies in the turf. His limbs were human sunbeams weaving mysterious intricacies. He waved, on high and wide, his slender flame-like arms, floating here, and floating there, with swiftly-ordered errancy.



His yellow head swayed like a buttercup on a stem. His lampromeirakiodia obeyed each rhythmick call. Song found free expression in the abandonment of his naif passionate movements, now quick and gay and crescent, now fading in cadences of gentle, long-drawn-out regret: again accenting suncopations with firm flying feet like flames, then dying — dying — dying to the slower unconquerable minor,

About Some Friends



and the collected emotions of final chords, when the dancer danced no more.

I signed for a change of musick. Desiderio drifted into the shade of trees, and slept.

“Well, Toto?” I said.

“Yes, sir, a strange thing, and divinely lovely. Also miracolossissimo. I shall think better of Desiderio now, seeing that some Personage has deemed him worthy of such an inspiration.”

“What Personage?”

“Sir, I don’t know; I — :” — he made a native gesture of dismissal.

“Is there not a story of some god who danced — danced with angels?”

“Yes, sir, Sanvito, Child of Lucca, was so graced.”

“Is that history worthy of a hearing?”

“Perhaps no, perhaps yes,” he answered dreamily, and looking down into the garden.

“Sir, this is all very sweet, is it not? And suitable for your birthdāy, sir,— this garden,— and the air and sky,— and this great peace. I hope that Don Friderico is happy to-day?”

“Quite happy, O charc puer.— And about that Child of Lucca?”

About Some Friends

“Ah, the Child of Lucca. Yes. — But you are happy? That is well. — Therefore, we also can be happy. — Did it ever occur to you, sir, to think how very excellent is the friendship between Vittorio and Otone, down there? They are both so rare, so fine, — so mighty, — also friends of Domeniddio, being full of grace, according to the Scripture where it is written, *The Grace of the Lord*. Yes, I am pleased to see them as friends, like my Guido and Ilario. One must have a friend after one has found oneself. Oh, yes! I had Beatrice, ☩ requiescat in pace. After her, I want no friend. Ercole, he has not yet found himself; therefore he needs no friend. But he will, soon. Guido and Ilario have paired. And Desiderio, — he has Sleep for his friend. You, sir, have no friend; and you are at all times entirely sad; for to have no constant friend is worse than death. But to-day you can at least see happiness, and I hope it has come so near your lips that you may taste. — Yes, I am very glad to see Vittorio and Otone going arm in arm like that, because they remind me of the two Friends of Lucca, who are gods, — yes, sir — of Lucca, sir, — the two Friends of Lucca, who are gods, sir! — Who said Lucca? — Ah, the Dancing Child of Lucca! — but now I speak of the Friends of Lucca; not of that Dancer. Would you care to hear a story, sir? A story about friends, sir? — Quite respectable persons, sir! Also loving — loving beyond

About Some Friends

everything, sir! — A story for your birthday, sir?"

It was precisely what I wanted.

"Then, sir, with the aid of Sangiovannino detto Il Divino, who himself is God's Own Darling, I shall tell a tale of friends; of the Two Boys of Lucca, who were friends, and are gods in paradise. And, in the beginning, you shall know that you cannot have your choice of friends. No. The Padre Eterno makes for everyone a friend; and, at the proper time, He lets each see the other. You know in your heart directly you see your friend; and it remains with you to say whether you will take and keep him. For you must perform special duties, if that you wish to keep your friend; and those duties are many and great and sometimes troublesome — sometimes terrible. Yet pleasure may be attained only through the gate of pain; and friendship is a condition of perfection difficult to reach, hard to maintain, but more full of benediction, when achieved, than any other, as you shall learn from the Acts of the Friends of Lucca.

"They are called Santamelio and Santamico: in Lucca they were born many hundred years ago.

"They were gorgeous and beautiful as young lions, like Vittorio and Otone; huge and vast of frame, strong and mighty of limb, made in the largest and most splendid moulds, first copies. And, in colour, sir, they resembled this." (He

About Some Friends

invited attention to the dazzling white little heap of meadowsweet, with a red-gold orange lying on it.) "That is like Otone, for Santamico, sir; — skin — and hair; — and eyes? — eyes? — like the buttons of your sleeves, sir." (Dark brown topazolite, very rich and liquid.) "And Santamelio was like Vittorio, as to his colour; just as you may see here." (He showed the mound of white-rose petals delicately flushed, whereon a cluster of blue-black grapes reposed.) "Skin, — hair; — and eyes? — eyes like these, — clear as the sky, and deep as the sea." (He dropped on to the rose-petals, two star-like chinese blossoms of intense and burning blue, whose names I do not know.) "They were like that, sir; — like Vittorio and Otone.

"Amelio was sixteen years of age, fifteen Amico, when first each discovered the other at the Baths of Lucca, and knew that they were meant for friends. So Amelio took his knife, and cut his left arm; and Amico took his knife, and cut his left arm also; and Amelio offered his arm to Amico; and Amico offered his arm to Amelio; and Amelio sucked the blood of Amico; and Amico sucked the blood of Amelio, all in the antick manner: and, when the blood of Amico was in the veins of Amelio, and the blood of Amelio in the veins of Amico, then they were friends for ever; because Amelio lived in, and was, Amico; and Amico lived in, and was, Amelio, in *sæcula sæculorum*: amen.

About Some Friends

“Now it chanced that these two friends were pagans; for, at that time, many pagans still remained in the world, even among the most noble families. Amelio and Amico wished to change all that; though for what they did not know. They ran away from their pagan relatives, going out into the world together; and, in course of time, they came to Rome, to Rome the Chief among all cities, to Rome the Home of the holy gods, to Golden Rome. And it was *Sabbato Santo*.

“Very early in the morning, the *Santo Padre* was going in procession to the Church of San Giovanni Laterano, to perform the ceremonies of *Sabbato Santo* with all pomp and majesty; in which ceremonies, as you know, sir, they have the habit of baptising a Jew, a Turk, a Pagan, and an Heretick. Well: and it fell out that, on this *Sabbato Santo* of which I speak, there was no Pagan handy, nor could the clergy of San Giovanni Laterano find one anywhere.

“The *Santo Padre*, Whose name was Costantino, was coming through the streets on His white mule, — gladly, when He considered how that perhaps the world was becoming altogether Christian, seeing that no Pagan could be found; and yet sadly, because He did not like to miss out any part of the glorious Office: — and, as He passed, He blessed the faithful who knelt by the roadside, crowding the *Piazza San Giovanni Laterano*.

About Some Friends

“When He reached that spot, there stood Amelio and Amico, right before His eyes. Their appearance was so singular, that the Romans had left them in a little group by themselves; not being fond of foreigners having a mien as of wild lions, similar to these two boys. For, *la sua eccellenza* will remember that it was a long journey on foot, from Lucca to Rome, which they had made, lasting many weeks, and costing many pains. They had lost their way in forests, living on nuts and berries, or on wild beasts which they killed with knives. They had swum rivers, climbed the mountains, and breasted every sort of storm and stress: and now they stood in Rome, tanned, footsore, hungry, and alone, their clothes in tatters, their strong limbs bruised, and aching, and their young hearts faint; but they held heads high, eyes fearless, and boldly faced strange faces; for, as yet, they knew not whether they would be treated well, or ill. And to them came the Santo Padre Costantino.

“When He saw these two mighty boys of foreign aspect, — all the same as your Vittorio and Otone, sir, — and marked how that they did not kneel to Him, as did the Romans, for they lacked knowledge, not respect; then the heart of *La Sua Santita* leaped for joy, and He was aware that the Padre Eterno had been very merciful, having sent Him, not one Pagan, but two, and altogether splendid examples, whose conversion would be quite creditable to all concerned. And the Santo

About Some Friends

Padre reined up His mule, looking on Amelio and Amico with much love, saying to them, 'Dear children have you the happiness of being Christians?'

"Amelio and Amico courteously answered that they did not know whether they were Christians; but certainly they were friends.

"The Santo Padre would know whether they desired another Friend, Who was very loving, and very strong.

"Amelio and Amico answered, No; because a new friend might try to separate them, one from the other.

"The Santo Padre said that the Friend of Whom He spoke, was not that kind of friend, being One Who would knit true friendship closer.

"Amelio and Amico answered, that such a Friend as that was greatly to their liking; and they enquired whether they might know His Name.

"The Santo Padre said, that He was called the Signor Cristo.

"Amelio and Amico answered, that the Name sounded very well; but they did not know this Signor Cristo.

"The Santo Padre said that nevertheless the Signor Cristo knew them, and had wished them so well that He had died for love of them.

"Amelio and Amico asserted this to have been done without their knowledge; for, if that

About Some Friends

they had known this generous Signor, and His surpassing Love, they would have lost their lives for Him, rather than have Him lose His Life for them. Friendship demanded that, at least; they said. But, seeing that the Signor Cristo had died before they knew Him, what use was there for more words?

“The Santo Padre answered that this Signor Cristo was a King; and, by His admirable power, He had conquered death, and was alive for evermore. Also, the Santo Padre said, that this same Signor Cristo, living in a distant country more beautiful than eyes had ever seen, had sent Him Who was speaking, to offer eternal Friendship for the acceptance of these two boys.

“Amelio looked at Amico: Amico looked at Amelio. Each read assent in the eyes of the other. Therefore, they said, that they were ready to swear a friendship with the Signor Cristo, without prejudice to the friendship already sworn at the Baths of Lucca.

“The Santo Padre would know in what manner they had sworn; and Amelio and Amico told Him how that each himself had wounded, giving to the other his blood to drink, so that they might be one in blood, in *sæcula sæculorum*: amen.

“Then, the Santo Padre, saying that He knew a better ceremony than that, took Amelio and Amico into the Church of San Giovanni

About Some Friends

Laterano ; and, at the appointed time, having stripped them of their rags, He plunged the tired way-worn bodies of these half-wild boys beneath cool water in the baptistery, saying, ‘*Amelio,*’ or ‘*Amico, Ego te baptizo, in Nomine Patris, et Filij, et Spiritus Sancti.*’ Also, He marked a cross upon their lion-like brows, bidding them to know it for the Sign of the Signor Cristo ; and He clothed them in clean white tunicles of coan cloth, whose bordures were of purple, resembling the Sangue Preciossissimo of their new Friend, the Signor Cristo. And, so, Amelio and Amico were made good Christians, to the immense admiration of the crowd standing by.

“ After this, Papa Costantino took them to live with Him in His palace ; for it would be altogether a foolish thing to neglect a person’s body, if that you wish to save his soul ;— oh, in those antick times, they had some sense :— and, presently, when they were well-instructed in Christian Doctrine, and recovered from the dolorous hardships of their journey, La Sua Santita sent them to the court of the Emperor Carlomagno, with a letter which required his majesty to treat them handsomely and to give them an education.

“ When that sublime sovereign had read the letter of the Santo Padre, and had seen these boys to be very splendid creatures, likely to do him credit, he made them pages of his presence ;

About Some Friends

and let them learn the use of weapons, and the duties of a court, with other noble boys who served him, according to the custom of that age.

“These foreign boys had no love for the Friends of Lucca, being jealous that the Lord Emperor should let his favour shine upon them; but Amelio and Amico were happy each in other, and did not need to go about to seek for friends. At all times, to their rivals, they showed generous courtesy, as was to be expected; and they easily surpassed them in exercises of high nobility. Wherefore, those pages became more than jealous of Amelio and Amico, hating them with bitter hatred, and taunting them in secret with bad words. And soon Amelio became of the age of nineteen years; eighteen Amico. Their illustrious deeds had placed them high in the favour of the Emperor Carlomagno, who raised them from the conlegium of pages to make them knights of his guard; and always their friendship, each for other, remained impregnable. Then their enemies, on fire with malice or imbecility, thought to destroy them by sowing discord.

“It happened that the lion-like Amico led in marriage a girl called Gisela, because he felt that marriage would give him satisfaction. And the envious pages chose a scoundrel of their number, called Ebbo, in whose mouth they put cunning words.

“It was the marriage-feast. Amico sat with

About Some Friends

the head of Gisela on his breast. Guests were merry, drinking wine, and beginning to scatter nuts to boys who scrambled for them on the floor. But Amelio had no mind for mirth; and, at Ave Maria, he left the feast, drinking on leaving, as the custom is, to the love of Sangiovanino detto Il Divino.

“He strolled out into the forest, where he might be alone, and to him came Ebbo, speaking courteously enough, concerning trees, birds, weapons, the loveliness of Gisela, the bravery of Amico. Also, he dared to suppose that day to see the end of the curious friendship between Amico and Amelio.

“When Amelio asked him very sharply for a reason, he said that Gisela would take care of that: whereat Amelio drove a crashing fist into his face; saying sternly, ‘You have lied in your hairy throat;’ and waiting, while the lout found footing, and spat teeth. Then Amelio said, ‘Let me tell you, sir, that in speaking against the honour of the Lady Gisela who is wife to Ser Amico, you have spoken against the honour of Ser Amico, who is friend to me; and in speaking against the honour of my friend, you speak against my honour, which I will always vindicate.’ He touched his sword, questioning with an action of his brows. Ebbo answered with bared blade. The lie, and the blow, given, demanded this. They fought till night, when Amelio slew him, and buried his carrion in the forest.

About Some Friends

“So was Amelio loyal to his friend Amico, on the point of honour; and he was not less faithful to him in regard to his spouse at all times, to whom he yielded the service of a knight, with the kind love of a brother.

“After a year, during which the sun rose always on the right, and set on the left side of their bed, Gisela gave twins to Amico, male children full of grace, with heads like stars, resembling those I have of Beatrice; ☩ requiescat in pace; and Amelio was glad because his friend Amico had much joy, having given handsome hostages to fortune.

“Then, it pleased the Signor Cristo to try the texture of the friendship of these two Friends of Lucca, sending a terrible trial; and this was the manner of the same.

“When the sons of Amico were about six months old, and flourishing like a pair of amorini, plump, healthy, and delicious as a nosegay, there came a day on which Amelio paid no visit. Amico was astonished; for never before had a day passed without salutations and sweet words: but he considered how that Amelio might be occupied with business of the Emperor Carlo-magno; and he left it so. But, when another two days passed without his friend, nor any news of him, Amico went to the lodging of Amelio. He found the door unlatched, the bed undisturbed. He found no sign of any kind, save that the Image of the Signor Cristo Crucified, which

About Some Friends

used to hang upon the wall, had disappeared. No one had seen It, or Amelio, go.

“ With dolour was the heart of Amico torn. All night he grieved, so that he could not sleep. Gisela lay with her babes, alone; but, at his stool of prayer, Amico knelt, praying to his Friend, the Signor Cristo, to Whom he cried continually, ‘ O Friend of friends, why has Amelio left me? And whither has he gone? If that You had sent him some great joy, he would have told me, and would have let me take a share. But he has told me nothing; and is gone away. Therefore, I say this,— You have not sent him joy, but dolour; and now, all the more, I demand my share of that, because he is my friend. I say, that I demand this as my right; and You must say where You have hidden Amelio in his pain: or You are no true Friend to me, O Signor Cristo!’

“ The Signor Cristo, sitting on His throne beyond the stars, heard the plaint of Amico. The Signor Cristo smiled to Sangiovannino detto Il Divino, who is God’s Own Darling, standing very near His throne; having pleasure that the Pattern of Friendship, which He had deigned to set, should be so well exemplified. The company of heaven became aware of the pleasure of the Signor Cristo; and all the gods who had been friends while living in the world, and who, now, are friends in paradise, came clustering to watch Amico stand his trial.

“ All night long Amico cried to Him.

About Some Friends

“When it was near the break of day, the Signor Cristo considered the first stage of the trial to have been passed with credit. To the gods who stood by, He put this point. Their kind eyes moved not from the passion of Amico, so true, — so constant; — their hearts were full of love; they breathed no word: they only signified assent with their immortal eyebrows.

“The Signor Cristo envoyed an angel to Amico, at the break of day; who said, ‘My Master bids me say, *So far, well done, thou good and faithful friend.* Also, He would know whether thou wishest to bear further dolour, for the sake of friendship, without wavering.’

“‘Lord Angel, it is enough for a friend to be as his Friend, a servant as his Master. I will bear all:’ Amico said.

“To him, the angel answered, ‘Go then, to such and such a place in the forest, where thou shalt find Amelio, and receive new dolour.’

“Amico tarried for mass; but not for meat. He stood not upon the order of his going; but he went, following the guidance of his angel. All the long day he went; and, at Ave Maria, he espied a lonely figure kneeling by a tree in prayer. It was Amelio. Amico, at a distance, called to him words of love. But, when Amelio heard, he rose; and, in a voice whose accents might not be denied, he forbade Amico to approach, wrapping his hands in his cloak, meanwhile; veiling his face.

About Some Friends

“Amico was amazed that his friend should use him so; and, at a space of ground which one might cover saying two Ave Marias, he stayed his steps; saying very gently, that he was come in friendship to share the dolour of his friend.

“And Amelio answered, ‘O well-beloved, I knew that thou wouldst wish to share my dolour; therefore I fled, lest harm should touch thee. For the Signor Cristo has been pleased to send me a dolour which I must bear alone.’

“Amico said that he meant no disrespect to the Signor Cristo; but he would not have it so.

“Amelio answered, ‘But thou canst never share this dolour, for it is personal to me.’

“Amico asked what might be this dolour; and why Amelio veiled his face, suffering no approach, nor the embraces of his sworn friend.

“Amelio answered, ‘O, my Amico, the Signor Cristo has deigned to smite my body with a dire disease; and, though my heart is bursting with my love, yet I may never touch thee, nor let thee breathe my tainted breath, lest thou become as I am. Therefore, in secret, I am fled away; and here I will live where no man lives, until the Signor Cristo bids me come clean to Him.’

“‘O friend,’ Amico said, ‘surely some leech might heal thee?’

“But Amelio let the cloak fall from his face. It was as white as dead snow. Beneath the trees, he stripped himself. He was all as white

About Some Friends

as dead snow. He uttered no word. In silence, he showed all his dolour to his friend, hiding no particular of his shame. He was like the leper in the Evangel.

“Amico knew. The horror of knowledge froze his blood. He could not speak, nor move one limb for horror. Amelio cried to him, ‘Farewell — Farewell — Farewell —’ and vanished among the thickets.

“Night in the forest. Night in the soul of Amico.

“He left the place with faltering step. Hot were his eyes with tears, which manlihood kept unshed. There was choking rage in his throat. He forgot his wife, the Lady Gisela. His ears were deaf to the cooing of his little sons. He flung himself before his Image of the Signor Cristo Crucified. No words would come from his paralysed lips: but, in his soul, he gasped, ‘O Signor Cristo, if that You want anything of mine, take it, for the sake of Amelio, my friend.’

“The Signor Cristo heard. He looked upon the shining gods, and said, ‘O younger brothers of Mine, here, at last, are very faithful friends! For the trial of his friendship Amelio is smitten with leprosy. For the sake of the friend he loves, he deprives himself of the love of his friend. But Amico, also, wills a sacrifice for the sake of his love for his friend. Let us see whether the loyalty of these two will remain constant after the last Trial.’

About Some Friends

“ And, from the Signor Cristo, an angel flew to Amico, with this message, that La Sua Maestà most mercifully condescended to accept, as a sacrifice for the healing of Amelio, the lives of his little sons.

“ Amico leaped up. His visage had the fierceness of a lion. ‘Is He as cruel as that?’ he said.

“ The angel answered, ‘He is not cruel; but He knows.’


“ Then Amico said, ‘I thank you, O Signor Cristo. I, also, will know. Therefore, you shall have my sons; for I am true to You, as I am loyal to my friend Amelio.’

“ He took his little sons, sleeping. He wrapped them in his cloak, still sleeping. He thrust a knife into his boot; and hied him to the forest as the day was breaking. At sunset he came to a little brook, buried amid trees, whereby he found his friend Amelio, also sleeping.

“ Amico approached. Now, he had no fear; but only faith. He took his little sons on his left arm: his right hand gripped the knife. He held their heads over the body of his friend, — white as dead snow: he laid cold steel across their throats. The innocent babes awoke; and looked up in their young father’s face, smiling at him like flowers, as he was about to kill them. He drew the keen blade through their throats, slashing clean and deep from hilt to point. The little smiling heads fell to the ground: and, on the

About Some Friends

body of Amelio, white as dead snow, blood poured like purple rain. And, by the mercy of the Signor Cristo, Amelio awakened from his sleep, and sprang up with his health all whole, and his body noble as a god.

“When he saw Amico, in an agony between grief for his murdered babes and joy for his friend restored, Amelio said, ‘O friend, have you done this for me!’ His angel whispered in his ear. He took the lily children from their father. He laid them down. He put the head to each. He signed them with the Sign  of our salvation. And, immediately, the Signor Cristo gave new life; and the babes awoke from death; and lived, wearing always round their throats a rosy scar, until the gate of paradise was opened to them, after long years.

“Amico their father, and his friend Amelio were happy each in love of other. They lived to prime, always doing illustrious deeds, until the children were well grown, and well bred in piety and high nobility: then, in a battle against a wicked king of Lombardia, the Signor Cristo raised them to His Kingdom, giving to each a diadem of oak and ivy, that all the company of heaven might know these generous Friends of Lucca for models of friendship and true love, such as I see growing, between the very gracious Vittorio and the very resplendent Otone, on this the birthday of la sua eccellenza.”

XVIIJ

ABOUT THE PENANCE OF PAISALETTRIO

OTONE (deinos, whom I called The Goth, having acquired him at Milan on account of his fiery hair, and his gigantick mien of barbarian) was driving the mules to bathe. He rode a barebacked one of cream-colour, matching his own skin; and, at the distance, resembled a young centaur; for he was a very daring rider, and sat his mount with indivisible conjunction.

I watched these animals as they frolicked at the water's edge.

There is a point to the N. N. W. of the Tower of San Felice, where the shallow shore ends abruptly, and you drop into water of twenty cubits and a span. Otone was ignorant of this, (indeed, none of us knew it till afterwards); and, riding in their rear, he drove his charges out to sea; with the result that, from wading, they plunged into an unknown depth. Then they lost their heads, and there was a scene of indescribable disorder. Otone swam his mule round and round, and through and through, the snorting crowd lashing hooves at him, refusing obedience. He was not their master now. He turned his

of Paisalettrio

own beast to the shore, and landed her. He leaped into the sea, (he was the most magnificent swimmer), and tried to catch another. But, as well might he have tried to halter the white steeds of Poseidon. The mules were wild. It was one boy against many monsters; and I waited to see him brained and drowned.

On the nick, entered Toto Ephoros, inevitably adjuvant, flinging away a towel. He bestrode my pony, riding like the wind.

Into the deep he dashed; and slid off the pony. With his right arm he swam alongside; with his left he gripped the beast and the bridle. Avoiding Otone in the thick of the fray, he swam the pony among stragglers on the left, and thence right out to sea. The mules tossed heads, sniffed, fell into line, followed. He led them for some distance; and, curving to the right, returned. In shallows, he remounted; and gained dry land with all the mules behind him, cowed, commandable.

The boys ran down and hobbled them; while Toto spoke severely to Otone at his emergence; who stood attentive, humbled, indignantly sheepish. Imagine a sheepish lion, please!

Presently, I caught Toto's eye. I beckoned. He finished a scathing exordium to Otone, (exordium which I could not hear, but read from gesture and expression); resumed his towel, and climbed up to my perch.

"That was rather good," I said; in praise of andragathema.

About the Penance

He was shaking the sea from his hair, and panting after his exertion; but he smiled, and acknowledged the compliment.

“What were you saying to Otone?”

“Just that he was a fool, sir.”

“Why? It was an accident: and I consider him to have behaved bravely.”

“Well, perhaps bravely; and that was his duty. But accident? No. It was ignorance, sir. All these many weeks, that boy has seen the pony in front of the mules when we are travelling. He thinks that it is there only to prevent la sua eccellenza from being discommoded by the dust. He never troubled himself about looking for all reasons. He was content with that one. Yet he rides always in the rear, where he might see many things without looking. I—Teodoro—ride in front with you, sir; and, from that situation, I have remarked the mules to follow, giving no trouble, when the pony leads. Otone—beautiful giant, strong and agile of body;—plain dwarf, feeble and lazy of mind—has seen nothing. It is ignorance, sir; not accident.”

“I, myself, was ignorant of this, O ingenious one.”

“Vere dignum et iustum est, æquum et salutare, that Don Friderico should be ignorant of mules. The charge of mules has not been laid upon you, sir. For you, pictures of the gods, and the guidance of the flying quill, and the study of printed things. And to the cult of these you

of Paisalettio

bring all curiosity, all knowledge, all devotion. Vittorio to his cookery; Ercole and Desiderio, Ilario and my Guido, each to his own employment; and I, to all, bring ardour to make perfect what we know, and curiosity to invent fresh knowledge. For one knows very little; and everything in the world is waiting to be learned. Yah! — Let Otone learn mules first, mules second, and mules for all eternity. And then there will be one mule which he does not know.”

Gumnephebos went on drying his hair with the towel.

He had been a naughty boy: — over-ate himself hideously on Sunday, made himself quite ill; ran away to Vieste on Sunday evening; spent the night and Monday there; came back at hestern sunset, penitent; confessed the usual, for which I whipped him in private, without compunction, and without reserve: and he spent last night in, or near, the sea. After these outbreaks of natural naughtiness, salt water was the adscititious penance which he inflicted on himself, as a work of supererogation. It was his firm innate conviction that the sea, which made his wounds to tingle, was a moral as well as a physical purifier. And, certainly, he emerged from prolonged solitary swims with all his virtues furbished up to the fine point to which expression has been given.

“ But, tell me another thing, Toto. You know that you yourself have done a brave enough

About the Penance

deed. Otone, for whom you have no love, was in peril. The mules were wild, — dangerous. And you risked your life. Why did you do that?”

“Not my life, sir, but my death. One’s death is an easy thing to give; and of little value to the giver. Anyone, even a guardian-of-the-publick-safety, would give his death to save a stranger’s. It is a duty. But to live, — sir, it is very difficult to live, — to live for some other! Well, one can only do that, when that other is one’s friend; — when one loves. As for Otone, he is not my friend. Therefore, I throw him my death as I would throw him a silver five-pence. It may be of some use to him. It is nothing to me. — Also, I did it for a penance;” he added, assuming a *chitoniskos anakolos*.

“Penance?”

“Yes, sir; penance. I have been a wicked boy since Sunday. Last night I confessed. I am truly contrite. I am forgiven. Now, I must pay my debt. Part, I paid with my flesh to the twigs of *la sua eccellenza*. Part, to *Domeniddio*, with salt water on my weals. Then, when I saw Otone in peril, my angel-guardian, my mind’s master, shouted in my ear, ‘To him, Toto!’ So I went. I have saved him. Also, the mules. Don Friderico looks on me with favour. I have obeyed my angel-guardian. I am clean. I am happy. *Houp-la!*”

He was dressed now, and his exultant eyes

of Paisalettrio

sparkled, seven times purified. I moved into the shade; and gave him a cigarette. "Continue;" I said.

"Yes, sir, it is quite simple. Penance is one of the few things upon which you can count for certain. The Padre Eterno has deigned to make laws; not many; nor troublesome: but just some, and all very necessary. If you obey them; well. If you disobey them; penance follows—follows disobedience just as lessa follows minestra. It is short, sharp, inevitable. And you cannot whine, or blame anybody except yourself; because you get no penance, unless you qualify for it.

"Observe me with woodcock, and take warning. When there is woodcock for breakfast, I become a fool. I devour woodcock till my stomach is stiff—but, stiff! Then I cannot move. I sleep, I snore, I ride a kicking nightmare. At Ave Maria, I wake with muddy eyes. My head wants to burst. On my tongue there is a taste resembling hot and rusty sin. Then I become wicked. After that, I go in penance, because I was greedy, and a fool, also a divel. Then I say that I will never eat woodcock any more. But, all the same, the next time I see woodcock, I eat; and, after the rest, I take another penance.

"Also, when an angel tells you to do a thing, you will be well advised to do it, for your own sake, if for nothing else; lest a disgrazia should befall you.

About the Penance

“Formerly, there was a boy called Paisalettrio. He lived in the city of Ancona in antick times: and he came to a bad end, because he did not pay attention to the orders of an angel.

“His mother was a beautiful lady, called the Signora Pafia. Paisalettrio lived with her, all alone, in a house on the city-wall which had a terrace looking over the sea.

“When Paisalettrio was twelve years and six months old, the Signora Pafia spent her time in pious works; for she was clever with her needle, and she made admirable pieces of arras, showing pictures of holy personages, which she sold to hang up in the churches at Christmas, or at Easter, or at other feste. Such is the arras hanging in the chapel of Our Lady of Dreams at Deira; all needlework of fine colours, very marvellous, and more pleasing than pictures painted with a brush, because it can alway be seen from every place, having a surface which does not shine. In this way, the Signora Pafia employed herself under the protection of San Gabriele Arcangiolo.

“Her only angor lay in her little son, this Alettrio of whom I speak; for he was an unspeakably lazy boy, given to sleeping his days away in some shady corner of the terrace on the city-wall, or in a couch of soft sand which he would scratch out on the shore. And at night he would sleep like any Christian. To be warm, and comfortable, and drowsy, was all that he de-

of Paisalettrio

sired; and his sleepiness caused him to become as plump as a beccafico: indeed he resembled Desiderio in his plumpness and his sleepiness. He was a great grief to his mother, though he was very beautiful, — beautiful as she was; — for it gave her pain to see him eternally idle. Sometimes she considered that it would be well that he should die; not because she lacked affection, but because she wished to have him in safe hands before he took to sin: also, she knew that the Padre Eterno allows some children to die for the sake of their parents, that these may have a chance of burying the dead; for whoever buries a virtuous person — a child, for example, — performs a corporal work of mercy, and obtains pardon for all iniquities. But Alettrio did not die. Many times, his mother asked him to help her in her work, holding her skeins, sorting her colours, threading her needles. But when she woke him, and demanded this, he only said, ‘ Tomorrow; ’ and curled his little plump limbs again in sleep. He thought that there was no necessity for him to do anything, except just to be beautiful; and that he did to perfection, as everyone could see. So his mother took consolation from the thought that, after all, one cannot have everything; and that the Padre Eterno had shown her much favour, in giving her a son more sweet and exquisite than any amorino ever seen, for which she offered thanks each day, remembering that a fine appearance is worth much gold.

About the Penance

“ Now, on a certain day, the protector of the Signora Pafia — that is to say, San Gabriele Arcangiolo, — chanced to have no particular business on his hands; and, as an archangel cannot bear to sit idle, he resolved to make a little journey to the city of Ancona, that he might give himself the pleasure of looking at the arras in the churches. So, having made himself invisible, he flew down from paradise; and he spent several hours, going from church to church, admiring the needlework pictures, worked by the Signora Pafia, which hung upon the walls, as well as those which he found folded up in presses in the sacristies, only to be brought out when it was necessary to decorate the churches in a special manner for some important festa.

“ In the Church of the Archangels, he became very sad: for, though this church was dedicated to the honour of him, and of the other princes, his brothers, he could not find a single picture in likeness of himself, or of them, either on the walls, or in the presses of the sacristy.

“ This was a condition of affairs which no archangel could be expected to bear with an even mind. It showed the devotion of the people of Ancona towards his highness, and towards their highnesses the other princes, his brothers, to be very cool indeed. Therefore, being invisible, he went and whispered in her ear, demanding of the Signora Pafia whether she considered herself to be behaving properly in neglecting to make a

of Paisalettrio

needlework presentment of his person, that all the world might have the honour of seeing him as he is.

“The Signora Pafia answered, that she would use her needle very gladly to make his likeness, if she knew the way: but that he had never deigned to show himself to her, nor had the other princes, his brothers.

“San Gabriele Arcangiolo said, that what they did was one thing, and what he did was another. They were old enough to look after their own interests. If they did not choose to have their likenesses made by her, he did so choose. And he bade her to hold herself in readiness to receive him privately that same night, when he would grant her the grace of a vision of him as he is; and, also, would show her in what way to work his likeness in arras, similar to the arras hanging in the churches and palaces of paradise.

“Then San Gabriele Arcangiolo returned to his duties, for the remainder of the day, showing himself freely as usual, to the angels and to the gods, in order that no one should suspect him of planning to escape into the world at nightfall.

“The Signora Pafia, on her part, made her preparations; sweeping her house, and decking it with fresh flowers, with sweet herbs on the floor; washing herself from head to foot, and putting on her festal habits, in honour of her guest. Also, she arranged her coloured linens,

About the Penance

her needles, and her threads, and all things necessary for working pictures in arras.

“When the night was dark, down in the world, San Gabriele Arcangiolo watched his opportunity. As soon as the gods and the angels had settled themselves for a pleasant evening with their friends, he descended to the house on the sea wall of the city of Ancona. He had taken the greatest care that no one should suspect his absence from paradise, because he wished to have his likeness made in arras before the other princes, his brothers. It would not be the first time that he had set a fashion; for he is of a disposition which avoids a second place, when a little cleverness will win the first. He copies no one; and, as I have said, that ordinary archangels should do certain things in certain ways, is a sufficient reason for San Gabriele Arcangiolo to do the same things in other and better ways. He is an original. And enjoys the taking of pains.

“When he alighted on the terrace before the house of the Signora Pafia, by an act of will he made himself as small as a large handsome youth like Vittorio, that is to say, of more than four cubits in height; in order that he might not be a terror to the lady by reason of his tremendous size: but, of course, being an archangel, no change could diminish by an atom his royal beauty.

“It was a fine hot night in summer. The

of Paisalettio

sea was smooth as glass; and the sky was clear.

“He entered the door of the house, saying, ‘I am San Gabriele Arcangiolo who stand before Domeniddio, and I am come to speak to you.’

“The Signora Pafia kneeled down, and kissed the floor before his feet, saying, *Angelus fortis Gabriel, ut hostes pellat antiquos, et amica cælo, quæ triumphator statuit per orbem, templa revisat,* and the rest.

“And San Gabriele Arcangiolo taught her, and spoke to her, and said, ‘O lady, I am come now that I may teach you, and that you may understand many things.’

“Then she led him into the room wherein she was used to work; and she shewed all her materials ready, the coloured linens, the thread, the needles, the scissors, and the wax.

“But, before beginning the business which had brought him down, San Gabriele Arcangiolo said that someone must keep watch, in order that he might be able to return to paradise before the break of day. He went to the bed where the plump little Alettio was sleeping; and he picked him out, all drowsy, just as he was; and he put him on the terrace in the moonlight; telling him to sit there, and to keep his eyes open, and to watch the distance where the edge of heaven’s dome seems to rest upon the sea. He must not lose sight of that for an instant: and, directly he saw a thin knekine streak run along that edge, he

About the Penance

must step into the house, and give warning. Did he understand?

“Alettrio answered, ‘Yes, my lord archangel;’ and he sat down by the door of the house, and fixed his drowsy eyes upon the far-off edge of heaven’s dome.

“San Gabriele Arcangiolo shut him out, and returned to the Signora Pafia; and he bade her to take a large sheet of coarse linen, coloured like a peacock’s breast, and to stretch it on a frame about six cubits high and four cubits wide.

“When this was done, he drew upon the linen with his finger; and, wherever his unerring finger went, white lines appeared as bright as nacre, having about a thumb’s breadth.

“On her knees, the Signora Pafia watched this marvel; and, there, was a veritable likeness of San Gabriele Arcangiolo as he is, all drawn in white lines on the linen coloured like a peacock’s breast.

“He explained that the white lines must be left as they were; but, that the spaces variously shaped, which they enclosed, must be filled with linen pieces of the proper colours: he took the scissors, and visited the stock of coloured linens.

“There, he chose a piece of silver-colour shot with rose; and he cut from it the shapes of his dalmatick, his amyct, and his stola, and the shape of his wings. These, he laid in their proper places, on the linen coloured like a peacock’s

of Paisalettrio

breast; and he bade the Signora Pafia to sew them there with silver-coloured thread.

“While she was doing that, he chose a piece of flesh-coloured linen; and he cut from it the shapes of his face and neck, of his hands and arms from which wings sprang, and also of his swift feet. These, he laid in their proper places, on the linen coloured like a peacock’s breast; and he bade the Signora Pafia to sew them there with flesh-coloured thread.

“While she was doing that, he chose a piece of snow-white linen; and he cut from it the shapes of his hair, of his albe, of his scroll, and of the blooms of his lily. These, he laid in their proper places, on the linen coloured like a peacock’s breast, and he bade the Signora Pafia to sew them there with snow-white thread.

“His highness cut the stem and the leaves of his lily from green linen; the pearls of his coronet, of his apparels, of his orfreys, from pearl-coloured linen; the shape of his halo, of his coronet, and of his winged sandals from gold-coloured linen. These, he laid in their proper places, upon the linen coloured like a peacock’s breast; and he bade the Signora Pafia to sew them there with green thread, and pearl-coloured thread, and gold-coloured thread.

“He put his fiery swiftness into her hands, so that her fingers flew; and his likeness came upon the arras in an hour, as though by magick art.

“But the naughty boy Alettrio, outside, had

About the Penance

put his forehead on his knees, and his plump arms round his leg; and, so, he fell asleep.

“San Gabriele Arcangiolo bade the Signora Pafia to observe that her work was not yet finished. He bade her to take threads of shadow-colour, and to work lines upon the linens, till the noble contours of him shone through the silver dalmatich, and through the snow-white albe, as through a film of gossamer. And, so, he made her work the features of his face, the fingers of his hands, the toes of his feet, the feathers on his winged arms, the leaves and the petals of his lily, the shadows on his coronet and on his winged sandals, and the folds of his vestments of arcidiacono. Round the rim of his halo, he bade her to work the letters,

EGS^vMG^aBPEL^rHNGLS

and the letters on his scroll,

AVMPAG^rTⁱADENA

“Here was as much work as seven and thirty ladies could do in seven and thirty months; but San Gabriele Arcangiolo caused the fingers of the Signora Pafia to fly so fast, that, in a matter of three hours, the arras was complete, no stitch remaining to be done. It presented the pale and mystick figure of the Prince of Fire, more than four cubits high, shining like life upon the linen coloured like a peacock’s breast. Oh, an admir-

of Paisalettrio

able work! And he told the Signora Pafia to use her skill, and to give him a bordure of a cubit's width, of fiordalisi, blue on gold, which she could do at her leisure and without his aid.

“While these things were being done in the house on the sea-wall of the city of Ancona, other things were being done in paradise. For the hours of night had slipped away to rest; and, at last, the Padre Eterno deigned to give the signal for a new day to be born. San Michele Arcangiolo brought to the gate his halo, flaming with the Fire of God; and, there, he placed it on the chariot which Sant' Auroraele Arcangiolo, successor of Lucifero, drives slowly round the outside of the wall of gold, to burn up any unclean opinions which apish dæmons may have expressed there while the night was dark. The silly world calls this Fire the sun. In truth, it is the flaming halo of San Michele Arcangiolo; and, when he places it on the chariot, a thin pale yellow streak runs along the distance where the edge of heaven's dome seems to rest upon the sea. Then, all the little kings and princes of the world put on their little crowns, and adore the Maker of the Sun; and the whole orb of the earth turns round and round to win its light and heat in every part, so that men may wake from sleep, and go to mass, and work, and play, while the birds burst into song, and fruit and flowers raise their heads to smile in bloom.

About the Penance

“Well: the narrow knekine streak ran along the distance, where the edge of heaven’s dome seems to rest upon the sea; but the boy Alettrio slept on. He saw no light. He gave no warning. He was happy, so happy, sleeping in the cool air; and his dreams were dreams of pleasure.

“The chariot of the sun left the gate of paradise; and began its journey round the wall of gold. As it moved, the city of Ancona moved to meet it; and the sky broke out in rays of dazzling light.

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“San Michele Arcangiolo was making his morning round on the ramparts of heaven, and his eyes happened to rest on the terrace on the sea-wall down below. He saw there, a boy sleeping with his forehead on his knees, and plump arms clasped round his legs. His highness considered it to be a strange place to choose for slumber, at that early hour; and he flew down straightway, to look a little closer. Perhaps the boy had lost his friends. Perhaps he had no home. Perhaps he had been deserted by cruel parents. Such things have been known to happen. At all events, a boy sleeping on a terrace, altogether as though he were, and at an hour when he ought to be, in bed, was a matter which needed a looking into. All angels love boys, being boys themselves; and San Michele

of Paisalettrio

Arcangiolo descended from heaven to see whether this one required him for his champion.

“But when his highness alighted on the terrace, he heard voices speaking, within the house. He crept to the window and took a peep. There he saw San Gabriele Arcangiolo teaching the Signora Pafia to make his likeness in arras, all quite happy and comfortable. He looked behind him; and there was plump Alettrio asleep outside the door.

“The Great Prince was back again in paradise before a flea could hop once; he called upon the other archangels to share his mirth. There was that Prince of Fire, he said, down there in a private house, teaching a lady to make his likeness in arras, he said. The slyness of him, he said! The vanity of him, he said! To go and try to steal a march upon the princes, his brothers, he said! And to get his likeness made in arras on the quiet, he said! Proh pudor, he said!

“And San Michele Arcangiolo brought the other archangels down, to the house on the seawall of the city of Ancona, to prove his words. One by one, those princes peeped through the little window; and they saw San Gabriele Arcangiolo teaching a lady to make his likeness in arras. And they watched; and they waited.

“Presently San Gabriele Arcangiolo heard a lot of little chuckles; and, when he looked at the window, behold! a row of grinning archangels,

About the Penance

pointing fingers at him, saying, 'Ah, sly-boots, we can see, we can see! Ah, sly-boots, caught you there, caught you there!'

"The Signora Pafia was confused by the honour paid to her poor house; but San Gabriele Arcangiolo burst into a rage, and shouted, 'Where is that confounded boy whom I set to keep watch?'

"He rushed to the door.

"There sat the plump little Alettrio, sleeping — sleeping, — his forehead on his knees, his arms clasped round his legs.

"San Gabriele Arcangiolo seized him by the hair, and woke him; saying, 'Miserable little rascal, what is the meaning of this?'

"Alettrio rubbed his drowsy eyes, and stared.

"'Did I not tell you to watch for the yellow streak, and to warn me when the dawn of day was near?' San Gabriele Arcangiolo demanded.

"'Yes, my lord archangel,' Alettrio said.

"'Then, why have you disobeyed me?' San Gabriele Arcangiolo would know.

"'If you please, my lord archangel, I slept too long,' Alettrio said.

"'Slept too long, indeed!' San Gabriele Arcangiolo continued. 'Who gave you leave to sleep at all, I should like to know? Sink of sin that you are! Here's a pretty pickle! Look at all these princes who mock me! All through your abominable laziness! — Does this boy go to mass, Signora Pafia? No? Cannot get him

of Paisalettrio

out of his bed? Ah, I thought not! Always sleeps too long, does he? I'll teach you to sleep too long, my boy! I'll have a change; or I'll know the reason why! Now listen to me!

“‘Yes, my lord archangel,’ unhappy Alettrio said.

“‘From this time forth, for evermore, when the first narrow knechine streak runs along the distance where the edge of heaven's dome seems to rest upon the sea, you shall wake from sleep, and you shall sing aloud to warn the world that daybreak is at hand. That is your penance, Paisalettrio,’ San Gabriel Arcangiolo said. He gave a sign.

“At this, the pretty pink toes of the disobedient boy shrivelled, and became sharp and thin, with claws, three in front, and a longer one behind. His pretty plump legs shrivelled and became covered with scaly skin. His knees slipped round to the back. His pretty plump body burst out into feathers, brown, red, and yellow, and a little white. His pretty plump arms became wings which he flapped, and black-with-green plume ended him. His nose and chin became sharp and hard as horn, and snapped together like a beak. His drowsy eyes became alert and fiery red, and slipped back to where his ears had been. Under his pretty plump chin, the skin became scarlet, and dropped with the weight of blood. His hair also became scarlet, and stood up high and fierce upon his head.

The Penance of Paisalettrio

“☩ Be a cock,’ San Gabriele Arcangiolo commanded.

“And Alettrio became a cock.

“He sprang up and tip-toed, all alert and bright, upon the sea-wall of the city of Ancona; and he sang aloud to all the world, ‘*Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo! Cock-a-doodle-doo!*’ which is as much as to say, ‘Get out of your beds, you lazy scamps; and say your prayers, and go to mass, and do your work, and play your play, and sleep your sleep; and never, never, never, shut your ears against the orders of an angel?’

“So, sir, whenever I hear the cock crowing before the break of day, I say some pious words for the soul of the plump little Paisalettrio of Ancona; that, when the ultimate day of judging shall arrive, he may be found to have made satisfaction by his penance; and to have merited the greatest happiness, for always.”

About Our Lady of Dreams

XVIIIJ

ABOUT OUR LADY OF DREAMS

THERE was no sleep for me.

How many hours I wasted, wooing sleep, I do not know. How many prayers I prayed to the gods in their content, I cannot say. How many charms and incantations I purveyed to those antick beings who, according to most respectable authorities, are no more than names,—they are all written in the book of my deeds, on a page which I have not seen.

There was no sleep for me.

On this single summer night, a fire burned for no cause in my brain. Thoughts, ideas, fantasies, problems to be solved, came, thick and fast, without and against my will. It seemed as though some kakodaimon rode my intellect, riding to delirium with whip and spur. Lying there, as still as death, clutching crucifix and rosary, and the miniature of my dead, my closed eyes saw myself as I was, driven from my road, my life's career wrecked, blocked, checked,—whichever

About Our Lady of Dreams

you will, — thrown out of my stride, thwarted in my sole ambition, utterly useless. Other men envied the freedom which was mine; they would have welcomed the happiness, and health, and power, which were offered to me in mocking substitution for the bonds I craved. But not I. That would be too common. I was wretched. I was near distraction. No drug would give me peace. No prayer, rest.

There was no sleep for me.

I opened the mosquito net; and lighted a lamp, and a cigarette. I tried to read Cardinal Franzelin's *De Ecclesia*. But, at the foot of every page, I knew that I knew nothing of the printed words. They pierced no deeper than my eyes; for the uncontrollable mechanism of my brain was occupied with other things. I extinguished the light, and beat my pillow till it was cool and soft; and again I tried to sleep. Fresh theories of life, of death, of loveliness, of love, arose like phantoms; and marched to scale the plateau of my imagination. But, when the first head came in sight, I ascended the chariot of Will, and grasped the reins; and, resolutely, I crushed my foes. Each in his turn, systematically, monotonously, I stamped them down, refusing parley or quarter.

The weight of the bulk of dead ideas which I had slain, weighed heavily.

About Our Lady of Dreams

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I was barely conscious, now; and I knew that
victory was mine.

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The stress of conflict was dying away. I
passed into the grey haze surrounding the
kingdom of sleep. I was near — oblivion.

.
With a shock, I fell; — fell into the clear black
pit of sleep: and, turning sharply on my pillow,
I was wide awake again.

There was no sleep for me.

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I got out of my hammock, and found my
slippers and a gown. I took a soft white bath-
towel for a cloak; and sauntered through my
tent-door into the moonlight of the forest of La
Guardiola.

How cool, how delicious it was! How soft,
how fresh, the air! How exquisite the fragrance
of juniper, and honeysuckle, and lentiscus, —
of the breath of earth asleep! I kicked away
my slippers, and let my feet revel in the velvet
turf. Through the trees, where the valley de-
scended to the sea, I saw the silver water all
a-shine. The mountain-sides of breccia were
clothed with solemn beeches, and ilexes, thickets
of pine, giant fennel, brank-ursine, and wild arti-

About Our Lady of Dreams

choke, like the black-blue of peacock's eyes in shadow, and like frosted silver where the moonlight's magick played upon them. The glade was carpeted with silver, of such admirably clarity that every blade of grass was dignified. The distance melted into solitudes, vast recesses and profundities, mysterious, obscure. Overhead, the leaves and branches of the trees hung in net-work and arabesks of silver filagree, laced with the diamond webs of spiders; and, higher yet, behind this veil, the sky, a dome of heliotrope sown with stars, wherein the lambent moon was sailing, in a plenitude of majesty, high above the sea.

I peeped into the other tent, where my seven deadly sins were sleeping. They slept, having no minds to torture themselves withal. The curtains at both ends were open; and the seven hammocks swayed gently in stillness. There was a plate of honey and dead insects, with a lanthorn standing on the ground, whose glimmer gave little gleaming passages of gold. The pure breath of these boys was like a posy. Their mothers must have lived on citrons. They were unknowing; and, therefore, happy: and they slept. I turned away.

There was no sleep for me.

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This was a world carven of cool malachite and lapislazuli, with intricate broideries and bordures

About Our Lady of Dreams

and fringed orfreys of white jade, and alabaster, and smaragdus, and rock-crystal, obsidian, and basalt, and black jasper, all set upon a luciferous field of lilac sapphire. The fresh odours of the night were clean. — I wandered away, till I came to a little point of rock, moss-cushioned. Here I sat me down, and watched the moon, and the sea. The air was soft and warm. Caressing. — Surely these silent things would show benig-nance! — How admirable was that sky; pale at the horizon, deeper in the height, flecked with faint shapes and shadows with silver outlines; and, dominating all, the moon, — the queen.

The wistful voice of Toto enquired whether I was in want of a companion.

Looking round, I beheld a slim faun of the forest all in white. A sheet, draped like a palla, played upon his ankles bare as ivory. His calm eyes glittered like snow diamonds in the brown rose of his skin. Such a note of black was his curly head, in the sumphonia of that night! Such a picture! I said that he might stay.

He moved beyond; and sat down where his contours were silhouetted on the silver sea. He was marvellous, — and so still. Presently, I would know why he came: and he answered, very gently, that he had been dreaming of Beatrice, his beloved; ✠ requiescat in pace: when his angel whispered that Don Friderico was in trouble; that, then, he had felt my presence

About Our Lady of Dreams

near ; and, waking, he had seen me turn away, and wander to and fro, as one who suffered sadness, silent in pride. Therefore, he had risen ; and, having pinched the others, one by one, not maliciously but enough, in order to make certain that they slept, he had followed me ; and here he was.

I gave him my hand : but no words. Everything was so lovely and so pleasant, that I could almost hear the footsteps of approaching peace. — Makroskelephebos said that he would go to give order to my bed ; and he left me.

The moon rode high ; and the silvered sea glittered in her beams.

Toto returned to his station, bringing snow-honey, and tobacco, and things ; but I put them away, for the aromatick air had done nothing to deserve defilement. After a time, he asked, whether I had mentioned to Madonna that I wanted sleep.

Indignantly I answered, that I had recited four times fifteen mysteries of the rosary, all to no purpose.

But, he persisted, had I addressed myself to Our Lady of Dreams ?

To make him speak, and to add to the pleasures of my senses, I answered that I did not see the good. He picked a branch of myrtle, and waved it while he spoke.

“ Sir, when I want to ask a favour from you, I do not go to Otone, nor to Ilario, asking that

About Our Lady of Dreams

they should ask for me. No. I am your own chosen slave, enjoying favour, and of you I have no fear. Therefore I watch you in your moods; and, when I am satisfied, I come boldly to ask for what I want. Well then! And Our Lady of Dreams is the mood of Madonnina in which she will refresh her friends with sleep; and, in the sleep which she will send, there are lovely angels bringing dreams, to teach you holy mysteries good for the health of your soul. I think this to be the most courteous mood of Madonnina, kinder than any other; for sleep is to a troubled mind the supreme mercy. As in a glass darkly, you have seen her, in her picture in her chapel of Deira, where she walks among the stars, between earth and heaven, sending dream-angels to instruct some person in their sleep; to the Signor Patriarc' Abramo, to the Signor Patriarca Giaccobe, to the Signor Faroa Re, to the Signor Capitano Guidione, to the Gran Patriarca Sangiuseppe, and to many others. And, there, if only you will look with faithful eyes resembling mine, you now may see *La Sua Immacolata Maestà*." He rose, pointing firmly to the sumptuous sky.

I admitted that I saw pale stars, and the moon, and faint shadows of peacock-purple fringed with ostrakon.

He supplied a noble gesture, with the branch of myrtle. "Sir, that is Our Lady of Dreams!" He performed a dignified prostration before the

About Our Lady of Dreams

moon, as I should at Elevation, or Exposition, of the Host.

“Every night that Madonna goes her journey round the world, sometimes early, sometimes late, sometimes this way, sometimes that way. Always there are, with her, many million angels for an escort; and persons, who are not faithful, see them as well as I, who am faithful: but they have not those spacious eyes which see the whole pageant in a glance, as I see it; for the angels are huge and vast, and Our Lady of Dreams, also; and persons with little narrow eyes have the gross stupidity, and impertinence of bronze, to call those shapes merely clouds, which manifestly are the lights or shadows of the white wings of angels ever-moving, and the folds of Our Lady’s trailing robes of darkest blue. Crowned, also, is that queen, crowned with the twelve stars, according to the scripture: and you may see that crown, when the crowd of her innumerable followers is on the other side, as now. And, in her consecrated hands, she bears the Holy Host, giving benediction to the world. That is the real truth about the moon. It is the Great Pearl, the True Light, the Peace which passeth understanding, — Il Santissimo, Himself.”

This, then, was why Toto adored the moon. I, myself, as a student of the rare, had often pondered over the supreme and ineffable Whiteness of the Host in a custodial: a Whiteness not accidental, but essential, dominating the light of

About Our Lady of Dreams

tapers, the whiteness of silk, or satin, or marble, and every circumstance of illumination, by the force of Its unapproachable purity. It was a beautiful theory, this — that the moon is the great Host of heaven, giving unending benediction.

There was a long pause. Then I said, “But, bad dreams, naughty dreams, o formose? Surely —”

“No, sir. Those come not from Our Lady of Dreams, but from the Other; and I do not know her name: but certainly she is a kakodaimon; for everything is two, good and bad, light and dark, man and woman, no and yes. As for me, I cannot tell you about that Other, because I do not meddle with her, — at least, not more than enough; and, after, I am always very sorry. Ah, yes! Baf! — Shall I go on, sir? Or shall I dance for you upon this green?” He grasped his drapery, and fetched a step or two. “Or would you choose to taste a very solemn little song, sir. *Ombra mai fu*, sir, with chitarone, sir?”

“Tell me of a case which Our Lady of Dreams has soothed with sleep, — sleep which tells you what you want to know.”

“Very well, sir. And the best tale of that species will be the tale of Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires. Do you choose that one, sir? Well then — In former times there was a boy —”

“Why do you tell me always about boys?”

About Our Lady of Dreams

“ Because, sir, *like perceives like*; and I, being a boy, know most about my fellows. You have said that we are amusing, and quaint, not a blot upon the view; and that some of us, I being one, can tell you of the future, or describe things happening in distant provinces, reflected in such matters as a bubble, or a drop of ink upon the finger-nail or palm of hand. Yes. I speak of boys because I am a boy. But I know of girls, also; — oh, yes, I know girls, — and I have tales of girls. And I know women, not more than enough: also, some men, and particularly priests. When I am older, perhaps old people will amuse me. But, while I am young, I speak of the young; because, being young, I know the young; and there is my answer. Am I to say more?

“ Well, then, sir, there is a proverb which says, *Happy is he who has boys for his friends*; and, therefore, — In — former — times — there — was — a — boy!

“ He was called Diodato, and he was of the age of eighteen years. Also, there was a girl called Coronata, and she was of the age of sixteen years, and pure; and Diodato wished her well. Also, in the same village, there was another boy called Aristide, and he was of the age of nineteen years; and he, also, wished Coronata well. Diodato was a boy of sound mind, good health, quick wits, unblemished body, and singular beauty. In summer, he was a

About Our Lady of Dreams

shepherd on the mountain; in winter, he brought his flock into the plain. Having no kin, he lived alone in a little house,—little house inherited from his dead father. Coronata was the daughter of a miser who lived in a poor hut, high up, on the lower bordure of the forest. Aristide was a butcher in the village, fat, lascivious, greasy, and sallow as boxwood. Also he smelled of blood.

“And it happened, on a certain festa, that these two boys leaned against a pillar in the church to hear mass; and Coronata was kneeling near them, but among the women. Diodato and Aristide saw her; and they wished her well. No one could complain of that, when it was seen how very rare she was. Only the eyes of Diodato sparkled. He did not move nor show his love, save by the brightening of his eyes. Aristide, otherwise, breathed so lustily, shifting his fat from one foot to the other, that he shook an evil stench of his trade out of him; and made some nostrils flicker, and Diodato furious, being annoyed that Coronata should suffer the inconvenience of this stinking hob. And he leaned toward Aristide, whispering the courteous suggestion that he would do well to give himself a good sluice down under a pump, before he should come to mass on some future festa. A greasy scowl and a bad breath were all he got for his politeness. But, when the mass was finished, he stepped after Coronata; and, in the

About Our Lady of Dreams

piazza, with a chaste mind, and a face a-flame with modest blood, he offered to her very respectfully the carnation from his cap, saying, 'To her beauty.' The sedate Coronata smiled, as she took his blossom, exulting in her heart with joy, because of the declaration of the lad whom alone she loved; and she gave him a 'Many thanks.' But Aristide snorted with rage at this; for he had no flower to offer, and nothing in his cap but grease and blood of beasts. So Diodato walked with Coronata; making diligent love to her all that day until the Ave Maria; and, when there was music, he danced industriously with her: and all the girls envied Coronata her Diodato; while Aristide eyed him with fat eyes full of hate.

"Every festa of that summer and autumn, the same thing happened; and Diodato was known for the chosen lover of Coronata: but sullen Aristide increased in fat and grease and evil stench only.

"One day during the wintry frosts of Capricorn, Coronata and her Diodato were coming out of church, wrapped in one cloak, for the weather was bitter cold; but, cold as it was, it had not cooled the rage of Aristide, and boiling hot was his hatred. As the lovers passed, he came beyond harmony, speaking calumnious words. And, when they gave him no answer, he emitted a howl of wolf, and rushed on Coronata, brandishing a terrible knife. But he did

About Our Lady of Dreams

not know his Diodato, who was quick, agile, supple, though so slim and graceful that it would take two of his size to make one hog like Aristide; and, in an instant, his wrist had been struck up, his knife sent flying. Coronata screamed, and ran away. Diodato, raging, sprang like a cat upon the fat and greasy butcher. As well might he have dashed against a tree; for the bulky carcass of Aristide was solid, insensible of blows. Therefore, the fight was not a fair one; and, before anyone could say, 'Apoplexy,' the butcher bore with all his weight on Diodato, and crushed him senseless to the ground. Then he fled; for people were rushing to succour Diodato, who was a favourite in that village, where every one thought well of him: but, in wickedness, Aristide determined to do a worse thing for revenge, and wound the heart of Diodato, as well as knife his back, at a more convenient time.

"They carried the shepherd boy to his little house, and washed the wounds which his head had taken from the ground hard frozen; and Coronata came, and gave him kisses till he recovered from his swoon. He was weak, and giddy, all that day; but, to those who stood by, he promised that, in the course of time, he would show Aristide who was master, in a fair fight, with knives, before witnesses. And, at nightfall, Coronata went to her poor hut, high up, on the lower bordure of the forest; and Diodato was left alone.

About Our Lady of Dreams

“That same night, when all the village slept, Aristide scratched his right ear, to excite the kakodaimon of revenge who sits there; and then he went creeping, creeping, towards the lonely hut of Coronata; for he knew that there was no one with her in the house, her father having gone on business to the neighbouring city: and he resolved to burst in upon her, in the dark, and, by sheer force, to help himself to the hoarded moneys of her father, and to loosen her girdle of wool. If Diodato should care to know her after that, — well! — He had forgotten that there are other powers beside the will of a wicked butcher-boy. But Sathanas had not forgotten. Does His Wickedness ever forget matters which concern his interest? By no means! Sathanas coveted the soul of Aristide. He knew that it would be his some day. But here was a chance to grab it, now; for Aristide was set out upon a sinful errand, unaccompanied by his angel-guardian, who had been forced to leave him when counsels of perfection were treated with contempt. So Sathanas set a kakodaimon to lie in wait for the soul of Aristide.

“He made his way towards the poor hut of Coronata, high up, on the lower bordure of the forest; and the path up the rocks was narrow; and the night was very dark. A black frost froze the earth, till it was as hard as bronze; and chained the rills in icy fetters. The road was slippery and steep. Frozen bushes tore his face; but he

About Our Lady of Dreams

hurried on, his heart being hot with sin. And, when he reached the turn, where the path is very narrow, passing under the little torrent which falls from the summit of the cliff, death struck him; and he died.

“The father of Coronata, returning at noon of the day following, was the one to find the carcase. He fled into the village, raising an alarm. Guardians-of-the-public-safety came to make themselves necessary. The day was bright and sunny, for a thaw had set in at dawn; and, on the wet ground, they found the body of Aristide, lying on his back, dabbled in blood, stone-dead of a frightful wound in the throat. He carried no knife. There was no knife near him. Therefore, the case was said to be a homicide. No one knew what might have been his business on that path; but when the gossips of the village bowed the chin of doubt upon the collar of meditation, they remembered the rivalry between Aristide and Diodato; and that Diodato had sworn, no later than the day before, to make the butcher pay for alarming Coronata.

“So Diodato was taken to prison as a murderer; and the Signor Sindaco and the Signor Avvocato Micci tried to make him confess to the slaying of Aristide. But all in vain. There were no words of that kind in his mouth. He swore that he was innocent; also, that he had never seen the butcher-boy, alive or dead, after the affray in the piazza.

About Our Lady of Dreams

“Coronata, who visited him in prison, believed him; but the others, no. They allowed themselves to see no more than this, — that there was bad blood between Diodato and Aristide; that Aristide had been killed; that the knife — the knife which did the deed — could not be found; that Diodato had no witnesses to prove him innocent, being an orphan, living alone, with none to say whether or no he had left his little house on the night of the homicide.

“In prison, Diodato suffered bitterly; for the weather had changed again, and the nights were icy cold. But he strenuously besieged with prayers *Il Santissimo Salvatore, e La Sua Madre*; and, once a week, he confessed his sins to *Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires*, who came to the prison, instantly and every day, on hearing of his spiritual son's *disgrazia*.

“Now this holy young friar had known Diodato all his life, being his elder by a mere handful of years: and he was quite sure that Diodato was no murderer. What the shepherd-boy told in confession, cannot be known; but *Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires* let it be seen that he remained the friend of Diodato; also, when speaking of him in the village, he said that, undoubtedly, it was *Madonna's* business to make his innocence clear to all the world: meanwhile, prison would do the boy no harm, but good; for he knew himself not to be a saint, and took his present pains by way of purgatory. With

About Our Lady of Dreams

these words, and with others like them, that friar cheered the few friends of Diodato, and his lover Coronata. And, as the days passed by, and the time drew near when Diodato must answer before the judges, Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires spoke very seriously to Madonna, reminding her of the innocent boy in prison. Also, he thought profoundly, visiting the place where Aristide had been slain, searching diligently under every tuft of weed, and under every bush; also, he broke the ice of the pool under the little torrent; and, having dismissed Coronata, he dived and dived again and again, till his holy young body was one vast ache of cold: and this he did, in order to the finding of the knife which slew the butcher-boy; for, by the knife, he hoped to know the murderer.

“And at night he prayed without ceasing.

“Here, sir, I will beg you to remark the kindness of Our Lady of Dreams.

“After many days of this work, and many nights of prayer, there came a time when Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires knew that he must either sleep or die. It was about one hour after sunset; and he kneeled at the window of his cell; and he saw Our Lady of Dreams, bearing the All-Pure Host to bless the world in sleep. And he prayed, and said, ‘O Madonna Mary, called Our Lady of Dreams, please to help me, as you have helped my betters in antick times. Send me some hours of wholesome sleep, that

About Our Lady of Dreams


I may have strength to aid, in his grave danger, that young Diodato. He is a good boy, Madonna, who loves you well, by reason of the greater love he bears toward your Son. Therefore, as you have taught the holy ones by dreams, teach me also by a dream, that I may know what to do for Diodato. O Rex cæli et inferni, marisque et terræ, accept my humble prayer from these pure hands in which I place it; and deign a gracious answer, as soon as may be. Per Jhesum Christum, Filium Tuum, Dominum nostrum, Qui Tecum vivit et regnat, in Unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus in sæcula sæculorum ✠ amen. Et fidelium animæ per Misericordiam Dei ✠ requiescant in pace.’ Having said these words, Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires laid himself upon his bed. His mind was calm and happy. He had done his best. And, now that his best had failed, he placed the matter in the Hands of Personages Who were far more capable than he. And with perfect trust, with perfect confidence, he slept like a little child.

“Our Lady of Dreams heard his prayer: she willed to grant him his request. Our Lady of Dreams presented the petition of the friar.

“Il Santissimo heard him; He said to Our Lady of Dreams, ‘Ask on, My mother, for I may not say thee nay.’

“The Padre Eterno heard him, in the fragrant recesses of His temple: He accepted the petition

About Our Lady of Dreams

and He deigned to smile, and to let His Favour shine, saying,  PLACET ET ITA MOTU PROPRIO MANDAMUS.

“The Personages are speedy, sir, up there. A holy thought, a look, the Smile of God, and the matter is accomplished. From Our Lady of Dreams, there flew a swift angel to the cell of Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires, who whispered in his ear; and every word resembled a picture which his eyes could see. This was his dream. He saw the dead butcher-boy alive, making his way to the poor hut of Coronata, high up, on the lower bordure of the forest; and the path up the rocks was narrow, and the night was very dark. A black frost froze the earth, till it was hard as bronze; and chained the rills in icy fetters. The road was slippery and steep. Frozen bushes tore his face; but he hurried on, his heart being hot with sin. And, when he reached the turn where the path is very narrow, passing under the little torrent which falls from the summit of the cliff, he panted for breath, and stopped, and put out his left hand to catch some drops of water. But there were no drops of water, for the little torrent was frozen; and the dream-angel made Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires to see it, hanging in icicles far overhead. Aristide was astonished when he found no water; and he lifted up his head to look. The friar, in his dream, also looked; and he saw the kakodaimon seated on the summit, who, at that instant, snorted fire.

About Our Lady of Dreams

And, immediately, a long sharp icicle came hissing down, and slit the weasand of Aristide, who gave one sob, and fell down dead. Then said the dream-angel to Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires, 'Little Brother, at dawn thou must go to the Signor Sindaco, and to the Signor Avvocato Micci, and to the Signor Dottore Pulobeni; and thou must require them to come with thee, to see in what manner Aristide the butcher-boy met his death. Then, thou must take a pig tied on his back upon a plank, and two strong men to carry the same; and thou must go to the turn where the path is very narrow, passing under the summit of the cliff; and, there, thou must place the pig upon the proper spot, — spot known now to thee; and my Lady will give a sign solving mysteries.'

"Therefore, at dawn, Frat' Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires took all those persons named by the dream-angel, and a fat pig tied, kicking, on a plank. The day was fair and fine, and before the rays of the sun, the frost was flying away.

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"'Imagine to yourselves, my children, that each one of you is Aristide clambering up this abominably steep path of the rocks,' the friar said. 'The night, you will remember, was very dark. Aristide must have stumbled often.

"'Now we are coming to the turn where the path is very narrow, passing under the little

About Our Lady of Dreams

torrent which falls from the summit of the cliff.

“‘It is evident that Aristide, who was a fat boy, must have been out of breath;—all the same as you, my children.

“‘Pass on, Signor Avvocato, and Signor Dottore, please; pass on up there. So!

“‘Now, Signor Sindaco, will you stand below here with me?

“‘Beppo and Marco, hold this plank like that. So!

“‘Now my children, let us consider, in the first place, that Aristide is this pig. Perhaps he may have wished to refresh himself with cool water, here. Let us suppose that. Well, then. Let us consider, in the second place, that he would stretch out his hand to catch some drops from the little torrent. You grant me that? Well, then.—But where is that little torrent?—There is no little torrent!—But there must be a little torrent—!!

“‘Ah, well, my children, let us be calm, and let us raise our eyes to heaven. Behold, my children, behold that little torrent hanging in icicles far above!

“‘Now, let us consider, in the third place, that Aristide would have looked up, as you have looked up. You grant me that? Then we will take the pig for Aristide, and make him throw his head right back, and look up, also. So!—See, my children! Let us suppose that Aristide looked up like that—

About Our Lady of Dreams

“‘But you wish to know more? Well, then, let us conclude —’

“Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires went no further with his demonstration; for, at that same moment, the root of a long, sharp icicle melted in the sun, losing its grip on the summit of the cliff. Like a swift-flying knife it fell, gathering force in flight. Into the fat throat of the pig it sped, who said ‘aoup,’ and died. In the gash, buried was that long, sharp icicle. Out of the gash gushed boiling blood; and, while the Signor Sindaco looked, while the Signor Avvocato Micci looked, while the Signor Dottore Pulobeni looked, — there was no longer any icicle; — but only a dead pig with a slit weasand, resembling Aristide.

“And then? Well! Cannot la sua eccellenza guess the rest? As for me, I am sleepy, — but, sleepy!”

So was I.

About Four Things Necessary

XX

ABOUT THE FOUR THINGS NECESSARY

AFTER sunset, on the southern shore of Lago di Varano, (where we kept camp some time, in forests, among mountains, near several miles of four to twelve cubits depth of salt water for our bodies' health,) I exclaimed, "Vesper adest: iuvenes, consurgite!" Here is Toto bursting with stories!"


We settled into comfortable situations round our rhabdodos, and he said:

"When all, sir, has been said and done, it remains not more than sufficiently difficult to gain paradise. Four things are necessary. First, you must have plenary absolution-in-the-article-of-death, with a release from all canonical censures and excommunications. This depends upon yourself. Secondly, you must have a strong will. Thirdly, you must have a firm determination to allow no one to play the fool with you. Fourthly, you must have an opportunity. And, for these three last, you may depend upon your patron, supposing that you are timid and distrustful of yourself. It is true that a life of virtue and good deeds will help you along the road; also, that wealth and riches will carry you over

About the Four

the rough places, and cause La Sua Santità, Sampietro, to be ready with His Keys: but, for the getting through the gate, and for the making good of your claim to citizenship in the Regno di Dio, you will require the Four Things of which I have spoken; and, having these, you may snap your fingers at the rest.

"Now there was the case of Lazzaro, the mendicant. What that poor little thing suffered during his life, is known to Padre Eterno alone: not to me. But, from the tip of his toes, to the skin of his skull where no hair ever grew, he was one vast itching fester, white and green as a putrid cheese of sheep's milk, and the skin all falling off in dry and dusty flakes. Yet he was resigned to the Will of Padre Eterno, and he bore his dolour patiently; for he knew that, so, he would gain much merit, and shorten his term of purgatory.

"One morning, the Grey Angel chanced to be looking through his kalendar; and he found, there, that the life of Lazzaro was to be ended at one hour after the Ave Maria. So his highness gave the usual advice to Lazzarello, who was the angel-guardian of this mendicant; and, at the first hour of the night, Lazzarello took the soul of Lazzaro in his arms, and carried him right up to the gate of paradise; for he needed none of the fire to cleanse him, having been purified by a more painful purgatory down in the world. And, in the porch, he laid down Lazzaro's soul, blessing him  with the sign of our salvation: at

Things Necessary

which sign the mendicant had his health restored, becoming young, and supple, and smooth, and beautiful as I who speak of him.

“Lazzarello said this to be all that he could do for the present. Lazzaro must now knock at the gate with his proper hand, explain himself to La Sua Santità, Sampietro, and pass through into paradise. There, he would find his angel-guardian with his halo, waiting for him near the Duomo, to present him to the Padre Eterno on His Great White Throne. And so the angel left him.

“This mendicant was an humble, timid man. In the world, everyone had kicked him here, or kicked him there. None had ever treated him with courtesy. ‘Aha, you stinking toad, get out of my way,’ was the only ‘Good-day’ to which his ears had been accustomed. His spirit was broken. He had lost the habit of asserting his rights. And his only wish was, to be allowed to crawl away, that he might hide in cellars or in caves. Therefore, when he considered his position there, right at the very gate of paradise itself, he had many tremors in case the gods should look upon his presence as presumption; and, as for knocking boldly, and speaking to La Sua Santità, Sampietro, face to face, on equal terms, — why, he blushed purple at the bare notion of taking such a liberty.

“There lay that poor little thing, shivering with unnecessary modesty. He hardly dared to breathe, lest he should disturb the bright and

About the Four

shining personages who already had achieved their joy.

“ After waiting many hours, his angel-guardian came back to the gate, to see whether, by some chance, Lazzaro had met with any accident: for it was a thing unheard of that a man who had won his right to everlasting bliss, should hesitate, of his own will, to grasp the same, placed within reach.

“ He found the mendicant shaking with shy fear. And he said to him that he must pluck up courage, and remember that he was just as good as any other man, and bushels better than some, on which account he had only to knock, and the gate would be opened, according to the evangel.

“ Also, the angel said, supposing it to be one of Sampietro’s evil days, when, perhaps, La Sua Santità might happen to show the rough side of His tongue, or might be inclined to argue, Lazzaro would simply have to be firm, and to insist upon a proper reception; for, in these affairs, some decision, some determination were required, according to Sanluca, Physician, Painter, Evangelist, and Chancellor of Madonna Mary, who had written word that we must take much trouble to enter into the Regno di Dio. Therefore, Lazzarello advised the mendicant that he should lay aside all that humility which, in the world, had pleased the Padre Eterno, and that he should comport himself as one who comes into his just inheritance.

Things Necessary

“Lazzaro made an effort. He raised his hand to knock. But he let it fall again, for his modesty was purely terrible. He dared, and did not dare. He dared again, and again he did not dare. At last, he gave a tiny tap, — just the tiniest, tiniest tap: and he sank down, hiding his blushes in his knees.

“Sampietro opened the gate of pearl, a little way. All that He could see was a small cringing heap of man beside the steps; and, being as short of temper as of breath, Sampietro shouted to know what might be his name and business there?

“With fear, Lazzaro’s throat grew hard. His lips trembled, and his tongue refused to wag. Not a sound could he utter; such was the gross humility of him. Sampietro gave a scornful snort, and He shut the gate again.

“After a day or two, Lazzaro found another sprig of courage, and he knocked once more, perhaps not quite so timidly. Sampietro was uncertain whether it were a knock, or just the wind. He thought He need not trouble to go down. He went and peeped through the little window slanting sideways in the tower. There lay Lazzaro, prostrate, shy; and Sampietro called to him that, if he wished to enter, he must give a decent knock, or else he must take his chance, and wait till the gate should be opened for some more manly soul. At His age, Sampietro said, He could not be expected to keep on running up and down stairs continually, on behalf of a person evidently

About the Four

unable to make up his mind. So Lazzaro kneeled at the gate of paradise during two months, listening to the musick of the angels, and to the happy voices of the gods: but, never once in all that time, did any other soul seek to enter; and from this, sir, you may be pleased to learn that it is not altogether of the easiest to gain one of those plenary indulgences which are sprinkled over the prayer-book.

“ But, at last, the very high and very illustrious Lord Baron Duria perished, of a forester’s disease, at his castle of Duria; and his angel-guardian brought the soul of him up to the gate of paradise, with pomp and dignity; for he was rich and grand as the sun, and many masses had been said for him during his sickness and agony, as well as after his demise. Sampietro had heard those masses, all sung by the singers of the opera; and He had smelled of the incense with pleasure, — pure gum olibanum at fifty lire the pound, expense being no object; — and He said to Himself that something having the nature of a reception was due, most assuredly, to this very high and very illustrious Lord Baron Duria. Therefore La Sua Santità sent for Santignazio of Loyola and required him to set some of his novices to work at doing what the circumstances demanded, — Jesuits being the arbiters of elegance, as well as of everything else. — And these draped the gate of pearl with magenta damask, very gorgeous, and with festoons of lace and muslin cur-

Things Necessary

tains, blue, and white, and yellow; and having strewed the floor with bay and box to hide their snuff and other things, they suspended from the ceiling of the archway, cut-glass chandeliers blazing with many hundred tapers of the finest beeswax, till one would almost have said that paradise resembled a May Meeting at Gesù in Rome.

“When the Lord Baron was arriving, Sampietro chaunted, ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, to let the very high and very illustrious Lord Baron Duria come in. Enter, O very magnificent and very sympathetick Lord Baron, — your lordship’s servant am I, and I beseech your lordship to look on me with favour! — What an honour! — What condescension! — Does your lordship admire the decorations? — Ah, so good of your lordship to praise our humble efforts! — We shall always remember this day! — And your lordship’s mansion has been prepared! Yes! — And we trust that your lordship will be consoled for the loss of your lordship’s castle of Duria! Yes! — And if there is any improvement which your lordship might suggest, or any little comforts which your lordship might require, they shall be attended to — oh, yes, they shall have our prompt attention.’

“And, while Sampietro was bowing and scraping and abasing Himself before the rich baron, and the rich baron nodding to Sampietro, the

About Four Things Necessary

angel-guardian of Lazzaro beckoned, through the open gateway, giving him such a sort of look that courage and determination fired him, and he arose, and walked boldly into the garden of paradise, snapping his fingers at the rest."

About Preface of Fra Cherubino

XXJ

ABOUT THE PREFACE OF FRA CHERUBINO

“**T**HEN, there was the case of the brigands.

“They were called Giacomuzzo Dimonti, who was nicknamed Lo Scojattolo, because he was nimble in his movements and a good climber, and Giuseppe Giovannino, who was nicknamed La Lodola, because he was always rubbing his hands and whistling. They were ruffians of the most sinful kind, who did murders, rapes, and robberies, all their lives, among the hills above Lanuvium.

“At last, they added sacrilege to their long list of sins, sacrilege committed on the consecrated person of a poor Little Brother, called Fra Cherubino, who, having been on a long day’s round of the country, begging for his convent in the Pontine Marshes, was jogging along the Appian Way at evening, with his ass well-laden with eggs, and oil, and vegetables, and a bag of money for the poor hanging from his girdle. When he came to the Hill of the Two Towers, those brigands stopped him to ask a blessing; and, as he lifted up his holy hands, Lo Scojattolo

About the Preface

caught them, and dragged him from his saddle, while La Lodola cut the bag of money from his waist. Then they made him promise that he would tell no man what they had done; and, having battered him until he swooned, they ran away with the money and the eggs and the oil and the vegetables and the ass.

“When Fra Cherubino had regained his senses, he tottered into the town all sad; but, being mindful of his promise, he said no word about the sacrilege. He wanted leisure in which to consider the situation well and purely. The townsfolk noticed the bruises of him, and his pallor, and his blood; and, in the wine-shops, after Ave Maria, they meditated about the person, or persons, unknown, who had been persuaded by the devil to incur the Greater Excommunication, by raising hands against a holy friar.

“The next day was the festa of Sangiuliano of Albano, — a wild (discolo) boy resembling me, sir, and of whom I dare not tell you, until you give an order, because of the reverence which is due to Vittorio and Otone and Ercole, and Desiderio and Ilario, and my brother Guido, — and Fra Cherubino was to sing mass, coram pontifice, in the Duomo. People came from near and far to hear that friar sing; for, not only had the Padre Eterno deigned to grant to him the voice of a mighty seraph, but his angel-guardian, also, had taught him the bel canto; so that he made all the marvellous sound in the

of Fra Cherubino

throat of him, and turned it into words with his lips, and his teeth, and the tip of his tongue, flinging pure clear notes into the air, — notes shaped labialiter, according to the rule, into syllables so distinct, so clean-cut, that every single letter was mellifluously plain and audible, except in the *Secreta*, which not even the priest who celebrates may hear, but only *Domeniddio* and His angels. You will know, sir, what an admirable voice this was, if you will consider how many priests cannot be heard distinctly, even when they sing with the high voice. This is because their passages are clogged with snuff, and other dirt, and are unable to make fine sounds: also, because of their absurd attempts to shape sound into words with their noses and the dingle-dangles over the roots of their tongues, instead of using the machinery ordered in the book. And, when they sing with the low voice, you hear nothing but a mutter and a buzz, and sometimes not a single sound of any species.

“ Ah, well, Fra Cherubino was different; and all the world flocked from near and far, to have the pleasure of listening to his seraphic voice.

“ The mass began, continued; and, presently, there was Fra Cherubino singing, — oh, so clear and slow, — the antick musick of the Preface of *Sangiuliano's festa*. One — by — one, the mellow syllables — thrilled — and — melted — in the air. It was a long, but not too long, Preface; and Fra Cherubino sang it after this manner: —

About the Preface

*It is very meet right and our bounden duty :
That we should at all times and in all places
give thanks unto Thee :*

O Signore : Santissimo Padre : Iddio Onnipotente ed Eterno :

And more especially when we admire Thy marvels in the person of Sangiuliano of Albano, whose solemnity we commemorate as on this day:

Nevertheless :

*Evil men have robbed me Thy Little Brother :
Of my ass and of her saddle :*

*Of my eggs and of my oil and of my vegetables :
And of all the money which I had begged for
Thy poor children :*

But :

*To no man have I declared the thing :
Save unto Thee :*

Only :

*O Domeniddio Padre Onnipotente :
Who pitiest the needy and the poor :
And Who knowest all things :*

And therefore :

With angels and archangels :

And with all the company of heaven :

We laud and magnify Thy Glorious Name :

Evermore :

Praising Thee :

And saying :

Sanctus : Sanctus : Sanctus

“While this astounding piece of news was coming from the lips of their beloved fraticello,

of Fra Cherubino

each man in the Duomo turned, and looked upon his neighbour with wide eyes, full of meaning. And, when thanks had been offered at the *Ite missa est*, they poured out into the piazza, very furious, where the Signor Sindaco, standing on the steps of the fountain, shouted to the crowd that, now, the time was come in which Lo Scojattolo and La Lodola must be prevented from committing any more crimes; it being evident that ruffians, who scrupled not to rob a holy friar, were a disgrace to the neighbourhood, and ought to be hunted to extermination just like wolves.

“So, all the men of the town, as well as of all the towns near by, took knives, and guns, and sickles, and scythes, and scoured the country till they had caught those brigands and lodged them in the gaol of Rome, where, in course of time, they were brought before the judges, a list of their crimes was read to them, and they were condemned to decollation on the morrow’s morn.

“At night, in the gaol, Fra Cherubino came to them. He showed them that they must repent of all their sins, and pray for mercy to Domeniddio, offering to Him their deaths in expiation.

“At dawn, he heard their last confessions; and, on the scaffold, he imparted plenary absolution-in-the-article-of-death, with release from all canonical censures and excommunications, to the utmost of his power.

“Lo Scojattolo was the first to face his doom.

About the Preface

He kneeled upon his knees, and fixed his eyes upon the crucifix which Fra Cherubino held before him, saying *Miserere mei Deus*, until the carnefex struck off his head at the verse *Averte Faciem Tuam a peccatis meis : et omnes iniquitates meas dele*: and then, before his angel-guardian had time to seize his soul, he fled straight up to paradise, not even invoking San Durmaele Arcangiolo to show the way; and there he battered on the gate with all his strength, being fearful lest Sathanas, whom he had served all his life long, should catch and carry him to the Brown Kingdom.

“So tremendous was the noise which he created there, that Sampietro hastened to unlatch the gate, demanding who dared to raise so very godless a clamour. To Whom the brigand answered, that he was called Giacomuzzo Dimonti, nicknamed Lo Scojattolo, by profession brigand, robber, fornicator, adulterer, and murthurer, that he had left the world in a state of grace, having obtained plenary absolution-in-the-article-of-death, with release from all canonical censures and excommunications, which death he had offered to the Padre Eterno in expiation of his crimes, and had suffered, the previous moment, on the scaffold of the Campo di Fiori down in Rome. Wherefore, he wished to enter paradise without delay, lest some disgrazia should come upon him.

“But Sampietro met him with much anger;

of Fra Cherubino

and He blocked the gateway, saying, that Lo Scojattolo was making a huge error—error amounting to heresy—if he supposed paradise to be a home for ruffians such as he had just described himself to have been. Heaven was inhabited by pure, and virtuous, and holy persons; and no unclean thing should enter there, as long as He held the Power of the Keys.

“Lo Scojattolo shouted, that he was not unclean, but clean; and, being in a rage, he waved his certificate of absolution-in-the-article-of-death, to which the pounce still clung, right in the face of Sampietro.

“La Sua Santità said that even persons who had lived respectably down there were none the worse for a taste of purgatorial fire; and for a bloody brigand to imagine that he could escape with a whole skin, was just a piece of bare-faced impertinence: and that was all about it. Purgatory was the place for the likes of him, that he might know something of the suffering which, in his life-time, he had put upon other people. What could he know of suffering, Sampietro asked? What pain had he borne down there which might pass for an equivalent to purgatory?

“Hardened criminal as he was, Lo Scojattolo flinched before the anger of the Santo Padre. He wished that he had spoken civilly at first. How was he to answer this angry pontiff now, —pontiff who kept the Keys? He stood on one foot and rubbed the instep of the other up and

About Preface of Fra Cherubino

down the calf of the firm leg in a manner of hesitation. He stammered, that his wife —

“Sampietro caught him by the sleeve, and interrupted, asking whether he meant to say that he had been a married man?

“Lo Scojattolo answered, yes, during twenty years; having married a widow of four and twenty, in order to deprive himself of the knives of her brothers, on the day when he had reached his eighteenth year.

“Then, Sampietro said, ‘Ah, well, well; We have been a married man Ourselves’; and he took the brigand by the hand, and led him sweetly into paradise, saying that that was quite enough, the Padre Eterno being too just, too merciful, to make a man taste purgatory more than once, no matter how black his record may have been.

“So, Lo Scojattolo was numbered among the immortal gods; and Sampietro shut the gate.”

About Insistence of Sangiuseppe

XXIJ

ABOUT THE INSISTENCE OF SANGIUSEPPE

“ **N**OW while these things were being done on the threshold of paradise, Giuseppe Giovannino, nicknamed La Lodola, that other brigand of whom I spoke, mounted the scaffold of the Campo di Fiori; and, kneeling on his knees, he fixed his eyes upon the crucifix which Fra Cherubino held before him, murmuring, *Gesù, Maria, Giuseppe; Gesù, Maria, Giuseppe*, until the carnefex struck off his head; and then his soul fled up to the gate of pearl, as swiftly as the soul of his comrade had flown before him, arriving just in time to hear the close of the argument between Lo Scojattolo and Sampietro, and to have the gate slammed in his face.

“ He hammered with all his might upon the knocker, raising echoes from all quarters of the sky; and Sampietro, who had intended to stroll a little way with Lo Scojattolo that He might hear the latest gossip of the City, was obliged to offer His excuses, and to hurry to the gate. As soon as He had opened it a little way, La Lodola attempted to push through: but Sampietro hit

About the Insistence

him over the knuckles with the Keys, bidding him to behave himself, and to tell his name and business there.

“La Lodola answered, that he was called Giuseppe Giovannino, the other being a nickname only; by profession brigand, robber, fornicator, adulterer, and murderer; that he claimed admission as his right, seeing that he had left the world in a state of grace, being armed with plenary absolution-in-the-article-of-death, and released from all canonical censures and excommunications.

“But one brigand was sufficient for Sampietro. He could not see His way to admit a second; and He firmly stated that La Lodola must make up his mind to go to purgatory without any more nonsensical ado. La Sua Santità made as though He were about to close the gate and terminate the interview; but La Lodola caught hold of it, daring Sampietro to crush his fingers, and to stain with blood the sacred precincts, and demanding why Lo Scojattolo should have been allowed to enter paradise without a course of purgatory, while he, the comrade of the said Scojattolo, and no jot a viler villain, should be sent to purgatory, paradise being denied. It was not fair. It was not what he had expected of Sampietro. What was sauce for the gander was sauce, also, for the goose; and so on, and so on.

“Sampietro answered, that the cases were by no means so similar as La Lodola pretended;

of Sangiuseppe

his comrade having already undergone a course of purgatory in his life-time, in that he had been a married man.

“ At this La Lodola eagerly spread his hands, saying, that if that were all, he had as much right to paradise as Lo Scojattolo, and even more; because he had made a practice of being married many times. It was his constant habit, at all times and in all places, in fact, he said.

“ Sampietro was utterly disgusted. He declared this admission to be a fatal and a final one. Purgatory, He said, was indispensable to La Lodola, seeing that there was a strict rule which prevented either idiots or imbeciles from entering paradise. Sampietro banged the gate, and returned to Lo Scojattolo in the garden; while La Lodola was left alone, outside.

“ But this brigand was not a man who takes rebuffs with patience. Having freed his mind, he stamped upon the ground, and asked himself who was this Sampietro, after all, that He should treat him so? In a moment, something about the past life of La Sua Santità flashed across his mind. He gave a cunning chuckle; and, kneeling on his knees, he put his lips to the key-hole of the gate; and, with high voice, he screamed, ‘ *Cockadoodledoo! Cockadoodledoo!* ’

“ Oh, sir; but what a shock for Sampietro! The heart of Him turned to boiling water. He dropped the arm of Lo Scojattolo there, on the very steps of the duomo, strewing flat the aco-

About the Insistence

lyths who held His orfreys, and those who waved the fans of peacock's tails by His side; and He fled back to the gate, cursing, fumbling with the keys. He loosed the latch. He flung the gate wide open; and He dragged that naughty Lodola inside, begging him, beseeching him not to make those horrid noises, — noises which would serve no purpose, — noises which would open up old wounds, reminding the high gods of matters painful to remember, better buried in oblivion.

“La Lodola answered, that it was not his wish to make himself a nuisance to Sampietro; far from it. He simply wanted to get inside the gate of pearl: and, having done that, he remained the obedient humble servant of La Sua Santità.

“Well! Of course Sampietro could not turn him out again. No. But He declined the responsibility of presenting La Lodola to the Padre Eterno, things being as they were. Wherefore a patron must be found; and He suggested that the brigand would do well to review his past life, as though in preparation for a general confession, that he might discover whether, by some chance, he had a claim upon the good offices of some or any of the gods already in glory.

“La Lodola declared, that, on that score, there need be no difficulty. At his baptism, his godfather called him Giuseppe, placing him under the protection of the divo who was Direttore della Sacra Famiglia; and, all through his life, it had been his constant habit to recite *Gloria Patri*

of Sangiuseppe

three times every morning and every night, in honour of Sangiuseppe. Also, in brawls, he had always invoked Sangiuseppe; and, when he wished to curse or to swear, he had cried commonly on Sangiuseppe, instead of on such antick gods as the Lord Dionusos, or the Lord Herakles, as did the other brigands, his companions. Wherefore, it was the duty of Sangiuseppe to make him some return for all these attentions, by taking interest in his welfare now.

“Sampietro was glad to have the matter taken off His hands so easily. He dispatched two acolyths with waxen torches to bear His compliments to Sangiuseppe, requesting him to be so kind as to come down to the gate for a minute, on urgent official business: and, when Sangiuseppe appeared, Sampietro said a few words, introducing La Lodola, and explaining the favour which he wished to ask.

“Sangiuseppe looked sternly at the brigand, and, in a searching manner, examined his conscience concerning his past life. Horrible were the crimes confessed by La Lodola, grim as adamant the face of Sangiuseppe; until the brigand alleged that he had recited that *Gloria Patri* three times every night and every morning. Sangiuseppe referred to the list of his regular clients; and finding there the name, Giuseppe Giovannino, according to the statement of the brigand, he looked more kindly on him, and said that he would see what could be done. Also, Sangiuseppe

About the Insistence

seppe patted him on the shoulder, as a father pats a naughty child who, after confession, has been forgiven; and said that he must cheer up, for he would see him through his difficulty. And, because the sins of La Lodola had been so terrible, Sangiuseppe thought that it might be as well to begin with an application to Il Santissimo Himself, and not to trouble about asking favours of other gods; for these were peculiar people, who had, each, his own friends to attend to, and who might not care to undertake the affairs of a stranger in whom they had no interest. So Sangiuseppe wrote a petition in these words:

“ The petitioner, Giuseppe Giovannino, called La Lodola, of the age of thirty-seven years, formerly living in the cave on the Hill of the Two Towers above the Pontine Marshes, by profession brigand, robber, fornicator, adulterer, and murderer, has suffered decollation on the scaffold of the Campo di Fiori in Rome, for the crime of sacrilege. He petitions for confirmation of his citizenship of this Kingdom: which citizenship he claims to have merited by full contrition, exact confession, and plenary absolution-in-the-article-of-death, with release from all canonical censures and excommunications. The case is recommended by his patron

SANGIUSEPPE,

*Direttore della Sacra Famiglia,
and the rest.*

“ Then, Sangiuseppe spoke a word to San Suriele Arcangiolo, the Prince of the Presence,

of Sangiuseppe

who guards the door, and gained admission to the Duomo. There, he and his client kneeled down before Il Santissimo, first making three genuflexions on both knees, according to the rule; and the brigand presented his petition.

“But Il Santissimo required to know what His Blessed Mother had said; and, when Sangiuseppe answered, that La Sua Maestà had not been consulted, Santissimo returned the petition to La Lodola, saying, that she was Rifugio dej peccatorj, having full authority to deal with the affair.

“Sangiuseppe made the brigand rise, making three genuflexions on both knees as before; and retired, a little to the right, always facing Il Santissimo, until they reached the throne of La Madre di Dio, where La Lodola made his best bow, and presented his petition.

“La Santissima Vergine read it with care, inquiring whether the petitioner had worn the brown scapular. When she heard that he had not done this, she was much shocked; and she asked whether he had invoked her aid during his life.

“With shame, La Lodola replied, that he had never even given her a thought, and had never used her name except when he was surprised. And he began to feel very sorry for himself; and he wanted to weep; for he was certain that his chances were becoming very small indeed. Yet, though it seemed that fire was likely to be his portion, something — of I know not what —

About the Insistence

forced him to make a clean breast of all his wickedness, when La Santissima Vergine put her gentle questions to him.

“She became very sad. She looked at her Son with eyes imploring. Seeing His Face to be terrible and full of doom, the tears ran down her cheeks. She nodded her head back, — oh, but in hopeless pity for the miserable brigand, who, in his life, had never given her a thought, and whom, now, she must refuse to aid.

“La Lodola checked his dolour with a sigh. He would not have that lovely Lady grieve on his account. He bowed low before her; and, retiring always backward, he passed out of the Duomo with his patron, Sangiuseppe.

“In the court, the two paced backward and forward for a quarter of an hour; and, because his patron did not speak, but knit his brows, and muttered in his beard, the brigand said that, now, he saw that he had been rash, — he had no chance, — it was his evil day, — his luck had deserted him; and, while he would always remember the kindness of Sangiuseppe, he felt it to be useless, unbecoming, to give him any more trouble; and, so, he simply begged a blessing before he withdrew to another place, — place for which his crimes had fitted him.

“But Sangiuseppe checked him there, saying that this was all nonsense. Did La Lodola suppose that the power of the Direttore della Sacra Famiglia went no further? Did La Lodola

of Sangiuseppe

imagine for a moment that the Patron-Of-All-Those-Who-Confidently-Call-Upon-Him would suffer a single one of his clients to perish everlastingly? Not by any means! La Lodola had mistaken his god, if that were his idea! Were there no other August Personages besides Those Whom they had just left? Indeed there were! Application must be made to These, before that hope should be laid down. Paradise was the land of hope; and, having gained a foothold there, La Lodola must struggle, must persevere, till he had made that foothold sure. With these words, and with others like them, Sangiuseppe cheered the brigand, while he sent one of the seven angels to find out whether the Santo Spirito received at that late hour.

“Presently, the angel returned, saying, that audiences were over for the day; and the Santo Spirito was gone into His Oratory to say the Little Office of Beata Maria Vergine, at which devotion He might not be disturbed.

“Sangiuseppe made a gesture of impatience. He said that it was purely silly to beat about the bush like this. Here was an affair of vital interest, which should be settled out of hand. Why not do the proper thing, and go straight to the Fountain-Head of Justice, without any more dilly-dallying? And, seizing La Lodola by his arm, he whisked him right into the Presence, making him lie prostrate before the Padre Eterno on His Great White Throne.

About the Insistence

“Sangiuseppe took the petition. To La Suprema Maestà e Grandezza, he presented it, begging favourable consideration.

“The Padre Eterno deigned to read the scroll.

“At the end, He returned it to the patron of La Lodola saying that He did not know whether Sangiuseppe’s hardihood, or his lack of the sense of decency, gave Him most amazement. Did Sangiuseppe expect that the presence of a person of this description — brigand, robber, fornicator, adulterer, murderer, sacrilegist, on his own showing — would be tolerated for an instant? He was astounded at Sangiuseppe! And the answer to that petition would be —

“But, here, Sangiuseppe interrupted, declaring that, notwithstanding all that had been said, certain facts remained. This brigand had received, in baptism, his name, Giuseppe, and had invoked him at least twice daily during his life in the world. Also, Sangiuseppe begged the Padre Eterno to remember that he who spoke had always enjoyed the reputation of being a god worthy of trust; and he had not the intention of forfeiting the said reputation. La Lodola was his client; and, never yet, had he forsaken any one who placed confidence in him. He must ask that the petition of his client be granted. He must ask it as a personal favour. It was seldom that he asked a personal favour. He was not one of those tiresome fashionable little gods who were always buzzing about, making themselves necessary with

of Sangiuseppe

lace pictures and periapts; but just a plain honest god out of the Evangel, where any one might read of him as a *just man*. That testimonial to his character was decisive, being contained in the Canonical Scripture, whose writers wrote nothing but the Words of La Suprema Maestà. Therefore, as a just man, he asked only for justice. He asked it as a personal favour. And when, — being a just man all the time, — he did think proper to ask a personal favour, he expected to have that favour granted. In conclusion, all that he could say was this, that if that favour were not granted — well, he would simply leave. And — what was more — as Direttore della Sacra Famiglia, he would remove his Spouse, and her Divine Child also, with him, and take up his abode in the Santa Casa di Loreto, a quite commodious residence, which pious persons had decorated with gold and precious marbles in a manner leaving nothing to be desired. And that was that!

“ Then there was a pregnant silence.

“ In the stillness of the hush, one of the little blue cherubini of the aureola whimpered, ‘ Oh! But where should we be then!’

“ The Padre Eterno smiled. Whispers rustled through the ranks of the company of heaven. San Sandalfone Serafino paused in placing laurel crowns upon the Head of his Creator. The seven angels blew a fanfare on their trumpets commanding silence.

About Insistence of Sangiuseppe

“Then the air vibrated with the distant rolling thunder of the Voice of the Padre Eterno, who deigned to say, ‘WE GRANT TO GIUSEPPE GIOVANNINO, CALLED LA LODOLA, CITIZENSHIP OF OUR KINGDOM, THROUGH THE POWERFUL INTERCESSION OF SANGIUSEPPE, ACCORDING TO THE EVANGEL OF SAN MATTEO, WHERE IT IS WRITTEN THAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SHALL SUFFER VIOLENCE, AND THAT THE VIOLENT MAN SHALL TAKE IT BY FORCE. BENEDICAT VOS OMNIPOTENS DEUS ❖❖❖ PATER ❖❖❖ ET FILIUS ❖❖❖ ET SPIRITUS SANCTUS.’”

About a Vegetable Purgatory

XXIIJ

ABOUT A VEGETABLE PURGATORY

“**B**EHOLD a malefactor !”
Toto came through the bushes behind me, and pointed a rigid finger at Desiderio, beautifully sleeping by a thicket covered with yellow cystus, across the little sunlit glade.

It was in the Bosco dell' Ombra, near by Monte Nicola; and I was painting Desiderio in the character of Love the Dreamer. For this purpose I had acquired him, seeing him to be a veritable reincarnation of the Son of Kuthereia, with his yellow hair, and yellow eyes, and his white smooth skin, glossy from head to foot with the finest yellow silken down, which made him shine in the sun as though he were chiselled in pale gold. He never wished to speak; he fed as delicately as a little bird; was always drowsy, and generally asleep; lived his own happy little life; and, at fourteen, showed a slim round shape like the David of Donatello, crowned with short and waving curls.

Under a smaragdine canopy of beeches, whose trunks, massive and fantastick, were sheathed in

About a Vegetable Purgatory

iron grey mail, the afternoon was warm. Everyone still slept: and I was painting Himeros, yellow, on yellow and green. Then came Toto; who glowered upon my unconscious model, and proclaimed him to be a malefactor.

“What has he done now?” I asked.

“But, sir, do you not see his garland?”

Desiderio slept in peace, by the thicket covered with yellow cystus, diademed with daffy-dillies.

“Oh, yes; I see his garland. I told him to get a garland. Don't you see that it helps the picture, Toto mio?”

“Yes, sir; of course a garland must be worn. And, for Divinamore, a garland of white roses. But daffy-dillies — daffy-dillies! By the goose! Nothing, but inbred sin, could have made the creature choose daffy-dillies out of all the many million flowers, in all these miles of forest. La sua eccellenza never ordered daffy-dillies. That I know. It would be too discourteous. And Desiderio is a malefactor, as I have said.”

“But why not daffy-dillies?”

“Sir, it is plain, after that question, that, if I tell you truth, I shall not please you; and, if I please you, I shall not tell you truth.”

“Then, by all means, tell the truth, and don't omit a single word.”

“Very well, sir. You shall hear a voice ignorant of lies. Now, in the whole body of you, there is not more than one pinch of cruelty. Also,

About a Vegetable Purgatory

you punish us when we are cruel or unkind, even to unimportant things, per esempio, puppies. And Desiderio is a malefactor; for he has taken advantage of your permission to crown himself with flowers, in that he has most rudely, most nefariously, chosen daffy-dillies. Oh, it is a very serious matter to pluck daffy-dillies; and Santacore died of that same, who, for her sin, is doomed to spend one half of the year in paradise; the other half in purgatory. But, at least, Desiderio is unkind.

“ Ah, sir, — if you knew all — ”

I laid down my palette, and lighted a cigarette, having asserted that I was waiting, and yearning, and burning, to know all, from the very beginning. He pillowed his head in his arms; his glance soared to the jewels of verdure overhead, dilating as he chaunted of mysteries unseen.

“ Sir, you shall know that the Padre Eterno prepares for every man a particular purgatory suited to his particular sin. Yes. That is where He is so kind; for you may trust Him not to play you the ungenerous trick of treating you as He treats the others. No. You have your sins; and He will fit them with a solely proper cure. I have mine; and He will deal with me as I deserve. No more, no less. Well then: some will have to burn, and some to freeze; and the lazy will be chained immoveably; and busy-bodies will be kept always on the jog; and the haughty will be used as doorsteps; and the humble, clothed in

About a Vegetable Purgatory

gold and tails of peacocks, will have to sit on shining thrones until they learn to carry themselves with dignity, — dignity of children of the Re del Cielo, even as I am, — I, — Teodoro! And by these means, or by others which are not now in my mouth, does the Padre Eterno clear us of whatever stain of sin there may be in us, at the time when Sant' Azraele Arcangiolo shall snip the cord which binds our bodies to our souls; that He may make the said souls like those of the gods, who will have to be our daily friends in paradise.

“ But now I am to tell you about persons who have their purgatory in flowers, or in trees; persons who, for some little sort of sin, are pent in places from which they may not move, wearing unusual shapes which not their lovers, nor even their own mothers, recognise; speechless, yet hearing everything; helpless, yet seeing everything; at the mercy of every beast, or of the rude hand of Desiderio, rather-brutal-than-not.

“ Yes, sir, — daffy-dillies. You shall know that, formerly, there lived a shepherd boy; and I think him to have been of the Abruzzi, though of that I am not certain: and, when he reached the age of seventeen years, he found himself to have a Vocation for the priesthood. Whether it was a present, in return for the musick of his flute, which he played while his goats were sleeping in the shade, or whatever

About a Vegetable Purgatory

else, has not been told to me. But there was his Vocation all the same. I am sure that Madonnina smiled on him, for he loved her dearly: and, on a night when he was lying in the open, just breathing little holy songs like this one, the sky was dark and clear, perfumed with cyclamen; and Atiso kneeled, and made a vow, that he would be her servant, always, whom he called the Mother of the Maker of the stars. That was his answer to her call.

“Now, sir, a Vocation is a very serious thing, as I have often said to Niccolo my brother. It makes a mighty difference in your behaviour to yourself, as well as to your friends. If you have no Vocation, well; you can only do your best. But, if you have it, then circumspect must be your mortal passage. And Atiso was a failure. For, in a year or two, he forgot his vow to Madonnina; and then he allowed himself to fall in love with a young girl of his parish who was called the Signorina Sangarisa.

“Madonna grieved because Atiso had forgotten her. She looked out from her picture in the church, where he came to pay his duty, with such sadness, and such longing, that something like a wave swept through his heart, and something like a shutter lifted from his eyes, so that he scorned himself for being unfaithful to his lady; and, in remorse, he ran away to the woods, where he put himself to prayer and penance, until he had forgotten the Sangarisa,

About a Vegetable Purgatory

and had made his peace with her who held his vow. After he had been a priest for many years, he was allowed to leave this life; and, for his purgatory, he was changed into a pine-tree, tall and slender, as he was at that time when he belied his promise, head veiled in sad-colour, drooping in regret.

“ So he must remain until the ultimate day of judging; silent, helpless, at the mercy of all the world, because he showed more than enough mercy to himself.

“ Also, there was a boy called Chupariso, who, on one of his evil days, slew a tame stag which was the property of some convent of San Michele Arcangiolo; at which mischance, he worked himself into a fever; and presently he died. Of course, he was very sorry, and he said so, frankly; because every respectable boy knows better than to do wilful damage to the pets of holy persons: but Chupariso showed such extravagance of sorrow, that, for his purgatory, San Michele Arcangiolo obtained an Order, from the Padre Eterno, to change him into a cypress-tree.

“ So he must remain until the ultimate day of judging; symbol of sorrow, silent, helpless, at the mercy of all the world, because he wasted sorrow upon a simple accident.

“ Also, there was a boy called Zafferano, who loved a girl. And he was too impatient in his love; and she was no less impatient than her lover: and—well, then,—yes, sir.

About a Vegetable Purgatory

“So, when they died, the Padre Eterno very kindly turned the girl into a yew-tree, and the boy into a saffron-flower, who, all day long must sit at the yew-tree’s foot, apart.

“So they must remain, until the ultimate day of judging; separate each from other, and yet always near; silent, helpless, at the mercy of all the world, because of their impatience.

“Also, there was a boy called Adone, handsome to look at, and in deeds not refuting his aspect. The mania of sport occupied his mind, making him neglectful of his orisons to Madonnina. Often, she sent an angel to whisper in his ear; but this boy with yellow hair refused attention; nor would he even give a moment to kiss his fingers to her picture. All his time he spent hunting in the forests, and doing mighty deeds, brandishing a spear which had a short head of steel. With swiftness equal to the winds, he carried death to fighting lions, and slew wild boars; bearing their panting bodies to the charcoal-burners, that these might admire his courage, and his strength. But, one day, when he was at the chase, from a dusky thicket, there rushed a huge wild boar; who, with his ruthless tusk, killed the boy Adone: and when he died the Padre Eterno changed him into the flower called anemone.

“So he must remain until the ultimate day of judging; Adone, once the ardent hunter, now helpless, at the mercy of all the world, raising purple eyes to the pitiful sky, praying silent

About a Vegetable Purgatory


prayers to complete the tale of those which he neglected when he lived this life.

“Also, there was a boy called Giacinto, — friend of San Michele Arcangiolo; and he was not beautiful only; but beautiful, and also noble. All the same he had his little sins, such as you would expect of anyone. Because he was the friend of an archangel, the kakodaimons of the Brown Kingdom hated him; and they always stood on tiptoe, looking for a chance of doing him a mischief. One day, it happened that San Michele was absent on his private business; and Giacinto was alone. If that he had been altogether holy, he would have spent the time in making a meditation, — meditation on the transcendent splendour of his patron, *per esempio*; — but he was thoughtless, as all boys are, when they are not exactly good, and not exactly bad: and he went out by the brook-side to play at quoits, neither spitting thrice, nor making horns, nor holding both his thumbs, in defiance of sinister things, being young enough to have no fear. And Sathanas saw his chance. He called his slave, the kakodaimon who blows that horrible wind which the people of these regions call the Bora; and, when Giacinto retired one pace, balancing his quoit, His Wickedness made himself invisible, and came and stood in front of him, at a distance of thirteen cubits; and, when Giacinto, springing forward, straightening upward, hurled his quoit, the said kakodaimon snorted just one fierce cold

About a Vegetable Purgatory

gust, blowing back the heavy disc on to the forehead of the boy, from which he took a wound, so deadly that he fell down there, and died.

“Then the said kakodaimon fled before San Michele Arcangiolo, swooping from paradise; who mourned the death of his little friend, lying in his blood upon the greensward, like some white flower stained purple, the victim of a mower’s scythe.

“And the Great Prince took his scales of gold; and he weighed the soul of Giacinto then and there; for he hoped to find him ready for the diadem of paradise. But, alas, Giacinto’s little sins weighed down the scale; and the archangel became aware that this was a matter of purgatory. So, pleading before the Padre Eterno, obtaining the Order which he craved, he buried the boy’s body in a cool place, at the margin of the brook; and he blessed the grave  with the sign of our salvation: at which sign a tall, slim plant uprose, with leaves of tender green, crowned with a flower so rare and ravishing, that, when one sees it, one prays to be made all nose: and, in this martagon lily, having on its petals words of woe, the archangel enclosed the soul of his friend Giacinto.

“So he must remain until the ultimate day of judging; Giacinto, once so brave of hand, so shrill of voice, so clever of limb, now silent, helpless, at the mercy of all the world, until to Divine Justice he shall have atoned for his little sins.

About a Vegetable Purgatory

“Also, there was a maid called Dafne; and San Michele Arcangiolo wished her well, offering to take her under his protection: but she was difficult, and not-a-little silly.

“Soon she died; and, immediately, she saw what she had missed;—great was her grief. And she was changed into a laurel, whose leaves the Great Prince wears for a garland on his helm—the victorious flower of his handiwork, which he won when Dafne hardened her heart no more against him.

“So she must remain until the ultimate day of judging; silent, helpless, at the mercy of all the world, because in life she preferred her own will, and refused the friendship of the god with the hair of gold.

“Also, there was a boy called Narchiso, an object of admiration, with songs, among his equals, and among his elders, and an object of interest to all young maids. But, for these, he had no liking; though some died for love of his grace. He was the only son of his parents. His sister was their only daughter. These two were twins, as like as two little drops of dew; and each one loved the other, using all their love till none was left unused. Therefore, Narchiso and his sister ran away into a forest, similar to this forest. They lived in peace, in those green solitudes; until the maiden died, and angels carried her candid soul to paradise.

“Narchiso was alone, longing for his sister

About a Vegetable Purgatory

every day, sitting by the stillness of a water-spring, bathed, as to his tender body, by the yellow and purple petals of wall-flowers — wall-flowers, which hold a soul, by name Ione, of whose history I am ignorant, knowing nothing more than just the name.

“ And, by-and-bye, when his streaming tears had ceased to flow, and the blindness of his grief had worn away, this boy Narchiso beheld the reflection of his image in the water. And, in looking on the likeness of himself, he saw the likeness of Candida, his dead sister; and, from that day forward, he moved not from his station by the water-spring, spending each hour of daylight in contemplation of the gracious loveliness reflected in the shadows of the pool; until he lost his longing for the maid in paradise, and loved, with all his soul, the apparition of his image in the water. And later, — for nothing in the world stands still, not even Love, which must descend, when there are no angel-wings to raise it high, — later, his affection passed, from the mere reflection of his beauty, to his veritable self.

“ Then, he had no speck of true love left; because true love is never for one’s self, but always for another, — and, for choice, for one unworthy, whereby the opportunity for sacrifice arises, whence merits may be won: — and, in the end, when he was nothing but a mass of selfishness, Narchiso pined away and died, and, for his purgatory, he was imprisoned in a daffy-dilly.

About a Vegetable Purgatory

“So he must remain until the ultimate day of judging; never near water where he might see his image and so gain joy; silent, helpless, at the mercy of all the world, till all his selfishness is purged away.

“True, sir? Oh, yes, — but, true! For you commanded that I should never lie. And, indeed, I have given you the sayings of Frat’ Innocente-of-the-Nine-Quires, — sayings which go very near the path of truth. But, often enough, I, who speak to you, have seen the faces, and the waving arms, of lovely milk-white girls, looking at me from oak-trees, and among the river-reeds. Also, sir, — and not so long ago, — you, yourself, recited histories concerning a noble lord of some strange country, who made musick, so divinely, on his chitarone, that wild beasts became like gentle little kittens, and trees tore up their roots to follow in his train, as virgin-lilies, in the canticle, follow the Agnello di Dio whithersoever He goeth. Yes, sir; it is all as true as life, or sunlight: and, if I believe that trees can walk, it will not be too difficult for you to believe that flowers must remain still, saying never a word, moving never by the breadth of Arachne’s Thread from the place whereon they grow, by reason of the souls whom they have to hold in purgatory.

“Poor dear flowers! Think, sir, how that a nightmare chains them, that they shall not leap nor run! Think of the torment which they suffer in hearing wicked words, or foolish words,

About a Vegetable Purgatory

which they may not notice, being doomed to silence! By the goat! Yes! And, if one owes courtesy to animals and persons, why not owe it also to flowers? Yet they are trampled down or torn to pieces; but never by me, Teodoro, for I will not be cruel to those persons who go in sadness, being less strong, less free than I; — at least, not when I know them as they are. And I do know those whose histories I have chaunted; therefore, knowing them, I must be kind. There are plenty of other flowers, of whom I have not learned that they are souls in purgatory. These I may allow myself to pluck, and keep my conscience clean; seeing that one earns no blame for what one does not refuse to know. But Desiderio knows, — have I not made all the boys to know? — and especially about Narchiso in the daffy-dillies, seeing so many millions in this forest, day after day. Yet he has not scrupled to tear up daffy-dillies, twenty at the least, and to twist, of them, a garland for his ruthless head.

“Wherefore, I have called Desiderio a malefactor, whom presently I shall awaken; and he will take from me a whipping of the very finest for his forgetfulness, and for his discourtesy; — that is to say, supposing that *la sua eccellenza* still means me to keep his boys in order. Oh, sir, do look at him! Oh, Madonna mia! Sir, be pleased to go and take a little stroll in the forest, while I smack him!”

About What is Due to Contrition

XXIIIJ

ABOUT WHAT IS DUE TO CONTRITION

AT Vasto d' Aimone. The end of an awe-full afternoon. The hot air throbbed in paralysis and apprehension. In battalions, wild black-purple clouds rolled up, massing in a mist saturated with sulphurous red, with sombre grey.

I was standing by the window. I did not care to move or speak. I felt the elements to be marshalling for horrid war.

"You know, sir, that you have not been making me very easy;" Toto said. During four months, he had been away from home; and, being bored, he was inclined to show contempt at what he called "these strange places" through which it was my will to go. I was visiting him with my displeasure.

I answered with no word. I waited for the outbreak of the storm. I could hear wind swishing through the olives, whipping branches into smoke.

"Eccellenza! Pardon!" He was not happy, evidently.

I told him to be quiet. I did not tell him that

About What is Due to Contrition

I was sick with terror at the imminent thunder-storm.

A sword-like flame split the heavens, and set them all ablaze. The world became black shadows floating on the blue of fire. On the instant, followed a crash which shook the solid earth as a heron shakes a lizard. And, with a scream, new winds awoke; and fled, on beating pinions.

“Pardon, sir, pardon!” He flung himself upon the floor.

I bade him count his beads. I was counting mine in my trousers’ pocket as fast as ever I could go, leaning against the window, and looking out to sea. He came and stood near my right ankle.

“Of your kindness, sir, pardon!”

Sleet and hail hissed and raged, resembling steam.

“Sir, I pray you to be merciful!”

In the south-east, came glimpses of Monte Gargano, at times; and, when rivers of flame rove ravines through mountains of black cloud, one could see the Tremiti, dotting a sea of blinding blue. Lelio Orsi has painted such a distracted storm-torn sky.

“Sir, I confess myself to be a wicked boy!”

The earth trembled, and was afraid. The waves of the sea rode high, and dashed themselves to death against the towered rocks. Weird

About What is Due to Contrition

winds rushed shrieking down to catch the whirling spume: but the blighting slash of hail thwarted them, and scattered it, and beat it low.

“Sir, I offer a promise to amend my naughty ways!”

Lightning and thunder flickered and roared continually. Sea and sky rushed, each pursuing other, through a black obscurity, which, splitting, gave brief vistas of viridian blue.

“Sir, pardon!”

I was speechless, counting hidden beads with fervour, and motionless,—learning the shapes and the sounds of the tumultuous spectacle, of the din, with every wit. Toto moved to the distant corner of the window. He gave me such a sort of look.

Far away eastward, the Diomedan Islands flashed in view, riding on the tortured water like a school of dolphins. In another moment, thunderclouds came hurrying to blot them out.

Toto said no more, aloud. He leaned upon the window-sill, and watched the storm, muttering little things sometimes.

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The tempest was in its agony, ready to flee away and be at rest. Hailstones melted into rain, which fell in steady sheets. Overhead, a greyer light began to feel its way. But far away, and farther, sea and sky were frayed and torn by heaving gusts of wind.

About What is Due to Contrition

Toto quivered as to his shoulders, but his face was hidden, pressed against the pane.

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The storm was leaving Vasto. Already, there was a cleared space in the atmosphere, where the sea sobbed sullenly, convulsively, like the throats of beaten women after rage. But the distance was black density; and fierce storms swept and circled there in monstrous curves.

“A-a-a-a-a-a-a-ah!!!” Toto gasped.

It was a whirlpool of clouds, which drooped in swaying tassels of mist; and a whirlpool of waves, which soared in hissing spray. From height and depth, they rushed together seeking lips; and, twining, writhed close-clipped, hither, thither, tortuously, over a boiling seething sea. A flash of lightning, like a brandished sword, cut the rocking rolling column, and drove the storm away, and yet away.

“Sir, sir,—the day of the week, if you please?”

“Thursday.”

“Ah! — And of the month?”

“Don’t know. Beginning of October. Third, I think.”

He did quick calculations with his fingers. He gave himself a little shake of satisfaction. He returned to his station at the window.

About What is Due to Contrition

The storm was away at the back of Gargano, thinning into dissolution. I was aware of a wet gleam from behind my tower; and, down the precipitous cliff beneath, waves rolled with crests a-shine.

Toto was muttering, "The day itself— forgiveness— who could now refuse?—"

I concluded my more private matter with extreme alacrity, *O clemens, O pia*, etc.; and observed that a person, knowing anything worth knowing and omitting to let another share his joy, deserved to be hanged. Indeed, hanging was too good for such an one, I said.

Toto then revealed himself in all his majesty. His right hand was arranged in a formal manner,—the first and second fingers stretched out straight, the third and fourth reposing on the palm, the thumb erect and competent to wriggle when occasion called,—and he preached in this wise:

"After the blissful vision which has been vouchsafed, *la sua eccellenza* will be aware that the Padre Eterno takes no shame at showing mercy to a sinner who is truly contrite."

I admitted the being aware of that.

"Then, *la sua eccellenza* shall also know, that as soon as Giuda, cognominato Iscariote, had sold his Master, a pain across the chest took him, which made him feel very sorry, and try to make good the damage which he had done: but, then, it was too late—it always is too late; and the

About What is Due to Contrition

thing went on. Nevertheless, there was that one moment of contrition on the part of Giuda, cognominato Iscariote, — a super-excellent trait in anyone, as well as a merit of sorts. It passed. It was written down in the book of the deeds of his life, — written down by the angel-guardian of Giuda, cognominato Iscariote.

“And the next moment there came an arch-kakodaimon, looking very noble, but a blackamoor: and His Wickedness climbed and clung upon the shoulders of Giuda, cognominato Iscariote, and made him see a tree, and made him find a rope all ready to his hand; and he gave him not a moment in which to think of praying for a prayer; so he simply hanged himself; which made him very disappointed in the flick of a finger, for the rope was old, and frayed, — just the kind of rope a kakodaimon would provide! — and, when he leaped, it throttled him, and broke; and dropped him deftly down to hell.

“Here was a shocking thing, — a thing on which one had no right to calculate. It was so upsetting to the plans; and it took the angel-guardian of Giuda, cognominato Iscariote, unawares. Oh, he was bad, that Apostle! — undoubtedly, very bad indeed, — an unscrupulous rascal, a bandit, an accursed Jew, and a skinfull of covetousness and greed. Also, a *felo de se*. But still, there was that one moment of true contrition. In justice, there was something due to him for that.

About What is Due to Contrition

“ And that charitable angel-guardian spread his white-winged arms, swimming i’ the air right up to paradise, as swiftly as an arrow feathered with a sea-gull’s plume: and he passed through the gate of pearl, speaking neither to his brothers, nor to the shining gods, for his errand was an urgent one; and he pierced the radiant throng of angels and of the spirits of just men perfected; flying onward — onward — always onward, to the Duomo in the heart of heaven, where he went and begged the favour of an Audience of the Dweller-In-The-Innermost: to Whom he, weeping, told a pitiful tale of how that he had had a man to guard, — and how that man had, somehow, tasted sin, — and, liking it, had plunged therein as in a bath, — soaking his soul for years and years and years, — until it softened, and became a limp rag of a soul, weak, feeble, having no more the strength to rise erect, to fight the battle of a Christian man against temptation and the kakedaimons of the depths; — and, by and bye, he found himself to be incapable of doing well, — sin-saturated as he was: — then, last of all, he crowned a wicked life with a Crime, — too monstrous to be named in words, — it would be within the knowledge of Omniscience. Furthermore, the angel said, after that Crime, his man had made experience of a moment of efficacious grace (*gratia efficax*), from which he drew enough of goodwill to repent him truly of his sin, — there was his confession, *I have betrayed Innocence*, to prove it; — and, after, in a

About What is Due to Contrition

wild spasm of remorse, he had given himself a hanging with a silly sort of rope, the first that came to hand, but rotten; which had played him the trick of breaking, and had dropped him down to hell.

“That was the whole case, the angel-guardian said; and, having performed three profound prostrations as prescribed in the ritual, he arose, and spread his hands, palm upward, weeping, praying *La Suprema Maestà e Grandezza* to show mercy, and to give a righteous judgment, because of the moment, just the one moment, in which the miserable Apostle had shown contrition.

“And Domeniddio loved that angel-guardian for his gentle tender heart; and He deigned to make it an Order that, once in every year until the consummation of the world, upon the day which is farthest from the Birthday of the Chalice, — that being the anniversary of his monstrous Crime, — to Giuda, cognominato Iscariote, should be conceded the inestimable envied privilege of being drawn from the flaming pit of hell, where never water is, and of being dipped by his angel-guardian in the middle of the sea; whereby his burning pangs might be assuaged, for just twice as long a time as his contrition had endured, according to the scripture, where it is written, *good measure, shaken together, pressed down, and running over the pottle.*

“Sir, you have here the day itself: the portent has been manifest before your eyes. For, you

About What is Due to Contrition

yourself have been grieved by the stillness of the stifling heat; and you yourself have seen how that the sky has frowned, and blazed, and shaken; and how that the sea has hissed, and seethed, and boiled, at the apparition of one loathsome little red-hot atom of bad man, who came, cloud-covered, from the pit of hell, to take his yearly dose of coolness.

“And, sir, — I, also, have experienced an emotion of contrition: — it began more than one hour ago: — and it will last as long as I shall last: — dear Don Friderico — I do assure you, sir, — I do assure —”

I gave him, in sign of amity, a cigarette.

I was very happy to have seen a waterspout.

And here was my lord the sun, beaming like a bride, at nightfall, in her crown and yellow-crocus-coloured veil.

(These Six Tales were printed in the "Yellow Book" in 1895-6. It has been deemed advisable to include them in this instalment: but it should be remembered that they were related a year before the Spring and Summer sections.)

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

I

ABOUT SAMPIETRO AND SAMPAOLO

“ONCE upon a time, sir, the people in Rome were building two churches; the one for Sampietro on the Monte Vaticano, and the other for Sampaolo outside the walls of the city. The two gods used to spend all their spare time sitting on one of the balconies of heaven, and watching the builders; for they were very anxious about their churches. Sampietro desired to have His church finished before that of Sampaolo; wherefore, every night after it was dark outside, He used to leave the keys of heaven in the porch, and to ask His brother, Santandrea, to give an eye to the gate while He went round the corner for a minute or two. Then He would slip down to the church of Sampaolo; and take to pieces the work which the builders had done during the day; and if there were any carvings, or pillars, or things of that sort, which took His fancy, He would carry them away and build them into His own church, patching up the part, from which He had taken them, so well that no one could tell the difference. And so, while the builders of the church

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

of Sampietro made a progress which was wonderful, the builders of the church of Sampaolo did not make any progress at all.

“ This went on for a long while, and Sampaolo became more uneasy in his mind every day, and he could not take his food, and nothing gave him any pleasure. Santacecilia tried to amuse him with some new songs which she had made; but this drove him into anger, for he said that a woman ought to learn in silence with subjection.

“ One day, while he was leaning over the balcony, he saw two pillars taken into his church, which were of yellow antique, most rare and precious, and had been sent from some foreign country; I do not know its name. He was altogether delighted; and he went down to the gate, and asked Sampietro to be so kind as to tell him whether He had ever seen finer pillars. But Sampietro only said that they were rather pretty; and then He asked Sampaolo to get out of the way, and to let Him shut the gate, in case that some improper souls should sneak in.

“ That night, sir, when it was dark, Sampietro went and robbed those two pillars of yellow antique, and set them up in His own church. But in the morning, Sampaolo, having thought of nothing but his new pillars all through the night, said a black mass as being shorter; and then he went on to the balcony, to have the pleasure of looking at his church with its beautiful pillars of yellow antique. And when, he saw that they

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

were not there, he became disturbed in his mind; and he went and sat down in a shady place to consider what he should do next. After much thought, it appeared to him that he had been robbed; and as he knew that a person, who has once committed a theft, will continue to steal as long as he remains free, he resolved to watch his church at night, that he might discover who had stolen his pillars.

“During the day the builders of the church of Sampaolo put up two fresh pillars of yellow antique, and two of porphyry, and two of green antique as well. Sampaolo gloated over these fine things from his seat on the balcony, for he knew them to be so beautiful that they would tempt the thief to make another raid, and then he would catch him.

“After Ave Maria, he made friends with one of the angels, who was putting on his armour in the guard-room before taking his place in the line of sentries who encircle the Città di Dio both by day and night. These angels, sir, are a hundred cubits high, and Sampaolo asked one of them, whose post would be near the gate, to hide him under his wings, so that he could watch for the robber without being seen. The angel said that he was most happy to oblige; for Sampaolo was a Roman of Rome, and very well-thought-of in heaven; and, when the night came on, he hid Sampaolo in the shadow of his feathers.

“Presently that Apostle saw Sampietro go out

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

of the gate; and the light, of which the bodies of the gods are made, went with Him, so that, though the earth was in darkness, Sampaolo could see plainly all that He did. And He picked up the two fresh pillars of yellow antique, and the two of red porphyry, and also the two of green antique in His hand, just as you, sir, would pick up six paint-brushes; and He carried them to His own church on the Monte Vaticano, and set them up there. And when He had patched up the place from which He had taken the pillars so well that they could not be missed, He came back into heaven.

“Sampaolo met Him at the gate and accused Him of thieving; but Sampietro answered blusteringly that He was the Prince of the Apostles, and that He had a right to all the best pillars for His church. Sampaolo replied that, once before, he had had occasion to withstand Sampietro to the face because He was to be blamed (at Antioch, sir); and then high words arose, and the two gods quarrelled so loudly that the Padre Eterno, sitting on His Great White Throne, sent San Michele Arcangiolo to bring the disputants into The Presence.

“There, Sampaolo said:

“‘O Re dej secolj, immortale et invisibile,—
The citizens of Rome are building two churches, the one for me and the other for Sampietro; and for some time I have noticed that while the builders of my church do not seem to make any

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

progress in their work, the church of Sampietro is nearly finished. The day before yesterday (and to-day is Saturday), two pillars of yellow antique were set up in my church, most beautiful pillars, O Signor Iddio; but somebody stole them away during the night. And yesterday six pillars were set up, two of yellow antique, two of green antique, and two of porphyry. To-night I watched to see if they would be stolen; and I have seen Sampietro go down and take them to His own church on the Monte Vaticano.'

"The Padre Eterno turned to Sampietro asking whether He had anything to say.

"And Sampietro answered:

"'O Re del Cielo, — We have long ago learnt the lesson that it is not well to deny that which La Sua Divina Maestà knows to be true; wherefore We acknowledge that We have taken the pillars, and many other decent things too, from the church of Sampaolo, and have set them up in Our Own. Nevertheless, We desire to represent that there can be no question of robbery here. O Dio Omnipotente, You have deigned to make Us the Prince of the Apostolic College, the Keeper of the Keys of Heaven, and the Head of Your Church on earth; and, We ask, is it fitting that the churches which men build in Our honour should be less magnificent than those which they build for Sampaolo. Therefore, in taking these paltry pillars, concerning which he chooses

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

to make a fuss, We are simply within Our right — a right actually inherent in the dignity of the rank which *Lo Splendore Immortale della Sua Maestà* has been graciously pleased to confer upon Us.'

"But this defence did not content the *Padre Eterno*. He said that the secret method in which Sampietro worked was a proof that He knew Himself to be doing what He ought not to do; and, further, that it was not fair to the men who were building the church of Sampaolo to take away the fine things for which they spent their money for the honour of Sampaolo. Wherefore He cautioned Sampietro not to allow it to occur again.

"On the next day there was a festa, when the builders did not work; but, on the Monday, they placed in the church of Sampaolo several slabs of lapis lazuli and malachite; and during the night Sampietro, who was the most bold and daring of men, had the hardihood to take them away and to put them in His own church, right before the very eyes of Sampaolo, who stood at the gate to watch Him. By the time He was returned, Sampaolo had made a complaint before the *Padre Eterno*; and Sampietro found Himself most severely spoken to, and warned that, supposing Him to persist in His disobedience, not even His exalted rank, and general usefulness, and good conduct would save Him from punishment.

About Sampietro and Sampaolo

“The following day, which was Tuesday, a marvellous baldachino of jasper and violet marble, being a gift from the Grand Turk, was put up in the church of Sampaolo; and at night Sampietro descended as usual and robbed it. For the third time Sampaolo complained to the Padre Eterno, and then all the Court of Heaven was summoned into The Presence to hear Judgment given.

“The Padre Eterno said — and His Voice, sir, was like rolling thunder — that as Sampietro had been guilty of disobedience to the Divine Decree, in that, urged on by vanity, He had taken the property of Sampaolo for His own church on the Monte Vaticano; and, by the act, had prevented the church of Sampaolo from becoming finished; it was an Order that, until the consummation of the world, the great church of Sampietro in Rome should never be completed. Also, the Padre Eterno added that, as He would give no encouragement to sneaks and tell-tale-tits, the church of Sampaolo Outside-The-Walls, though finished, should be subjected to destruction and demolition, and, as often as it was rebuilt, so often should it be destroyed.

“And you know, sir, that the church of Sampaolo is always being burned down or blown up, and that the church of Sampietro has never left the builders’ hands.”

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

IJ

ABOUT THE LILIES OF SANLUIGI

“**Y**OU know, sir, that Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio were always very friendly together. While they lived in this world, they were used to get into mischief each in the other’s company; for they were extremely fond of playing unexpected tricks upon the pagans who were putting the Christians to death.

“ Then, when their turn came, they gladly suffered martyrdom; and Sampancrazio was killed by a black panther in the Colosseo of Rome, while Sansebastiano was stuck as full of arrows as a hedgehog is of prickles; and when that did not kill him he was beaten with a club until he died. And then they both went to live in heaven for ever and the day after.

“ Now, I shall let you know what appearance they present, so that you may recognise them when you see them. First of all, you must understand that the gods in heaven have eternal youth; that is to say, if you are old when your life in this world comes to its end, you just shut your eyes while your angel-guardian takes you

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

to paradise; and, when you open them the next minute, you are there, and you have gone back to the prime of your life, that is, to the age of forty-six when manhood begins, and so you are for always; but if you die while you are young you do not change your age, but remain at the age at which you died. That is, supposing you to depart in the odour of sanctity, or as a martyr, which last is better, — and, of course, you can always do that if you choose. And, even supposing it is good for you to have a little purgatory first, so long as you shall have kept good friends with Madonnina, she will go and take you out on the Saturday after you have died, and that door opens into paradise.

“And your body, too, is changed, so that you cannot suffer any more pains or illnesses. Oh, yes, it is made of flesh, just the same to look at as this; but, instead of the flesh being made of the dust of the earth, it is made of the Fire of God, and that is why wherever the gods go they are all effulgent like the stars.

“Ah, well! Sansebastiano was eighteen years old when he went to heaven, and so he is always eighteen years old; and Sampancrazio was fourteen, and so he is always fourteen; and they are quite as cheerful and daring and mischievous as they were in this world; indeed when a joke has been played upon any of the gods, they always say, ‘By Bacchus! there are those boys again.’

“There are, of course, very many boys in

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

heaven, but now I am only telling you of these two — Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio, and the third, whose name is Sanluigi; and the fourth who is the angel-guardian of Sansebastiano, called Sebastianello.

“ You must know that Sanluigi was altogether different from Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio. Of course, he had not been a martyr like them, though he was sumptuously furnished with curious virtues; and I suppose his manners are as formal as they are, because he has only been in heaven a little while, and finds the novelty surprising. He always goes about with his eyes on the ground, you know, and there is not a bit of fun in him. You see, he was a Jesuit; and there were no such things in the world until hundreds of years after Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio had gained their haloes. When he first came, Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio thought there was another boy like themselves to join in their games; and they were quite eager to make his acquaintance, and to give him a welcome. So the moment the cantors of the quire gave the intonation of the *Iste Confessor*, they rushed down to the gate to offer him their friendship. Sanluigi came slowly through the archway, dressed in a cassock and a surplice. He carried a lily in his hand, and his eyes were fixed upon the ground; but when Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio, whose arms were locked together, said how pleased they were to see him, he looked up at them shyly and

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

said, 'Many thanks,' and then the vision of Sansebastiano so shocked him that he blushed deeply and re-veiled his eyes; and, afterward, he kept out of their way as much as possible.

"You see, sir, Sansebastiano was quite naked: indeed he had nothing about him but his halo and an arrow; for, when the pagans made a target of him, they stripped him of his clothes, and so he came to heaven like that. You may see his picture in the duomo whenever you choose, if you do not believe me. But he was so beautiful and muscular, and straight and strong, and his flesh so white and fine, and his hair like shining gold, that no one had ever thought of him as being naked. Sanluigi, however, found him perfectly dreadful; and pretended to shiver whenever he met him, which was not very often, because Sanluigi spent most of his time in the chapel saying office.

"Sansebastiano did consider him a little rude, perhaps, and, of course, Sampancrazio agreed with his friend; and, though they were quite good-natured and unwilling to make any unpleasantness, still they could not help feeling hurt when this newcomer — and that was the worst name they ever called him — turned up his nose because their minds and their manners were more gay and free than his.

"One very hot afternoon in summer the two gods, Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio, went to practise their diving in a delicious pool of cool

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

water under a waterfall; and when they were tired of that, they reclined on the bank and dangled their legs in the stream, while the sun was drying their haloes.

“Presently Sanluigi came creeping along with an old surplice in his hand, and he went up to Sansebastiano and offered it to him, holding his lily up before his face all the time he was speaking. Sansebastiano did not move, but lay there on the green grass, looking at Sanluigi with his merry laughing eyes, and saying not a word; and Sampancrazio did the same. Sanluigi repeated his offer from behind his lily, and implored Sansebastiano to put on the surplice,—just to hide his poor legs, he said. Sansebastiano replied that he did not think there was anything amiss with his legs, which were good enough, as far as he could see, because the Padre Eterno had made them like that, and He always did all things well. Then Sanluigi offered the surplice to Sampancrazio, who was also naked, because he had been bathing; but he laughed as he answered, with many thanks, that he had some very good clothes of his own, which he would put on when his body was dry; and he pointed out his beautiful tunicle of white wool with a broad purple stripe down the front, and his golden bulla, and his sandals of red leather, with the ivory crescent on the toes, for he was noble, sir, and also a Roman of Rome. Sanluigi said that the tunicle was rather short but it was better than nothing; and then he turned

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

to Sansebastiano and again entreated him to put on the surplice.

“ Presently Sansebastiano stretched out a splendid arm from the long grass wherein he was lying, and he grabbed the surplice so suddenly that Sanluigi dropped down on his knees, and his lily became disarranged; and, while he was recovering himself, Sansebastiano rolled the surplice into a ball and tossed it over to Sampancrazio, who threw it back to him; and the two saints played pallone with it quite merrily for some minutes; and all the time Sanluigi was protesting that he had not brought it out for that purpose, and beseeching them not to be so frivolous. But the game amused them to such an extent that they were now running to and fro upon the bank, and taking long shots each at other. Sansebastiano had just made a particularly clever catch; but in returning the ball he over-balanced himself and tumbled, splash heels over head, into the pool. This mischance had a bad effect upon his aim, and instead of the ball going in the direction he intended — that is to say, towards Sampancrazio — it flew straight in Sanluigi’s face. He again was holding up his lily for a screen, and consequently it was crushed and broken, and all the blooms destroyed; and he seemed so grieved that the two friends — for Sansebastiano immediately swam to the side and climbed out of the pool — tried to console him by telling him that they would get him another in two winks of an eye.

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

“ But Sanluigi said that would be of no avail, because he always got his lilies off his altars below there in the world, and no others would suit him; and there were none there now, because it was not his festa till to-morrow, and nobody would offer him any lilies till then.

“ When they heard this, Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio burst into roars of laughter, and they made such a noise that the Padre Eterno, Who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and sent one of the cherubini from the aureola to know what it was all about.

“ Sampancrazio jumped into his tunicle and put his bulla round his neck, while Sansebastiano laced his sandals for him; and then the two friends stood at ‘ Attention!’ as the Suprema Maestà e Grandezza came under the trees towards them. Of course you know, sir, that Sansebastiano was in the army when he lived in the world; and he had taught Sampancrazio.

“ Then Sansebastiano looked boldly upon the Face of God, and said:

“ ‘ O Signor Iddio Altissimo, we were laughing at Gigi because he will not have the lilies of paradise, but prefers the nasty things which are put upon his altars in the world.’

“ Sanluigi got quite angry at hearing his lilies called nasty; and the Padre Eterno said that the word certainly ought not to have been used unless Sansebastiano had a very good reason.

“ Then Sampancrazio explained, that he was

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

sure Sansebastiano did not mean to make any reflection upon the lilies *quâ* lilies, because it would not be becoming to speak against the handiwork of the Padre Eterno; but it was because the people who offered the lilies to Sanluigi did not come by them in an honourable manner, that he had called them nasty: and Sansebastiano nodded his head forward and said that was just it.

“ These words made Sanluigi still more angry; and his wrath was so righteous and so unaffected, that Sansebastiano saw him to be really in ignorance of the dirty tricks of his clients; so he said that if La Divina Maestà would deign to allow them, he and Sampancrazio would show Sanluigi the source from which his lilies came. The Padre Eterno was graciously pleased to grant permission, and passed serenely on His Way, for He knew Sansebastiano to be a boy whom you might trust anywhere.

“ Then Sansebastiano told Sanluigi that if he could put up with the company of himself and of Sampancrazio, he proposed a little gita into the world that very night; because, the next day being his festa, all the boys would be getting lilies for his altars; and in the meantime he invited him to come and look over the ramparts.

“ So the three young gods went and stood upon the wall of gold; and, beneath their feet, they could see the world whirling round in space. Sansebastiano pointed out that, by midnight,

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

they would be just above a little white city which clustered up the side of a distant mountain. He said that it was called Genzano, and that the Prince Lorenzo di Francesco Sforza-Cesarini had there a palace with the most beautiful gardens in all the world, which were certain to be a-brim of lilies at that time of year.

“Sanluigi made answer that he would like to say his matins and lauds, and to prepare his meditation for the morning, before they started; and he agreed to meet Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio at a little before midnight.

“You know, sir, that there is no night in heaven, or rather, I should say, that it does not get dark inside there; and so, when Sanluigi came to look for Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio, he found them in the orchard near the gate, turning a skipping-rope for Santagnese and some of her friends; but Sanvito and Sancelso, being tired of playing morra, were willing to take their places at the rope; and then they were all ready to start on their journey.

“Sansebastiano called his angel, Sebastianello, and told him to what place it was desired to go.

“I ought to have let you know that the appearance of Sebastianello was exactly like that of Sansebastiano; only he did not carry an arrow, and he had huge wings growing out of his arms of the same colour as his flesh, but whiter towards the tips of the feathers. And

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

then, of course, he was as high as a giant, like all the other angels — and a hundred cubits high is their ordinary size.

“The three gods mounted him in this manner: Sampancrazio stood on his left instep and put one arm round his leg to steady himself; and Sansebastiano stood on his right instep and put one arm round his leg to steady himself too; Sanluigi also stood on the right instep of Sebastienello, close to Sansebastiano, who clasped him round the waist with his other arm. When they were ready, the angel, with a downward swoop of his wings, rose from off the wall of gold, and, spreading out his pinions to their full extent, remained motionless, and dropped gently but swiftly towards the earth.

“I should tell you that they had all made themselves invisible, as the gods do when they come down into the world, unless there shall be some one present who is good enough to merit a vision of the gods. When they were alighted in the garden by the magnolia-tree, they left the angel there; and went to sit down near the lily-beds. You understand that no one could see them, and they rested against the edge of the fountain and waited; and Sanluigi took out his beads to wile away the time.

“Presently, three or four men came into the garden very quietly, and they stood under the shade of a blue hydrangea bush. The eldest of them appeared to be giving directions to the

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

others, and then they separated, and went each to a different part of the garden.

“‘Who were those men?’ Sanluigi asked.

“‘Tell him, ’Bastiano,’ Sampancrazio whispered.

“‘Gardeners,’ Sansebastiano murmured; ‘they have to watch all through the night between the twentieth and the twenty-first of June.’

“‘And I suppose they will be going to cut the lilies for the boys who are coming to fetch them?’ Sanluigi said.

“Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio nearly choked with laughter; and then Sansebastiano said that, if Sanluigi would have the goodness to be patient, he should see what he should see.

“They watched the gardeners go and hide themselves in the syringas, and for some time there was silence.

“Then there came six ragamuffin boys, creeping cautiously through the darkness, who made their way towards the lily-beds. As soon as they were there, the men in the bushes jumped out upon them with a loud yell, whereupon the boys took to their heels, fleeing in a direction different to that by which they had come. The men gave chase, but they ran so swiftly that they were soon out of sight. Now, as soon as they were gone, twenty or thirty more ragamuffin boys rushed noiselessly out of the darkness, and began to cut the lilies into sheaves as fast as possible. In a short time there was not one left

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

standing, and then they made off with their spoils and disappeared.

“The next minute the gardeners came back, loudly lamenting that they had failed to catch the robbers; but when they saw the beds where the lilies once had stood, they called for Madonna to have pity on them. And the chief gardener also wept, for he said the Prince would surely send him to prison.

“But the three gods continued to sit still by the fountain.

“Sanluigi was trembling very greatly; but because he is, as you know, of such an admirable innocence, he did not understand what he had seen; and he begged his companions to explain it.

“So Sansebastiano told him that the boys of the world were wicked little divels, and very clever, too. Wherefore it was their custom to send the six best runners first, because they knew that the gardeners would be watching. And these six were to make the said gardeners chase them and to lead them a long dance, so that the others could come, as soon as the place was clear, and steal the lilies. All of which had been done.

“And then Sanluigi grieved greatly at this appalling turpitude; but most of all because the gardeners would lose their places. So he asked Sansebastiano if he could not do something for them.


“Sansebastiano answered that they would be

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

very pleased and quite happy if Sanluigi would show himself to them, for they were most respectable men, and pious into the bargain; neither had they sworn nor used bad words.

“But Sanluigi was so modest that he did not like to show himself alone, and he held out his hands, the one to Sansebastiano and the other to Sampancrazio, saying:

“‘My friends — if you allow me to say so — dear 'Bastiano — and dear Zino — who have been so kind to me, let us all show ourselves, and then I will give them back the lilies.’

“So they called Sebastianello and mounted upon his insteps again; and then a silver light, more bright than any star, beamed from them, and the gardeners saw in the midst of the blaze the giant angel by the magnolia-tree, and the three gods standing in front of him — Sanluigi in the middle, with Sansebastiano on his right hand and Sampancrazio on his left hand. Then the gardeners fell on their knees returning thanks for this vision; and, as the angel spread his wings and rose soaring from the ground, Sanluigi made  the sign of the cross over the garden. But the men stood all amazed, and watched till the brightness seemed to be only a tiny star; and so the three gods went back with the angel to paradise.

“And, after they had disappeared, the gardeners saw the lily-beds to be full of flowers more beautiful than ever had been seen before. But

About the Lilies of Sanluigi

when the thieves brought their stolen flowers to the Church of Sanluigi in Via Livia they were nothing but sticks and dirty weeds.

“Those three gods are most friendly together now, because Sansebastiano and Sampancrazio cannot help admiring Sanluigi for his strange innocence, as well as for the strange penance with which he gained his place in paradise; and they are always delighted to do anything to oblige him, because, having been longer there than he, they understand the ways of that blessed place so well; while Sanluigi carries only the lilies of paradise, and is never so happy as when he is choosing the best branches of golden palm for his two martyr-friends; nor does he allow himself to be shocked at Sampancrazio on account of his gay heart, nor at Sansebastiano because he is naked and not ashamed.

“How should he be ashamed, sir?”

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

IIJ


A CAPRICE OF SOME CHERUBIM

“**W**HEN you have the happiness, sir, to see the Padre Eterno sitting upon His Throne, I can assure you that, at least, your eyes will be satisfied with the spectacle of many splendid personages who are there also.

“These, you know, are called the angels, and they are in nine rows of endless depth. All these rows are in the shape of the body of a fish, just like that gold ring on your finger. Those in the first row near by are named serafini, but I am not to speak of them. Those in the second row are called cherubini; and you will find their appearance quite beautiful and curious to look at. They have neither arms, nor bodies, nor legs, like the other angels. They are simply heads, like those of little boys. Their eyes are as brown as the shadows on the stream, which you fished last Thursday, when the sun was shining through the trees. Their skin, if you will only believe me, has the colour and brightness of the blue jewels which la Signora Duchessa wears at night, and their hair waves like the sea by Ardea. They

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

have no ears; but, in the place where the ears of a boy would be, they have wings shaped like those of a sand-piper, and blue as the sky at day-dawn. These flutter and shine for ever in regular watches in the second ring of the Glory of the Highest, to cool the perfumed air with a gentle quivering of their feathers.

“Once upon a time, some of these cherubini came to hear of the pastimes with which people in the world weary themselves; and they humbly asked permission of the Padre Eterno to make a little gita to the earth, and to have a little divel to play with, the next time they should be off duty. And the Padre Eterno, Who always allows you to have your own way when He knows that it will teach you a lesson, made the sign of the cross, and said,  IT IS ALLOWED TO YOU.

“So the following day a very large number — I believe about ninety-five milliards, but I should not like to be quite sure, because I do not know exactly — of these beautiful little blue birds of heaven were taken by San Michele Arcangiolo down into the world, and they perched in the trees in the gardens of the Palazzo Sforza-Cesarini, in that city over the lake.

“San Michele Arcangiolo left them there, while he made the second of his journeys into the pit of hell. The first, you shall know, was when he had conquered the prince of the divels in a dreadful duel and bound him in chains and flames for a thousand years. As he passed along the

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

pathway down the red-hot rocks, the flames of burning divels licked upward till, meeting the cool air of paradise which San Michele Arcangiolo breathed, they curved backward, and still upward, forming a sort of triumphal arch of yellow flame above his head.

“When he arrived at the gate where hope must be laid down, he called aloud that the Father and King of gods and men had occasion for the services of a young imp, bad, but not too bad. The arch-fiend shook his chains with rage, because he was obliged to obey; and caused a horrible little kakodaimon to flash into bodily shape from a puddle of molten brimstone.

“If you looked at his face or his body, you would have thought he was a boy of the age of fourteen years; but his eyeballs glittered with the red of a burning coal. If you looked at his arms, you would have thought he was a bat, for wings grew there of spikes and skin. Oh, and he had nasty little horns in his hair, but it was not hair but vipers; and from his waist to his feet he was a he-goat, and all over he was scarlet. It was a different scarlet to the scarlet coat of that English soldier whom I saw once by the Porta Pia of Rome. I can only make you understand what I mean, by saying that it was the colour of the ashes of burning wood, which have been almost dead, but which you have blown up into a fiery glow without flame. He was much that is bad and hideous from his hoofs to his horns; and no

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

one, whether he were god, or angel, or man as you are, sir, so long as he had the protection of Madonna, would need to be a bit afraid of him; because his nastiness was clear, and he could be seen through like a piece of glass; and in the middle of him there was his dirty dangling heart as black as ink.

“San Michele Arcangiolo, who knows exactly how to deal with everybody, and especially with a *scimiotto* like this, stuck his lance through the length of the little divel’s belly, just as Gianetta would spit a woodcock for toasting; and holding it out before him,—it is always best to see mischief in front of you,—he carried the writhing, wriggling little divel up into the world. The flames, as before, licked upward and around the great archangel, but never a feather was singed, nor a blister came upon his whitest skin, for they could not pierce the ice of his purity; but all the same they made the little divel kick and struggle,—just as I should, sir, if you whipped me naked with a whip of red-hot wires, instead of with the lilac twigs which you do use when I am black with crime.

“So they came into the Prince his garden; and, having released the little divel from his uncomfortable position, San Michele Arcangiolo—who, because he commands the armies in heaven, is very fond of soldiers—went down into the city to pass a half-hour inspecting the barracks.

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

“ When the little divel found himself free, he could hardly believe his good luck; and sat for a few minutes rubbing the sparks out of his eyes, and wondering what his next torture would be. Meanwhile, the cherubini sat in the trees saying nothing, but watching with all their might, for never had they seen such a thing before.

“ Presently, as nothing happened to the little divel, he plucked up what small courage he had to take a sly look round. The first thing he saw was the fountain near the magnolia-tree; and as the divels know very well what water is, although a rare commodity in their own country, where one drop is worth more than all the wealth the world has ever seen, he plunged head-foremost into the basin, to cool the burning pangs which continually torment him. And still the cherubini said no word; but they watched with all their eyes.

“ Now the basin, sir, is a deep one, as you know, because the noble Sforza often dive in there when the sun is in Leo. And the little divel disappeared in the water. But, a moment after, his head popped up, twitching with pain, amid clouds of steam and a frightful hissing; and he screamed very much and began to clamber over the edge with every circumstance of speed.

“ When he got on the grass, he jumped and skipped all over the place, and flapped his wings and squeezed his hairy legs, and stroked his naked breast, and rolled about on the ground,

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

and leaped, and howled, till the cherubini, finding him to be most diverting, laughed so much that they tumbled out of the trees, and came and fluttered round the little divel; for this was a far funnier entertainment even than that which they had promised themselves.

“And the reason of it all is very easy to understand, if you will only think. You see, one of the torments that the divels and the damned have to bear is to be disappointed alway; they never get their wishes fulfilled; all their plans, no matter how carefully they construct them, fall to the ground; all their arrangements alway are upset at the very last moment, and everything goes by the rule of contrary. So, when the wretched little creature plunged into the cold water, the heat of hell-flame boiled it, in a flash; and, instead of being cooled at all, the little divel took a very handsome scalding. Now, when the cherubini had had their fill of laughter, and could observe accurately this sight, which was to them so strange, they saw great patches of scalded flesh hanging in shreds and strips from his neck and sides and back and belly, and the skinny leather of his wings crinkled and warped, and the horn of his hoofs beginning to peel; and they would have felt sorry, if to grieve over a little divel had not been wrong. So they said nothing, hovering in the air around him, and looking at him with their clear eyes all the time.

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

“The little divel looked at them too; and, being a cheeky little beast, he asked who, the hell, they were staring at.

“They said that they came to play with him, and they desired him to do some more tricks, and to tell them merry stories, and where he came from, and what he did there, and how he liked it, and why he had that nasty black heart-shaped blotch hanging in the middle of his inside, and many other things.

“The little divel answered that he had had a bad accident, and he was not going to hurt his throat by shouting to a lot of blue birds up there in the sky; and if they wanted him to answer their questions, they must come down lower, because he was in great pain.

“And the cherubini wondered very much where this pain could be in which the little divel said he was; and, also, what kind of thing was this same pain: but, as they were curious and wanted to know, they descended a bit until they fluttered in a ring round and round the little divel’s head.

“And there they became aware of a horrible stench, and they said one to another: ‘He stinks — stinks of sin!’ But, because they wished to be diverted, they resolved to put up with small inconveniences for a while.

“Still the little divel was not satisfied; and perceiving that these would be very agreeable play-mates, he tried to make a good impression. So

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

he flopped down upon his stomach, and propped up his chin in his hands, and invited the cherubini to come and sit round him and listen to such tales as they had never heard before. And the cherubini came a little lower, but they did not sit down.

“ And then other things happened.

“ Suddenly, the cherubini found that they did not desire to play with this little divel any longer; and with one swoop of their wings, sounding like the strong chord you strike, sir, when you begin to strum your arciliuto in the evening, they retired to paradise; while the earth opened under the little divel, and a red flame, shaped like a hand with claws, came up and gripped and squeezed him so tightly round the waist, that his face bulged, and his eyes went out like crabs', and his breasts swelled like pumpkins, and his shoulders and arms like sausages, and the skin of his hairy thighs became balloons, and burst; and then he was tossed back into his puddle of molten brimstone.

“ When Ave Maria rang, and this company of cherubini went on duty in the aureola, the Padre Eterno observed, from the expression of their faces, that they had been insulted, and their feelings hurt. And, when La Sua Maestà deigned to inquire the reason, they replied that the little divel, with whom He had allowed them to play, had been very rude, and they had no desire to




A Caprice of Some Cherubim

see him any more; for they had asked him to show them funny tricks, and to tell them merry stories, and where he came from, and what he did there, how he liked it, why he had a nasty black heart-shaped blotch dangling in the middle of his inside, and so forth; and that he had agreed to answer all this, and to play with them, if they would come and sit down on the grass round him; but they had been obliged to reply that they were not able to sit down; and the little divel had asked why not; and they had answered politely that they had not the wherewithal; and then the little divel jumped up from the ground, where he was lying with his legs a-straddling, and showed them that he could sit down, and had turned heels over head, and laughed and jumped and made a gibe and a jeer of them, because he could do things impossible to them, and had also done many other disgusting tricks before them, which had caused them much offence; and so they were bored and came back to paradise.

“They added that, while their consciences were quite devoid of envy of this wretched little bragger, still they did not desire to mix with that class of person; and they begged pardon if they had seemed to prefer their own will this time.

“And the Padre Eterno smiled, and at that Smile the light of heaven glowed like a rainbow, and the musick rose in a strain so beautiful that I

A Caprice of Some Cherubim

believe I shall die when I hear it, and He made the sign of the cross and said: IT IS WELL, MY CHILDREN, AND GOD BLESS YOU. BENEDICAT VOS OMNIPOTENS DEUS  PATER ET  FILIUS ET  SPIRITUS SANCTUS.”

About Beata Beatrice and

IIIJ

ABOUT BEATA BEATRICE AND THE MAMMA OF SAMPIETRO

“**A**H, Don Friderico, don't be angry with me,— oh, don't — because really I do love her so! What else can I do when she is as pretty as that; and as good, and as cheerful, and as patient? And when at hestern eve I met her by the boat-house, I took her into my arms asking her to kiss me; and, sir, she did. Then I told her that I wished her well, and she said that she also wished me well. Also, I said that I would marry her; and when I looked into her eyes they were full of tears, so I know she loves me; but she is ashamed because she is so poor, and her mamma such a hag. Do I mind her being poor — the little pigeon? Ma che! For when I feel her soft arms round me and her breath in my hair, and when I kiss her on the lips and neck and bosom, then I know it is Beatrice, her whiter body and her whitest soul, that I want — that I will care for, and not her ragged clothes.”

Toto jumped off the tree trunk and stood before me, with all his lithe young figure tense and strung, as he went on with his declamatory notices.

the Mamma of Sampietro

“Has not la sua eccellenza often said that I am strong as an ox? Will it not be my perfect joy to work hard to make my girl happy and rich and grand as the sun? Do you think that I spend your money at the wine-shop, or the tombola? You know that I do not so sin. Am I a man? No. Always have I saved. Now I shall save more; and in a year or two I shall ask your permission to marry her. No, I don't want to go away, to leave you. May the ten million kakedaimons fly away with me to the pit of hell and burn me for ever with their hottest fire, if I should entertain any so base desire. Nor will Beatrice make any difference to la sua eccellenza; you never need see her, you never need know even that there is such a flower of paradise blooming near you, if you do not wish to know. And I can assure you that Beatrice has the greatest respect for you; and if only you will be so good and so kind as to let us make ourselves happy, she will be quite proud and glad to serve you as well as I do, and to help me when I serve you too. — And, sir, you know how fond you are of a fritto? Well, Beatrice can make a rigaglie of such tastiness, that you will say it must have come straight from heaven; and this I know because I have tried it myself.”

He flung himself down on the ground. He kissed my hands, and kissed my feet, and wept, and made me an awful scene.

I told him to get up and not be a young fool.

About Beata Beatrice and

I said that I didn't care what he did; and demanded whether I had ever been a brute to him, or denied him anything that was reasonable.

He swore that I was without spot or stain of sin, devoid even of a blemish, that I always had been so, that I always should be so, because I could not help myself; the decoration of the earth with a such *monster*¹ being obviously a part of the Divine Plan: he wanted to go down on his knees again; but that I said he would do better to bring the girl to me, and not to make me hotter with his noise than I was then.

“To tell you the truth, sir,” he replied, with sudden suavity, “I was always quite sure that you would have pity upon us when you should know how very much we loved. Therefore when you caught us last night, I told Beatrice that, now, I must let you know everything; because I was assured that, so long as I did not deceive you (and you know that I have never done so), there was nothing to fear; also I told her you would without doubt like to see her, to give her good counsel, because she was my friend; and she said that she would call that too much honour. Then, sir, I felt her trembling against my heart, so I kissed her for a long time, and told her to be brave as I am; —and, —sir, —as you are so gracious as to want to see her, — I have taken the liberty of bringing her, — and she is here.”

I always had admired the cleverness of this

¹ The italics are mine, to emphasize the intended compliment.

the Mamma of Sampietro

lad, and felt not much surprise at his last announcement.

"Where?" I said.

"I put her behind that tree, sir," and he pointed to a big oak about twenty yards away. I could not help laughing at his deepness; and he took courage, I suppose, from my auspicious aspect. All sorts of clouds of hesitation, uncertainty, and doubt, moved out of his clear brown eyes, while his face set in a smile, absurd, and complacently expectant. "Shall I fetch her, sir?"

I nodded forward. I had had some small experience of his amours before; but this was a new phase, and I thought I might as well prepare myself for anything. He went a few paces away, and disappeared behind the oak-tree. There was a little rustle of the underwood, and some kissing for a minute or two. Then he came out again, leading his companion by the hand. I said I was preparing for *anything*, but I confess to a little gasp at what I saw. It was not a boy and girl who approached me, but a couple of boys — apparently, at least. They came and stood beside the hammock in which I was lying. Toto, you know, was sixteen years old, a splendid, wild (discolo) creature, from the Abruzzi, a figure like Cellini's Perseus; (don't misunderstand me: I mean the Waxen Model in Palazzo del Bargello, and not — not the Bronze Abortion of the Loggia de' Lanzi). His skin was brown,

About Beata Beatrice and

with real red blood under it, smooth as a peach, and his aspect was as noble as a god. He had a weakness for sticking a dead-white rose in the black waves of hair over his ear, and the colour of that rose against his cheeks, flushed as they were now, was something for which to be truly thankful. I used to make him wear white clothes, on these hot summer days down by the lake. A silk shirt opened, and the sleeves rolled up, showing his broad brown chest and supple arms; and short thulakoi of the same, convenient for rowing. (He had half-a-dozen creatures of his own rank under his command, all chosen for some singular quality; and it was their business to carry my books, photographick and bug-hunting apparatus, and to wait upon me while I loafed the summers away in the Alban hills, or, at later date, along the eastern coast.) The seeming boy, whom he had called Beatrice, seemed about fourteen years old, with far more of rarity and dain than even he. The bold, magnificent independence of his carriage was replaced in her by one of tender delicacy, quite as striking in its way as the other. She wore her hair in a short silky cocoon like Toto, and her shirt was buttoned up to the spring of her pretty throat. She came about as high as her boy's shoulder, and stood before me with her poor little knees trembling, and a rosy blush ebbing and flowing over her flower-face. They were so exquisitely lovely, in that sun-flecked shade with the blue lake for their

the Mamma of Sampietro

background, that I could not help keeping them waiting during some minutes. Such pictures as this are not to be seen every day. Presently he put his arm round her neck, and she put hers round his waist, and leaned against him a little. But he never took his eyes off mine.

“Go on, Toto,” I said; “you were about to say —”

“Ah, well, sir, you see I thought if Beatrice came to live with us — with me, I mean — it would be more convenient if she looked like the rest of us, because then she would be able to do things for you as well as we can, and people will not talk.”

It struck me immediately that Toto was right again, as usual; for, upon my word, this girl of his would pass anywhere for a very pretty boy, with just the plump roundness of the Florentine Apollino, and no more.

“So I got some clean clothes of Guido’s, and brought them here early this morning, and then I fetched Beatrice and put them on her, and made her hide behind the tree, because I knew that you would pretend to scold me about her when you should come down to read the papers. Therefore I determined to tell you everything, and to let you know that the happiness of us both was in your hands. And I only wanted you to see her like this, in order that you might know that you cannot be put to any discomfort or inconvenience, if you are so kind as

About Beata Beatrice and

to allow us to love one another according to the Evangel.”

This looked right enough; but, whether or no, it would have been in execrable taste to show nasty temper just then, so I told them to be as happy as they pleased for I would not interfere with them, so long as they did not interfere with me. They both kissed my hands, and I kissed Beatrice (she was a nosegay) on the forehead, Toto looking on as proud as a white peacock. And then I told him to take her away, to send her home properly dressed, to avoid all disguise for the future, and to return to me in half an hour.

I could see very well that these happenings were natural enough; and it was not a part I cared to play, to be harsh or ridiculous, or to spoil an idyll so full of charm and newness. Besides, I have reason to know, — oh, jolly well, I have reason to know — the futility of interfering between the male animal and his mate.

So when Toto came back I said nothing discouraging or *ennuyant*, beyond reminding him that he ought to make quite sure of possessing an enduring love for this girl, — a love which would make him proud to spend his life with, and for, her, and her only. I told him he was very young, which was no fault of his, and that if he would take my advice he would not be in a hurry about anything. He said that my words were the words of wisdom, and that he would obey me just as he would Madonna del Portone in

the Mamma of Sampietro

her crown of glory if she came down and told him things then and there ; that he had known Beatrice since they were babies together, and always had loved her far better than he loved his sisters, also, in an altogether different way, — if I could only understand. Last night, when he had held her in his arms to tell her that he knew she wished him well, suddenly he felt himself so strong, and her so tender, and so tempting, that all of a minute he desired her for his own, and to give somebody a bastonatura of the very finest for her, above all things to take her out of the clutches of that dirty mean old witch-cat of a mamma of hers, who never gave her any pleasure, kept her shut up whenever there was a festa, and, holy gods of paradise ! sometimes beat her, simply because she envied her for being beautiful, and delicate, and bright, as a young primrose. What it was to be cursed with a hag of a mamma like that ; and what could Madonna be thinking about to give such a donnicciuola of a mamma to his own bellacuccia ! Not but what Madonna was sometimes inattentive ; but then, of course, she had so many people to look after, or she never would have given to Sampietro such a mamma as she had given.

Here, seeing a chance of changing the subject, I remarked that it would be nice to know what sort of a mamma Madonna had given to Sampietro.

“ Well, sir, you must know that the mamma of

About Beata Beatrice and

Sampietro was the meanest woman that ever lived — scraping and saving all the days of her life, and keeping Sampietro and his two sisters (the nun and the other one, of whom I will tell you another time), for days together with nothing to eat except perhaps a few potato peelings and a cheese rind. As for acts of kindness and charity to her neighbours, I don't believe she knew the names of the said virtues, though of course I cannot be certain; and whatever good there was in Sampietro, he must have picked up elsewhere. As soon as he was old enough to work he became a fisherman, as you know; because, when Il Santissimo Salvatore wanted a Santo Padre to govern the Church, He went down to the seaside and chose Sampietro; knowing that Sampietro, being a fisherman, was just the right man to bear all kinds of hardships, and to catch people's souls and take them to paradise, just as he had been used to catch fish and take them to the market. So Sampietro went to Rome, and He reigned there for many years. And at last the pagans settled that all the Christians were to be killed. And the Christians thought that, though they had no objections to being killed in their proper persons, it would be a pity to waste a good Pope like Sampietro, who had been chosen and given to them by the Signor Iddio Himself. Therefore they persuaded Sampietro to run away on a night of the darkest, and to hide Himself for a time in a


the Mamma of Sampietro

lonely place outside the gates of the City. After He had gone on a little way along the Via Appia — and the night was very dark — He was aware of a grey light on the road in front of Him, and in the light there was Il Santissimo Himself; whereat Sampietro was astonished, for La Sua Maestà was walking towards Rome. To whom Sampietro said: 'O Master, where do you go?' Then the face of Il Santissimo became very sad, and He said: ✝ *I am going to Rome to ride the Cross a second time.* And then Sampietro knew it was not a noble thing that He was doing, running away all on the sly like this; because no shepherd leaves his sheep when wolves come — at least, no shepherd worth a baiocco. Then Sampietro turned round and went back to Rome, where He was crucified with much joy midway between the goals in the Circus of Nero; but He would not let Himself be crucified in the manner consecrated by Il Santissimo, because He wished to make amends for His weakness in trying to run away; wherefore He begged and prayed to be crucified with His head where His feet should be. The pagans said most certainly, if He preferred it that way, it was all the same to them. And so Sampietro made no more ado, but simply went straight to heaven. And, of course, when He was arrived His angel-guardian clothed Him in a new cope and a tiara and handed Him the Keys; and the Padre Eterno put Him to look after the gate,

About Beata Beatrice and

which is a very great honour, but only His due, because He had been of such high rank when He lived in the world.

“Now after He had been there a little while, His mamma also left the world, and was not allowed to come into paradise: but because her meanness amounted to mortal sin she was sent to hell. Sampietro did not like this at all, and when some of the other gods chaffed Him about it He would grow angry. At last He went to the Padre Eterno, saying that it was by no means suitable that a man of His quality should be disgraced in this way; and the Padre Eterno, Who is so good, so full of pity and of mercy that He would do anything to oblige you if it is for the health of your soul, said He was sorry for Sampietro, and He quite understood His position. He graciously suggested that perhaps the case of Sampietro’s mamma had been decided hurriedly, and He ordered her angel-guardian to bring the book in which had been written down all the deeds of her life, good or bad.

“ ‘NOW,’ said the Padre Eterno, ‘WE CAREFULLY WILL GO THROUGH THIS BOOK, AND, IF WE CAN FIND ONLY ONE GOOD DEED THAT SHE HAS DONE, WE WILL ADD TO THAT ONE GOOD DEED THE MERITS OF OUR SON AND OF HERS, SO THAT SHE MAY BE DELIVERED FROM ETERNAL TORMENTS.’

“Then the angel read out of the book; and

the Mamma of Sampietro

it was found that, in the whole of her life, she had only done one good deed; for a poor starving beggar-woman had once prayed her, per'l Amor di Dio, to give her some food; and she had thrown her the green top of an onion which she chanced to be peeling for her own supper.

“And the Padre Eterno instructed the angel-guardian of Sampietro's mamma to take that identical onion-top from the Treasury of Virtuouse Deeds, if indeed he could find so insignificant a thing; and to go and hold it over the pit of hell; so that if, by chance, she should boil up with the other damned souls to the top of that stew, then she might grasp the onion-top and by it be dragged up to Heaven.

“The angel-guardian did as he had been commanded. He hovered in the air over the pit of hell. He held out the onion-top with his right hand. The furnace flamed. The burning souls boiled and writhed like pasta in a copper pot, and presently Sampietro's mamma came up thrusting out her hands in anguish. And when she saw the onion-top she gripped it, for she was a very covetous woman; and the angel-guardian began to soar into the air, carrying her up to Heaven.

“Now when the other damned souls saw that Sampietro's mamma was leaving them, they also desired to escape; and, clutching of the skirts of her gown, they hung thereon, hoping to be delivered from their pain. And still the angel-guardian rose, and Sampietro's mother held the

About Beata Beatrice

onion-top, and many tortured souls held her skirts, and others held the feet and skirts of those, and again others held the last, and you surely would have thought that hell was about to be emptied straight away. And still the angel-guardian rose higher, and the long stream of people all hanging to the onion-top rose too, nor was the onion-top too weak to bear the strain: so great is the virtue of one good deed, — of but one small good deed! But when Sampietro's mamma became aware of what was going on, and of what a perfect godsend she was becoming to the numbers who were escaping from hell along with her, she was annoyed: and, because she was a nasty selfish and cantankerous woman, she kicked and struggled, and even took the onion-top in her teeth, so that she might use her hands to beat off those who were hanging to her skirts. And she fought so violently that she bit through the onion-top, and tumbled back once more into hell flame.

“So you see, sir, that it is sure to be to your own advantage, if you are kind to other people and let them have their own way, always supposing that they will not interfere with you.”

I chuckled at Toto's moral reflections.

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

V

ABOUT THE HERESY OF FRA SERAFICO

ONE of Toto's brothers was called Niccolo, and he was going to be a priest. He was nineteen years old, and very like Toto in appearance, with this notable difference — that there was no light in his eyes. In manner, he was a curious gaunt awkward unworldly creature, absolutely the opposite of Toto, who had the charm and freedom of a young savage whose manners had attained perfection. I don't know why the clergy (for whom I entertain the highest respect, of course,) should always slink along by the wall, expressing by the cringing obsequiousness of their carriage that they would take it as a favour if some one kindly would kick them; but such is the deplorable case. I used to see this Niccolo sneaking about the woods during his summer vacation: but I don't think I ever spoke to him except when he came to say, "How do you do?" and "Good-bye." One morning, soon after his arrival, I asked Toto what was the matter with his brother; for he looked even more caged, humpty-backed, and slouching, more utterly miserable and crushed,

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

than usual. "'Cola, sir," he said, "you must know, has a very feeling heart; and if he meets with any little misfortune it is a much more serious thing to him than it would be to me. I, of course, would say that it did n't matter, and look for something else to amuse me; but 'Cola will think over his grief till it seems far greater than it really is; and he will not be able to eat his food or to take any interest in anything; he will wish himself dead; or that he had never given himself the annoyance of being born. And I suppose, now, he has had some little trouble in his college — dropped his garter, perhaps, and let his stocking down, when out with the camerata in the street, and he has thought about it so much that he at last believes himself to have committed a sin against the sixth commandment, by an indecent exposure of his person. But, if I have your leave, I will pierce him with a question, for I can see him saying his beads behind the Emissario."

Toto ran away, and I took a little nap.

When I awakened, he was coming down the steps, shading his head with a monstrous rhubarb leaf. "I am sure you will be much amused, sir, when I tell you what is the matter with 'Cola," he said. "I have made him very angry with me, because I could not help but laugh at him; and he says that I should certainly burn for making a mock of the clergy — clergy, indeed, and he only a sub-deacon, and I his brother who know

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

all about him, and everything he ever did! And Geltruda, too! For my part, I am sure it is a gift straight from Heaven to be called to the priesthood, because I remember that 'Cola used to be quite as fond of enjoying himself as I am; but since he first went to the Seminario he will not look at a petticoat—that is to say, at the face that belongs to it; for it is only the petticoats he does look at. Have I not seen my little mother cry when he comes home, because he only puts his lips to her hand—and they do not touch it—as if she were la Signora Duchessa, instead of the mother who wished to take him in her arms? Altro! I told him that I would go and choose my faggots; and I am here to explain his dolour. You must know, sir, that at the Seminario, you have to preach to the other chierichetti in the refectory, during supper. This is to give you practice in delivering sermons. And after you have preached, you go to your place; and, if it be necessary to make any remarks upon what you have said, the professors will tell you all they think. Well, it was 'Cola's turn to preach the night before he came home, and he says that it was a sermon which had taken all his life to write. He had learned it by heart; and on arriving in the pulpit he repeated it, moving his hands and his body in a manner which he had practised before window-panes and puddles. When he had finished, the rector paid him compliments, and two or three of the other professors

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

did the same. But when it came to the turn of the decano, who is the senior student, he said that the college ought to be very proud of having produced an abbatino so clever as to be able, in his first sermon, to invent and to proclaim sixteen new and hitherto unheard-of heresies. And 'Cola, instead of cherishing a fine rage against this nasty, jealous prig, with his mocking tongue, has taken all blame to himself and is making himself wretched. I told him that there was no difficulty about heresies, if that was what he wanted; because I think that to do wrong is as easy as eating, and that the difficulty is to keep straight. But he says that he is a miserable sinner, and that it is all his fault, for he cannot have perfectly corresponded with his vocation, otherwise he would have been saved this mortification. Why, as for heresy, sir, I can tell you how a friar in Rome was accused of preaching heresy, and then you will know that it is not merely the being accused of inventing heresies that makes you guilty of that same.

“Well, sir, formerly there lived in Rome a certain friar called Fra Serafico. When he had lived in the world he was of the Princes of Monte Corvino; but, at about the age of 'Cola, he astonished everybody by giving up his rank, and his riches, and his state, to become a Little Brother of the Religion of Sanfrancesco. Now the fraticelli of his convent were not quite able to understand why a young man who had his ad-

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

vantages, should give them up as he did, preferring a shaved head and naked feet and to be a beggar. And Fra Serafico, though he had the best will in the world, did not make a good impression on the other friars, because his manners were different to theirs. He felt miserable without a pocket-handkerchief-for-his-nose, for one thing. And it was some time before the superiors became certain that he had a true vocation; for he went about his duties with diligence and humility, feeling so shy, because the things around him were so strange, that he gained for himself, among the other novices, the frightful nickname of 'Dumbtongue.'

"And this went on until he had finished his probation, and taken the habit and the vows.

"One day after that, Fra Guardiano, in order to give him a good humiliation, told him to prepare to preach a sermon before the convent at the chapter that afternoon. Fra Serafico received this command in silence, and, having kissed the ground before Fra Guardiano, he went away to his cell to study, and when the afternoon came he stood up to preach.

"Then, sir, a very curious thing happened; for Fra Serafico preached, and, while he preached, the faces of the other friars became set in a glare of astonishment, and the eyes of Fra Guardiano were almost starting out of his head by the time the sermon was finished. Then there was silence for a little while, and the friars looked one at

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

another, and nodded forward. It seemed that they had been entertaining an angel unawares, for this Dumbtongue, as they called him, had turned out to be a perfect Golden-mouth. And the friars were more than glad; for, though they were all good men and very holy, yet they had no great preacher among them at that time, and they thought it was a shame that a Religion, whose business was to preach, should have no man who could preach well, and at last they saw a way out of the difficulty: 'For surely,' they said, 'this Serafico speaks the words of Sampaulo himself, with the tongue of an angel.' After this he gave fervorini daily in the convent church, till all the city was filled with his fame, and at last he was named by Papa Ottoboni to preach the Lent in the Church of Sancarolo al Corso.

"Of course you know very well, sir, that Sathanas is disgusted to see the works of God going on alway as easily as water runs out of a turned-on tap; and you know also that when a good work seems to be thriving at its best, then is the time the said Sathanas will choose to try that he may upset it. And so he went to a little Jesuit called Padre Tonto Pappagallo — and, of course, I do not need to tell you that the Jesuits are not what you might call friendly to the Franciscans — and he suggested to him the evil thoughts, that it was bad for the Jesuits to be beaten in preaching by the Franciscans, and what a score it would be if a Jesuit were

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

to have the honour of catching Fra Serafico in the act of preaching heresy. Padre Tonto, it happened, had made a bad meditation that morning, having allowed his eyes to fix themselves upon some of the alabaster angels who were dangling their beautiful white legs over the arches around the apsis, and his thoughts to wander from his meditation to those things from which every good priest flies with as much haste as he would fly from the foul fiend appearing in person. And so his mind was just like a fertile field; and, when Sathanas popped in his suggestion, the seed immediately took root, and before the morning was over it had burst into blossom; for this Padre Tonto skipped off to the Church of Sancarlo to hear the great preacher; and when he saw the vast multitude all so intent upon those golden words that, if an earthquake had happened then and there, I believe no one would have even blinked; and when he heard the sighs from the breasts of wicked men; and when he saw the tears rain down on women's cheeks; then he envied Fra Serafico the power to do these things: and so he began to listen to the sermon, that he might catch the preacher preaching heresy. Of course, while he was staring about, he had not paid attention to the words of gold, and the first sentence that caught his ear when he did begin, indeed, to listen was this, *No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully.*

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

“Padre Tonto jumped for joy, and ran out of the church. He was good friends with everybody, for he had heard a heresy straight away. ‘*No one shall be crowned,*’ he said, ‘that is, of course, with the crown of glory which the gods in paradise wear for ever — *unless he has contended lawfully* — that is to say, as the martyrs did in Colosseo. Pr-r-r-r-r, my dear Serafico! And what, then, becomes of all the holy bishops and confessors, and of the virgins and penitents and widows whom Holy Church has numbered with the saints? These were not martyrs, nor did they fight with beasts, like Sampaolo’ (and I cannot tell you the place, sir). ‘If I were Papa Ottoboni, Seraficone mio, I should burn your body on Campo di Fiore to-morrow morning, and your damned soul in hell for ever and the day after.’ And saying these words and all sorts of others like them, he ran off to the Sant’ Uffizio and made a mischief with much diligence.

“Now Padre Tonto had a very good reputation among superiors, and ladies, and was exceedingly well-thought-of in Rome. Moreover, the accusation which he made appeared to be well founded. So Fra Serafico was summoned, and this question was put to him, — ‘Did you, or did you not, in your sermon preached in the Church of San-carlo al Corso, on the first Monday in Lent, say, *No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully?*’ And Fra Serafico replied that his

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

questioner, who was the Grand Inquisitor himself, spoke like a book with large letters and clasps of silver, for without a doubt he had used those very words. The Grand Inquisitor remarked that confession of wrong done was always good for the soul ; and he pointed out to Fra Serafico the dreadful heresy of which he had been guilty in uttering words meaning, if they meant anything at all, *That it was impossible to get to Heaven unless you suffered martyrdom.* Then he told Fra Serafico, that as he had made his heresy publick by preaching it to all Rome, it would be necessary to make amends also in the place of his crime, or else to let himself be burnt with fire on Campo di Fiore at the next public holiday, both to atone for the sin, and in order to encourage other people who might feel it their business to imitate him by preaching such atrocious and soul-slaughtering heresy. And Fra Serafico answered that he hoped to live and die a good and obedient son of Holy Mother Church, and to submit his judgment to hers in all things reasonable, except his order ; therefore, it would give him much joy to make public amends for his heresy at any time or place which his eminence, in his wisdom, might be pleased to appoint.

“ The next day the people of Rome were called by proclamation to the Church of Sancarolo al Corso to see Fra Serafico’s humiliation ; and because he was such a celebrated man there came

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

together all the noblest and most distinguished persons in the city. Papa Ottoboni sat upon the throne with the Princes Colonna and Orsini on His right hand and on His left. All around there were fifty scarlet cardinals, bishops by the score in purple and green, friars grey, friars white, friars black, monks by the hundred, and princes and plain people like raindrops. When all had taken their places, Fra Serafico was entered, between two officers of the Sant' Uffizio having their faces covered in the usual manner; and first he prostrated himself before La Sua Maestà in the tabernacle, and then at the feet of Papa Ottoboni, then he bowed from the waist to the Sacred Conlege and to the prelates, and from the shoulders to the rest; and last of all he was led into the pulpit from which he had proclaimed his heresy. There he began to speak, using these words: 'Most Holy Father, most eminent and most reverend lords, my reverend brethren, most illustrious princes, my dear children in Jhesus Christ. I am brought here to-day on account of preaching a vile and deadly heresy, in this pulpit on the first Monday in Lent. That heresy is contained in the following words: *No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully.* I freely confess, acknowledge, and say, that I did, in real truth, use those words. But before I proceed to abjure the heresy contained therein, and to express with tears my penitence for my hideous crime, I crave, my be-

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico


loved children in Jhesus Christ, most illustrious princes, my reverend brethren, most eminent and most reverend lords, and, prostrate at Your feet, Most Holy Father, indulgence for a few moments while I relate a dream and a vision which came to me during the night just past, which I spent for the good of my soul upon the tender bosom of the Sant' Uffizio.' Fra Serafico's face, as he spoke, beamed with a beauty so unearthly, his manner was so gracious, and the musick of his golden voice so entrancing, that Papa Ottoboni, making the ✠ signs of ✠ the cross ✠ granted him the favour which he asked.

“The friar continued: ‘In my dream it appeared to me that I was standing before the bar of the Eternal Judge; and that there I was accused by a certain Jesuit called Padre Tonto Pappagallo of preaching heresy, on the first Monday in Lent, in the Church of Sancarlo al Corso, using these words: *No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully.* And while I waited there, Beato Fra Francesco himself came and stood beside me. And the Judge of all men looked upon me with wrath and anger, asking whether I confessed my crime; and I, wretched man that I am, in the presence of Him Who knows all things, even the inmost secrets of the heart, could do nothing else but acknowledge that it was even so. Then the Padre Eterno, Who, though terrible beyond all one can conceive to evil-doers, is of a justice so

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

clear, so fine, so straight, that the crystal of earth becomes as dull as mud, the keenness of a diamond as blunt granite, and the shortest distance from here to there as crooked as the curves in a serpent's tail — this just Judge, I say, asked me, who am but a worm of the earth, whether I had anything to allege in excuse for my crime.

“And I, covered with confusion as with a garment, because of my many sins, replied, O Clementissimo Signor Iddio, I have confessed my crime; and in palliation I can only say that, when I was preparing my sermon, I took those words from the writings of Sangregoriomagno.

“The Judge of all men ordered my guardian angel to write that down, and deigned to ask whether I could say in what part of the writings of Sangregoriomagno this heresy would be found. O Padre Celeste Iddio, I replied, the heresy will be found in the 37th Homily of Sangregoriomagno on the 14th chapter of the Gospel of Sanluca Evangelista. Then I covered my face with my hands and waited for my dreadful sentence: but Beato Fra Francesco comforted me, and patted my shoulder with his hand, all shining with the sacred stigmata; and the Padre Eterno, speaking in a mild voice to the Court of Heaven, said,  DEAR CHILDREN, THIS LITTLE BROTHER HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF PREACHING A HERESY, AND HIS HERESY IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

THE WRITINGS OF SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO. IN THIS CASE, YOU WILL PERCEIVE THAT IT IS NOT OUR LITTLE BROTHER WHO IS A HERETIC, BUT SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO, WHO WILL THEREFORE HAVE THE GOODNESS TO PLACE HIMSELF AT THE BAR; FOR WE ARE DETERMINED TO SEARCH THIS MATTER TO ITS REMOTEST END. ❖❖❖

Then Sangregorio, detto Magno, was led by his angel-guardian from his throne among the Doctors of the Church; and he came down to the bar and stood beside me and Beato Fra Francesco, who whispered in my ear, Cheer up, Little Brother, and hope for the best! And the Padre Eterno said,

❖❖❖ SANGREGORIO (all short), THIS LITTLE BROTHER HAS BEEN ACCUSED BEFORE US, THAT ON THE FIRST MONDAY IN LENT, IN THE CHURCH OF SANCARLO AL CORSO,^s HE PREACHED HERESY IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS: — *No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully.* WE HAVE EXAMINED HIM, AND HE ALLEGES THAT HE TOOK THOSE WORDS FROM THE

37TH HOMILY, WHICH YOU HAVE WRITTEN UPON THE 14TH CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL OF SANLUCA EVANGELISTA. WE DEMAND, THEREFORE, THAT YOU SHOULD SAY, FIRST, WHETHER YOU ACKNOWLEDGE YOURSELF TO HAVE WRITTEN THESE WORDS; AND, SECONDLY, IF YOU HAVE DONE SO, WHAT EXCUSE YOU HAVE TO OFFER? ❖❖❖

Sangregoriomagno opened the book of his writings which, of course, he always carries with

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

him; and he turned the pages with an anxious finger.

“‘Presently he looked up with a smile into the Face of God and said, O Dio, Padre delle misericordie, our Little Brother has spoken the truth, for I have found the passage, and when I shall have read it also, You will find the answer to both questions which Your Condescension has put me. So Sangregoriomagno read from his writings these words, *But we cannot arrive at the great reward unless through great labours: wherefore, that most excellent preacher, Sampaolo, says, No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully. The greatness of rewards, therefore, may delight the mind, but does not take away the obligation of fighting for it first.*

“‘HM-M-M-M, said the Padre Eterno, THIS BEGINS TO GROW INTERESTING; FOR IT SEEMS, DEAR CHILDREN, ❖❖❖ THAT OUR LITTLE BROTHER HERE HAS QUOTED HIS HERESY FROM SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO, AND THAT SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO, IN HIS TURN QUOTED IT FROM SAMPAOLO, UPON WHOM, THEREFORE, THE RESPONSIBILITY SEEMS TO REST. ❖❖❖ CALL SAMPAOLO.

“‘So the seven angels blew into their trumpets and summoned Sampaolo, who just then chanced to be attending a meeting of the Apostolic College; and when he came into court his angel-guardian led him to the bar, where he took his place by the side of Sangregoriomagno’ — (the

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

god who made Christians of the English, sir, and the chaunt, sir, and saw San Michele Arcangiolo on the top of the Mola), — ‘by the side of Beato Fra Francesco, and of my wretched self.

“**✠✠✠** NOW, SAMPAOLO, said the Padre Eterno, WE HAVE HERE A LITTLE GREY FRIAR WHO HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF PREACHING HERESY ON THE FIRST MONDAY IN LENT, IN THE CHURCH OF SANCARLO AL CORSO, IN THESE WORDS, *No one shall be crowned unless he has contended lawfully.* AND HE INFORMS US THAT HE HAS QUOTED THESE WORDS FROM SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO’S 37TH HOMILY ON THE 14TH CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL OF SANLUCA EVANGELISTA. WE HAVE EXAMINED SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO, WHO HAS POINTED OUT TO US THAT HE DID INDEED USE THESE WORDS, AS OUR LITTLE BROTHER HAS SAID: BUT HE ALSO ALLEGES THAT THEY ARE NOT HIS OWN WORDS, BUT YOURS. THE COURT, THEREFORE, WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER YOU ADMIT HIS STATEMENT TO BE TRUE.

“**✠✠✠** Then Sampaolo’s angel-guardian handed to him the book containing all the letters which he had written; and after he had refreshed his memory with a glance at this, the great apostle replied, O Principio di ogni cosa, there is no doubt that both this Little Brother and Sangregoriomagno are right, for I find in my second letter to Santimoteo, chapter ii. verse 5, the following words: — *And if a man also strive for*

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

masteries, yet is he not crowned except he contend lawfully.

“**✠✠✠** WELL! the Padre Eterno said; THIS IS A VERY SHOCKING STATE OF THINGS, THAT YOU, SAMPAOLO, SHOULD PUBLISH HERESIES IN THIS MANNER, AND LEAD MEN OF ALL AGES INTO ERROR! SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO, TAKING THE STATEMENT ON YOUR AUTHORITY, PREACHES HERESY IN HIS TIME; AND, A THOUSAND YEARS LATER, OUR LITTLE BROTHER, INNOCENTLY THINKING GODS OF SUCH EMINENCE AS THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES AND THE APOSTLE OF THE ENGLISH TO BE GOOD AUTHORITIES, HAS PREACHED THE SAME HERESY. YOU SEE, NOW, THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW WHAT THE END OF A LIE WILL BE, WHEN ONCE IT HAS BEEN STARTED ON ITS COURSE.

“‘But hear me, Sampaolo said, (he was a very bold man, sir), ‘for I venture to submit to La Sua Maestà that the second letter which I wrote to Santimoteo has been placed by Your Church on earth on the list of the Canonical Books; which signifies that, when I wrote that letter, I was inspired by the Third Person of the Maesta Cœterna dell’ Adorabile Trinita, and that therefore I was divinely protected from teaching error in any shape or form!

“‘OF COURSE IT DOES, the Padre Eterno replied. THE WORDS WHICH YOU HAVE WRITTEN, SAMPAOLO, IN YOUR SECOND LETTER TO SANTI-

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

MOTEO, ARE NOT THE WORDS OF A MAN, BUT THE WORDS OF GOD HIMSELF; AND THE MATTER AMOUNTS TO THIS, THAT OUR LITTLE BROTHER HERE, WHO TOOK THE WORDS FROM SANGREGORIO, DETTO MAGNO, WHO TOOK THEM FROM YOU, WHO WERE DIVINELY INSPIRED TO WRITE THEM, HAS NOT BEEN GUILTY OF HERESY AT ALL, UNLESS GOD HIMSELF CAN ERR. AND WHO, the Padre Eterno continued with indignation, WE SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW,—WHO IS THE RUFFIAN WHO HAS TAKEN UP OUR TIME WITH THIS RIDICULOUS AND BASELESS CHARGE AGAINST OUR LITTLE BROTHER?

“‘Somebody said that it was a Jesuit called Padre Tonto Pappagallo, at which the Padre Eterno sniffed and said, A JESUIT! AND WHAT, IN THE NAME OF GOODNESS, IS THAT?

“‘Madonna whispered that it was a son of Santignazio of Loyola.

“‘WHERE IS SANTIGNAZIO OF LOYOLA? said the Padre Eterno.

“‘Now Santignazio, who had seen the way things were going, and what a contemptible spectacle his son was presenting, had hidden himself behind a bush and was pretending to say his office very diligently indeed. But he was soon found, and brought into Court; and the Padre Eterno asked him what he meant by allowing his spiritual children to act in this way. But Santignazio only groaned and said, O Potenza Infinita, all my life long I tried to teach them to mind their

About the Heresy of Fra Serafico

own business, but in fact I have altogether failed to make them listen to me.

“That was my dream, Most Holy Father, most eminent and most reverend lords, my reverend brethren, most illustrious princes, my beloved children in Jhesus Christ; and, since you have been so gracious as to listen, I will now proceed to a formal recantation of the vile and deadly heresy which I am accused of having preached, on the first Monday in Lent, in this Church of Sancarlo al Corso.’

“But Papa Ottoboni arose from His throne, and the cardinals, and bishops, and the princes, and the people, and they all cried in a loud voice, ‘Evviva, evviva, Bocca d’Oro, evviva, evviva.’”

Christians Love one Another

VJ

ABOUT ONE WAY IN WHICH CHRISTIANS LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“**Y**ES,” I said, “that ’s a very good story, Toto. And now I want to know where you learned it.”

“Well, sir,” he replied, “that history was told to me by Fra Leone of the Cappuccini. Not that I wish you to think the Cappuccini and Franciscans to be the same, — oh, not at all. But, of course, you know better than that; and it is like their impertinence of bronze to pretend that they are; as they do; for the Cappuccini were not heard of even for hundreds of years after Sanfrancesco had founded his Religion. And the reason why they came to be made, was simply on account of the vain man Matteo Something-or-other-of-Low, who gave more thought to his clothes than to the good of his soul, considering that the sleeves which were good enough for Sanfrancesco, and the round tippet which that most sweet god wore, did not suit his style of beauty; wherefore he made himself a brown habit instead of a grey one, with plain sleeves to show the shape of his arms, and no pockets in them, and a tippet not round, but

About one Way in which

pointed like the piece of flesh which there is between my shoulders. And then, because there are always plenty of men ready to run after something new, he got together so many followers wishing to dress themselves like him, that Papa de' Medicj preferred to give them permission to have their own way, rather than cause them to become rebels against our Holy Mother the Church, by making it difficult for them to be obedient. You see the matter had really no importance which was worth a schism."

I said that I knew all about that, but that I did n't believe that religious men, whether they were Franciscans, or sham ones like the Cappuccini, or even Jesuits, would show such jealousy and envy one of another as appeared in the story of Fra Serafico.

"And there," said Toto, "I can assure you that you are exactly wrong. I may tell you that in every Religion there are two kinds of men—the saints and sinners. Of course, the saints always love one another as did Francesco and Domenico ; and, by contrary, having submitted themselves to the infernal dragon who always drives all love out of the hearts of his slaves inflaming them with the undying fire of envy, the sinners hate one another with a hatred like the venom of vipers, and continually occupy themselves with all kinds of schemes by which they may bring discredit upon their enemies, the sinners of the other Religions. Why, I can tell

Christians Love one Another

you a tale which is quite true, because I have seen it, of how some Cappuccini — and you will not ask me to say where their convent is — have done a deed by which much shame will be brought, some day, upon a house of Jesuits who live in their neighbourhood.

“ Well then, — there was a convent of Cappuccini; and, outside the grounds of the convent, there was a small house, in which I lived with my father and my mother and my brothers and sisters; and it was a very lonely place. And about as far off as it would take you to say five Paters, and five Aves, and five Glorias, there was another house; and there were perhaps three or four cottages in sight; and that is all: so it was a very lonely place. But six miles away there was a large college of Jesuits, up in the hills; and, when a Jesuit died, it was the custom to bury him in the churchyard of these Cappuccini.

“ There was a man who came to live in the other house, and he was not an old man, nor a young man, but just between the two; and, because he felt lonely, he used to pay attentions to all the ladies who came in his way when visiting this celebrated convent of Cappuccini; and our difficulty was to know which one he was going to marry. And there was one in particular who appeared to these Cappuccini to be the one which he ought to marry; but her home was far away in a large town. So one of the friars wrote to

About one Way in which

her parish priest to ask him what ought to be done; and the parish priest replied; 'Yes, you must get her married as soon as possible;' and, soon after that, the respectable man married her and brought her to the house in the lonely place of which I speak. They lived there very quietly for a little while; and then his business called the respectable man away from his house for a few weeks. So he went; and his wife remained at home: and there was no one in the house with her but a woman, her servant.

"And presently, in the middle of a night, there came a knocking at the door of the small house where I was living with my father and mother and my brothers and my sisters, and I heard this knocking. For that night I was going to enjoy myself in the orchard of the Cappuccini. So I came downstairs in my shirt alone; and because I wished to keep secret what I was going to do, I left the said shirt, rolled up in a bundle, under the seat in the porch; and I will tell you why: I thought of two things; the first thing was, that it was a very rainy night, and if my mother in the morning found my shirt wet, she would guess I had been up to mischief, and, having told my father, I should have solely stick for breakfast; and the second thing was, that if some Cappuccino should be persuaded by an uneasy divel to look out of his window to see a naked boy capering about in the orchard, or in the churchyard, he would say to himself that it was

Christians Love one Another

just a poor soul escaping from purgatory; and then, having repeated a *De Profundis*, he would go back to his bed. So just when I was creeping across the yard, with the warm rain pouring in torrents over the flesh of me, there came this banging on the door of my house; and I skipped behind a tree, and waited. Then my father opened the window of his room upstairs, demanding what was the matter; and the voice of the servant of the respectable man, replied that *la Signora Pucci* had been taken very ill of a sudden, and that if my mother was a Christian woman she would come to her assistance. This servant spoke with a very thick voice; and as I did not think I should be amused by staying behind my tree, I ran away, and presently enjoyed myself enough with the peaches belonging to the said *Cappuccini*. When I came home, I dried myself with a cloth, took my shirt from under the seat in the porch, and went to bed again.

“In the morning when I awoke, there was no one to give us our breakfast; for my father was gone to his work, and my mother to the assistance of the wife of the respectable man; so I was thankful enough that I had made so many good meals during the night.

“All that day, and all the next night, and all the day after that, was my mother away from her home; and I need not tell you that I began to think that something very strange was happen-

About one Way in which

ing, of which I ought to know ; so I waited here, and I waited there, and I put a question of one kind to this, and a question of another kind to that; and during the night, after my father had seen me go to bed, I rose, and left my shirt in the porch as before, not because it was raining now, but because I liked it, as well as for the second reason ; and I wandered about quite naked and happy and free” — (here he tossed his arms, and threw up his legs, and wriggled all over in an indescribable manner), — “dodging behind trees and bushes, from my father’s house to the house of the respectable man, and to the churchyard of the said convent of Cappuccini ; and, during that night, I saw many curious things ; which, with the answers given to the questions that I had been asking, and other odds and ends, which, either I knew, or which I had seen with my eyes, made me able to know exactly what this mystery was.

“ Now I ought to have told you this : — that a week before, a priest of the Jesuit College, of which I have already spoken, had been buried in the convent churchyard ; also that he was confessor of the wife of the respectable man, and a priest whom she held in the very greatest honour, and he was called Padre Guilhelmo Siretto. He was a very holy man indeed, whom everybody venerated ; for the Signor Iddio had made him live sixty-seven long years in order that he might add to the many good deeds which in his

Christians Love one Another

long life he had done. I should like you to try to remember this, because now I must go to another part of the story.

“After the servant of the respectable man had told my father that her mistress was ill, my mother rose from her bed and went, at once, to the house of the sick person. Arrived there, she found la Signora Pucci fallen upon the floor in greatest pain; and, being a woman herself, she knew, with a single stroke of her eye, what was the matter.

“Now the servant of the respectable man, who had accompanied my mother, was a tipsy wench, and useless. Therefore my mother, who is the best of all women living, (perhaps equal to Beatrice), made la Signora Pucci as comfortable as possible at that time; went into the stable; put a horse into the cart; and, having driven for three miles to the nearest town, brought back a doctor with her as the day was breaking.

“The sick woman was put to bed, and the doctor gave my mother directions as to what was to be done during his absence; for he said he must go home now to finish his night's rest, and in the morning he had his patients to see; but, in the afternoon, he would come again; and then, perhaps, something would happen. But my mother told him that on no account she would consent to be left alone in the house with la Signora Pucci, because she perceived that something most astonishing was to happen. The doctor

About one Way in which

replied that he would not stay, because he could not; and, that, if my mother was not there to assist the sick woman in her trouble, she might die. But my mother would by no means be persuaded, and in the end she conquered; and the doctor stayed, and they waited all through the night, and the next morning before noon there came a new baby into that house; and la Signora Pucci was so astonished that she really nearly died; and as for the baby, he did die, after a half-hour of this world.

“Then the sick woman became mad; and cried in delirium that she would not have it known to the respectable man, her husband, that a new baby had come into that house; so my mother went for the Fra Guardiano of these Cappuccini, telling him all that she knew, how she herself had baptised the baby, by the name Angelo, seeing him to be in the article of death, and that, therefore, he must be buried in the churchyard; also how that his mother, la Signora Pucci, demanded to have this done secretly, and that the grave should be made with Padre Guilhelmo, of whom I have just spoken, who was a holy man with whom any person might be glad to be buried. Upon this Fra Guardiano replied that it would be as easy as eating; and he directed my mother, having put the dead baby into a box, to take the said box under her cloak, at midnight, to the grave of Padre Guilhelmo.

“So she did as she was told, putting the dead

Christians Love one Another

baby Angelo into a wooden box in which rice had been, and cutting a cross upon the lid so that San Michele Arcangiolo should know there was a Christian inside; and at midnight she was there, at the grave of Padre Guilhelmo. And, of course, I need not tell you that there was a naked boy hidden in a cedar-tree, over her head, lying flat with his breast upon a thick branch which he held between his thighs and with his arms, and looking right down upon the grave. Then there came out of the convent Fra Giovannone, Fra Lorenzo, Fra Sebastiano, and Fra Guilhelmo: and if I had not remembered that a naked boy in a cedar-tree was not one of the things which you are unable to do without at a midnight funeral, I should have laughed; because these friars, coming out of their convent without candles, fell over the crosses on the graves, and said words which friars do not say in their offices. They brought two spades and a bucket of holy water; and, when they came to the grave of the Jesuit Padre, Fra Sebastiano and Fra Guilhelmo dug about two cubits of a hole there; then my mother gave them the box from underneath her cloak, and they put it in the earth; and having sprinkled it with holy water, they covered it up, made the grave look as it had looked before, as best they could in that dim light, and then returned to their convent, all the time saying no word aloud.

“Then my mother went back to the house of la Signora Pucci, and a boy without clothes followed

About one Way in which

her there. For one hour after, I ran backwards and forwards, secretly, between the convent and the house of the respectable man; but, finding that nothing happened, I went to my bed.

“ About the Ave Maria of the day after this, my mother returned to her house, saying that the doctor had brought a nurse to la Signora Pucci, and that the respectable man her husband also was coming back, so there was nothing more for her to do. Then she swooned with weariness, for she was tired — but, tired; but after resting two days while I, and my sisters, and my brothers, kept the house clean and tidy, she recovered.

“ And that is all the tale, sir.

“ Now I think you will understand that these Cappuccini, unless indeed they are entirely fools of the most stupid (and that they may be), have been urged on by envy of the Jesuit fathers to lay the beginnings of a plot which, some day, will cause a great scandal. You must see that they could not help the coming of the new baby, Angelo, to the house of the respectable man; and it is not for that that I blame them. You must see that when the new baby, Angelo, was come, and had died a good Christian, there was nothing else for them to do but to bury him in their churchyard, and secretly, to defend la Signora Pucci from shame; and after all, you must see that there are paces upon paces upon paces of ground in that churchyard, where this dead Christian baby, Angelo, could have been

Christians Love one Another

buried by himself, secretly; and that it is purely abominable to have put him into the grave of a Jesuit, which, being opened, as it may at any time — God knows when, or why, but it is quite likely — will bring a great dishonour, and a foul blot, upon the sons of Santignazio of Loyola.”

I said that I saw.

From London, in my study, on the Eve of Saint George the Martyr, Protector of the Kingdom, MDCCCC.

*“Improbè facit, qui,
in alieno libro,
ingeniosus est.”*

MART.

COMEDIES AND ERRORS

By HENRY HARLAND

Second Edition

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