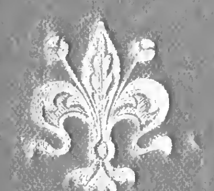

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SANDRO BOTTICELLI

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By A. J. ANDERSON

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"The face of Alessandra."

#76212

THE ROMANCE OF SANDRO BOTTICELLI

WOVEN FROM HIS PAINTINGS

BY

A. J. ANDERSON

Author of "The Romance of Fra Filippo Lippi," etc.

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE
AND NINETEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
STANLEY PAUL & CO
31 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

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PREFACE

HE who would write the account of a Tuscan of the Quattrocento will find that there are two just courses open to him: he may compile a scientific record of bare facts and contemporary references, without a word of comment, or else he may tell his story in the guise of fiction.

The common practice of writing a serious book, rooted on solid facts, and blossoming out into the author's personal deductions as to character and motives, is a monstrous injustice—the more authoritative the style, the worse the crime—for who can judge the character and motives of even a contemporary? Besides, such works stand self-condemned, since the serious books and articles on Sandro Botticelli, written during the past twenty years, prove beyond a doubt—

(*a*) That he was a deeply religious man, permeated with the rigorism of Savonarola, and groaning over the sins of Florence;

(*b*) That he was a semi-pagan;

(*c*) That he was a philosopher, who despaired of reconciling Christianity with classicalism;

(*d*) That he was an ignorant person, who knew but little of those classical subjects which he took from the poems of Lorenzo and Politian ;

(*e*) That he was a deep student and essayist on Dante ;

(*f*) That he was a careless fellow, with no thoughts beyond the jest and bottle.

The scientific history of Botticelli has been compiled, once and for all, by Mr. Herbert Horne ; and, save for the doubtful suggestion, "Too little mindful of the outward forms and observances of religion, too deeply enamoured of the old pagan world of the senses, Botticelli may well have been, during no small part of his life," little light has been thrown on Sandro's personality.

But here fiction may step in, and, by following the methods of the modern detective who reconstructs the scene of a crime, the writer may reconstruct the atmosphere in which Sandro moved and the persons who must have influenced him.

So, in writing this book, I have started with a table of contemporary Florentine events and the chronological list of Sandro's paintings ; I have taken the records of Sandro from contemporary documents ; I have taken his patrons and friends, the de' Medici, Politian, da Vinci, and the rest, from contemporary accounts and their own writings ; I have taken the philosophy, the classicalism, the life and the art of the age from contemporary books ; then, placing

Sandro's pictures before me and remembering the patron for whom each was painted, I have tried to reconstruct the life of Sandro Botticelli.

Lastly, so as to guard against the confusion of fact with fiction, I have stated the source of my information, and the nature of my deductions, in the notes.

A. J. ANDERSON.

NOTE.—The word "romance" is used in the sense of a fictitious narrative in prose, with imaginary conversations and fictitious incidents, and not in the modern sense of a love-story. Thus the title might be read: "The Story of Sandro Botticelli, Reconstructed from his Paintings."

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NOTE.—Mr. Anderson, Rome, who has photographed many of the pictures that are reproduced, has no connection with the Author.

Book I

DAWN

COMMENCES IN THE YEAR 1462,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS EIGHTEEN

ENDS IN THE YEAR 1467,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS TWENTY-THREE

Book I

PERIOD: 1462 to 1467

1444. Sandro Botticelli born.

1456. Fra Filippo Lippi abducts Lucrezia Buti.

1457. Filippino Lippi born.

1458. Lucrezia returns to her convent.

1459 (?). Botticelli becomes Fra Filippo's pupil.

1461. Lippi and Lucrezia released from their vows, and united by the Pope.

1462. THIS STORY COMMENCES.

1464. Cosimo de' Medici dies, and Piero succeeds.

1465. Alessandra Lippi born.

1466. The Rucellai wedding.

1467. Botticelli probably leaves Lippi.
Lippi goes to Spoleto.

NOTE.—In 1457 Sandro Botticelli was still at school. After leaving school he worked for a short time with a goldsmith in Florence, and became Lippi's pupil in 1458 or 1459. The date on which he left Fra Filippo is also uncertain.

THE ROMANCE OF SANDRO BOTTICELLI

CHAPTER I

ECHO!

"Piero di Prato,
Fior di granato!"

SER PIERO D' ANTONIO DI SER VANNOZZO, notary public, and late procurator to the Convent of Santa Margherita in Prato, stopped mopping his sweltering face, stared hard at the steps of the Pieve, and swore long and earnestly. Again, from the direction of the parish church, the voice sang sweetly :

"Piero of Prato,
Blossom of the pomegranate!"

"Corpo di Bacco!" If one should happen to be fat and full-blooded, if the colour of the pomegranate should blossom in one's nose as one leaves the wine-shop, it is exceedingly unpleasant to have personalities hurled in one's face by some invisible tormentor ; and this was the fourth following morning that the soothing flavour of the old Chianti had been spoiled, and its generous afterglow changed into a fury of anger.

The notary looked across the Piazza, he searched every corner of the Square with eyes that twinkled like those of an angry pig, but he could see no one in the glare of the morning's sun except a priest and one or two women ; none of these could be his enemy !

"Piero di granato !" (Piero of the pomegranate-tree !) whispered the walls of the Pieve. The voice ended with a chuckle of delight, and Ser Piero d' Antonio di Ser Vannozzo went on homewards towards the Gorellina, grunting wickedly.

As the notary left the Square to turn into the Via delle Tre Gore, a boy of seventeen or eighteen strolled up the street which meets the entrance into the Gorellina at an angle, and greeted him.

"The day is hot, Ser Piero !" said he with politeness.

For a second Ser Piero eyed the youth suspiciously. "The day is as the good God made it," he answered, and passed on.

Then a sweet face looked out of the window of the corner house, and a voice that struggled betwixt laughter and chiding called: "Sandro !"

The boy glanced up, blushing as one who had been detected in some indiscretion, and entered the house. Outside in the Square the hard sun was biting the carving on the exterior pulpit of the Pieve like the black and white of an etching ; within the house, the drawn blinds subdued all the lights and shadows into soft half-tones that made it difficult to distinguish details or read the expression on features.

"Ah ! Madonna Lucrezia," he began, hurrying to

plunge into any topic that might turn the conversation away from a rebuke.

"Sandro," she interrupted, "I have heard you, and your words were rude."

"Rude to sing the praises of Ser Piero, madonna?" The boy's face had the look of an angel who had been misunderstood. "Since he has toiled long to paint his nose with the colours of the flowers, it were churlish to withhold one's admiration. But what have I been doing? What do you accuse me of?" he inquired shrewdly.

"You go a hand's-breadth down the street, my Sandro," she answered, "so that you cannot be seen from the Piazza; then you call out rude things against Ser Piero, and wait till he comes fussing round the corner with his face all crimson, grunting like a pig. I have seen it, not once but three times!"

"Are you kind, madonna?" retorted the boy. "I do but call Ser Piero 'the pomegranate-flower,' and you rebuke me; whereas you christen him 'the scarlet pig'!" And their eyes met in laughter.

Lucrezia Buti, wife of Filippo Lippi, was exceedingly fair and graceful; the boy was blessed with a keen love of beauty. Also Sandro was as good as a little piece of bread, which counted for much; he was her husband's favourite pupil, which counted for more; and he was constitutionally delicate, which counted for most of all.

"Sandro," asked Lucrezia curiously, "how do you perform this miracle? You stand close under my window calling out rude things against Ser Piero; then, five or perhaps ten minutes afterwards, the

Saints bring Ser Piero round the corner, fussing with anger ! "

" This miracle is easy, madonna "—it is pleasant for a painter's wife to hear herself called " madonna," just as though she were some great lady : " one stands beside yonder brown cobble-stone, calling out against the wall of the Pieve, and the echo carries one's voice to the far corner of the Piazza over against the wine-shop. As the shadow of the roof approaches my cobble-stone, Ser Piero always enters the wine-shop for his mid-morning draught of wine ; as the shadow touches my cobble-stone Ser Piero leaves the wine-shop ; as Ser Piero leaves the wine-shop, Sandro speaks with him : 'tis as easy as stealing grapes ! "

" But how did you discover this echo ? "

" By the artistic invention," and he laughed at her whimsically. " Fra Filippo says that I have too much invention. Then, instead of speaking with him rudely —scarlet pigling, for instance—I liken Ser Piero to the beautiful blossom of the ruby pomegranate. Ho ! I am a great artist ! "

" A great artist ! Heaven ! There was once a tiresome little boy——"

" I am eighteen ! "

" With the looks and manners of fourteen ; but I am speaking of the past. There was once a tiresome little boy, who broke his pedagogue's heart over the ancients——"

" It was over a dull treatise on the metaphysics of Plato by Messer Ficino," corrected Sandro.

" Over a learned treatise in the beautiful tongue of the ancients," amended Lucrezia. " Then he was

placed with his brother to learn the cunning craft of the goldsmith——"

"Beating out gold-leaf for the gilder," corrected Sandro.

"To learn a craft that is essential to the painter," amended Lucrezia. "And he broke his brother's heart by his idleness. Now, when he is apprenticed to the calling he desired, and apprenticed moreover to the greatest painter in Tuscany, he plays round the corners with fat Ser Piero. What are you supposed to be doing, Sandro?"

"Fra Diamante supposes that I am gilding a frame," he answered with an expressive shrug of his shoulders; "Jacopo imagines that I am grinding colours; but I am neither the apprentice of Diamante nor of Jacopo."

"But has my husband set you no task?"

"The master is far too busy with not painting the portrait of Messer Spighi to set any one any task!"

"With not painting the portrait of the Canon? What do you mean, Sandro?"

"St. Stephen is lying on his bier; the plasterers have laid the patch of fresh plaster above the head of St. Stephen, all ready for the picture of Messer Spighi as chief mourner; the Canon has promised to arrive early; the master is in the mood for painting. Then comes a message from the Canon, saying that he has been called to give the last sacraments to a dying woman, and that he will arrive presently. Fra Filippo is furious!"

In fresco painting, as every one knows, a patch of fresh plaster must be laid and the paint applied

without delay; for, if the plaster should have set, the paint, instead of soaking into the plaster and forming part of its surface, will remain outside ready to flake off.

"What did Filippo say?" asked Lucrezia.

"He said that this conduct was like the thoughtlessness of the secular clergy; that the Canon must have known that the plaster would be dry within two hours, whereas the soul of the sick woman would remain waiting in purgatory for centuries; he said that the Canon combined the face of an angel with the soul of a scorpion; and that his face would flake off the wall of the Pieve and stew in the lowest circle of the inferno for all eternity. Believe me, he was very angry!"

Lucrezia laughed, for she loved these hot moods of her impetuous husband; and, since she knew that he had turned over a new leaf with the firm determination of serving God, and that he would be the first to throw down his brushes and go help the dying, she could value his vapourings at their true worth. "Then he set you no task?" asked she.

"He told me to go to the devil! That's why I sought out Ser Piero."

"Then fetch your materials and work, my Sandro. See! you are not only wasting your own time, but mine also. There was never an artist who had the chance that you have," she continued, as the boy fetched board and paper; "it is not as though Filippo had still a workshop, with many apprentices and journeymen, and turned out many pictures; he has only Fra Diamante as his assistant and you

and Jacopo as his pupils, and he is the greatest artist of his age."

"Now what shall I draw?" said he, as he stretched the paper on the board. "Fra Filippo bade me go to the devil; shall I draw devils?—but, of a truth, Fra Angelico has drawn all the little devils in hell, and I could plan nothing new. Stay! I will draw a satyr, or still better a centaur, or a whole troop of little centaurs—they will amuse Filippino."

"Sandro!" Lucrezia's voice was pained; for she had just been giving him a lecture on earnestness, whereas such fancy drawing as he suggested was strictly forbidden except out of work hours.

"Then I will draw yonder table. It will be a good exercise in the lines of perspective, and, who knows? some day I may have to paint Salome with the head of St. John Baptist resting beside her on a table. Here is a theme: Messer Cosimo de' Medici hath purchased a table designed on the classical model; Sandro Filepepi, the great artist, is commissioned to paint an altar-piece of the aforesaid table supporting the head of the Baptist, with Messer Lorenzo Strozzi as Herod, madonna his wife as Herodias, and madonna their daughter as Salome; Messer Giovanni Rucellai and Messer Carlo Pandolfi are standing in the background, looking on with shocked surprise. The whole city of Florence throngs to see the picture, and Messer Filepepi obtaineth great renown!"

"Sandro!" The boy's caricature of the fashionable art tendency made Lucrezia smile; but as her own husband was engaged in portraying various worthies of Prato grouped around the bier of St. Stephen, she

was also a little angry. "My husband painted me as Salome in the fresco of King Herod," she remarked.

"But that is different, madonna! Fra Filippo painted your features because you stood as his model; he did not paint you so that men might come and gape, saying: 'How wonderful! This is the living image of the beautiful Madonna Lucrezia! Heaven, how gracefully she dances! You can almost hear her feet tapping the floor!'"

"That is true, but what can you say about Filippo's picture of Messer Carlo de' Medici and Messer Paolo della Torricella and the Canon mourning over St. Stephen?" She felt that she had Sandro at a disadvantage.

"'Tis but the master's whim," he answered laughing. "Who can say what he will do next? Truly he is a great artist! Besides, when those who hold the purse-strings desire to be painted, what can the artist answer?"

"Then what does my wise Sandro desire? Does he wish to paint his figures after the manner of Giotto?"

"Bah! in the image of wooden puppets? Thank God, I am not like Fra Diamante!"

"Then what does he want?"

"Not to copy the model like Jacopo until the neighbours say: 'See! Our Lady is Lisa of the wine-shop, and Santa Anna is old Caterina who sells chestnuts!"

"Then what do you want?"

And gradually, because the boy had become very

shy when he came to speak of his own desires and aspirations—but surely, because she was both sweet and sympathetic—Lucrezia won Sandro's confidences. He was weary of being set to complete a drapery that Diamante had begun, all bunchy and bejewelled; he was sick to death of being told to draw studies of Lisa the wine-shop girl, who posed in the early mornings as model to himself and his fellow pupil. "For," as he remarked, "Lisa serving wine has a merry smile and a changing expression, but Lisa as the Madonna is ridiculous!" He could tell her about the dulness of drawing conventional faces after the old method, and about the disillusionment of drawing saints and angels from life-models after the new method—Lisa as Our Lady and old Caterina as St. Anna, for instance—but, as he was only eighteen and the bottega-talk had not yet coined the art-jargon of "personal impressions" and "individual expression," and as he had not even formulated his longing to paint the breath of life and the poetry of motion within his own mind, he could only give Lucrezia to understand that he wished to give vent to his imagination.

Outside, the sunshine was pouring down into the Square and beating against the sun-blinds; inside, the room was shady and restful. "Have you any picture in your mind, my Sandro?" asked Lucrezia gently.

"As I crossed the Piazza del Mercatale some weeks ago, there was a woman sitting on her doorstep with her baby on her knee, and her little boy was kneeling down kissing the baby's toes, and she was stooping

forward to encourage him in the kissing. Do you realise ?"

"Yes."

"If I were to paint Our Gracious Lady like this, holding the Bambino for the Wise Men to kiss His feet ?"

"It is a beautiful thought !"

"Will you let me draw you as Our Lady, Madonna Lucrezia ?"

"'Tis first Filippo, then Fra Diamante, and now you !" said she laughing. "I am no wife ! only a model ! Well, I must see my own bambino first—that he is having his siesta." And she went off to make certain that Filippino was sleeping instead of playing about on the bedroom floor.

Left to himself, the boy looked longingly at some charcoal, which is a quick and facile medium with which to draw, and then armed himself with ink-horn and pen ; charcoal may be seductive, but pen and ink—whether it be the ink of the Indies or the oak-gall of Italy—is the true method of the craftsman, for ink will bear with no carelessness in draughtsmanship, nor yield a line that has been once drawn to the wiles of cunning shading. Placing a chair so that the light from an eastern window would fall almost full on his model's face, Sandro seated himself on a low stool as far on one side as the width of the chamber permitted.

"Is it allowed ?" asked Lucrezia, holding up a strip of half-finished lace.

"As long as you stoop over your work, madonna," he answered, "it is obligatory."

So he worked with the full certainty of one who knew whither each line would lead, combined with the uncertainty of one whose soul is only in the process of development ; and she worked with the certainty of one whose fingers had attained much skill, and the preoccupation of one whose thoughts have gone off day-dreaming.

These day-dreams started with the remembrance of the time when she was as young and enthusiastic as Sandro, when she was the petted daughter of Francesco da Buti, a Florentine merchant who was endowed with some culture and much refinement. Her father had died, and her stepbrother had placed her and her younger sister Spinetta with the good nuns of Santa Margherita of Prato. Two and a half years had passed, years spent as a parlour-boarder, with the talk of the convent doings and the parochial gossip as her recreation, and some precious volumes by Messer Dante as her comfort, and then she had sought to fill her heart with the duties and offices of a professed nun ; but, sad to say, time proved that she lacked a vocation.

Had she been happy in her Order? She could not tell. She had not been unhappy, only somewhat wistful and empty-hearted ; for where Sister Margherita had been able to lift up her soul and fill her mind with the Divine Presence, Sister Lucrezia (possibly through some fault of her own) had failed to find this consolation ; and where Sister Margherita had been able to fill the craving of her heart with the Divine Spouse, the heart of Sister Lucrezia had remained unsatisfied. How much of this had been her own fault, and how much the result of her natural

limitations? She could not say. "After all," she thought, "if the good God had called every woman to be a nun, then mankind would come to an end!"

For two years she had been a nun—not unhappy, only somewhat wistful and empty-hearted—and in the spring of 1456 Fra Filippo Lippi, the great artist, had come to paint a picture of "Our Lady of the Girdle" for the convent chapel. At first, the Lady Abbess had refused the friar's request for Sister Lucrezia to sit as model for the painting of Our Lady; then she had consented, with the stipulation that one of the older nuns should act as chaperone, and Sister Lucrezia had commenced her sittings most willingly.

From the first she and the painter had been attracted towards each other. Why? Lucrezia smiled to herself as she tried to formulate the attraction in her thoughts, knowing full well that the attraction lay in the fact that he was Filippo and she Lucrezia, and that there was the end of it. They had tried the friendship that Messer Plato is said to have originated; they had tried to follow the example of Dante and Beatrice, of Petrarch and Laura; but—well—the sins of one's past life should only be considered on one's knees, or in the confessional.

In the summer of 1447 Filippino had been born, and in the winter of '48, as soon as she had been able to wean her baby and leave him safe with his father, she had made her peace with God and returned to the convent. No! she and Filippo——

"May I place your cloak round you, madonna?" asked Sandro; "it is necessary for the subject."

"Yes!" she answered, deep in her thoughts, and unmindful of the heat.

No! she and Filippo had made their peace with God when the baby had been born; and then, as soon as Filippino could be left, she had gone back to her convent to work out her repentance. Filippo had begun by loving her for herself, but he had also begun by loving her beautiful body—yes, she knew that she was beautiful, for did not both Filippo and her mirror tell her so daily—he had begun by loving her body more than her soul, and he had ended by loving her soul (that was the real part of her) more than her body; then God had been very good to him, and had given him back the whole of her. Each had given up the other for God; then, after more than two years, God had worked a miracle and made the Pope dispense them from their vows so that they might be joined in holy matrimony.

"He began by admiring my body, and by painting my body," she thought; "now rh loves my soul, and will presently paint my soul." Stay! Had not Filippo commenced by painting only the bodies of his models, and was not he already beginning to paint their souls? He had clearly painted the soul of Messer Carlo de' Medici and the soul of Messer della Torricella, his vicar, in the "Funeral of St. Stephen"; and the very fact that he had just spoken of the Canon as having the soul of a scorpion within a beautiful body showed that he was thinking of painting persons' souls.

"Sandro," she asked, "may I move?"

"One moment, madonna!—Yes! Now you have the artist's permission!"

"Sandro," she asked, "have you ever tried to draw a person's soul?"

"Eh?"

"The soul that reveals itself in the mouth, and looks out through the window of the eyes?"

He sat staring at her, with his lips parted and his eyes wide open.

CHAPTER II

CONCERNING MESSER DANTE

HE sat staring at her for a moment, then his face clouded. "It is a beautiful thought, Madonna Lucrezia," he said; "but I fail to understand it!"

"It is my fault, Sandro," she answered. "I have explained myself clumsily"; and, going to a shelf on which lay several books, she took down a volume bound in worn vellum.

"Ah! here is the passage,"—Lucrezia's voice took on a reverential tone as she read it: "'The Soul shows itself so evidently in the eyes that it is possible to know its present passions if you look attentively.

"'Six passions are proper to the human Soul . . . Grace, Zeal, Mercy, Envy, Love, and Shame; and with whichever of these the Soul is impassioned, there comes into the window of the Eyes the semblance of it, unless it be repressed within, and shut from view by great power of will. . . .

"'It reveals itself in the Mouth, like colour behind glass as it were. And what is a smile or a laugh except a gleam of the Soul's delight, a light shot outwardly from that which shines within?' And so the poet calls the eyes and the mouth 'the balconies

of the woman who dwells in the house of the body, she being the Soul; because there, although veiled as it were, the Soul often shows itself.' "

"It is wonderful, madonna!" cried the boy; "wonderful! Not that I comprehend the fulness of its meaning even now! But who wrote this masterpiece? and how did you meet with it?"

"Have you ever heard of Dante, Sandro?"

"Naturally! Who has not heard of Dante? But I thought that messere wrote in verse!"

"He wrote *Il Divina Commedia* in verse, but other of his works are in prose; moreover he wrote in Tuscan and not in the tongue of the ancients. Shall I tell you the history of this book, Sandro?"

The lad made a gesture of assent, and drew his stool near beside her.

"Some fifty years after Dante died, many learned men were appointed to lecture and comment on his writings. Messer Boccaccio was first appointed to lecture in Florence, shortly after Messer Benvenuto da Imola was appointed in Bologna, and some years later my father's uncle, Messer Francesco da Buti, was appointed to lecture at Pisa. On his death my uncle left his books to my father, who had been named 'Francesco' after him, and my dear father gave me this copy of *Il Convito*—so you see that I treasure my book very highly!"

"It is truly a great treasure!"

"When I entered religion, the Lady Abbess—since nuns are permitted to retain no private possessions—allowed me to place my book in the convent library. When I returned to the convent, my novice mistress

read *Il Convito* with me, expounding the meaning by the aid of St. Thomas Aquinas." Lucrezia paused to look thoughtfully at the boy. "Sandro," she said, "what do you think your soul is like?"

"A little something here," he answered lightly, tapping his chest, "that will go to heaven if I am very good, but if I am lazy, or if I say rude things to Ser Piero, it must be burnt in purgatory first, just as we burn the dross out of base gold. If I am very wicked it will go to hell—but the Saints forbid!" and he crossed himself.

"A little something here!" said she, leaning forward and tapping his chest lightly in gentle mockery: "a poor little something that will have to suffer if Sandro be naughty. No! Sandro mine, the soul is Sandro Filepepi himself! See here!" she continued, touching herself lightly; "my soul is 'I'—the true Lucrezia; my body is only the house wherein Lucrezia lives, and the instrument through which Lucrezia feels and speaks and works. The good God did not create my body, for my body sprang from my parents; I became 'I' when God created my soul and united it with my body."

Sandro Filepepi shook his head in despair. This seemed even harder of comprehension than the doctrines which his pedagogue had derived from Messer Ficino, who had derived them from Messer Plato.

"It is quite simple," she explained earnestly: "the soul has three faculties—the vegetative, the sentient, and the rational."

"Santa Margherita!" he groaned. "Plato's

doctrine was like a child's picture-book compared with this!"

"Let me think!" she said, realising that what seemed quite simple to her must sound like the Egyptian tongue to Sandro. "I will see what Messer Dante has to say on this matter. Ah! here is the passage: 'The Soul hath three chief powers, which are, to Live, to Feel, and to Reason.' Is that simple, my Sandro?"

"It sounds simple!" he answered cautiously.

"Then, first, my soul has the power of living, and by exercising this power my soul first fashioned my body into human form, it made my body grow when I was a child, and it still maintains my body from day to day. Every living thing, even the flower, has a kind of soul which gives it the power of living, and therefore this power within the human soul is called the 'vegetative faculty.' Again, it is said that I am the very image of my dear mother; yet, though our features and complexions may be similar, our faces must be different, for I am fashioned by the soul of one Lucrezia Buti, whereas my mother was fashioned by the soul of Caterina Buti—it is as though Masaccio and my husband each painted the same picture, for, although each picture would be fashioned with equal skill, yet one would show the touch of Masaccio and the other the touch of Fra Filippo Lippi. Is that clear?"

"Yes! Yes! madonna. Then next I feel——?"

"The next power of the human soul is one which it shares with all animals—the sentient faculty, the power of feeling through the senses. And, lastly, the

human soul has the rational faculty, or the power of reasoning, and this belongs to the human soul alone."

"Then man has, as it were, three souls, Madonna Lucrezia?" The teachings of his pedagogue seemed to be returning to him.

"No, Sandro! That is part of Plato's heresy! Messer Dante shows that these three powers of the soul are so entwined that one is the foundation of the other—a man cannot feel without living, nor reason without feeling. Besides, unless one and the same soul both felt and reasoned, how could I compare the different pleasures of the senses, and reason that it would give me more pleasure to gaze at the frescoes of Masaccio in the Carmine than to listen to the choicely sung canzoni at a May Day revel?"

The boy sat still, lost in thought; and Lucrezia, being a woman, divined his thoughts; but, being all a woman, she must needs first benefit his soul.

"A man," said she, "who is so lazy that he lives only to rest and feed, lives by his vegetative soul, and is no higher than a cabbage; a man who lives only to delight his senses is no better than an animal; a man who lives by his reason, seeking to be enlightened by Him Who is the Perfect Reason, is altogether a man."

The boy, being a boy, sighed; the woman, being a woman, divined the reason of his sigh.

"See here, my Sandro," she said, smiling, "I am not teaching you your catechism, but talking with you about your art; since the soul has formed the face, and expresses its passions through the face, an artist should strive to paint the soul!"

"Sit still, madonna!" he cried, seizing his paper and ink-horn. "I will try to draw your soul looking through the window of your eyes! Also let it show itself in the mouth, like colour behind glass!"

"'Let thy smile be without loud laughter,'" she quoted; "'that is, without cackling like a hen. Ah! the sweet wonder of my Lady's smile, which is never seen but in the eyes!'" And she smiled at him through her eyes, somewhat incautiously.

For a time he drew quickly and silently; then he began to talk, as artists will talk over their work, following out an unconscious development of his thoughts. "A fair soul must show a fair colouring," he said, working rapidly, with the full concentration of his faculties all the time; "but the colouring should not be too vivid, lest the eye be attracted by the beauty of the paint and forget to seek for the soul beneath the paint." And Lucrezia smiled still more sweetly, marvelling at the insight of this boy who was said to have shown himself so dull over his lessons.

"I wonder what sort of souls the fauns and satyrs have," he rattled on. "They must be merry and mischievous, without being wicked. And the centaurs? Fine, strong, animal souls, without much wisdom?"

"I think that Dante makes the centaurs the mercenaries of the Inferno," said Lucrezia. "They are the watch-dogs that have to keep the wicked from escaping out of hell." But the subject of the centaurs no longer excited Sandro's passing interest, for he was deep in trying to catch the likeness of Lucrezia's soul.

Gradually, as he drew, the expression of his lady's soul changed, it ceased to be sparkling and explanatory, and became meditative and somewhat introspective; so, since ink-lines cannot be worked up or drawn over like paint, he commenced a new sketch.

"Madonna!" he remarked suddenly.

"Yes!" said she, starting.

"I do not think that this idea of painting souls is altogether a wise one!"

"Why not, Sandro?"

"If I were painting your portrait, it would be right to try and make the soul gaze out of its windows; but if I were painting Lisa as the Madonna, how, by all the little fishes in the Arno, could I imagine Our Lady's soul looking out of Lisa's eyes?"

"I—never—thought—of—that!" she answered.

"Moreover, I do not think that the idea of painting from the model is a very wise one; for when one is painting a figure, one should surely first create the soul, and then fashion the body to match."

This revolutionary suggestion, which was but the logical outcome of her lesson from Dante, held Lucrezia speechless.

"Ohé!" he cried, as the instinct which had been lying at the back of his brain for many days past suddenly found its clear expression. "Dante had beautiful ideas, and wrote them in poetry on the surface of his parchment; so Sandro should have beautiful ideas, and paint them in pigments on the surface of his *gesso*! Thus, Sandro's pictures should speak to the poet, just as *Il Convito* appeals to Sandro."

"Sandro," said Lucrezia, presently, "if I give you my *Convito*, will you promise to keep it always, and study it very carefully?"

"For my own?"

"For your very own!"

"Madonna!"

She held out the book to him, and he, kissing her hand, took it. For one second she was tempted to kiss him on the forehead, but remembering from her past experience the danger of expressing the feelings of the soul through the touch of the lips, she refrained.

"It shall be my most precious treasure!" he said.

"And you will always study it?"

"Always, madonna!"

Then Lucrezia rose and fetched her small son, so that he might watch for his father to leave the Pieve, whilst Sandro sat down to gloat over his prize.

After a time she heard the boy chuckling to himself. "What is the passage?" she asked.

"The command of the book on the four cardinal virtues," he said: "'Let thy smile be without loud laughter, that is, without cackling like a hen.' Ho! I shall never draw my women cackling like hens, it would be too ridiculous! I do not think that I shall even paint my ladies with their lips smiling," he added thoughtfully; "for a smile is but a passing motion, ever changing like the passing of a zephyr; whereas a smile that has become fixed is but a grin, and I do not desire to paint grinning women. 'Ah, the sweet wonder of my Lady's smile, which is never seen but in her eyes!'" And Lucrezia wondered at this boy's wisdom until she remembered that the secret of all

true artistic talent lies in the power of observation combined with the gift of imagination.

The time of the noonday meal had come when Fra Filippo left the Pieve with unusual punctuality. He was walking with the Canon, and, as the painter's hand was resting on the priest's shoulder whilst the priest was laughing very violently, Lucrezia concluded that her husband was telling the other some merry story. She saw that the pair were wending their way towards the house, so she hurried off to order that another cover should be laid for Canon Niccolao Spighi.

CHAPTER III

MASTER AND PUPIL

THE Canon had gone, and Fra Filippo had drawn his chair beside the open window, for he had done a good morning's work and had no intention of bestirring himself until it was time to examine the cartoon and decide what plaster the masons should spread on the morrow. Lucrezia was moving about the room, as a woman will, putting a touch here and rearranging a drooping flower there : it was wonderful what a sense of refinement her deft fingers transfused through the apartment.

"Another glass of wine, Filippo ?" said she. "You and the padre have left half a bottle between you, and this wine of Burgundy is none the better for the air."

"As you will, little one," he answered, "as you will ! I need some consolation !"

"Eh ? What is wrong now ? I thought that Messer Spighi's portrait had surpassed your expectation !"

"Certainly ! He kept me waiting like a devil ; he asked my pardon like a nobleman ; he posed like an angel ; and he ended by performing a veritable miracle by keeping the plaster sufficiently moist to

take the pigments. Then, when I moved the scaffolding so as to view my figure at full length, I thought I should have had an apoplexy. Death of a dog!"

"Surely the surface has never cracked?" she asked with anxiety. "What was wrong, Filippo?"

"Diamante!" he muttered, and the name sounded like an oath.

"Diamante?"

"You remember the cartoon, with the two women mourning at the foot of St. Stephen's bier?"

"Yes, beloved!" answered Lucrezia.

"I had left the head of one of the mourning women for Diamante to paint; I had drawn the cartoon of a sorrowing woman with a miserable face, most carefully; I had elaborated every detail; and that son of a jackass has painted her grinning like a Barbary ape!" And Fra Filippo grinned most horribly.

"Cannot you take out the patch of plaster?" asked Lucrezia. She knew that the task was not very probable, and her voice was somewhat despairing.

"It has dried thoroughly! It is a part of the whole! If I started meddling, heaven only knows where the damage would end; besides, to tamper with a fresco is bad craftsmanship, for it causes the work to come in patches. No! Fra Diamante has converted my finest fresco into a thing for boys to laugh at. A pest on the head of that son of perdition! I cannot tell how I bear with him!"

"I do not like Fra Diamante's work," said Lucrezia, "nor do I like Fra Diamante."

"He has been a loyal friend to me!" said Filippo, softening.

"He knows on which side his bread is buttered!" replied Lucrezia.

"He is very careful!" suggested Filippo.

"For which reason I trust him the less!" replied his wife.

"Well! well!" he muttered, sipping his wine. "Diamante is as the good God made him—not very clever, not very generous, not very sympathetic, but very cautious and very faithful. What would you have? One cannot gather grapes from thistles: the idea is preposterous!"

"And Sandro?" asked Lucrezia, preparing to introduce the subject that had been near her heart since morning.

"Pouf! Lippo Lippi has two pupils: one works with great diligence, listening to every word of instruction but always ceasing punctually at meal time; the other is either furiously diligent or furiously idle. Jacopo di Sellajo, with all his diligence, will never be more than a poor imitator of his master; Sandro Filepepi will become a great master himself. It is unjust!"

"Sandro has *sprezzatura*!"

"Sandro may copy what I set him, learning all I can teach him with the utmost diligence—that is to say, when the mood takes him, for otherwise he is as obstinate as a little pig—but there always creeps into Sandro's work a bit of Sandro! He cannot help it; it is, as you say, *sprezzatura*—spontaneous, instinctive—and, whether this personal touch be right or wrong, it is always a bit of Sandro. Some day he will be a great artist, but I shall not live to see it."

"Nonsense, my dear one!" said she, putting her arm round him tenderly. "Since God has given you to me, God will spare you to me." But Filippo knew otherwise.

"I think," said Lucrezia, when she had fetched a piece of embroidery that she was commencing, and had seated herself beside her husband—"I think that Sandro is not completely satisfied."

"Why?" asked Filippo carelessly. "What makes you think so?"

"He is too fond of tricks, too fond of jesting!" And she told the story of Ser Piero of the pomegranate, to her husband's great delight.

"It is but a boy's trick," he chuckled. "He who plays best, works best: it is the thickheads that are serious; the true painters have always loved a jest!"

"That is not what I mean. It is good to jest; but it is bad to forget one's painting for the sake of a jest. It shows that one's heart is not in one's work. Besides, I talked long with him this forenoon, and found out much that was passing in his mind." Threading her needle, Lucrezia commenced to work with those fine, short stitches which mark the matchless embroidery of the Quattrocento; and, as she worked, she related the morning's conversation to her husband. "Perhaps," she concluded, "he needs a little praise and a little encouragement."

"There can be no praise in painting," he answered; "for when the painter does his best he falls short of what he desires, and when he is careless his work is very bad indeed; but if you send Sandro to me, I will talk with him. What the boy needs," he explained,

"is purpose; he must cease to flit about from fancy to fancy like a butterfly; he must learn to draw from the model with absolute certainty, he must learn his light and shade and colour; then, when he has mastered all the craft that I can teach him, he may give way to his invention."

Of the painters of the Renaissance, many were fitted to found schools — schools of convention, schools of classicalism, schools of naturalism, schools of chiaroscuro—but there was only one who was perfectly fitted to teach a boy endowed with original genius; for whilst Filippo was the best craftsman of his time, he was never bound by his own or others' conventions, he was always ready to learn a lesson from his fellow-painters, and he was, at that time, struggling away from realism and towards idealism.

"If you," said he, as Sandro entered the room, "will beg another bottle and fetch another glass, we will drink a cup of wine together."

The boy flushed with pleasure. It is a fine thing to be asked to crack a bottle of wine with one's master, just as though one were a brother artist. "Eh!" he remarked, smiling with manliness: "I must be cautious with the bottle, lest I grow as fat as my brother Giovanni and they christen me 'The Barrel.'"

"Much water must run beneath the Ponte Vecchio before you equal Giovanni," laughed Filippo. Then he held up his thin Venetian wine-glass so that the reflected sunshine from the corner of the roof opposite shone through the Burgundy, and regarded it critically. "Every man desires a son to carry on his name and features," he observed, "and every painter desires a

pupil who will carry on his art : if the pupil should show talent, the painter has great hopes and much anxiety. It is a great honour to have created a great painter ! "

Again the boy flushed with pride, but this time he was feeling a little younger.

"Now I have great hopes of you, Sandro, very great hopes, but I have also great anxiety ; for I have long seen that you dislike the drudgery of your craft, and my wife has told me of your dissatisfaction."

Sandro Filepepi was feeling very young indeed.

"I have asked you to drink a glass of wine with me," continued the friar, "because I wish to speak with you as one man to another, and not as a master to his pupil—it is an old man of much experience speaking with a man who is entering on life. Have you ever dreamed of being a brave knight who did bold deeds ? "

Sandro smiled, for what boy is there who has not dreamed such dreams ?

"If you were to become such a knight, you would have first to learn to sit your horse with all the skill of the riding-school ; then you would have to learn both the French and Italian fence, until you had equalled your master ; even then, you would not have commenced to become a knight until you had acquired the endurance of the field, the discipline of the camp, the experience of war, and the power to lead men. He who fights must become a good soldier before he can hope to become a good knight ; he who paints must become a good craftsman before he can dream of becoming a great artist. Is not this reasonable, Sandro ? "

"It is most reasonable!"

"What is the painting of a picture of the Madonna with Lisa as the model? 'It is,' say you, 'the painting of a snub-nosed girl dressed up in a blue mantle.' Very true! But how can you hope to paint the Madonna whom you have not seen until you have learnt to paint Lisa, whom you have seen? Until you can draw what is before you, you cannot draw what exists only in the imagination."

"Why do you think that I selected Lisa for your model?" he asked, watching the boy narrowly.

"Because she lives hard by, and because——"

"Because she costs but little, you would say?" laughed Filippo. "That is not the reason, for I could set you to draw my wife whilst she is at her needlework, and that would cost nothing! Let me change the form of my question; why have not I selected my wife for your model?"

"Because——" and he could think of no reason.

"Because Lucrezia has a sweet face, a beautiful face, and, above all, a thoughtful face—a face that might well dwell in the memory: whereas, the good God only made Lisa's face for laughter, and a little kissing if one is not too particular; it is a face that is seen to-day, forgotten to-morrow. But all the time you are drawing Lisa's face, you are learning to draw; and all the time you are painting her face, you are learning to colour; and all the while, you are learning how the shadows fall, and how they alter the tint of the colour. Do you know that I have planned a great future for you, Sandro?"

It was beginning to dawn on Sandro that this master

who set him to do odd jobs and paint dull exercises was doing all with a definite purpose. "I did not know," he answered.

"You have a great power of drawing, and a great love of beautiful curves, and superabundant imagination. I saw this from the first; but you need patience to master the drudgery of your craft, and you have no great love for colour. Is not this so?"

"It is!" he muttered.

"I want you, whilst you are with me, to work at the drudgery of the craft; I want you to draw from the model; and above all, I want you to learn colour—that is one of the reasons I chose Lisa as your model: she has a fine, rich colouring. If afterwards, when you are your own master, you choose to paint with subdued colouring, that is your own business: but no artist could paint forcibly in pale colouring, unless he had first acquired the power of painting with a full, rich palette. Will you do this, Sandro?"

"I promise," cried the boy, "that as long as I am with you I will work with all my might, and that I will do whatever you shall tell me!"

"I shall make you prepare colours," said Fra Filippo, drawing the chains tightly, "and paint in some background for Diamante, or fill in a bit of drapery for me until your work cannot be distinguished from mine, for this is the way to obtain a mastery over your craft; I shall make you paint from the model, and again paint from the model, for this is the way to obtain a mastery over yourself. Then, when I think that the time has come, or when you tell me that the time has come, I shall make you paint a

paragon which will proclaim that you are a finished artist. Here's a health to Messer Sandro Filepepi, the painter!" And Filippo filled the glasses.

The shadows had begun to lengthen; an evening breeze sprang up, and the sound of Lucrezia's voice, as she sang softly over her housework, reached them. "Madonna Lucrezia," said Sandro, "has told me how it is the soul that fashions the features and moulds the expression. She bids me paint the soul."

"A good woman who has the gift of sympathy sees deeper and truer than a man," answered Filippo.

"Do you think that one should strive to paint the soul, Fra Filippo?"

The friar shook his head and smiled: he did not intend to be drawn into any psychological discussion.

"It is a beautiful thought!" mused Sandro.

"It is a beautiful thought!" echoed Filippo, content to let it go at that. Lucrezia's voice ceased, and Fra Filippo replenished the glasses.

There was a silence for a time; then, presently, Lucrezia's voice began again, singing part of a hymn by Jacopone da Todi:

"Love! Love! Jesu, desirous!
O Love! I yearn to die embracing Thee!
Love! Love! Jesu, sweet spouse of mine!
Love! Love! death I demand of Thee!
Love! Love! Jesu, my parched self
Cries out to be transformed in Thee!
Swooning in loneliness: Thy Love my light alone,
Jesu, my hope alone, engulf me in Thy Love!"

Fra Filippo sighed; but Sandro's eyes sought Lucrezia's crucifix.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF ALESSANDRA

> "Amor! Amor! Jesu, dolce mio sposo!
> Amor! Amor! la morte i' ademando!"

THESE lines of Lucrezia's favourite hymn rang in Filippo's brain and haunted him.

Three years had passed since Lucrezia's voice, singing the hymn of Jacopone da Todi, had ended the conversation between Sandro and Fra Filippo: there were now no echoes of scandal to trouble him, no monetary anxieties to worry him; the Pieve frescoes were finished to the satisfaction of all concerned, the money was safely invested in first-class house property, and the friar was fast developing into a respectable and portly citizen; and yet Fra Filippo was beset with anxiety.

Once before, when he had been working in Florence and Lucrezia had been waiting for him at Prato, he had suffered from the same torment of mind. "Answer me at once, I implore," he had written to Giovanni de' Medici, "as I am dying here and wish to depart." Yet, now that he was safely in Prato in the same house with Lucrezia, his anxiety was no less overwhelming. "If aught should go wrong," he muttered; "if aught should go wrong!"

He had been across to the Pieve to try and pray, but the dancing girl in the fresco of the "Daughter of Herodias" had seemed to dance on his nerves, and had driven him back to his own apartment. "If aught should go wrong!" he muttered as he paced to and fro.

Then the lines of Lucrezia's favourite hymn came into his mind:

"Love! Love! Jesu, sweet spouse of mine!
Love! Love! death I demand of Thee!"

If God should grant her demand, and take her now, it would kill him! And Filippo wrung his hands in agony.

Upstairs, Sandro was waiting about in corners. Under normal circumstances he would have taken what was happening as a matter of course, but fear is infectious, and Fra Filippo's nervousness had affected him almost as strongly as it had affected his master; even Diamante, over in the studio, was fussing and fidgeting and nagging at Jacopo.

During the last six months Sandro had watched Madonna Lucrezia with interest; he had noticed her steps grow slower and her figure become stately; for there was none of that hateful prudery in the Quattrocento that makes a wife feel shy of what should be the glory of womanhood, and shroud her figure in a shapeless cloak or indefinite wrapping as though maternity were a disgrace. Sandro had watched Lucrezia's figure grow in stateliness, reading at times his *Convito* and wondering at the mystery of the new soul within her—a newly created soul that was forming a new body to serve God—and it seemed to him that

this was a very precious mystery, and that his lady's condition was deserving of much homage. And so it was with all the men, even with Diamante.

The passage was very still, except when some chance sound came from the end room which overlooked the Piazza. How well Sandro remembered the past six months, his reading to madonna when she was weary, his familiar talks with madonna when she was in the mood for conversation, his short walks with her in the cool of the day, during which he had learnt to regard approaching motherhood as something beautiful—an ideal which should afterwards form the central theme in the composition of his masterpiece of the "Primavera." But now that his madonna's sorrow was upon her, he must collect his thoughts and pray.

The door at the end of the passage opened, and a woman's head was thrust forth. "Go tell the master that all is well!" she said, shutting the door without more to-do; so Sandro went, and, delivering his message, passed over to the window to gaze out.

"Abyssame en amore!" muttered Filippo, and again: "Engulf me in Thy love!" It was a strange form of thanksgiving; but it was the last line of Lucrezia's hymn, and the only prayer that he could think of.

Thus the two of them continued in the room, Filippo muttering such scraps of Lucrezia's hymn as came into his mind, and Sandro gazing out of the window but seeing nothing; until presently Lucrezia's midwife, having washed the infant and swathed it in very fine white cloths, brought it softly to its father, and said: "I bring you a fine gift!"

"Thank God!" answered Filippo.

"You have but little curiosity!" exclaimed the woman.

"So long as the mother is spared——" replied Filippo.

"Heaven, was there ever such a father!" cried the midwife, with that adoration towards the baby and that impatience towards the father which belong to her class: "you have not even inquired whether this is a boy or a girl!"

"Have I a son or a daughter?" asked Filippo.

"She is a girl, and a very fine girl too, I would have you know!"

"But—the mother?"

"The signora is as well as one could expect. And how will you name the signorina?"

"Eh? 'Lucrezia,' of course!" He was still feeling dazed; besides, the idea that the baby might be a girl had not occurred to him.

"But," broke in Sandro, pressing forward excitedly, "the baby was to have been a boy, and I was to have been the godfather, and he was to have been named 'Sandro' after me."

"Here, at last, is one who takes an interest!" said the nurse, holding out the infant for his admiration. "What is there to prevent your being the godfather, I should like to know? And what is there to hinder the signorina from being named 'Alessandra' after you? 'Sandrina' would be a pretty name of endearment!"

Thus came Alessandra! And because, unlike his brother Giovanni's firstborn (a little red barrel of a

thing, which had arrived just before Sandro left Florence), Sandrina was a very pretty baby, and because he was her godfather, and because she was named after him, and most of all because he had watched and waited for her coming, Sandro loved the child very dearly.

So enwrapped was he that Filippo, seeing that he was neglecting his work, and fearing lest he might lose the habits of diligence which he had gradually acquired, sent him packing to Settignano with directions to paint a fresco of the Madonna and Divine Infant which had been commissioned on a neighbouring hillside. This was no great business, nor was the payment to be a large one ; but as this was the first time Sandro had painted a genuine commission on his own account, and as he had to lay the plaster as well as paint the picture, he came back filled with pride and energy.

Nine months had passed, and in the July of 1466 Filippo Lippi, attended by his pupil Sandro Filepepi, journeyed to Florence so that he might respond to an invitation which bade him attend the marriage of Bernardo, son of Messer Giovanni Rucellai, to Madonna Nannina de' Medici. It was to be a gorgeous wedding, as befitted the alliance of the two greatest families in Florence, and Filippo felt himself much honoured by this invitation.

After hearing an early Mass at the Church of Santa Maria Novella, and breaking their fast at a neighbouring tavern, Sandro and Filippo betook themselves to the small piazza opposite the Rucellai Palace. The place was in a commotion, only the palace itself remaining still and dignified.

"I saw the façade of this building planned and executed by my friend Leon Battista Alberti," remarked Filippo. "To adorn the Doric pilasters of the ground floor with the arms of the Medici and Rucellai, and to trick out the Corinthian columns of the loggia with festoons and awnings, is like dressing out a noble lady with gauds and trumpery."

"But it is gay!" replied Sandro.

The carpenters were putting the final touches to the platform in the Piazza, stretching a canopy of the finest cloth to protect the guests from the sun, fixing wreaths of greenery so that they hung in festoons beneath the blue of the awning, binding wreaths and roses everywhere; lackeys were spreading priceless tapestries over the seats and on the floors; butlers were loading a huge sideboard with the choicest work of the gold- and silver-smiths; a master of the ceremonies was placing cards bearing the names of the principal guests on the seats, in their order of precedence, each card marked "I will come" in the guest's handwriting.

The Via della Vigna was crowded, the Piazza was thronged to suffocation; citizens jostled each other good-humouredly, nobles pressed their way good-naturedly, carts forced their passage insistently. These same carts were loaded with quartered bullocks, dressed calves, bars of buffalo-cheese, hampers of large sea-fish, casks of Chianti, as well as the choicer wines and the wines of Greece; one wagon bore a fine olive-tree from Carmignano, others were filled with young oaks from the Villa at Sesto, others were heaped with roses and various summer flowers that

were to renew the blossoms in the heat of the day. Shouting men staggered along, carrying staffs laden with capons, hares, small birds, and quails; grunting men bore baskets crammed with fruits, cream-cheeses packed in fresh rushes, crates of small silver-fish from the Arno, trays of tarts, sweetmeats, and delicate confectionery; groaning men again struggled through the crowds with huge basins of galantine.

"This is like purgatory," grumbled Filippo, "with much present suffering in preparation for the joys that are to follow."

"It is hot!" owned Sandro.

"Phew! If purgatory will be half so hot as this, it behoves us to be exceeding virtuous! I can recognise no friend; if I could recognise him, I could not reach him through this throng; if I could reach him, I could not hear him speak. Let us seek some coolness until it is time for dinner!"

The crowd was thrust aside, as footmen wearing the Medici livery made way for Madonna Giovanna, the bride's mother, who was escorted by Messer Carlo Pandolfi and three other noblemen. Close on their heels, so as to profit by their passage, followed a tall, dignified figure, clad in a gown of rose-coloured cloth.

"By Jupiter!" said he, catching sight of Fra Filippo. "So you have escaped from the good people of Prato and madonna your wife, and have come to dance at this wedding!"

"Thank God, our ages as well as our infirmities will prevent us from hopping about in the sweltering heat!" shouted Filippo, wiping his face.

"Neither your age, your infirmity, nor the heat will prevent you from drinking a glass of wine with me," he shouted back, and the man in the rose-coloured gown led the way out of the crowd.

"Do you really purpose to attend these festivities, my Filippo?" asked the man in pink, after he had called for the coolest wine from the deepest cellar.

"One has been invited," replied the artist.

"And one's absence will pass unnoticed," retorted the other. "You will stand about all morning to see a pretty bride, decked out in white finery, perspiring freely; at noon you will be served with a slice of capon by a lackey who is perspiring freely; in the afternoon you will watch some foolish boys playing at tilting, and you will be wedged amongst a crowd all perspiring freely; then, before evening, you will have the apoplexy. You had better walk with me in the coolness of the Duomo until dinner, dine with me at my tavern, and in the evening I will take you to have a word with Madonna Nannina."

"I can remember her as a pretty child," said Filippo, weakening; "but she will have forgotten me."

"Forgotten you?" and the stranger's eyes twinkled; but, catching sight of Sandro, he remembered himself sufficiently to suppress a smile. "Believe me," he continued sententiously, "the Medici never forgot a friend! How is your fair lady and your small daughter? You see that I have kept in touch with your affairs."

"They are both well," answered Filippo, shortly; for he did not relish the idea that his abduction of

Lucrezia from the Convent of Santa Margherita was still remembered. "On second thoughts I will return to the revelry; otherwise my pupil will be disappointed."

"I would sooner spend the afternoon with the frescoes of Masaccio in the Carmine," said Sandro.

"So this is your pupil, Filippo?" asked the stranger, examining him with interest. "Pollaiuolo tells me that you expect much from him."

"Some day he will be a greater painter than his master," replied Filippo. "Also he should interest you, Alberti, for he has a taste towards the gods and goddesses, and even towards the fauns and satyrs."

"Only this morning," replied Alberti, "when I should have been intent on the Mass, I found myself meditating on a subject for the painter: let him depict a fair woodland scene with dark foliage as a background, and in the foreground let him paint those three sisters, to whom Hesiod gave the names Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, with their hands entwined, laughing and clad in ungirt, diaphanous vesture."

"So thin," broke in Sandro, "that it will show the colour and modelling of the limbs beneath!"

"Precisely!"

"With their bodies swaying in rhythmic dance!"

"Perchance!"

"And their vesture fluttering in the breeze!"

"As I suggest!" Messer Leon Battista Alberti had adopted the whole picture scheme as his own. "But it is hot in here," he remarked, turning to Filippo; "let us seek the Duomo."

The coolness and sweetness of the air in Santa Maria del Fiore are unequalled, and Alberti strolled slowly up the nave, chatting to Filippo as he went; for every Italian cathedral is, to each Italian, the palace of his King, and the King's subjects are free to walk and talk in his palace unless they are assembled to do homage at the altar or to hear Mass in one of the side chapels.

"This temple has in it both grace and majesty," said Alberti, waving his flat cap descriptively, "and I delight to notice that union of slender elegance with full and vigorous solidity which shows that, while every member is designed to please, the whole is built for perpetuity. Inside these aisles there is the climate of eternal spring—wind, frost, and rime without; a quiet and mild air within—the blaze of summer on the Square; delicious coolness here."

Alberti paused. Filippo kept silence in the hope of one of those extraordinary flights of fancy which sometimes overtook his companion.

"Above all things," continued Alberti dreamily, "I delight in feeling the sweetness of those voices busied at the sacrifice, and in the sacred rites our classic ancestors called mysteries. All other modes and kinds of singing weary with reiteration; only religious music never palls. I know not how others are affected; but for myself, those hymns and psalms of the Church produce on me the very effect for which they were designed, soothing all disturbance of the soul, and inspiring a certain ineffable languor full of reverence towards God. What heart of man is so rude as not

to be softened when he hears the rhythmic rise and fall of those voices, complete and true, in cadences so sweet and flexible ? I assure you that I never listen in these mysteries to the Greek words which call on God for aid against our human wretchedness, without weeping." And Alberti wept.

CHAPTER V

THE PARAGON

THROUGH the rest of their stay at Florence, during the ride homeward, and for two days after their return to Prato, Sandro thought deeply ; then, after their dinner—for it is unwise to approach a man of sixty earlier in the day—Sandro Botticelli sought his master.

" Fra Filippo," said he, " I have worked as you told me. I have studied Lisa of the wine-shop, drawn Lisa of the wine-shop, and painted Lisa of the wine-shop, until I have only to close my eyes in order to see a thousand snub-nosed Lisas prancing before me ; I have toiled to acquire richness of colouring until even you have praised me ; and now I desire to paint my paragon ! "

" So the pretty girls of Florence have turned your head ? " asked Filippo, looking up sharply.

" The fair-haired girls of Prato—always excepting Lisa of the wine-shop—are prettier than any girls of Florence, and Madonna Lucrezia is the most beautiful woman I have yet seen."

" Then you would leave me and start your own bottega ? You are two-and-twenty, and it is but just ! "

" Do you remember your story of the knight, Fra

Filippo—the parable through which you made me start work in earnest? I have learnt our craft; I have learnt to curb my imagination and paint seriously, and for some time past I have wished to put what I have learnt to the test: the study of Masaccio's frescoes at the Carmine was the only thing I needed. As for leaving you—I desire to remain as long as you can have me, that is until you depart to paint the frescoes at Spoleto. But, with regard to this paragon, I must have time to paint it without hurry, so that it may be worthy of your teaching."

Fra Filippo drew a deep breath of relief; Sandro's desire to paint the paragon had seemed as though his pupil was weary of the life of Prato and desired to leave him, but his explanation was eminently reasonable. The idea of Sandro Botticelli qualifying as an independent artist and then remaining as a fellow-workman was most sympathetic. Going over to the sideboard, he mixed the juice of a pomegranate with a couple of lemons which he had squeezed into a vessel of water, sweetened the liquor with syrup, flavoured it with a small handful of freshly gathered wood-sorrel, and pouring the drink into two beakers, carried them over to the table by the window. "Here," said he, "is something that will cool our blood after the doings in Florence. Have you selected the subject for your picture, Sandro?"

"It is my old theme—the Madonna stooping forward, holding the Bambino so that the Wise Men may kiss His feet—but now I believe that I have the skill to execute this subject: I have even chosen my models for the Madonna and Child!"

"I might obtain a commission for the painting," said Filippo thoughtfully. "I am not without influence!"

"No! If I painted this picture for a patron, he would make me paint his wife as Our Lady, his friends as the Wise Men, himself as St. Joseph, and any other idea that came into his head; my paragon must be all my own! Besides, as I said, I have already engaged my models."

"The most beautiful woman that you have yet seen, as the Madonna? Eh? Having learnt my craftsmanship, you now steal my model. Such is the way of the world!"

"Madonna Lucrezia as Our Lady—it is an old engagement; Sandrina shall be my Bambino—since she is my god-daughter I need no permission; and I shall paint Filippino as a little shepherd-boy. Speaking of Filippino, your son will be a master-painter before I have earned my first commission. He is wonderful!"

"He has what you lack, my friend—he is both docile and adaptable; for the same reason, I shall send him to your bottega presently on the chance that he may catch a little of your independence. But tell me more of your paragon!"

"First the Madonna and the Child must be very good, so as to satisfy Sandro; next, the colouring must be so rich that Fra Filippo shall smack his lips; lastly, the composition must proclaim that the artist is a rival of Masaccio. I shall not paint it very large, and this for two reasons."

"O modest philosopher!" broke in Filippo.

"In the first place, I doubt whether I have the skill and experience to fill a large surface; in the second

place, I do not desire to own a great cart-horse of a picture without the chance of a purchaser. No! It shall take the form of a panel for a marriage-coffer, so that when Sandrina is espoused I may be ready."

"Ha! You have caught Diamante's forethought! We have taught you much between us!"

"You have at least taught me that it is impossible to paint a good picture unless one paints with a definite object," he answered, smiling.

"Which reminds me that I too have to draw a small panel of the Magi for the predella we are finishing," remarked Filippo, stretching himself. "If you come across to the workshop with me now, I will make the drawing and paint you in as one of the onlookers. I must make this drawing at once, otherwise I may find myself copying your paragon, and it would be a sad thing for a master to imitate his pupil!" So they went off arm-in-arm to the studio, and Filippo sketched in his panel, inserting two excellent portraits of himself and his pupil, with Sandro pointing out some artistic defects to his master—which imaginary defects became established facts by the time that Diamante's brush had completed the execution.

During the next day Sandro mixed lime with glue and prepared the surface of his panel—never was gesso spread more carefully—and on the following morning he commenced his drawing; for this picture was to be a paragon, showing his mastery over his art and compelling the admiration of his fellow-artists, rather than an example of his natural style and fancy. So, since he intended that his subject should be composed of many figures, painted in the richest colouring and

blended together into one perfect whole by the scheme of light and shading, he made a shaded drawing, instead of adopting that pure line which was his instinctive form of expression.

The Madonna and Child, together with one of the Wise Men in an act of adoration, were to hold the foreground, just as they had held the foreground in Fra Filippo's recently drawn predella; but whereas the friar had placed these figures right forward, Sandro intended to place them a short distance within the picture and give them a due prominence by means of a sweeping arrangement of the Magi's followers. These followers should include gallants, pages, and a dwarf similar to those he had seen at the Rucellai wedding; for were not the Magi personages of much importance in their own country?

Lucrezia posed herself and Alessandra ready for the tableau, whilst Filippino knelt down so that he might engage his sister's attention.

"There!" cried Sandro, as Filippino crawled up to kiss the bambino's feet, and Madonna Lucrezia stooped forward so that she might grasp her baby firmly whilst she saw what went on: "Hold your pose, madonna; it is adorable!" For Lucrezia had assumed the exact position which had caught his fancy in the woman of the Piazza del Mercatale, and his pencil flew over the paper like lightning. It was indeed a pretty grouping, and Sandro, catching an action of the baby as she began to thump her brother's head, transformed her motion into that of a hand held up in blessing. If Fra Filippo, in that tondo which he had painted on his first arrival at Prato, had depicted the Madonna

Mansell photo] [National Gallery.

"THE BEAUTY OF MATERNAL TENDERNESS" (p. 63).

as a real mother of a real child, Sandro went further ; for he not only caught all the beauty of Lucrezia's maternal tenderness and transferred it to the figure in his drawing, but he also transformed his small god-child into a dignified and devotional rendering of the Bambino.

"There! That is done!" said Sandro; and Lucrezia leant back to stretch herself, whilst Sandrina made a last desperate assault on her brother's locks. "Of course I shall need some more sittings when I come to paint the picture, but this study is quite good enough to draw from. But you would like to see the drawing, madonna!" and he took Alessandra, so that her mother might be at leisure.

The picture grew apace. First the three central figures were finished to Sandro's complete satisfaction ; then the other Magi and their attendants ; a dwarf from a sketch made in Florence ; Jacopo in his Sunday best ; a horse, stolen from Fra Filippo's predella, and placed in the side of the composition. The side of the building behind Our Lady was sunk in shadow ; St. Joseph, and a small shepherd that was Filippino, were put to lurk in this shadow. Sandro himself, in the suit he had worn at the Rucellai wedding—and a very bad portrait this—was placed where he had stood in the predella. Lastly, more attendants and still more attendants were added, until a really fine composition filled the panel. Perhaps it was because he had not overtaxed his skill when choosing the size of the panel ; perhaps it was because he used all he had learnt from the frescoes in the Pieve and Carmine, not disdaining many private hints from his master ;

perhaps it was because he used every artifice in his power to obtain juicy colouring—even including the trick of painting the richer colours over gold, which that fine old man, Paolo Uccello, had taught him; perhaps it was because he took particular pains with his chiaroscuro as well as with the rest of his technique; perhaps it was because he tried to please and satisfy others and not himself—anyhow, when he had completed the paragon, Fra Filippo embraced him, and told him, in an exceedingly husky voice, that he had shown himself indeed a true artist, and that he (Fra Filippo) had not lived in vain.

Mansell photo] [National Gallery.

ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

CHAPTER VI

A PARTING

IT was well on in 1467, nearly a year after Sandro had finished his paragon, that Fra Filippo summoned up energy to start for Spoleto. Perhaps it had not been the need of finishing up his accumulation of commissions, and his natural disinclination to start a new and laborious piece of work, that had deterred him, so much as his unwillingness to leave his wife and Alessandra ; but, at any rate, he had procrastinated shamefully, and now he must go.

" Umber, raw and burnt ; Sienna, raw and burnt" —Diamante was fussing over the colours they were to take with them, comparing the list that he had made out with their present supply, so that he might replenish their stock when they passed through Florence —" terra verde ; indigo——"

" You have not entered the ultramarine," remarked Filippo, looking at the list over his shoulder. " I suppose you have ordered a new store from the Prior of the Gesuati at Venice ; his is the best in Italy."

" But he charges two florins an ounce ! " replied Diamante with a shrug. " The Commune of Spoleto will never consent to pay such a sum ; and if we

order it on our own account, they will think we are trying to cheat them." In commissioning a fresco, the patrons usually provided the gold, ultramarine, and more precious materials.

"Was there ever such a weasel!" cried Filippo angrily. "You will always spoil a picture for a soldo's worth of paint! Order the pigment, I tell you; and if the Commune refuses to pay, I will bear the cost. I cannot be kept idle whilst the fools send to Venice for their paint!"

"Of course, if you choose to bear the cost——" retorted Diamante, with another shrug.

"Stay!" said Filippo, calming down. "Tell the Prior to send the ultramarine to the Commune, together with the bill; then, if they think the cost excessive, I will bear the difference. At the same time, you might bid Antonio Filepepi have some gold-leaf ready for us. Heaven only knows whether we can get anything in that god-forsaken place! Come, my little artist," said he, laying a stress on the word "artist" so as to imply that Diamante was a mere craftsman, and slipping his arm into the arm of Sandro, who was helping with the packing, "let us cross over and have a glass together; I have much to say to you."

"He is very cautious!" he remarked when they were outside, as though trying to justify his assistant; but this did not seem to satisfy him, so he added: "very loyal and cautious; very loyal and cautious!"

Having reached his house in the Gorellina, and called for the wine, Filippo seated himself carefully. "Sandro," he said, leaning back in his chair, "of late

I have suffered much from my rupture, and I think it is growing worse ; perhaps that is what makes me so uncertain in my temper."

" Uncertain in your temper ? " said Sandro, looking at him lovingly. " You were never uncertain in your temper, my master !—it has always been the same ! You are angered ; you flash up like a firework, and at once you are sorry. But about your infirmity ? "

" When I rest, the pain is only tedious ; but whenever I stretch up to paint something that is above me, I can feel that my rupture is becoming worse. That is why I would speak with you."

" Cannot you leave the stretching to Diamante, Fra Filippo ? "

" If you were engaged in some important work, my Sandro, would you leave the more delicate parts to Diamante—the face of a Madonna, for instance ? "

Sandro shook his head.

" Then, before I go to Spoleto, where there will be much stretching, I would speak with you." Sipping his wine, he seemed to think deeply ; for his was a nature that disliked anticipating the future, and he found it an effort. " If aught should befall me," he said, " my wife will be left well provided for, and for the matter of that, so will my children ; but I have appointed Diamante as Filippino's guardian, and that troubles me."

Sandro nodded.

" Of course I trust Fra Diamante," he continued, " He is both loyal and cautious, and he will not wrong the boy. But he is also somewhat selfish, and he may become so wrapped in Fra Diamante that he will forget

Filippino Lippi. If you will keep your eye on Filippino, Sandro, and see that he does not fall amongst bad companions ?"

"I will take him into my own bottega—that is to say, when I have one."

"I could wish no better, and as for you—you will strike no bad bargain, for the boy is both docile and industrious. Then, as to Alessandra ?"

"You forget that you have Madonna Lucrezia to care for her !" Sandro considered that his master was becoming over-anxious.

"She is a painter's daughter—I still have hot blood in my veins—she will be a painter's sister and a painter's god-daughter ; and, as you know, a painter's house is no convent. Will you always remember that she is your godchild, Sandro ?"

"I will not forget," said he.

"Lastly, there is yourself—I understand that you intend to set up a studio in your father's house ?"

"That is my intention, Fra Filippo."

"And I believe that you have never lost your desire to paint such thoughts as come into your mind, rather than to paint direct from the model ?"

"That is true !"

"Has it never occurred to you that you are, as yet, unfitted to discard the model ?"

"One might discard the model gradually, painting sometimes with a model, and sometimes without."

"One might paint like that till the day of judgment, without deriving the least profit !"

Sandro smiled patiently, for he was naturally obstinate, and Filippo's bare assertion failed to convince him.

"When I first came to Prato," began the friar, "I gave up studying from the undraped figure for fear of shocking the clergy who were my patrons, and creating a scandal; after I was married I abstained from using the undraped model—well, for my own reasons—*ne nos inducas in tentationem*, you understand; so I have been unable to teach you to draw from the undraped model. It was a serious omission!"

Sandro was beginning to see whither the conversation was leading, and the smile faded from his face.

"Now, if you intended to paint your pictures from life, always working from the model, my omission would not matter; for if you were painting a draped figure, you would pose a draped model and paint what was before you; and if you were painting a naked Mercury or a Venus without attire, you would pose an undraped model and paint what was before you. But if, on the other hand, you propose to paint from the imagination, you should have such a perfect and intimate knowledge of the human figure that your imagination would be incapable of erring. Do you see the wisdom of my reasoning?"

"It is very wise!" owned Sandro.

"There is Antonio Pollaiuolo," said Filippo thoughtfully. "Antonio cuts up dead bodies, so that he may see how the bones work in their joints, how the tendons pull the bones, and how the muscles move the tendons." He paused, for he was very hazy on the subject of anatomy. "Anyhow, Antonio cuts up the dead so that he may see how the human body is put together."

"Faugh!" muttered Sandro.

"With one who paints from the model, I deem that this butcher's-work is injurious; for he who studies the undraped model will learn what muscles and sinews show during the various movements, and when he is painting he will be prepared to see whatever his eye perceives; whereas he who studies anatomy, knowing every muscle that lies beneath the surface of the skin, will be apt to imagine that he perceives much more than is really visible. But with one who paints from the imagination, I believe that the study of anatomy is a necessity."

"Why?" asked Sandro, guessing the answer.

"If I were to draw a disrobed Venus, having posed my undraped model, there would be no likelihood of error; but if Sandro were to draw a disrobed Venus from his imagination, especially if he were to twist the body into graceful curves, he would be likely to forget some of the muscles and sinews that are necessary to support the body. Besides——" and Fra Filippo grinned.

"Besides what, Fra Filippo?"

"If it were known that you had not studied anatomy, and it were also known that you painted from imagination, men would look out for this fault in your pictures, and cry: 'See! the ignorant fellow hath not learnt even the elements of anatomy!' But if it were known that you were well versed in both anatomy and perspective —well—he who hath obtained a reputation for virtue may break all the commandments with impunity!"

"Then you would suggest that I should study anatomy with the Pollaiuoli?"

Filippo fidgeted with the stem of his wine-glass un-

easily. "Antonio is a good fellow," said he, "and Piero is about your own age ; but they tell me that their bottega is no convent."

"Nor am I a nun !" replied Sandro.

"If you had studied the undraped model here, there would have been only you and Jacopo, with Diamante and myself to give countenance—all of us painters working at our craft; but in Pollaiuolo's bottega, there would be Antonio in one room cutting up the dead, whilst there would be the goldsmiths, embroiderers, sculptors and painters—men and boys—labouring together in the big workroom ; presently some girl would ascend the platform and commence undressing. No ! the conversation would not be that of a convent, nor would such girls be very modest !"

They sat silent, Filippo gazing at his wine-glass and Sandro staring out of the window. Both were frowning a little. "What do you think of the matter ?" asked Filippo presently.

"It seems the only way !" replied Sandro firmly.

Again Filippo fumbled with the stem of his glass, for the responsibility was heavy on him. "I am no prude !" he said. "I am not one who is shocked when a young man steals grapes by moonlight or sips the forbidden waters; but he who dabbles in pitch stains his hands !"

"If I were doing this for my pleasure, Fra Filippo," replied Sandro somewhat sententiously, "I might suffer harm ; but since I am doing it for my work's sake, I do not fear the talk of Pollaiuolo's craftsmen."

"Do you think I am afraid that the talk of Pol-

laiuolo's craftsmen will corrupt you?" asked Filippo with contempt; "you, a man of three-and-twenty! Pish! unless you change most strangely, it will only disgust you! It is the women I fear—and the atmosphere of these women."

"It is thus!" he continued. "A good woman may lead a man towards heaven; she who has lost her virtue may be an occasion of sin: but a woman who has lost her sense of shame and modesty is a source of everlasting degradation. These women who pose in Pollaiuolo's bottega are likely to be well-formed and beautiful; these women who expose themselves before a room filled with goldsmiths and embroiderers, as well as with those that will draw them, are certain to be shameless; and a woman who becomes shameless, becomes very shameless indeed. Santa Maria! How could it be otherwise!" And, with many earnest words, Fra Filippo pointed out the danger of those who, having lost their own sense of shame, ruin the moral standards of others and destroy their self-respect. "Then," he concluded, "since you are old enough to know your own mind, and have formed your resolution, I will use my influence with Antonio Pollaiuolo; also, if you meet me when I pass through Florence, I will make you known to Messer Lorenzo de' Medici—Piero is too full of the gout to think of aught else, but Lorenzo may prove a useful patron. Now I must go across to worry Diamante, for Lucrezia would speak with you."

The shadows had shifted a full hand's breadth before Lucrezia came, and when she came her face was

marked with care. She closed the door behind her, and, crossing the room, seated herself in the window opposite to him. "So you are determined to study with Pollaiuolo?" she asked.

"He will teach me to cut up the little dead," he answered, with an attempt at gaiety.

"He will teach you more than that," she said, raising her eyebrows. Then she bit her lip and watched him.

"Fra Filippo has been talking to you?" he asked presently.

"He has," she answered.

"And you would dissuade me from my purpose?"

"I know that you should learn anatomy!" she cried. "I know that you should learn to draw from the figure! But—is this worth it? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

"It is the only way, madonna!" he answered; and the same dogged look came into his face that had appeared when he spoke with Filippo.

"I know that you will hate it, Sandro," she said. "I know you well enough to know that you will hate it! I pray that you may hate it—I pray the good God that you may hate it more every day—I will never cease praying that you may hate it! Will you promise me one thing, Sandro?"

"If it be possible, madonna!"

"You were so dear to me before Alessandra came—you have been so dear to me since she came—that I have the right to ask this promise!"

He hesitated, his affection for Lucrezia struggling

with his love for his work. "I promise," he answered.

"It is no hard thing I ask," she said; "and yet it may be hard to perform, since you must fulfil this promise when it is hardest to fulfil." She thought a minute, for what she had to say required a fitting choice of words. "As a painter's wife," she said, "I think that it would be possible for a model to pose undraped before a painter without a loss of modesty; for when an artist is immersed in his work he ceases to be altogether a man, and, being intent on his work, forgets that his model is a woman. But no woman could undrape herself in the presence of those who are merely curious, without violating those instincts of modesty which God had given her—and she who violates her natural sense of modesty loses all that makes her a woman, sinking lower than all created things. Do you understand, Sandro? It has not been easy to explain!"

"A man who loses his sense of decency also becomes contemptible!" he answered.

"Oh! you foolish one!" she cried, laughing at his density as one laughs when tears are near the surface; then her words poured out in a torrent. "Do not you know that every woman, however bad, longs for respect; and that when she has lost respect, she tries to make men worse than she is so that they may not despise her? For one of Pollaiuolo's models to feel that Sandro despised her would make her life like hell; and, if it lay in her power, in a little time Sandro should have no right to despise her—she would never rest until Sandro had no right to despise

her! So, if you become too friendly with one of these girls, I ask you—no! I command you by your love for God and your affection for me—that you leave Pollaiuolo's bottega!"

And, kissing him swiftly on the forehead, she swept out of the room to lock herself in her own chamber.

Book II

MORNING

COMMENCES IN THE YEAR 1467,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS TWENTY-THREE

ENDS IN THE YEAR 1482,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS THIRTY-EIGHT

Book II

PERIOD: 1467 to 1482

1467. Sandro probably joins the Pollaiuoli.

1469. The Pollaiuoli paint the Virtues.
Lorenzo de' Medici's tournament.
Lorenzo de' Medici's wedding.
Lippi dies at Spoleto.

1470 (?). Sandro paints Fortitude.
Filippino Lippi placed with Botticelli.

1471. Lorenzo de' Medici orders Lippi's monument

1473. Sandro paints St. Sebastian for Lorenzo.

1474. Sandro visits Pisa in July.

1475. Giuliano de' Medici's tournament.

1476. Sandro paints Magi for St. Maria Novella.
Simonetta's death.

1478. Pazzi Conspiracy.
Sandro paints the conspirators.

1480. Paints St. Augustine.
Sandro illustrates Landino's Dante.

1481. Sandro goes to Rome to paint the Sistine frescoes.

1482. Sandro returns to Florence.

CHAPTER VII

POLLAIUOLO'S BOTTEGA

"O *SIGNORI, la mia bella verdura—Ah-h!*" The voice of the vegetable-woman at the stall on the edge of the cow-market died away in a wail of rapture. "See my beautiful onions, pumpkins, greens—melons, peppers, cardoons! *O signori, la mia bella verdura—Ah-h!*"

"A pest on that hag and her garbage!" muttered Antonio Pollaiuolo, for he was very busy.

He was always busy, was Antonio! Ever since he had bought a shop in the cattle-market and set up for himself as a goldsmith, he had been busy; then, when he had turned his hand to the sculpture of metal, he had become more busy; then, when he added a department to his workshop for the making of church vestments, he had become busier still; and now that he was also a painter, his time was full to overflowing.

"*O signori, la mia bella verdura—Ah-h!*" wailed the voice outside, and Pollaiuolo cursed—when one's father has sold poultry in the market and one has been surnamed "The Chicken" in consequence, one contents one's self with cursing below the breath; one does not bandy words with local market-women.

"How can I design this vestment for San Giovanni?"

muttered Antonio, laying down his pencil. "How can I proceed to design a clasp for the Medici? How can I plan to secure the commission of those paintings for the tribunal of the Mercatanzia? How can I plot to finish my drawings of the muscles of the throat, whilst that old bastard of a cabbage howls without?"

"*O signori, la mia bella verdura—Ah-h-h!*" sang the woman.

"Diavolo!" shouted Pollaiuolo.

The door of his private workroom swung open as though he that entered had the right of entry, and a tall young man of about four-and-twenty put his hand on Antonio's shoulder. "There is one to see you," said he.

"By the pig of St. Anthony!" cried Antonio; "cannot you observe that I am all in a fever with the cries of the vegetable-woman? How can I see any one?"

"But this one bears a letter from Fra Filippo of Prato, which he must deliver in person," replied his brother calmly.

"Eh, well! Patience! There is always to-morrow, I suppose," murmured Antonio, looking at his drawing with resignation. "Bring him to me!" And his brow cleared.

It was a strange room in which Sandro found himself, a long, low room with windows that were barred like those of a prison, and a door that would only yield to artillery. On the shelves were the cloth-wrapped boxes in which jewellers kept their silver-work safe from tarnish; on the wall were designs for copes and chasubles, drawings from the life, sketches for statuary,

anatomical drawings, designs for morses, clasps and pendants; in one corner there stood an iron chest in which the Pollaiuoli kept their more valuable jewels, in another corner hung a skeleton; the table at which Antonio was working was spread with the full-size design for a humeral veil; another table in the window was littered with modelling instruments and the half-finished figure for a crucifix in strong-smelling red wax.

"So you come from Fra Filippo," said Antonio, holding out his hand for the letter. "Are you pestered with vegetable-women at Prato—'Mia bella verdura!' —eh?"

"There is a woman who has a stall below our house," answered Sandro; "however, she only cries her vegetables in the morning, her garlic at noon, and her salads when the men return home from work"; but Antonio was too busy deciphering Fra Filippo's bad writing to heed him.

"He is Fra Filippo's pupil," said Antonio, glancing up at his brother, and again fixing his eyes on the letter. "He is his favourite pupil—the best pupil he ever had —a finished craftsman—he desires to perfect himself in anatomy. That sounds well, Piero; he will be under your charge; you can do with another good assistant! He is the son of Mariano Filepepi, the tanner in the Via Santa Lucia. Then," he asked, turning to Sandro, "you are brother to Antonio Filepepi the goldsmith?"

"I learnt to beat out gold-leaf with him; he does little else!"

"Yes! Yes! With him it is thump! thump! from morning to night. A hard life and little profit! Fra

Filippo says that you have executed a painting of the Magi as a paragon? Have you brought it with you?"

"It is without, in the workshop!"

"Then fetch it here, and we will examine your skill."

Under ordinary circumstances, if Sandro had been going to show his picture to old Paolo Uccello, Benozzo Gozzoli, the great Verrocchio or any other of the leading artists, he would not have felt nervous; but here the whole atmosphere was so new and strenuous that he felt his fingers tremble as he undid the wrappings. He placed his panel on an easel where the light would fall on it, and stood back.

"What do you think?" asked Antonio of his brother.

"He has craftsmanship!" replied Piero.

"But the colour? It seems dead!"

"Only with the dullness of tempera: a coat of varnish will remedy that!"

"The drawing?" And Antonio sniffed.

"Fra Filippo said that he needed to perfect himself in anatomy!"

"Heaven! Perfect himself! How can one perfect what is not even begun?"

"The modelling is not good!"

"Modelling! Why, his men are modelled out of putty! There are no muscles beneath their skin, nor bones beneath their muscles!"

"That is the old fault of the painters! but the craftsmanship is excellent. See how he handles his tempera, blending the tints into each other without cross-hatching. See for yourself, Antonio!"

The brothers stepped forward to examine the painting closely, exchanging remarks and criticisms in quick, pointed sentences. Finally Piero turned to Sandro, asking whether he might varnish the panel in order to prove some contention which he was maintaining against Antonio.

"But," said Sandro, aghast, "the very beauty of tempera on *gesso* lies in the surface, and my picture has the surface of an eggshell!"

"If this is, as you say, a panel for a coffer," replied Piero, "you will need a coat of varnish to protect your surface"; and without more ado, before Sandro could make further protest, Piero had fetched a pot of some choice varnish and had begun his work.

"See," he remarked to his brother, wielding his brush quickly and evenly all the while, "how the colours of this red robe come up! See how this shadow gains in depth! There is nothing wrong, I tell you, with his craftsmanship!"

They talked together softly and rapidly, Piero working with his brush all the while, and Sandro could only catch scraps of the conversation: "That is your work, Piero." "That is your business, Antonio." "If he can paint like this in tempera, he will have no difficulty with oils"—and so on. At length Antonio seated himself on the table and addressed Sandro.

"There is no doubt," began Antonio, swinging his legs, "that Fra Filippo is still a very great painter, but many years have passed since Filippo Lippi learnt his art, and his methods are now the methods of the past: you, like your master, show a fine craftsmanship, but like him you are ignorant of anatomy. Now, since

you are a pupil of Fra Filippo, the brother of a fellow-goldsmith and a member of our craft, I am willing to instruct you in the science of anatomy on two conditions: the first is that you help in any work that may be progressing in the bottega—that is but just!"

"That is but just!" re-echoed Sandro.

"The second condition is that, after you have learnt from me and are duly qualified, you assist Piero and myself in an important commission which we expect to receive as soon as this war with the Venetians is ended." He looked across at his brother, and receiving a nod of assent, continued: "We are expecting to paint a large set of the Virtues for the tribunal of the Mercatanzia—a commission which will give much credit—and if you assist us, you shall receive a fair recompense—that is just!"

"It is generous!" said Sandro.

"Then I will set you to work at once. Here"—and he opened a portfolio—"are some drawings in the modern method, with bones, sinews, and muscles beneath the skin. Later on I will dissect a body, and show you these in reality; but it is too warm to dissect the dead at present—they become too like pheasants.

"After you have seen the true formation of a few muscles, I will set you to study the bones from yonder skeleton and the tendons, ligaments, and muscles from various drawings that I have made; at the same time you must draw from the life model, spying closely what is beneath the skin. To start with, until the weather is cool enough for a dissection, I will give you some drawings of the tendons of the neck, and you must draw the neck from life,

spying out these same tendons." And Antonio went to the shelf to hunt out the required portfolio.

Left to himself, Sandro turned over the drawings before him. Their realism repelled him, their exaggeration offended him, their anatomical qualities interested him, and their skilful craftsmanship delighted him ; they were quite different from anything he had ever seen, and yet they seemed strangely familiar. Looking up, his eye caught sight of a strenuous statue in bronze on one of the shelves, and it flashed upon him that these drawings were exactly like drawings of bronze statues, and that Antonio Pollaiuolo must think as one who works in bronze rather than as a painter. His eyes sought the drawings with renewed interest. Yes ! this master would be very useful to him. Fra Filippo was clearly right !

A funny little white dog of the Bologna breed, that had been asleep on some straw in the corner, woke up and came over to investigate ; after one sniff at Sandro's hand, it climbed on his knee to resume its slumber. " See ! " laughed Piero kindly, " Picco has accepted you as one of the bottega ; and moreover he has recognised you as a painter, for he will have nothing to do with the embroiderers or even the goldsmiths. He is my dog, and he——"

" Piero ! " Antonio's voice sounded thick with the dust that had lain amongst long-neglected portfolios. " What models have we here to-day ? "

" Only Sibella. I shall need her presently for that panel of Venus."

" Then Venus must wait ! Ohé ! Sibella ! Sibella ! "

The girl who entered was of a type that one sees in Florence at the present time—plump, brown-eyed, pretty; but she was rather taller than most. She smiled at Piero, then her eyes rested on Sandro with approval.

"Come here, Filepepi!" said Antonio, as he unclasped the model's gown and laid bare her throat. "This girl is somewhat fat for our purpose, but she must serve." And, tilting her chin, he commenced to lecture on the anatomy of the throat, comparing what was visible with the sketches and diagrams in the portfolio. "Pouf!" he said; "she is too fat. You must see with your fingers instead of with your eyes!" He guided Sandro's fingers to the tendons above the collar-bone. "Press deeply," he said; "she is not wax to dent, nor salt to crumble!"

"Nor is she Picco to bite," added Sibella, showing her white teeth in laughter and glancing at him saucily over the point of her chin.

"Now," said Antonio as he ended his lecture, "I will take you into the workshop and set you to draw this girl, remembering always the tendons and muscles beneath the skin. Pouf! She is as fat as a sucking-pig!"

The conversation in the workshop died away as Antonio, Sandro, and Sibella entered, not out of respect to the master, since all in the room were connected with the same guild, and the difference between master and men was only one of capital and skill, but because all were inquisitive to see what this intrusion of an outsider might mean.

"This one," said Antonio, divining their thoughts,

"is a pupil of Fra Filippo of Prato, a brother of Antonio Filepepi, and has sought us to learn the science of anatomy: he is already a fine craftsman."

"Then you have come to the right bottega," exclaimed a youth of about Sandro's age, who was working at a piece of *niello*, with a friendly nod; for there was much esprit de corps among the Tuscan craftsmen. Outside the guild all were Philistines; within the guild Pollaiuolo's was the best of all possible bottegas.

"So Fra Filippo said," answered Sandro, nodding with equal friendliness. "I hope to prove myself a good comrade, and if you will drink a measure of wine with me at noontime——"

"I will come too," broke in a bright-faced boy who was seated next the *niello*-worker.

"And I too," said a youth who was busily gilding the background of a small triptych.

"We will all come," said the deep voice of an embroiderer near the window.

Having posed Sibella so as to make the most of the modelling of her too-plump neck, and having found Sandro a seat close to the model's platform, Antonio retired to his work-room, and the conversation broke out afresh. In Fra Filippo's studio, they either rested and chatted or else they worked in comparative silence; here every one seemed to work and talk at the same time, and they worked and talked with equal energy.

"Sibella must find it very warm to-day!" said one.

"After being an ancient goddess," suggested the embroiderer.

"Ancient, yourself!" retorted Sibella, for the man was near fifty.

"Anyhow, I do not expose my person for all to see!" answered the embroiderer angrily.

"Giovanni took off his shirt to bathe in the Arno," said Sibella, addressing no one in particular. "As his shirt covered his face, 'Behold! there bathes a Moor!' cried the people!"

"A sin that when exposed is most desirable!" cried the bright-faced boy quickly, firing off this riddle ere the embroiderer could find words, for the story of the Moor always made him very angry. Then, before any one could find a reply, he answered: "A woman!" and the room rang with laughter.

"Speaking of expositions," continued the boy, addressing Sandro, but taking care that his voice reached the model: "presently this workshop will be changed into a church of Venus; Piero is the priest, and Sibella——"

"Because of his immaturity, Adonis scorned Venus," remarked Sibella, striking the bright-faced boy shrewdly through his self-consciousness of youth. "Besides, as all know, Venus was a goddess and beyond the reach of men!"

"There was once, as all know," suggested a dark, clean-shaven man who was chiselling a bronze candle-stick ready for the gilders—"there was once, as all know," he repeated, "an embroiderer—or was it a shepherd?——"

"Thank God!" replied the embroiderer, who had lately married a young maiden, "my wife is thrice as fair as Sibella!"

"Fairer in face, and fairer in limbs!" said Sibella sweetly. "So I have heard from at least two," she added thoughtfully, for report was already busy with Giovanni's wife.

"Gesù-Maria!" shrieked the man, springing up and groping for his knife, but those near him held him back and quieted him; not only was knife-work contrary to the spirit of Florence, but also the law of give-and-take was the law of Pollaiuolo's bottega.

"Where one finds a woman, there one finds trouble!" remarked the bright-faced boy, sententiously.

"It is only that we are growing impatient," explained the clean-shaven man. "We are like the people in the booth at a festa; we are waiting for the curtain to be withdrawn and for Sibella to disclose herself. Heaven! what else could you expect?"

"For shame!" cried the model. "You disgrace us before this stranger! What is your name?" she asked, looking at Sandro. "Messer Filepepi is too big a mouthful!"

"Sandro," he answered.

"Then, Sandro," said she, giving him a glance that would have done credit to Aphrodite herself, and lowering her eyes, "do not we shock thee?"

"How can I draw if you move continually!" he protested with great good-humour. "Unless you keep from chattering, I shall lose my temper—and believe me, when I lose my temper I am a very angry man; then I shall kill you and, carrying you into Antonio, ask him to dissect your neck so that I may draw it."

"Oh, well said!" whispered the worker in *niello*. "For that you must dine with me, drinking at my expense"; and he came round to examine Sandro's drawing. "Ohé, craftsmen," he called, "here is one that can draw! Come and see."

"Per Bacco!" muttered the bright-faced boy. "Of a truth, it is Sibella to the life!" For, not content with drawing his set task, Sandro had added Sibella's tilted face in half a dozen suggestive strokes, giving not only the foreshortening of the features in admirable perspective, but also the saucy, self-conscious smile of the model.

"It is very good!" said the clean-shaven man. "But if you would please Antonio, you must strengthen the shading so as to bring out the modelling of the neck."

"I have already drawn more shading than was visible!" answered Sandro Filepepi.

"If you would please Antonio, you must see more than there is, and draw more than you see. To please him thoroughly, you should draw the front of Sibella's neck so as to show her spine. He has all the zeal of the inventor!"

"If you will observe this picture," said the *niello*-worker, fetching an engraving from a portfolio on his private shelf—"it was wrought by Antonio and my brother working together—these fighting men are all fat skeletons with bulging muscles."

"Of course," interposed the clean-shaven man, "you are a member of the bottega, and what we say here is between ourselves"; for Pollaiuolo's craftsmen were very proud of their master's reputation for anatomy.

"Let Sandro proceed with his drawing," said Sibella, "and I will keep quite still!"

"How do you like our bottega?" asked Andrea Finiguerra, the *niello*-worker, as he and Sandro sat at a tavern table sharing his cheese and garlic.

"Speaking truthfully and between ourselves?"

"Speaking truthfully and between ourselves!"

"I hope to learn much from Antonio, but all this talk before a woman disgusts me."

"Wait until the afternoon, when Sibella undresses for Piero to paint her. Then you may stop your ears with modelling-clay, as I used to do when I first came here."

"But why do they do it?" asked Sandro. "Have they no manners?"

"It is the women's fault," answered Andrea; "they lead the men on so that they may pretend to be shocked at what they say. I hear that it is different in Verrocchio's bottega, where the painters have a work-room to themselves. Our embroiderers and gold-smiths are the worst; old Giovanni the embroiderer, before his marriage, was the worst of all. Dominica, the hill-girl, is the only one who makes the men respect her; but then she has the strength to knock their heads together."

CHAPTER VIII

JUDITH

IN the summer of 1478, Sandro was still in Pollaiuolo's workshop. In the beginning Sibella had wooed him vigorously, and then, finding her fascinations of no avail, had given him up with much disgust and a little spitefulness; Dominica of the hills had become his firm friend, treating him from the first as one who would take no liberty and make no undesired advances ; the other models had been indifferent to him, and he to them, for when girls can trap hares they do not trouble to snare a rabbit.

Within the bottega, the same stream of talk still flowed on, Sandro wading through it as one would wade through some dirty river in order to reach a fair meadow; but outside, he was learning that the world was far different from the lascivious picturings in the stories of Boccaccio or in the recently published novellinos of Masuccio Guardato. For the noble ladies of Florence, who walked so proudly in their silks and embroidery, walked without breath of scandal ; even the beautiful Marietta Strozzi, who had snowballed the youth of Florence from her bedroom window, and reigned from the same window as the queen of a midnight tournay, had merited no more than the epigram : "Snow art

thou, O maiden, and thou playest with the snow. Play, but see that the snow melt before it be sullied." It is true that the men were sometimes apt to be over-amorous in their youth ; but such faced the result of their indiscretions bravely, bringing up their natural children most carefully, and legitimatising them so that they might bear their paternal names.

Madonna Aspasia wrote poetry and entertained gentlemen in her villa on the heights of Fiesole, imitating the *hetæræ* of ancient Greece ; but who could say how far madonna's friendships were platonic, and how far intimate ? Even the ladies of Florence could not refuse to attend her conversazioni. Pretty Felicia in her chamber near the Via Rondinelli was no better than she should be ; but no one had a greater horror of a gratuitous display of her charms than Felicia, and when they wrote over her tomb : "In this sepulchre lies Felicia of noble beauty ; pleasing was this fair girl to many a wooer," they had told her worst. No ! except for the love of games of chance and the fall of the dice, there was no more vice in Florence than there must be in any civilised city ; and, outside Pollaiuolo's bottega, Sandro had no more temptation than comes to every town-dweller.

Sandro had fitted up a small studio at the top of his father's house in the Via Nuova of the parish of Santa Lucia of Ognissanti ; and there, after Pollaiuolo's bottega was closed, he would draw the devoted Dominica, for Dominica was country-bred and very strong. Even when she had been posing all day for Piero, she could hold a pose for fully three-quarters of an hour in the evening.

It was an evening in June, and Dominica was posing. The day had been intensely hot ; the evening breeze came off the roofs and buildings of the city like heat-waves from a furnace : Sandro had been drawing and rubbing out until he was disheartened.

"Heaven !" he groaned ; "what is the matter with me ? Try as I will, I cannot get this drapery to look natural !"

"It is easy to tell !" remarked Dominica, who had come round to inspect the study, and was ready to criticise with the directness and intuition of a model who is interested in her work.

"Then what is wrong ?"

"I can tell you this—my pose is very good indeed ; I am swinging along with the step and carriage of one who has far to go ; also you have draped my gown so as to give me every freedom in walking."

"Then what is wrong, O Dominica ?"

"You have made my drapery sway with the motion and blow with the wind ; that is right ! But you have made it fall as loosely as it falls when I pose, instead of making it cling close to my legs : that is very wrong indeed !"

"By Bacchus ! you are clever !" He wiped the sweat from his face, pushed the hair off his forehead ; then he looked up at Dominica. "How in the name of all the saints am I to draw your drapery in motion ?" he asked. "I cannot make you stride up and down this paint-box of a studio !"

"Ask Picco !" said she scornfully. "Even that little dog would know ! You must first draw me un-draped and properly posed, so as to get the shape of

Anderson photo.] [Uffizi, Florence.

"THE STEP AND CARRIAGE OF ONE WHO HAS FAR TO GO."

my limbs ; then you must draw in the drapery when I am walking, so that you may make it cling properly to the front of my legs : it is as simple as eating chestnuts ! See ! I will undress and pose now so you may draw my limbs ; then, to-morrow morning, I will dress in this drapery, and we will go out early before the people are astir so that you may draw me as I walk along." And she began to unloose her garments.

"Wait!" he said nervously, for Dominica was a singularly direct young woman, and it might not be easy to make her see why drawing from the undraped model would be impossible in his makeshift studio. "Let us go to the piazza and dance!"

"Eh?" said she.

"It is so hot in here," he explained.

To give up a definite piece of work so as to dance in the piazza was unlike Sandro, and for a second she looked puzzled. Then, with one glance round the room, she understood. "Oh, my San Antonio!" she cried, laughing ; and, before he could stop her, she had sprung through the door, and was bounding down the stairs. "Signora Smeralda! Signora Smeralda!" he heard her say. "Our little saint upstairs needs to draw from the undraped model, and he fears to let me pose for him since his studio is also his sleeping-room!" This was followed by the sound of women talking and much laughter. The family had taken to Dominica, not only because of her unselfish nature and her merry tongue, but also on account of her skill in compounding a risotto.

Presently Dominica returned. "It will be as it should be," she said, struggling with her laughter.

"We will leave open the chamber door ; and first your mother, then Lisa, will visit us." She made her preparations, and, placing herself close to the further wall, drew herself upright.

"Now!" she said, as she took one step with that forward swinging motion which is peculiar to those who are used to travel far in hilly countries, and held her pose.

For a time she watched him work in silence. When so many men had paid her attentions, only to be repulsed with a decision that approached violence, it was strange that this one man whom she honestly cared for should prove indifferent. "For all he thinks," thought she, "I might be a wax statue!"

"Have you ever been in love, Sandro?" she asked, watching him curiously.

"No!" he answered, drawing quickly and accurately.

"Does not even Sibella attract you? She is very pretty!"

"Yes, she is very pretty." He was too intent on his drawing to wish to criticise Sibella.

"Then why does she not attract you?"

"She has no mind! She is always thinking about Sibella. She is either thinking how pretty Sibella is, or else how pretty one ought to think her."

"And Maddalena? Many admire her!"

"Piero, for instance!"

"And Dominica? Some think her fair!"

"You know how I like you!" he answered, working at the curves of the body.

"Poor Dominica!" sighed the girl, as though in mockery. "She has fine limbs and a kind heart, but

she is only one of the people! Who is that woman you have drawn there? I mean the one on the wall behind you—the one holding her baby."

"Madonna Lucrezia, Fra Filippo's wife."

"She attracts you?"

"Heaven!" he laughed, commencing to draw her right leg, "what a girl you are! Yes, Madonna Lucrezia is the most beautiful woman I have seen."

"Then you are not in love with her, or you would not speak so plainly: she is too old? Eh? But attend to what I am saying! Some day you will fall in love with that baby!"

"The saints forbid! She is my god-daughter."

"The saints do not meddle with love affairs. I tell you that you will either fall in love with one like this Lucrezia of Fra Filippo's, or else you will fall in love with some big coarse animal of a woman!"

"Why?" he asked, for Dominica's ideas had an originality that always interested him.

"If you were like other men, you would fall in love with any pretty face; but you, if God is good to you, will fall in love with one who has much refinement. Or else——"

"Or else, if God is not good to me?" he suggested.

"Or else, since there is a little of the animal in every man, you will fall in love with some great brute-beast of a woman."

"You speak with much knowledge, and foretell pleasant things!" he said, determined to counter her attack. "Have you ever been in love?"

"With those soft-fleshed magpies of the bottega?" said she. "Per Diana! If I marry, I will marry a

man. I might," she added reflectively, "marry Antonio Pollaiuolo, for he could give me a home; or I might," she added with a shrug of her shoulders, "marry Sandro, for he is delicate and I should tend him; but since one is married already and the other does not fancy me, I must pray San Giuseppe for a husband."

He was finishing the drawing of her firmly placed foot, and his next question came instinctively: "Do you ever want to return to the hills, Dominica?"

"Sometimes I sicken for the hills," she replied, "and I would return home ere I die; but there is little food in the hills and much here—to fill the eyes is not to fill the stomach!"

"Then you do not mind your life here—I mean posing before the magpies of the bottega?"

For the first time, this girl, who had been brought up in primitive simplicity, and who had posed with a clean and wholesome unselfconsciousness, realised her condition; and, remarking that the picture must be finished, caught an old cloak of Sandro's off a peg, put it round her shoulders, and came over to examine. "That is good!" she declared. "That is very well drawn indeed! The woman is walking with a brave heart! What will be the subject of your picture, Sandro?"

In reply, he took out a dainty sketch in pure line. A woman with a sword in her hand was striding over the ground, just as he had caught Dominica in her stride, and behind her followed a handmaid carrying a parcel on her head: they compared the two together.

"Alas! my drawing is all wrong," groaned Sandro, inspecting the sketch on his easel; it comes of working

in this paint-box of a studio. I have posed you too near me, and the ground on which you stand seems to slope upwards ; there is too much perspective ! "

"I have already said that it is good!" replied Dominica with indignation. "See ! I am but walking down-hill ! "

Again he examined the picture, trying hard to accept her suggestion. "It will be difficult to draw the second figure," he said dejectedly ; "for unless I make the handmaid walking almost beside her mistress, she will appear so small that she will look ridiculous. Anyhow," he added more hopefully, "men will not be able to say that I am ignorant of perspective."

"It is as it should be," answered she, tossing her head. "What is the subject ? "

"The mistress is Judith, and presently I shall draw the head of Holofernes looking out from the parcel which the handmaid is carrying."

"And this ?" she asked, picking up a sketch of a corpse with its head dissevered.

"It is the drawing of one of Pollaiuolo's little dead for my fellow-picture of the finding of Holofernes."

"Heaven ! What a subject ! Did not I truly say that there is a little of the animal in every man ! And now," said Dominica, "you may take me out to dance on the piazza."

Daylight was passing into moonlight when Sandro and Dominica reached the Piazza della Signoria ; and again, the moonlight was dimmed by the glow of torches and the gleam of light from gold and jewels ; there was the purr of sliding footsteps from the smooth

pavement of the piazza ; the splashing of the fountains was blending with the notes of the lute, and the sound of the dance-songs rose and fell like music across water. Lorenzo de' Medici was abroad, and Pico, and the dashing Bartolommeo Benci, and young Filipo Corsini, and scores more ; for the night was hot indoors, whilst there were hundreds of pretty girls waiting to be danced with in the Piazza della Signoria.

The music had stopped, and now the sounds of voices and laughter were hushed. A clear boy's voice, accompanied by a single lute, sang :

"I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
Through a green garden in mid month of May."

Then a choir of voices, men and boys accompanied by lute and viol, took up the song, and the dance commenced.

"Violets and lilies grew on every side
Mid the green grass, and young flowers wonderful,
Golden and white and red and azure-eyed,
Towards which I stretched my hands, eager to pull
Plenty to make my fair curls beautiful,
To crown my rippling curls with garlands gay."

The refrain re-echoed, but this time the dancers had joined in the chorus, and also the crowds that watched :

"I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
Through a green garden in mid month of May."

Again the choir took up the melody :

"But when my lap was full of flowers I spied
Roses at last, roses of every hue ;
Therefore I ran to pluck their crimson pride,
Because their perfumes were so sweet and true
That all my soul went forth with pleasure new,
With yearning and desire too soft to say.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
Through a green garden in mid month of May.

I gazed and gazed. Hard task it were to tell
How lovely were the roses in that hour:
One was but peeping from her verdant shell,
And some were faded, some were scarce in flower.
Then Love said: Go, pluck from the perfumed bower
Those that thou seest ripe upon the spray."

"You will pluck that little baby of Lucrezia's some day, Sandro," said Dominica with a sound that was half a laugh, half a sigh, for the music and motion had taken hold of her.

"For when the full rose quits her tender sheath,
When she is sweetest and most fair to see,
Then is the time to place her in thy wreath,
Before her beauty and her freshness flee.
Gather ye therefore roses with great glee,
Sweet girls, or ere their perfumes pass away."

As the last refrain rang forth, Sandro felt the girl clinging to him tightly; then her clasp loosened. "I shall go back to my hills, Sandro," said she; "for I desire none that wants me here, and one that I desire wants me not. What is life without love, or a full stomach with an empty heart? Perchance one of my own people may gather me before I fade!"

Next morning, after Dominica had walked in "The Prato" so that Sandro might catch the swing of her drapery, she went into the nearest church and knelt down.

"O Saint Joseph," she prayed, "I love Sandro. But since Sandro loves me not, nor desires me for his mistress, find me a husband amongst mine own people."

Then she went back to the hills.

CHAPTER IX

ON LOVE AND LORENZO

"I TELL you," shrieked Maddalena, shaking her fist at Piero, "that you are no artist! I tell you," she hissed, putting her face close to his as though she would bite him, and blind to the spectacle she was making of herself before the bottega, "that you are no lover of mine! I tell you," she howled, flinging down a fish that she was carrying by a string, and stamping on it, "that you are an assassin!"

"And I tell you," retorted Piero, "that anger makes you appear even hotter than you are!"

"Infamous one!" cried Maddalena in the full bitterness of her spirit. "It is because I have kept so still for you to paint me that I melt; and then you paint me perspiring!"

"Bene!" drawled Piero, looking at her critically. "Then pose again as you are now, so that I may finish your complexion."

"Oh!" she wailed, burying her face in her hands. "And I have been his most faithful inamorata!"

Thereupon the craftsmen gave full vent to their pent-up merriment.

The pretty, fair-haired Maddalena, Piero Pollaiuolo's favourite model and particular friend, had been posing

for him as the young Tobias, and on leaving the platform in order to rest herself and inspect the progress of the work, she had become most justly angry. It was a realistic picture that Piero was painting, and one that he was executing in his best manner ; there was the Angel Raphael, as large as life, leading Tobias into Media so that he might espouse Sara the daughter of Raguel. The boy was stepping out lustily, carrying the fish which should furnish a charm to drive away the demon from his bride, and beside him trotted the little white dog Picco. Tobias, in trunk and hose, with his pretty hair falling to his shoulders, was a most truthful portrait of Maddalena, and the little dog was Picco to the life ; but in his search after realism Piero had become cruel ! Maddalena, posing in the heat of the hottest day in June, was obviously hot ; Tobias, striding through Media with the lusty Raphael setting the pace, was presumably hot : therefore Piero had painted the hot, greasy face of Maddalena exactly as it appeared ; and therefore Maddalena was simply furious !

"If you loved me as you say you love me," sobbed Maddalena, "you would never have made me appear so ridiculous ! Maddalena of the greasy face !"

"He loves you best warm !" jeered old Giovanni the embroiderer from his seat by the window.

"You are a beast, and also a pig !" said Sandro, turning to face him.

The bottega door was open, and now the craftsmen became aware that two men of dignified carriage stood within the doorway. Piero came forward to

greet them, but Maddalena remained beside the easel, sobbing.

"We are honoured!" stammered Piero, for he had recognised that one of his visitors was Messer Leon Battista Alberti, who had much influence in the artistic world, whilst the other was that noted scholar Cristofano Landino, late tutor to Lorenzo de' Medici; and with an attempt to carry off the situation, he told them that his brother Antonio was within, and asked them whether they desired to see him.

"I would speak with Sandro Filepepi," answered Alberti; "and I would speak to him without"; and, turning on his heel, Alberti left the workshop.

They reached the street, Landino walking in front and Sandro bringing up the rear with Alberti. "What can one expect from those mechanics?" muttered Landino, who had the scholar's contempt for the mechanical arts.

"Verrocchio is different!" protested Alberti. "Andrea Verrocchio is a nobleman when compared to the Pollaiuoli!"

"As Aristotle says," retorted the other, "'one swallow does not make the spring!' However, since you have your message to deliver, we will enter yonder tavern and refresh ourselves."

"I arrived last night from Rome," said Alberti, throwing off his cloak and seating himself; "and on my way I passed through Spoleto."

"Then you saw Fra Filippo?" asked Sandro, full of anticipation.

"I rested two nights with Fra Filippo, and talked much with him and Madonna Lucrezia."

"Yes?" asked Sandro, knowing that if Alberti had stayed with Fra Filippo he would have talked, and that if he had talked he would have talked much.

"Filippo is working slowly and fitfully, for his rupture pains him; but he is working with great skill, and his frescoes will do him credit. Diamante is painting as diligently, as carefully, and as foolishly as ever—bestowing the same care on the details of a stable wall as he is bestowing on the features of an angel. Filippino shows great promise, and Madonna Lucrezia bids me tell you that your little Alessandra would rejoice you. But I must deliver my messages; and since madonna was the more importunate, I will deliver her message first." He sipped his wine slowly, turning over the message in his mind.

"I long to hear of madonna!" said Sandro.

"She told me of your promise respecting the bottega of the Pollaiuoli," said Alberti deliberately; "and I think this same promise both wise and creditable: she bids me remind you of your promise." He paused, watching the clean, wholesome face of the young painter. "You still purpose to remain with these Pollaiuoli?"

Sandro nodded his head. "I have promised to help in an important commission for the hall of the Mercatanzia which we commence next spring; we are to paint the pictures of the Virtues, and I myself am to execute the picture of Fortitude. Will you tell this to Fra Filippo? The news will please him."

"And Madonna Lucrezia—what shall I tell her? Shall I tell her of what I saw in the bottega—for I

gathered that the girl was Pollaiuolo's inamorata, and no friend of yours?"

"You may tell madonna that I have had but one friend amongst the models, and that she was a good country girl who returned to her home a week past."

"The love," said Alberti, gazing dreamily through the tavern door, and watching the pigeons which were running hither and thither as they hunted for food amongst the garbage of the gutter—"the love of a degraded woman—if you can call it love—is the greatest of all evils; for such love can only render a man vile and contemptible in his own eyes. True love must spring from the man; and true love, springing from the pure heart of a good man, should beget lofty ideals and bring forth beauty in the soul of his beloved."

Then Landino, who had grown bored and sleepy with the talk of Spoleto, woke up. "In love," said he, "the man who loves, loves love above all; love is sufficient unto itself and finds its goal within itself."

Alberti nodded his head wisely, but Sandro looked puzzled.

"With love," continued Landino, fixing his eyes on Sandro, "the love which is from above fixes its gaze upon heaven, and, despising the passing pleasures of the senses, seeks the greatest and most lasting happiness in the pleasures of the reason. And yet, as Plato teaches"—he was attributing doctrines to Plato that no one has been able to discover in any of Plato's philosophy—"there is another love that is born of Jupiter, and which seeks only to produce a form like his; but this earthly love is a snare, for when an appe-

tite is appeased there soon follow satiety, weariness, and often aversion."

"I think," suggested Sandro rather shyly, "that Dante's words are the most beautiful of any : 'But, since the noblest part of man is the mind, he loves that more than the body or any other thing ; and the mind it is that, naturally, and more than any other thing, he ought to love.' He also says that, in true love, a man should love his lady's soul, and he should love that soul as it looks out through the window of her eyes."

"This is most interesting!" cried Landino. "It is very interesting indeed—for few know *Il Convito* so intimately! You are a student of the Divine poet?"

"It is thus," answered Sandro: and he explained how he had received a copy of *Il Convito* from Lucrezia, and how she had inherited the book from old Francesco da Buti, who had lectured in the college at Pisa.

"I have a great desire to see this manuscript of yours," said Landino; "for, now that my *Disputationes Camaldulenses* is in the printer's hands, I am commencing a commentary on the works of Dante. And they fell to talking of Dante until Alberti interrupted them.

"Now," said he, "I have a commission from my dear friend Fra Filippo. Having failed, as you will remember, to present you to Messer Lorenzo de' Medici, he bids me present you to Lorenzo in his name. Messer Landino and myself are proceeding to the villa at Careggi presently; and, if you go home quickly to arrange your attire, we will meet you at the inn opposite San Marco, and will take you with us."

* * * *

Four men lay in the stillness of the cool woods above Careggi, a stillness that was broken only by the babble of a brook that poured down beside them. Three of these men were the same who had ridden out from Florence, the fourth was a youth of some nineteen summers. They had been discoursing of those who had qualified themselves by study to retire into philosophic contemplation : now Alberti spoke.

"But if this life of contemplation," said he, turning to the youth who was lying beside him, "be an occupation suitable for all men of learning, it is the more particularly suitable for you on whom the direction of the affairs of the Republic is likely, from the increasing infirmities of your father, soon to devolve. For although, Lorenzo, you have given proof of such virtues as would induce us to think them rather of Divine than human origin ; although there seems to be no undertaking so momentous as not to be accomplished by that prudence and courage which you have displayed, even in your early years ; and although the impulse of youthful ambition, and the full enjoyment of those gifts of fortune which have often intoxicated men of high expectation and great virtue, have never yet been able to impel you beyond the just bounds of moderation ; yet both you and that Republic which you are shortly to direct, or rather which now reposes on your care, will derive important advantages from those hours of leisure, which you may pass either in solitary meditation or social discussion on the origin and nature of the human mind. For it is impossible that any person should rightly direct the affairs of the public, unless he has previously established in himself virtuous habits,

and enlightened his understanding with that knowledge which will enable him clearly to discern why he is called into existence, what is due to others, and what to himself."

The brook babbled on, singing an accompaniment to the philosophy of Alberti. Sandro's eyes wandered across the rich valley of the Arno, with its fields of corn and olives hedged in with fences of clustering vines. The valley itself seemed trembling in the heat-waves, but far away, over the heat haze, the sea shimmered and glittered in the distance. The youth whom Alberti was lecturing would rule over the whole of this—in fact was already ruling it ; and since his kingdom was a republic of sturdy citizens, he must rule by moral influence.

Sandro's eyes passed on to the Medici : yes, he was tall and strongly built, and he had a long, strong, masterful nose ; but his carriage was ungraceful, his voice was harsh and ugly, and he was peering about as though he were near-sighted. It was absurd to imagine that this boy, who was nearly five years younger than himself, should rule over independent Florence.

Alberti was still arguing—he seemed to be arguing that since reason is the distinguishing characteristic of man, and since he can only perfect his reason by the cultivation of his mind, a ruler should abstain from worldly pursuits and devote himself to contemplation.

" But, my dear Alberti," answered Lorenzo, " how in the name of all the saints can I rule Florence if I devote my whole life to meditation ? I must know all that goes on ; I must know each important citizen,

I must know what he thinks, what he plans, and too often what he plots. I must know what his Holiness wishes, I must know what the Venetians wish, what Naples, Milan, and France wish. I must entertain my friends, study philosophy, cultivate poetry, and worship the fine arts. Even now I am planning a tournament, madonna my mother is planning my marriage, whilst I am told that the Pazzi are planning my overthrow. If the monk can say *Laborare est orare*, I must say that to rule is to contemplate! But let us descend to supper; my mother would speak with you."

So far Lorenzo had paid but slight attention to Sandro; now, as they walked down the hill-side, he drew him apart from the others. "An introduction from Fra Filippo," he said, "is a very good introduction. Have you set up your own bottega?"

"I am studying with the Pollaiuoli, your Magnificence," answered Sandro.

"As silversmiths they are most excellent, as craftsmen they are good, but as painters——?" and Lorenzo paused.

"He is but studying anatomy," broke in Alberti, who had been straining his hearing to its full extent. "Fra Filippo thought that he had an over-lively imagination, and bade him study anatomy with the Pollaiuoli."

"By Saint Anthony!" he answered, looking back, "Antonio Pollaiuolo will curb his imagination with a curb of iron!" Then he quickened his pace so as to draw Sandro out of earshot. "You see," he remarked drily, "what privacy a ruler has for contemplation; and, to each interruption, he must answer back cheer-

fully. How long do you intend to remain with Antonio ? "

" For at least another year, your Magnificence; perhaps longer. I am assisting with the decorations for the Mercatanzia ; and I myself," he added with a touch of pride, "am to paint the picture of Fortitude."

" That is good," said the Medici, " for it will bring you into notice ; but for the present, until you open your own studio, I can do naught. Nevertheless, do not allow me to forget you : come and visit me from time to time, for I have taken a fancy to you, and I would help you for your own sake as well as for the sake of our friend Fra Filippo."

" I am deeply grateful," murmured Sandro.

" I shall not have the time to seek you out," continued Lorenzo ; " but you must make the time to seek me, for the Medici have always desired to surround themselves with those who are true artists. Believe me," he concluded sadly, " I envy you from my heart! Sandro Filepepi is free to follow his painting, but Lorenzo de' Medici is the slave of Florence." For a moment he caught hold of Sandro's arm and became a boy : " I would give my right hand," he said, " to stand in your shoes" ; then, still holding his arm, he wheeled round to meet the others.

CHAPTER X

"FORTITUDE"

ON the seventh day of February, in the year fourteen-hundred-and-sixty-nine, Sandro rose very early and in great excitement.

Twice since the summer he had met Lorenzo de' Medici: once he had accompanied Messer Landino on a visit to the villa at Careggi—since he had discovered that Sandro was a student of Dante, Landino seemed to have taken a fancy to him—and once he had seen him on Pollaiuolo's behalf about the design for a banner. On each occasion, although Lorenzo had not talked much with him, he had greeted him kindly and referred to the time when he should have a studio of his own : therefore Sandro had conceived a strong devotion towards Lorenzo, coupled with much admiration.

The Piazza of Santa Croce had been transformed into a tilt-yard ; a long, strong barrier—high enough to prevent the horses of the combatants from colliding, but low enough to allow the contending knights a fair and full meeting—had been erected towards one side of the piazza, whilst above it, gay with banners and hangings, stood the throne of the queen of love. On either side of this throne there were galleries for the

more distinguished guests, whilst a chin-high palisade surrounded the lists so as to keep the crowd from pressing forward. Lorenzo the Magnificent had arranged a tourney, Lorenzo was to run the opening course, and Sandro was longing for his hero to win the helmet crowned with a figure of Mars that was to be awarded as a trophy to the victor.

The nobles and their ladies had filled the galleries; the crowds had thronged the Square until Sandro, separated from his friend Andrea Finiguerra, had been cast up like a piece of flotsam close to the palisade; the queen of love had ascended her throne; the gates at either end were flung open.

A trumpet sounded, and Lorenzo de' Medici, attended by some hundred gentlemen, men-at-arms, and pages wearing his livery, entered the lists. Mounted on a palfrey that was a gift from the King of Naples, wearing armour presented by the Duke of Milan, his lack of grace was lost in the strength of his person, and Lorenzo looked every inch a knight. On his banner was embroidered his lady, bathed in sunshine and weaving a garland of laurel; "Le Tems Revient," lettered in large pearls, stood out beneath; and the device on his shield showed the Royal Lilies of France which had been granted to the head of the City of Lilies by Louis XI. After him followed seventeen other knights—Medici, Pitti, Pucci, Vespucci, Benci, Pazzi, Borromei, Salutati—each accompanied by a similar retinue. Again the trumpet sounded, and Lorenzo de' Medici, who had changed his palfrey for a war-horse that had been sent him by Borso, Marquis of Ferrara, spurred forward to meet Carlo Borromeo.

There was a woman standing close to Sandro, a huge woman with high cheek-bones and lazy eyes; as Lorenzo ran his first course this woman looked sleepily on, towering a full head and shoulders above those that were round her. "Eh!" she drawled, as the Borromeo showed some indecision and Lorenzo obtained a slight advantage; "they manage matters better in Ferrara."

Again the trumpet sounded, and Braccio de' Medici attacked his kinsman with such strength and courage that Lorenzo was only saved by his perfect horsemanship. "Madonna mia!" laughed the woman. "If that stroke had gone home, Orlando himself could not have withstood it!" and her words, catching the public fancy, were tossed from one to another, until Luca Pulci heard them and noted them down to be embodied in a poem he was planning.

Then, having pulled himself together, Lorenzo hurled himself on Braccio de' Medici, and his violence was such that his spear was shivered into a hundred pieces and Braccio all but bit the dust. "Good lance!" drawled the woman, smiling at Sandro, who was shouting himself crimson.

Lorenzo had run his last course with Benedetto Salutati, and, as Luca Pulci afterwards expressed it, had "swooped on him like a falcon," when the woman turned to Sandro. "Eh!" she said, "my little cock that crows so loudly may take me to refresh myself: whatever happens after this will fall as flat as marsh-water. Eh?" she added lazily, as she caught his look of surprise, "I fear not to trust myself in your company: none takes a liberty with me unless I will, and what I will that I do."

For a moment Sandro hesitated, weighing the risk of talking to a stranger against his desire to see more of her and listen to her droll conversation, but she had already taken his consent for granted and was forging her way through the people like a ship through the waves. "Keep close!" she said, looking back; and he followed. "Eh?" she repeated, when she had forced their way through the crowd, and Sandro had accompanied her to the nearest inn. "None takes a liberty with me unless I will: Hilda is able to take care of Hilda. Now," she added, smiling indolently, "fetch me some orange syrup and some of those sugared cakes—the ones with preserved cherries on the top. Eh?" she said, arranging the cakes in a row, so that the one bearing the largest cherry should come as a finale. "You will observe that I am well able to take care of Hilda!" and she started to munch the cakes with sharp, white teeth, licking her red lips after each mouthful.

Sandro watched her, fascinated; he had never seen anyone so big, or so deliberately sensual.

"Eh?" said she, when she had finished the last cake and sucked her fingers; "so you are one of us? I noticed your hands before I spoke to you. Not that that would have made any difference," she added.

"Then you come of the artist class?" asked Sandro. So far words seemed superfluous.

"My father is a painter of banners and coat-armour to the Marquis of Ferrara, but he judges that the Medici would be the better patrons and has come over to inquire about a bottega. He also prepares oils and varnish for the painters. He is also a German. His

name is Heinrich Lochener ; he is nephew of Meister Stephan of Cologne ; I am Hilda his daughter. What do they call you ?"

He told her his name.

"Eh!" she answered, nodding. "And what are you painting ?"

He told her of his work, and of the contemplated Fortitude. She listened quite intelligently.

"Have you a model ?" she asked.

He told her of his difficulty in securing a model who combined strength with dignity.

"Then," said she, "I will be the model for your Fortitude. I have posed often, and I am a fine woman. Who pays your model—you or your master ?"

He looked at her, deciding that she had great possibilities for his subject, and explained that Pollaiuolo had contracted to supply the pigments, whilst he must find and pay for the model.

"Then," said she, "I will pose to you for nothing. It will give me an opening here, and I have a fancy for this business. We come to Florence as soon as we have found a workshop : then I will pose for you. Now I will find my father." And she strode away, leaving him to pay the reckoning.

The rest of February passed, and March and April ; in May and June Sandro was busy assisting the Pollaiuoli in painting decorations for the wedding of Lorenzo de' Medici and Clarice Orsini. In July he was free to commence his picture of Fortitude.

The brothers Pollaiuoli were already busy with the pictures of Faith and Prudence, and Sandro was expected to develop his theme in the same manner.

Fortitude must be seated on a throne of elaborately variegated marbles; her robes must be trimmed with jewelled embroidery; her armour must be finely polished; and the whole picture had to be executed in pale colouring and sculptor's modelling: only in the design of the figure itself could he have liberty.

Then Hilda Lochener came to dominate the bottega. It was not so much her size that awed the workmen as her cool deliberation and her utter disregard of others. Piero might pet or bully Maddalena, Hilda did not care; Giovanni might insult Sibella, Hilda was indifferent; the rest might indulge in their coarsest jokes, Hilda would smile lazily: but when it came to Hilda herself, "None takes a liberty with me unless I will, and what I will that I do!"

Hilda posed, Sandro painted; or, rather, Hilda both posed and painted, for, after the first fortnight, as Sandro wielded his brush, he knew that Hilda was influencing his strokes and making him paint her exactly as she was. During the first fortnight he was painting her face, and during the first fortnight he managed to breathe some spirituality into her features, to refine the shape of her broad nostrils, to take the sensuality out of her mouth, to remove the suggestion of animalism which stamped her chin and throat; but when he came to her body he painted Hilda. It is true that he foreshortened the upper part of her legs badly, but the body was the body of Hilda and the pose hers.

Sometimes, during the dinner hour, Antonio and Piero would come into the bottega to examine the paintings.

"This is a strange figure of Sandro's!" Antonio would remark.

"I wonder what she would look like if she stood up!" Piero would answer.

"Of course the construction is wrong! This woman of Sandro's is a monstrosity, but she is imposing! She will cause a sensation!"

"It is not well," Piero would grumble, "for the picture of an assistant to cause a sensation! The sensation should be created by the pictures of his masters."

"He is so careless of his anatomy that we need have no fear of his competition," and Antonio would shrug his shoulders; but nevertheless both the brothers began to grow a trifle jealous of Sandro.

Then the men would troop back to the workshop, and a little while after Hilda would return, picking her sharp, white teeth, and Sandro would come in with her. For Sandro's mother, having taken an aversion to Hilda, had forbidden her the house; and Sandro, partly because the girl was making no charge for her posing, and partly because he had fallen under her fascination, would take her to dine at his inn, paying the reckoning. Thus July passed, and August, and part of September—Hilda posing, whilst Sandro toiled to secure that elaborate finish which the Pollaiuoli demanded in all the pictures that left their bottega.

Hilda dominated the bottega. Before she came, the conversation had not been that of the convent, but one or two—Sandro and Andrea Finiguerra in particular—had always showed a silent disapproval when the talk passed the limit of decency. Now that Hilda, Sandro's friend, smiled at the coarsest jokes and most indelicate allusions, this check had ceased. For how

Anderson photo] [Uffizi, Florence.

"THIS WOMAN IS A MONSTROSITY, BUT SHE IS IMPOSING."

could Sandro look disgusted when Hilda only smiled lazily? and how could Andrea sneer when Sandro condoned?

During this period, Sandro's state of mind was a problem. At first he was alternately repelled by Hilda's coarseness and delighted by her artistic possibilities as a model. It is true that he might have rendered Fortitude in the person of either a saint or a hero; but since he had decided to paint the virtue as a woman, this huge, imperturbable being who seemed to belong to some older order of creation, who seemed as though she might be a survival of the mysterious "daughters of men" that once mated with the sons of Adam, inspired him with a rendering which was altogether out of the common. This was his first and rational state of mind.

Next, Sandro lost the coarseness of the woman in the conception of the subject. As a Christian ideal, Fortitude must unite bravery and endurance with modesty and chastity; but take Fortitude alone, as Sandro was now doing, place her on a classical throne in pagan garb, and she would be neither moral nor immoral, neither modest nor immodest, for only the great animal virtue of brave endurance would remain.

Then at last, and without his knowledge, the law of sexual attraction overmastered him—that strange physical law which makes the strong mate with the weak, the refined with the coarse, so that the general character of the human race may be kept even—and the huge image of this woman gradually blotted out the images of the saints, and her slow, indolent smile came between him and the altar.

But so far, although the woman had attracted the man, and although Hilda liked Sandro in her selfish, lazy way, his delicate body and fanciful mind had not appealed to her physically. If any one attracted her it was Piero, and she sometimes wondered if it were not worth her trouble to take him away from Maddalena.

One day, towards the end of September, Hilda and Sandro had finished their noonday meal. Sandro had drawn what he could in advance of his payments for Fortitude, and had just entertained her somewhat lavishly, so they had tarried on until the merchants, brokers, and artisans who frequented their ordinary had left the inn.

"Now, which of these is good?" said Hilda, inspecting a small dish of confections that had been placed before them. She chose a caramel made of pine-seed, and put out her tongue to taste it before she ventured further. Sandro watched her, fascinated.

"How I love you!" he murmured, hardly knowing what he said.

"Eh?" she answered, more interested in the caramel than in what he was saying.

"I love you!" he repeated, stretching out his hand and touching her elbow.

She laid down the sweetmeat, and, sucking her fingers, smiled at him. "Eh?" she said. "Poor Sandro! Is it as bad as that?"

"Will you marry me?" he asked, catching hold of her hand all sticky from the caramel; for he had suddenly realised that he must possess her at any cost.

"Eh? poor Sandro," she laughed. "Is it as bad as that?"

"I will work for you!" he cried. "I will make a home for you! And, by the saints, how I will love you!"

"Marry you?" she answered, keeping him at his distance, and looking at him critically, as though she were wondering what sort of a husband he would make. "Marry you on the wages of a journeyman?"

"I have talent! I will set up my own bottega! Lorenzo de' Medici has promised me his patronage! I will work for you! Madonna! how I——"

"No!" she interrupted, having come to her decision. "If I married you, I should tire of you. However," she added, stretching herself, "perhaps some day I may be kind to you: what I will, that I do."

Sandro leant back, dazed by her refusal, and unable at once to grasp her meaning.

She looked at him thoughtfully for some moments; then putting her arm round his neck, she kissed him with a moist, lingering kiss—just as though she would taste him like she had tasted the caramels. Then she got up to return to the studio—Sandro following after her trembling.

They had reached the bottega door when Hilda stopped and turned to Sandro; her lips parted, and a slow gleam of humour came into her eyes. "I have not told you," she said, "that, after this Fortitude is completed, I have engaged to pose for Piero. Eh? If I married you, how would Sandro like his wife to take Maddalena's place? For what I will, that I always do!"

Through that afternoon, Sandro listened to the loose talk of the studio in a torture of jealousy ; and through the night he tossed to and fro—now scheming to marry the girl, now calling on God and the saints to aid him, with those selfish, foolish prayers that men utter when they are determined to have their own way. Then, next day, he begged her to marry him ; and the next day, and the next—until, at length, his moral fibre weakening, and his higher love becoming swallowed up and lost in his lower nature, he pleaded for whatever she might be prepared to give him.

"Eh ?" she said, looking at him with a new interest ; "perhaps, some day. But," she added deliberately, "Hilda is not an over-ripe cherry !"

So Sandro wooed Hilda vigorously—if such can be called wooing—spending what he had on her, raising what he could, and selling even the furniture of his studio in order to get a little more.

So Hilda was wooed—if such can be called a wooing—until she changed the "some day" into "soon." Then, towards the middle of October, the day on which his picture of Fortitude was finished, she smiled at him :

"Eh ?" she said. "To-morrow you must varnish your picture ; on Friday I pose for Piero ; on Saturday I will go with you to Pontassieve until Monday. Are you happy, Sandro ?"

CHAPTER XI

FORTITUDE

ON Friday, the thirteenth day of October, in the year fourteen-hundred-and-sixty-nine, Sandro rose early, for he had passed a most restless night.

He dressed, and, from force of habit, knelt down to pray; but with one glance at the crucifix he rose and looked out of his window. For how can a man pray when he has made up his mind to commit a mortal sin and has the whole day before him in which to contemplate the crime of premeditation?

His copy of *Il Convito* was lying on the window-sill, and he picked it up absently to turn over the pages. The book fell open at the eighth chapter of the second treatise, and, noticing that a passage towards the end of the first paragraph had been marked, and that one sentence was underlined, he read it:

> Therefore, when one speaks of a living man, one should understand the man using Reason, which is his special Life, and is the action of his noblest part. And, therefore, *whoso departs from Reason, and uses only the Senses, is not a living man, but a living beast*, as says that most excellent Boethius, "Let the Ass live."

Again he read through the passage. Was it true?

Was he a sensual, irrational beast, or was he a man who had fought against overwhelming odds—who had been ready, who was still ready to do what was right if it were possible?

This had come to him, he had not sought it! He had kept himself clean amidst all the uncleanness of Pollaiuolo's bottega; he had worked his hardest at his profession; he had met Hilda entirely by accident; he had fallen in with her suggestion that she should pose as model from the best motives; then, when he had found himself hopelessly, desperately in love with her, he had asked her to marry him as an honest man should. As to what had happened since—he was neither a St. Roch nor a St. Anthony, and he had fought to do right as long as mortal man could fight. Nay more—and he looked defiantly at the crucifix—he would again ask Hilda to marry him; he would ask her this evening; he would even ask her once again when they reached Pontassieve. Now he must sell his last treasure to provide funds for the journey, and, throwing *Il Convito* carelessly on the window-sill, he took out a long, flat package.

For the past three months, he had not unwrapped his panel of the Magi, and even now he could not bring himself to undo the package and unveil the face of Madonna Lucrezia; but sell the picture he must, and that was the end of it. Doubtless Antonio Pollaiuolo would give him a fair price for the panel, but there were a hundred reasons why he should not sell it to Antonio; Morelli, who made furniture for the Signori, might give him even a higher price, but every time he passed Morelli's workshop he would see the

panel, and his friends would be sure to notice the picture and inquire why he had sold it. He would take it to old Soccebonel, the cabinet-maker, in the Borgo Pidiglioso across the Arno; it was true that this man lived in a poor neighbourhood and would pay a poor price, but the picture would be gone from his sight for ever. That was essential, for he could never look Madonna Lucrezia in the face after to-morrow.

Oh, yes! He knew what he was doing! He was giving himself body and soul to Hilda; nor was it as though this were an ordinary liaison and she was giving herself in exchange. She had reserved the right of free action—even now, in an hour's time, she would be posing for Piero. The degradation made him shudder, until the heavy features, and red, red lips, and lazy eyes of Hilda Lochener came to fill the imagining of his senses.

Whoso departs from Reason, and uses only the Senses, is not a living man, but a living beast.

"Let the Ass live!" So he shouldered his burden, and went out to Soccebonel's shop in the Borgo Pidiglioso.

Bene! It was a nice panel and well finished—Soccebonel acknowledged that—and if it had been painted by Verrocchio or Rosselli or Pollaiuolo he might have been able to find a customer; but pretty panels by unknown painters were as plentiful as olives at Fiesole. He was a pupil of Fra Filippo? An excellent artist, Fra Filippo! But unfortunately Florence was filled with the paintings of the pupils of the Pollaiuoli and Verrocchio and Fra Filippo—it was

sad, but who could sell marble in Carrara? However, since it was painted on a sound bit of wood—some of the young painters were careless, and their panels either cracked or warped—and since it was nicely finished, he would give a golden florin. What? Ten florins? One might as well ask ten thousand! Ebbene! he was not a Medici!

Thus the bargaining went on until, finally, Sandro named four florins as the lowest price that he would accept, and Soccebonel, after measuring the panel carefully and comparing the measurements with those of a coffer he was making, paid over the money with many lamentations. Then Soccebonel went inside to write to a rich client who had ordered a very handsome marriage-coffer for his daughter's wedding, and Sandro went home with enough money in his pocket to enable Hilda and himself to pass their time at Pontassieve amidst luxury.

His morning was spent in misery. Jealousy forbade him go to the bottega where Hilda was posing for Piero; jealousy made it a torment for him to stay at home; jealousy made him determined to marry the girl and take her away from his rival; jealousy told him that her intimacy with Piero—nay, her very proposal to himself—made her no fit wife for an honest man: then the image of her heavy features, her red, red lips and her lazy eyes came to complete his degradation, and to force him—whatever her past might have been—into a mad desire to marry her so that he alone might possess her.

Toward noontime, his sister Beatrice, who was twelve years his senior, and Lisa who was six years older,

came up to his room, inviting him to celebrate the completion of his picture by taking them for an afternoon's pleasure on the heights of Fiesole ; but he put them off with the excuse of a headache, and went to dine at a small tavern where the carters from Pistoja were wont to break their fast. The acrid fumes of the coarse wine, the stale bread and evil-smelling cheese gave him a bastard feeling of voluntary asceticism that seemed to discount his sensuality and restore, for the moment, his self-respect : he would return home and take Lisa and Beatrice for an afternoon in the country.

But on his return he found that Messer Luigi del Volpe, a friend of his brother Giovanni, had called to see him and would call again. This Luigi was a broker who obtained orders for the fine Florentine cloth in Rome, bringing back such bronzes, medals, and intaglios as the peasants dug up in the Campagna, in order to sell them at a large profit to the Medici, Tornabuoni, and other collectors of antiquities. On his journey home he had stopped at Spoleto, and, calling at the house of his old acquaintance Fra Filippo the painter, had heard some sad news which he would return to relate as soon as he had refreshed himself. In the meantime, Fra Filippo's wife had begged him to deliver a letter addressed to Sandro Filepepi, and this he had left.

With beating heart, Sandro tore open the letter, and read :

"Sandro Mio,

"The hand of God lies heavy on me. My beloved is dead. He was painting on the frescoes above the apse only this morning, when he fell in sore

pain, and some one running fetched me quickly. I reached him before he died. Of late he hath talked much of death, bidding me, when it should happen, remind you of your promise to befriend and instruct our son, for he had grown to mistrust Diamante. We return to Prato as soon as may be, when I would that I could leave Filippino under your protection.

"Remembering what you have been to me in the past, and dwelling here amongst strangers, mine eyes ache for the sight of you. Pray to God for my Filippo. Fra Diamante is saying Mass for him daily throughout the month's mind. And pray for your friend, who is a little *starocca* with pain,

LUCREZIA."

"*From* SPOLETO, *9th of October*, 1469."

Sandro felt as though the earth was crumbling under his feet. His master, who had seemed to be part of the structure of life, was dead, and Madonna Lucrezia was wanting him.

He handed the letter to his mother to read, looking out of the window whilst she read it; then, having recovered the letter, he went upstairs and locked himself in his chamber. The whole thing was incredible! He must think.

Fra Filippo was dead; but so far that meant nothing to him, for when a friend has been absent for two years, the realisation of his death only comes to one gradually. But Madonna Lucrezia was alone, with only the boy Filippino and the tiny Alessandra to bear her company, and she wanted him—"dwelling here amongst strangers, mine eyes ache for the sight of you"—that was real! And yet, before he began to think of madonna, he must pray to God for Fra Filippo.

He looked at the crucifix and became conscious that there was some bar to his prayer. Why could not he pray? It was Hilda—of course, when he had deliberately turned his back on Almighty God through his intention to sin with Hilda, he could not pray to God for Fra Filippo, nor for himself, nor for any one else! He must think.

With an effort of mental concentration he called up the image of Hilda Lochener, of her heavy features, her red, red lips and her lazy eyes. But now he saw that there was no love for him in those eyes nor passion for him on those lips.

What had bewitched him? It was not as though she had been a southern girl, whose hot blood had stirred towards him in answer to his passion, until the two of them were carried beyond the sway of religion and reason. It was like the Grecian story of Messer Landino, wherein a woman had given travellers a cup that changed them into swine. In true love, each loves the other's soul above all things; in passion, passion must be met by passion or else it dies; but here there had only been an irrational animal desire on his part, and nothing more than a lazy, tolerant sensuality on hers.

The day was passing, and evening drawing on, when Sandro sought Hilda; he met her coming out of the bottega, for she had tarried to talk with Piero after the working light was over.

"I cannot go with you to-morrow!" he blurted out, falling into step with her.

"Eh?" she answered, still dreaming of Piero.

"I cannot go to Pontassieve with you to-morrow!" he repeated.

"Eh?" And the inflexion of her voice hinted that there was anger behind the interrogation.

"Fra Filippo, my old master, is dead," he explained, "and his wife and children need me."

"Eh? When did he die, and where?"

"At Spoleto, and I heard the news this noontime."

"Then you start at once for Spoleto?"

"No," he stammered, conscious that she was making his resolve hard for him.

"Then you start to-morrow, or on Sunday or Monday?"

"No," he stammered.

"Having persuaded me to consent, and I having made my plans, you now cast me off?"

Sandro looked down, biting his lips.

"Surely the arms of a living woman such as I am," she cried angrily, "are worth more than——" But some sense of decency prevented her from going further.

They walked in silence for some hundred yards, Sandro dazed and she planning—for, although she was indolent in making up her mind, she was very determined in having her way. Then she stopped before a lighted window.

"Look at me!" she said. And now there was something in her eyes that made the animal inside Sandro clamour for mastery.

"Are you coming?" she asked.

"How can I come," he answered in desperation, "when my master lies dead in Spoleto?"

"Then you will come with me the next Saturday?"

He kept silence. It was the most he could do.

"If you do not come with me then," she said, driving in her dart, "I will go with Piero. He has asked me. Now leave me! You weary me!"

That night Sandro tossed to and fro, fighting against his memory of Hilda Lochener. No longer did her lips seem merely red and her eyes merely lazy; for her eyes—as he had seen them beneath the lighted window—spoke to his passions and her lips made him hunger.

The next day he sought one of the Fathers at San Marco so that he might be shriven; and this friar, being a simple and holy man, offered to lend him a shirt of horse-hair which he himself was accustomed to wear during the penitential seasons; and he bade him remember, above all things, that since he had unchained his lower passions, his only course was to flee from them. "Fasting is good," said the friar, "and prayer essential; but the chief remedy for evil thoughts is to fill your mind with thoughts that are wholesome."

Sandro donned his hair-shirt: it irritated both his skin and temper. He took a piece of silver, and fashioning a small cross with many sharp points, such as some of the saints were said to have sometimes worn, placed it next his breast: it wounded his flesh without healing his spirit. He prayed: but his thoughts wandered to Hilda. Then he took Madonna Lucrezia's letter and, after reading it carefully, came to the conclusion that he must save Filippino from the contagion of the craftsman's bottega, and that the only way to do so was to make a studio of his own. So during Saturday evening and through Sunday he set himself to work, clearing out a disused attic in his father's house, packing away old garments in presses, piling

damaged furniture in the far corner, and scrubbing the floor: it only required some large windows in the northern roof-slope to convert this attic into quite an excellent studio. Through Sunday night he slept the sleep of the just, and on Monday morning he felt able to face the world and Hilda calmly.

So on Monday morning he went to Pollaiuolo's studio as though nothing had happened, received instructions to finish some details in one of Piero's pictures for which Maddalena was posing, and took a seat opposite the end of the dais, so as to leave his old seat which he had occupied during the painting of Fortitude free for Piero. Maddalena came in, put on her boy's livery sulkily, and posed. Sandro painted. Piero came in, uncovered his panel, prepared his colours, and came over to give Sandro some directions. Then Hilda entered the bottega.

She entered with a supreme self-confidence, smiling first at Sandro, then at Piero, and, donning some loose drapery, seated herself on the throne which had figured in Fortitude. Strange to say, her new pose was similar to that in Sandro's picture, and Sandro, to his confusion, found himself right in the line of her vision.

Hilda fixed her eyes on Sandro, and the battle began.

At first Sandro tried to busy himself with his painting, and forget about Hilda; but how can one forget about the woman who fascinates one, when one is under the battery of her eyes?

Next, he acknowledged to himself that Hilda was there and that he was in the presence of a great temptation;

and, recalling Landino's story from ancient Greece, pictured the woman as some witch who was striving to convert him into the similitude of a beast; but how can one regard a woman as a sorceress when one is conscious of the thrills of an intense physical excitement?

He raised his eyes to meet hers. She hardly smiled, but something came forth from her eyes that caressed him, and, do what he would, his eyes caressed her back. From that moment he could not keep his eyes from seeking hers frequently.

"Are you painting me or are you painting Hilda?" asked Maddalena tartly.

"He does but rest his eyes," suggested Hilda.

"I was speaking to him, not to you!" retorted the former.

"I did but explain," answered the other gently, "that Sandro must rest his eyes. Your face dazzles him."

"You liar!" cried Maddalena, for this false accusation of a shiny complexion had been going on for more than a year, and the jest had become exceeding wearisome. "You beast! You pig!"

"It is better to gaze at a pig in the flesh," said Hilda Lochener, "than to gaze at swine in a mirror." And the bottega yelled with merriment.

The dinner-hour had come, and, save for Sandro, the bottega was empty; for Piero had gone inside to speak to Antonio, and Hilda, who had extracted the promise of a meal from Piero, had accompanied him so that she might straighten her locks before a mirror which hung in Antonio's work-room.

The door opened, and Piero passed through the studio, calling to Hilda that she should hurry after him as he went. Again the door opened, and Hilda herself passed through ; but, as she passed, she stooped over Sandro, and, pressing a burning kiss on his forehead, whispered : " I live but for Saturday, Sandro ! "

The kiss stirred him to madness, then left him icy cold. The last time he had been kissed on the forehead, Lucrezia had said : "So, if you become too friendly with one of these girls, I ask you—no ! I command you by your love for God and your affection for me—that you leave Pollaiuolo's bottega ! " Then she had kissed him on the forehead, and left him.

Once again the inner door opened, and Antonio passed through the studio.

" I would speak with you," said Sandro.

Antonio stood still, fidgeting, for he was already late and his dinner would be growing cold.

"I must leave your bottega," said Sandro ; and Antonio sat down heavily, with his dinner forgotten.

" As you have heard," said Sandro, planning his excuse so as to avoid all mention of Hilda, " Fra Filippo is dead. When I was with him I promised to instruct his son in our craftsmanship. With his last words he recalled this promise, and now his wife would leave the boy in my charge."

" Then," answered Antonio, greatly relieved, " I will find a place for him here. With you to instruct him, a youth could have no better training than in my bottega."

" If you had a son of twelve, would you expose him to the conversation of this bottega ? "

Antonio was too honest to answer in the affirmative, so he sat speechless.

"The only thing for me to do," continued Sandro, "is to set up a bottega of my own and take him as my apprentice."

"That is absurd!" answered Antonio impatiently. "It is like using an arquebus to slay gnats. Place him for a year with your brother the goldsmith: a year with a goldsmith is no bad beginning for a painter."

"You know my brother," said Sandro. "He would employ Filippino in beating out gold-leaf from morning to night, and teach him nothing else."

"Then do as you say: use that small studio of yours in your father's house, and I will give you one hour in the morning and another hour in the afternoon, in which to instruct him." Antonio knew that this offer was liberal on his part, and anticipated no refusal.

"You are most kind!" answered Sandro, feeling that if it had not been for Hilda he would have accepted the offer gratefully; "but I fear that I must set up my own bottega."

"Ebbene!" laughed Pollaiuolo, trying to keep down his anger. "One journeyman as master, and one little boy as apprentice! Your own bottega, indeed! You will be doing yourself a great injury, Sandro?"

"I have made up my mind, Messer Antonio; I am sorry if you disapprove."

"Having learnt all that I can teach you, having secured the painting of a picture for the Mercatanzia through me, you now purpose to leave me?"

For one moment Sandro felt a burning desire to tell of his true reason, but he judged this to be dishonourable. "I am very sorry," he repeated.

"You think that you are already a great artist?" jeered Antonio, with his temper getting the better of him. "You think that you can get orders away from me? You think that because you have painted this Fortezza you have made your name? Very well! I will see that no orders come to you, and I will see that men shall admire your Fortezza with a shrug of their shoulders! You may pick up your rags and go!" Antonio left the studio muttering: "His own bottega, indeed! To the devil with such a bottega!" And he slammed the door after him.

CHAPTER XII

A ST. SEBASTIAN

"AND so, my Sandro, these Pollaiuoli are very angry with you?" At the invitation of Mariano Filepepi and Smeralda his wife, Lucrezia had broken her journey in Florence; and now she was sitting in the studio which Sandro had just completed. It was a fine studio, this attic, and the money which should have taken Sandro and Hilda to Pontassieve had not only paid for two large windows, but it had also enabled the artist to buy a little simple furniture for himself and Filippino.

"Since Antonio was ignorant of my reason for leaving his bottega, madonna, his anger was just!"

"His anger also shows," said Lucrezia, nodding her head wisely, "that you had become very valuable to him and that he minded losing you; one does not weep over mouldy bread!"

"It will mean a hard struggle, madonna."

"For that I am glad, Sandro mio; with my love and Filippo's wisdom, life came too easily for you at Prato—your ideas came too easily, your drawing came too easily, your craftsmanship came too easily, your very religion seemed to come too easily. You needed all this fighting to make a real man of you! And so I thank God for your struggles at the bottega, and the

troubles that are before you—I almost thank Him for that miserable German woman! If we have seen no ugliness, we do not appreciate beauty. You still think of that woman?"

Sandro looked troubled.

"I would not have you forget too easily," said she, "but have a care! Anyhow," she added, "Filippino will be here to occupy your thoughts. Do you propose to have other assistants?"

"Jacopo will join me as soon as Diamante has finished with Spoleto."

"It will be like Prato," said Lucrezia, smiling brightly.

"You are brave!" he muttered; then he thought a little. "How would you like me to open a bottega in Prato, madonna," he asked, "so that Filippino and I might be near you?"

"It is very sweet of you to think of this," she answered; "but I shall have Sandra to educate, and Filippo to pray for. Oh, no! I shall not be lonely. I shall have plenty to occupy me."

"There would be a good opening in Prato," he suggested.

"Where you might become a little artist, in a little city," she answered. "No, Filippo. You must fight your fight in the big world, for you have great talents."

"Then I shall fight here. And I shall fight by my own talents: I shall not ask the Medici to help me."

"In your art, yes." Then she sank her voice to almost a whisper. "But ask God's help against the memory of that German girl, Sandro."

"You have saved me once," he answered softly. "I shall obey you also in this."

"About the Medici," said she, harking back to the previous topic with infinite tact: "I like your resolve of fighting by your own talents, but be not over-obstinate. A man who fights by himself may fight unnoticed; he needs others to fight with him and for him. Messer Alberti told us that Lorenzo had taken a fancy to you, Sandro."

"His Magnificence has been very kind!"

"Then, when you are quite sure of yourself, go to Lorenzo and say: 'I have done this and that, and now I can do even better; give me some important work as a paragon!' The Medici like those that are bold—at least so my Filippo said."

"I will obey you in this also," he promised.

"Listen!" said he. A sound of romping came up the stairs, followed by shrieks of clear, shrill laughter.

"That daughter of mine has taken a great liking to you," remarked Lucrezia, rising.

"Am I not her godfather?" answered Sandro, preparing to follow her. So they went downstairs, he braced and revivified, with his fighting spirit roused and his self-respect restored.

During the next few months—nay more, during the next few years—Sandro needed a plentiful supply of endurance. It was one thing to establish a small bottega that was ready to execute all reasonable orders, it was another thing to obtain those orders.

From the very first Antonio Pollaiuolo kept his word. Did Morelli or one of the other fashionable

furniture-makers require a nice panel for a bedstead, cupboard or coffer, Antonio would quote a low price on the understanding that he should have all future commissions. Did some church need an altar-piece or devotional picture, Antonio would get wind of the business, and, if he were too busy to have it done by himself and Piero, would drop a hint to either Rosselli or Verrocchio or Zenobio Macchiavelli. As to the private orders from wealthy citizens, one of the fashionable workshops was certain to secure the commission.

Naturally, Sandro's picture of Fortitude made some stir ; but whilst Antonio expressed unbounded personal admiration for the daring originality of the figure, he hinted at his great anxiety lest his patrons should have found fault with imperfections in the drawing, and ended by a laugh and a shrug of the shoulders. "Per Bacco ! " he would say, "what in the name of Silenus would this figure look like if she stood up ?" This clenched the matter : originality in one of established reputation is genius ; originality in one who is unknown is eccentricity ; and who wants an eccentric picture by an unknown artist ?

The hard part of Sandro's struggle lay in the very excellence of his establishment. Jacopo di Sallajo had developed into quite a first-class workman ; it is true that he lacked invention and that his touch was a trifle hard, but, with Sandro's imagination behind him, his furniture-work was more decorative than any that the Pollaiuoli had accomplished. Filippino, although he was only in his teens, was already showing that facile drawing and suave colouring which was to make him

the most popular master of his generation. Sandro was the tutor of Filippino and the guiding light to Jacopo ; but, as to his own work, no one wanted it. The workshop did a little work for old Soccebonel the cabinet-maker, who required a finer finish and paid lower prices than any one in Italy ; it sold a few religious pictures to the smaller shopkeepers and poorer tradesmen ; it made just enough to pay Jacopo's wages and contribute a small sum towards the board of the two other painters in the Filepepi family.

All this does not mean that Sandro vanished from the artistic world. He remained a firm friend of Andrea Finiguerra and the other craftsmen of his old bottega ; he became an active member of the artistic guild, the Compagnia di San Luca ; and in spite of, or perhaps because of his quarrel with the enterprising Pollaiuoli, he acquired the friendship of the great Andrea Verrocchio and young Dominico Ghirlandajo, who was already making a name for himself. His drawings in clean, masterful line were eagerly sought for by his brother-artists, and his paintings of Judith and Holofernes, and several small portraits, were much admired. But, as the proverb hath it : "The painters' painter paints for painters," which, being interpreted, means that, although there may be much honour, there is very little profit in the business.

Nearly four years had passed—years during which Sandro's note-books were filled with payments of small sums to Jacopo, and with the receipts of small sums for work done and pictures painted—and during these four years he had only found three noteworthy events to record. First, on December 3rd, 1469, Piero de'

Medici had died, and Lorenzo had succeeded to the government of Florence. Secondly, in the following year his brother Giovanni had been blessed with a female child, and, yielding to Sandro's request, had named this child Alessandra after Sandro's small god-daughter. Thirdly, in 1471, after journeying to Rome to congratulate Sixtus the Fourth on his election to the papacy, Lorenzo de' Medici had visited Fra Filippo's grave at Spoleto with the object of removing his body to the Florentine Duomo for interment; but yielding to the prayers of the citizens of Spoleto, his Magnificence had consented to leave the painter's body in its resting-place and erect a monument over his grave. On his return to Florence he had sent for Sandro; and, partly on Sandro's suggestion, partly by his own kind thoughtfulness, had determined to commission Filippino to design his father's memorial as soon as he was sufficiently experienced to undertake such an important piece of work.

Sandro was now twenty-nine, and he felt that the time had come, if it ever was to come, for his appeal to the educated public. It was a letter from Lucrezia that brought his conclusions into a definite form, and determined him to seek out Lorenzo the Magnificent and ask for his patronage.

"SANDRO (she had written),

"When I bade you fight, and welcomed the idea of your winning fame by means of your own talents, I also warned you that the time might come when you would need assistance.

"The time has come, for not only are you reaching the full strength of your manhood with your talents

unnoticed, but you are also losing the chance of putting those same talents to the test by means of work that is worthy of them.

"So seek out Messer Lorenzo de' Medici, and, reminding him of his affection towards my Filippo and his promise towards yourself, tell him from me, Filippo's widow, that I thank him for his purpose of erecting a memorial to my husband's memory, but that Filippo looked for his most noble memorial in the pictures of his pupil Sandro."

The rest of the letter related to private matters, the doings of Alessandra and the plans of Lucrezia ; but, nevertheless, Sandro determined to lay the whole letter before Lorenzo.

"What can you do ?" asked Lorenzo de' Medici. He was seated in his private room at the Palace of the Priori, with maps of every known and unknown country hung round the walls—where details of Central Africa or the contours of America were unknown, the imagination of the draftsman had supplied the deficiency—and correspondence relating to every known country before him, and yet he had found the time to cross-examine this unknown artist on his private affairs and enter into the spirit of Lucrezia's letter. "What can you do ?" he repeated. "Remember," he added, smiling, "I have seen none of your work except your Fortitude, which is undoubtedly powerful, but scarcely agreeable. Can you, for instance, draw as well as Antonio, or paint as well as Piero ?"

"I can equal the Pollaiuoli," answered Sandro, "but my work is different."

"Deo gratias!" said Lorenzo below his breath, then aloud: "But wherein lies the difference?"

"The others paint very well, they paint very well indeed; but they paint as though they were painting either draped or undraped models very cleverly. They have no imagination!"

"Could you paint a naked figure as well as they?"

"If I might draw my figure in repose," he answered. "But I do not like these naked figures in motion, for they appear like moving men changed into stone! A moving man never holds his position long enough for one to see him clearly. A moving figure needs the swing of drapery to complete the sense of motion."

"Per Bacco, you are right!" muttered Lorenzo; and he sat turning Lucrezia's letter over and over. "Now," he said at last, "there is nothing that excites such interest as a public contest; and if an unknown knight takes his stand, and some knight of great repute challenges him, only to be overthrown, at once the victor becomes famous. Have you any ideas for a San Sebastiano?"

"He must be transfixed with arrows so that all may recognise him," began Sandro; then his imagination ran away with him, and his voice became like the voice of one who sees a vision: "The soldiers have pierced him through each vital organ; they have left him dead —quite dead! Yet still he looks forth firmly and bravely, for Sebastian lives for ever!"

"Madonna!" murmured Lorenzo—he had a poet's insight, and realised the full beauty of this conception. "Paint me this Sebastian!"

Hanfstangl photo] [Royal Museum, Berlin.

"SEBASTIAN LIVES FOR EVER."

"But the Pollaiuoli, your Magnificence?" said Sandro, awaking. "And the contest?"

"Leave that to me!" answered the Medici. "Paint this picture. Commence it immediately, and I will hang it in Santa Maria Maggiori when it is finished: they need a St. Sebastian!"

"You are very kind!" said Sandro.

"Then begin it at once! Draw the picture as you have described it; paint it in Santa Maria Maggiori, so that you may judge the light in which it will hang; and I will do my best for you. Now leave me, Sandro, for I am very busy. Ohé!" he called after him; "'Twould be wise to give the Saint a loin-cloth, and do not forget the anatomy!"

Left to himself, Lorenzo smiled, for only that morning he had met Antonio Pucci and heard from him that he was ordering a picture of St. Sebastian from the Pollaiuoli for his private chapel in the Church of San Sebastiano de' Servi. Granted that Sandro's account of his relations with his late master were correct—and Lorenzo saw no reason why it should not be correct—it was morally certain that the Pollaiuoli, when they found Sandro engaged on the same theme, would try to excel him, and a very pretty duello should result. As to whether Sandro really painted as well as he professed to paint, Lorenzo could form no opinion; but Antonio Pollaiuolo would hear of the picture from the Companions of St. Luke, he would go to see it in the church, and he would try to beat it: this would give Sandro his chance—might the best man win!

Sandro's bottega was all excitement. A long panel, measuring some six feet and a half by two feet six inches,

had been purchased and coated with *gesso*; and now the drawing was being made. Lisa and Caterina would come, with various excuses, a dozen times a day; Smeralda would toil laboriously up the stairs; Mariano would have to consult his son on business of which Sandro had not the least knowledge. Amidst this Sandro worked on, the only calm one amongst the lot; for now, as always, Sandro Filepepi had the invaluable power of detaching himself from his surroundings.

The theme had been his own inspiration, and had commended itself to that sound critic Lorenzo de' Medici, so Sandro determined to develop the theme in his own way. One majestic figure of the martyred Saint, wounded to death yet living, must fill the panel; there must be no model to take away his mind from the subject itself, so he must work from his imagination. And now he felt his debt to Fra Filippo; for hard, steady work from the living model had filled his mind and stored his memory with truth instead of fancies, and he knew that he had the power to paint his subject truthfully.

As he drew, something of Lorenzo crept into the face of St. Sebastian. This was not because Sandro was striving to win favour, or because Lorenzo was worthy of canonisation, but because Lorenzo de' Medici had acquired a brave, unselfish devotion to his country, combined with a fearless resistance of all who were foes of Florence, that was stamping his features with many of the attributes of the soldier-saint.

Winter had passed, spring had come, and the picture was nearly finished before Sandro heard of the Pollaiuoli's intentions. He knew that they

were painting a large picture of St. Stephen, that was all.

He had been working in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiori until the light was beginning to fail, when he became conscious that some one was standing behind him. He turned round and, looking upwards, met the eyes of Hilda. The woman was growing very fat and exceedingly coarse, and a certain animal charm that used to mark her expression was leaving her.

"You did not treat me very well," said she. "You failed me, and you have kept out of my path."

Sandro mumbled something awkwardly.

"But I like to see fair play," said she. "So I have come to tell you that Antonio means to make you look ridiculous."

"This is very kind of you," answered Sandro.

"Antonio says," continued she, "that your anatomy which you have learnt from him is not bad, but that your knowledge of the internal organs is absurd. He says that you have given the poor young man at least four mortal wounds, and that he seems to like them. Now I must go, for I am not pleased with you."

"But you have told me nothing," protested Sandro. "How is he going to make me look ridiculous?"

"He is going to paint such a picture that when men see it they will laugh at yours. He is going to paint the saint so that a soldier can look at him without laughing, and he is going to add some very clever archers in very clever perspective. He means men to say that the little you know has been learnt from him. But I must go, for I am not pleased with you."

"And you think my figure ridiculous?" he asked curiously.

She gazed at St. Sebastian for some moments before giving her answer. "If you," said she, "had been like that, I should have married you!"

Then Hilda went, whilst Sandro remained and shuddered.

Book III

NOON

COMMENCES IN THE YEAR 1482,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS THIRTY-EIGHT

ENDS IN THE YEAR 1490,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS FORTY-SIX

Book III

PERIOD: 1482 to 1490.

1483. Probable date of "Primavera"—Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, the patron, being twenty years old.

1485. Sandro paints the Bardi Madonna.

1486. Lorenzo Tornabuoni marries Giovanna.
Frescoes at the Villa Tornabuoni.

1488. Filippino Lippi starts for Rome.
Giovanna Tornabuoni dies.

1490. Sandro paints the Coronation of the Virgin for St. Marco.

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER NINE YEARS

> "Candida è ella, e candida la vesta,
> Ma pur di rose e fior dipinta e d'erba;
> Lo inanellato . . . . . ."

SANDRO'S voice stopped, for he could not remember how the verse went on. He had been walking on the terrace of the Medici villa at Fiesole, talking to Madonna Clarice, Lorenzo de' Medici's wife, until it had been time for her to retire in order to entertain her guests; and now he was leaning over the balustrade which overlooked Florence.

> "Purest white the maiden, and purest white her vesture,
> Painted with the roses red, flowerets and verdure;
> Waving tresses falling . . . ."

His voice stopped, for he could not remember how the verse went on. The poem itself contained a description of the finding of Simonetta by Giuliano de' Medici. Simonetta had been resting on the moss of a woodland glade; she was clad in a white gown embroidered with roses and rosebuds and grasses. Giuliano had appeared, and Simonetta, seeing the youth, had raised her head a little shyly; then with her white hands she had lifted the edge of her white skirt, and had risen to her feet with her lap full of flowers.

It was a pretty fancy, this poem of Poliziano's, but he wondered what had recalled the verses to his memory ; perhaps he remembered the verses because he had just been engaged in defending his friend's character before Madonna Clarice, who regarded Politian as little better than a pagan. Perhaps—and the heavy scent of the orange blossom rose from the trees below the parapet and hung round him in the warm evening air. Bah ! One may recollect with one's brain, but one recalls through one's nose !

It had been on a warm May evening, just nine years ago, that he had first met Madonna Simonetta. He had been invited to the Medici villa to receive the congratulations of Madonna Clarice and Madonna Lucrezia de' Medici on the completion of his San Sebastiano ; and there, on the same terrace, he had been presented to Madonna Simonetta, the young wife of Marco Vespucci. Madonna had detached him from the rest, and, after walking up and down the terrace with him, talking with him about his St. Sebastian, had leant over the balustrade. The sweet scent of the orange blossom had filled his nostrils as Madonna Simonetta had drawn him on to tell her of his life in Prato, of his experiences with the Pollaiuoli, and of his struggles to set up a workshop on his own account.

Gradually he had found that he was speaking to her of his ideals : a painter should see his subject mentally, just as a poet must see his subject mentally, and he should paint this mental image, only using his studies from the model sufficiently to secure truth in his light and shade and anatomy ; moreover, he had

contended that a painter should strive to paint the soul and spirit of his subject rather than the outward appearance ; for the outward appearance of each living thing is moulded by the soul which vivifies it.

"And this San Sebastiano of yours ?" she had asked.

"He had a brave soul, madonna," he had explained, "which had fashioned a brave body, and I would not paint this body in the passing agony of martyrdom ; besides, since I have never seen a saint martyred, nor even a good man tortured, I could have no true idea of his appearance under the circumstances."

"That is true," she had replied, smiling.

"And so," he had continued, "I have wiped out the pain which I could not imagine truthfully, and have painted the courage and steadfastness which I could imagine. Is that clear, madonna ?"

"It is clear," she had answered.

"I have tried," he had concluded—"I have tried to paint a very brave soul in a very brave body. After all, it was not the pain of the martyrdom that mattered, but the courage which led him to his martyrdom."

"It is a very beautiful thought," she had replied ; "I would hear more of it." But the others had come up, and their conversation had ended.

All this was recalled by the scent of the orange blossom.

A cloud passed over the moon, and, as the light ceased, so his recollections ceased, leaving him wondering. What was it that had made him recall every detail of this conversation ? For much water had flowed down the Arno since he had talked with Madonna

Simonetta, and his recollections of that period were not altogether satisfactory.

During that year and the next Florence had been free from wars and conspiracies, and the whole of the social life had been devoted to festivities over which Simonetta had reigned as queen. Plato had been the god, Ficino and Landino his priests ; and what Ficino and Landino evolved in the abstract, the nobles practised in the concrete with Madonna Simonetta as the objective. Her fragile beauty, her sweetness and goodness and sympathy had made madonna an ideal queen of Platonism, and—he smiled to himself—the only hint of scandal was madonna's too evident affection for her husband Marco Vespucci.

Per Dio ! What an empty life it had been ! When the love of beauty and the beauty of love are deemed the highest good, when it becomes an impropriety for a man to kiss his own wife, when passion is banished as though it were degrading—then manliness goes too ! For a man's life means fighting and work and art, and also love if he should have the disposition; whereas ethics and philandering are fatal to the more robust qualities.

During those two years, when he should have followed up the success of his St. Sebastian with some great masterpiece, he had been caught into the vortex of vanity which swept over Florence. He had been nominated to continue the great frescoes in the Campo Santo of Pisa ; but before he had even completed the paragon of the Assumption of Our Lady in the Duomo—which painting was to prove his artistic capabilities to the magistrates of Pisa—he had wearied

of his task, and had returned to Florence to paint tournament banners for Giuliano de' Medici. Lorenzo the ruler had spent his energies on converting the doctrines of Plato into poetry; Giuliano the knight had devoted his time to the task of planning a lavish tournament in honour of the Platonic queen of love; Poliziano the poet had embellished the episode with classical allusions and embodied it in his haunting verse; whilst he, Sandro the artist, had wasted his talents on painting banners for Giuliano to bear at the jousting. Truly the mountains had been in labour with a vengeance!

Madonna had died. They had borne her to her burial with her face uncovered, so that all the city might mourn her loveliness; then, after a time, they had settled again to their fighting, their work, and their love.

Well, those two years were passed and done with, and it is useless to worry about eaten olives. He had worked hard enough since then. The composition and execution of the Adoration of the Magi, which he had commenced for Messer Giovanni Laini in the year of Simonetta's death, had established his status beyond any dispute; the portraits of the Pazzi conspirators, which he had executed by order of the Priori, had proclaimed him as the first artist in Florence; and the magnificent frescoes which he had just completed in the chapel of Pope Sixtus had carried his fame throughout the whole of Christendom.

The moon, which had been hidden by the cloud, shone out, cutting the view below him into clearly defined patches of light and shadow. Some way-

farers returning up-hill from Florence struck up a hymn of the Laudesi, praising God in harmony. Again he asked himself why he had remembered this particular conversation with Madonna Simonetta.

Again his thoughts went back; but this time they carried him on, through the San Sebastiano, through the first Adoration of the Magi that he had painted, to his conversation with Madonna Lucrezia at Prato. They had been talking of ideals; Lucrezia had given him his copy of *Il Convito*, telling him that it is the soul which forms and models the body, and that he should try to paint the soul; he had acknowledged the truth of this and urged that, instead of painting from the model, the artist should first conceive the soul, and then fashion the body, to match. Some of his actual words came back to him: "Dante had beautiful ideas," he had said, "and wrote them in poetry on the surface of his parchment; so Sandro should have beautiful ideas, and paint them in pigments on the surface of his *gesso*! Thus Sandro's pictures should speak to the poet, just as *Il Convito* appeals to Sandro." How had he carried out these ideals?

Some one began to play a lute in the villa. A pest on the music! How had he carried out his ideals? There was that painting of Fortitude—a portrait of Hilda Lochener, nothing more! There was that Adoration of the Magi which he had painted in Santa Maria Novella for Messer Laini—a fine composition indeed, but the very success of that picture had lain in the fact that he had painted the Medici as the Wise Men, and other well-known Florentines as their attendants. There were the Vatican frescoes—

bold, decorative, workmanlike; but in none of these was the artist speaking to the mind of the onlooker as Dante speaks to the mind of his reader in the Divine Comedy. And now he had undertaken to paint a grand picture of Our Lady with St. Barnabas, for a church which was under the custody of the Guild of the Physicians, and his mind was barren. Hilda Lochener had told him of the swan which sings once before it dies; his ideals had reached the fullness of their expression in the painting of St. Sebastian, and his conversation with Madonna Simonetta had been his swan-song!

With a shrug of his shoulders Sandro took a quick turn along the terrace. How tired he was growing of his work—saints and angels and patriarchs in endless sequence, with only an occasional portrait to break their monotony—and now there was this new picture of St. Barnabas awaiting him! He was becoming like most of his contemporaries, a mere hack—a machine for turning out religious pictures! He supposed that this new St. Barnabas would only be his old ideas served up in new dresses and with a new grouping! How could his friend Politian, who was just beginning to recite inside the villa, make true poetry if he had to write everlastingly on set themes of saints and apostles and patriarchs? He plucked a sprig of jasmine, and, again leaning over the parapet, sighed moodily. Politian was declaiming a passage from the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius:

> "It ver et Venus, et Veneris praenuntius ante
> Pennatus graditur, zephyri vestigia propter
> Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai
> Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet."

Here a lady's voice interrupted, begging the poet to translate the Latin into a Tuscan *rispetto* ; and, without a moment's hesitation, Poliziano struck his lute and sang—the last syllables of each line furnishing the cadence to the melody :

> "Spring comes, and with her Venus onward straying—
> The wingéd harbinger of Love preceding—
> And close upon the steps of Flora's maying
> Her sons, the eddying Zephyrs, are succeeding
> In strewing all the pathway with their playing,
> The wanton waste of blooms and buds unheeding:
> Until, with rarest hues, the flowers are dressing
> The scented path which Flora's feet are pressing."

Madonna! How hard it seemed! Politian the poet could sing his fancies as they came to him, whilst Sandro the painter was compelled to express only the wild craving for saints that seemed to have obsessed the world. It was not that he was unwilling to paint the saints! The saints themselves knew his willingness! But—— His recollections of Simonetta had gradually changed into dissatisfaction with himself, and then into rebellion against the limitations of his calling, and he stood gazing gloomily over Florence.

"Of what is Sandro dreaming ?"

The voice came as a shock, for Sandro had imagined himself alone. "Of Poliziano's song, Magnificence," he answered.

"Per Bacco ! A light song seems to have inspired heavy thoughts !"

"It is a heavy thought, Magnificence, that whilst the poet has the freedom of an artist, the painter should be treated like a mechanic !"

"Have I ever treated you as a mechanic?" asked Lorenzo gently.

"The carpenter," he answered with bitterness, "is given wood with which to make a panel, he is given instructions as to the frame, and gold with which to gild it; the painter is given this same panel, he is given full instructions as to his subject, and a certain weight of ultramarine and gold-leaf with which to fashion the picture. Ebbene! Wherein lies the difference?"

"The painter has freedom as to the rendering!"

"Freedom!" scoffed Sandro. "A Madonna enthroned, holding the Bambino in a certain position, seated under a certain design of canopy, with certain saints round her. These saints must include St. Jerome and St. Monica, who are the patrons of the donor's family, with St. John, who is the patron of the city; St. Jerome must be a portrait of the donor, St. Monica the portrait of his wife, and St. John must be in the likeness of the Gonfalonier. Truly, if the world calls painting a mechanical art, it is the world itself that has turned the painter into a machine!"

Lorenzo slipped his arm into Sandro's, for he saw that there were both truth and justice in his complaint.

"Give Politian a set theme," he continued. "Tell him to sing of the Adoration of the Magi! Tell him that Our Lady must be seated before a ruined shed, holding the Bambino in such a manner, with the Wise Men kneeling in such a manner; and tell him that the Madonna must be described as he has described her in a previous poem, and that one of the Magi must have the character of Cosimo—God rest his soul!—and another must be exactly like your Magnificence. Tell

him that his poem must be of a certain dimension, and give him a certain measure of ink to be accounted for. Bah! The characters in his poem would be like marionettes!"

"But Madonna Clarice gave Politian a set theme," said Lorenzo, smiling. "She bade him convert some lines of Lucretius into the form of a Tuscan *rispetto*."

"Aye! She gave him a poet's theme! He was not bidden to describe the Adoration of the Wise Men, with Our Lady, St. Joseph, and the Magi, each in the customary attitude!"

"Could you paint such a theme as that of which Politian has been singing? Could you, my friend, convert the lines of Lucretius into the form of a picture?"

"God give me the chance!" he answered.

Then Lorenzo's clasp tightened, and he led Sandro inside, into the villa.

CHAPTER XIV

SPRING

THE Medici villa was filled with guests. Some were discoursing on philosophy, lightly, with an underflow of badinage; others were examining the latest additions to Lorenzo's collection of intaglios; others again were talking together softly of those things which the druggist does not sell.

"As they say," remarked Lorenzo de' Medici, approaching a group that was gathered round Poliziano and a young man with whom he appeared to be arguing, "birds fly in pairs and thoughts run in couples. I found our artist musing on Politian's song, and even longing to paint the subject."

There was a hush of expectation, and the youth who had been arguing with Politian turned to Sandro. "You think it possible to paint such a subject?" he asked eagerly; for, even at the age of twenty—an age at which most men are intent on sport, jousting, and pretty lips—Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, cousin to Lorenzo the Magnificent, was a keen lover of the fine arts and anxious to further the true development of the artistic movement in Florence.

"I think it possible," answered Sandro, looking, not

at Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, but at Poliziano and Landino, who were smiling at each other.

"And you would undertake such a subject?" cried Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco.

"I would give my right hand to paint this picture," answered Sandro firmly.

"Having sacrificed his right hand as an offering to Flora," murmured Politian, "he would then proceed to paint his picture!"

"It must be a large picture," explained Pierfrancesco, ignoring the interruption, "fit for my villa at Castello; it must be full of the progress of Spring, with Flora strewing flowers before the steps of Spring and Venus, and——" and he paused in hesitation, whilst Poliziano shrugged his shoulders incredulously.

"You are suggesting, Lorenzo," remarked the poet, "exactly what I have acknowledged as possible. Just as the Church may dictate a religious subject for the painter to execute, so the poet may invent a profane theme, and the painter illustrate the same. Sandro has already illustrated the Dante of Landino, he might also illustrate the poem of Lucretius. Am I not right, madonna?" he added, turning to Clarice de' Medici and addressing her in suave tones. Since Madonna Clarice had deprived Politian of the tutorship of her children, he had waged a ceaseless vendetta.

"In his picture of San Sebastiano, Sandro Filepepi did more than illustrate," answered madonna coldly.

"I grant that the Sebastiano was a fine picture," owned Poliziano, for he was not ungenerous, "and I acknowledge that it was more than an illustration; but this exception only proves the rule which determines

that the province of the mechanical arts, such as painting, is to portray, to illustrate, to describe, and not to create. Even yourself, madonna, suggested that the creation of the poet Lucretius would make a fitting subject for a picture!"

"If," she replied, "Art lies in creation, and creation lies in borrowing a little from Nature, borrowing a little from the baser passions, borrowing much from the ancients, adding those pagan gods in whom none believes, and converting the whole into rhyme, then the modern poet is the only artist."

"I translated that passage from the ancient, Lucretius, into modern rhyme by your request, madonna."

"Maladetto!" broke in the Medici. "I invited Sandro to settle a dispute, not to listen to a contention! Perhaps"—and he turned to a man who was standing a little apart from the rest, and who was evidently a personage of importance—"perhaps my Uncle Giovanni will describe our argument, and then Sandro can give his decision."

"After Poliziano had finished his song," said Giovanni Tornabuoni, speaking as though he were summing up in the hall of justice, "Madonna Clarice, who had asked for the *rispetto*, suggested that the theme would make a fitting subject for the painter; and Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, who is himself a poet, expressed a desire to possess a picture of the Coming of Spring, treated with the poetic imagery of the ancients. But Poliziano, Landino, and others, contending that painting was not numbered amongst the fine arts, declared that such a picture would be devoid of that intellectual quality which distinguishes all true

works of art; for, said they, although it might be possible for a clever painter to illustrate the poem of Lucretius, describing the scene even as he had pictured it, the conception would be that of Lucretius and not that of his illustrator; moreover, said they, it would be well-nigh impossible to express such imagery by means of a mechanical art, without stripping the subject of its poetry and converting it into a tableau fitted for the Carnival. Pierfrancesco, on the other hand, maintained that the ideal of Lucretius might be translated into a painting as easily as Politian might translate it into a *rispetto*; and more, that a gifted painter, who had been endowed with poetic feeling, might so treat the subject that it would become his own creation. Then, the argument waxing warm, Il Magnifico said that, as the proof of the grapes lay in the vintage, so the proof of the contention lay in the picture; that there was but one painter who possessed the *sprezzatura* needful for the task: and, going forth, he brought in Sandro Filepepi."

"Prove that I am right!" urged Pierfrancesco. "Tell them how you would treat this subject, Sandro!"

"Remember that you are not tied to Lucretius," added Il Magnifico. "You have a poet's full licence of expression."

"Will Poliziano repeat the passage from Lucretius?" asked Botticelli.

Picking up a lute, and passing his fingers over the strings, Politian recited:

> "It ver et Venus, et Veneris praenuntius ante
> Pennatus graditur, zephyri vestigia propter
> Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai
> Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet."

"Now let him translate the passage literally into the Tuscan tongue," asked Botticelli.

With a shrug of his shoulders, Poliziano put down his lute, and began:

> "Spring and Venus go their way, and——"

"Be literal, my friend," interrupted Il Magnifico, "you forget that the verb is in the singular!"

> "Spring passes and with her Venus,"

corrected Politian testily,

> "and the winged harbinger of Venus
> Steps on before: close upon the zephyr's footsteps
> Flora, their mother, strewing all the way before them,
> Covers it with rarest colours and odours."

"And therefore," said Botticelli, "let each one know that nothing which is harmonised by the bond of the Muse can be translated from its own language into another, without breaking all its sweetness and harmony—at least, that is what Dante has set forth, and what Politian has now proved. To translate the language of Lucretius into the lines and colours of a picture, literally and without invention, would break all sweetness and harmony."

There was a murmur of appreciation.

"You bid the painter illustrate some passage or depict some incident," he continued; "you say that his art is mechanical, and therefore you bid him illustrate the passage truthfully, forbidding him to use his intellect and judgment; and consequently his work becomes as mechanical and inharmonious as this literal translation of Poliziano."

"He has pierced your armour," said the Medici, nodding at Poliziano.

"But," concluded Sandro, "since his Magnificence has given me the same liberty that custom has given to Poliziano—for did not Politian double the numbers of the Zephyrs in his *rispetto*, making them, and not Flora, strew the pathway with flowers?—it has become possible for me to paint this theme harmoniously."

"Tell me how you would treat the subject," asked Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco.

"I would——" began Sandro. Then his ideas seemed to freeze, and he looked round him helplessly, whilst Politian chuckled.

"Between theory and practice," laughed the poet, "there lies a world of difference."

"Give him pen and paper!" said Il Magnifico. "Politian composes with his tongue; this one composes with his fingers." And some one fetched a pen and paper.

He drew quickly, with delicate, unbroken strokes of the pen, using the flow of the lines to describe the form and solidity of his figures without any shading. As he drew, he found words to express what was passing in his mind.

"Time," he explained, "according to what Aristotle says, is the number of movements, first, second, and onwards. For the earth is prepared in one way in the beginning of spring to receive into itself the animating power of herbs and flowers." And so he drew the figure of Spring, embraced in tender roughness by the Zephyr, shedding flowers as she went, and beside her walked Flora: here the memory of Politian's other

poem made him draw Flora in white vesture, painted with the roses red, flowerets and verdure, lifting the hem of her skirt so that her lap might be filled with flowers.

"Love and the promise of fruitfulness make the second movement of spring," explained Sandro, drawing a stately Venus in the dignity of coming motherhood; "and, since Ovid testifies that Love, the son of Venus, is addressed by his mother: 'Son, my arms, my power,' I will draw Love discharging those little flames of fire which rain down from his mother's beauty."

"He is quoting the words of Dante," whispered Landino to Politian: "throughout his explanation he quotes the words of Dante!"

"And the third movement of spring," murmured Sandro, "must be onward." He hesitated for a moment, pondering how he could combine a suggestion of this onward movement with the poetry of his subject; then there came to him the memory of those three sisters that Alberti had described, with their hands entwined, laughing, and clad in ungirt, diaphanous vesture; and he drew those three Graces who temper the enjoyments of life by their refinement and gentleness; and he drew them moving slowly onward, so that the dart of Cupid should be directed at her who was the most beautiful.

"What flowers will be dressing the pathway?" asked Landino, watching him closely.

"Each of the plants," he answered, "has most evident love for a particular place, according as its nature may require; and therefore certain plants almost always grow by the side of the streams, and certain others at

the foot of hills ; which, if they be transplanted, either die entirely or lead a sad life. Therefore I will plant violets and daisies, wood-strawberries, iris and wild orchids."

"This is Dante!" whispered Landino to Politian.

"Whether it be Dante or no," answered the poet—"and I cannot recall such a passage in the Divine Comedy—our Sandro's picture is filled with poetry."

"It is poetry itself!" exclaimed Il Magnifico.

For a moment they crowded round the drawing, hardly realising what had been done. Then it dawned upon this most genuinely artistic circle of the Renaissance that Sandro Botticelli had achieved a picture that marked a new epoch. If poetry meant the rhythmic flow of beautiful thoughts, then this was poetry ; if idealism meant not only the expression of an ideal, but also that power of suggestion which inspires the mind of the onlooker to carry on the ideal, then this picture was idealism of the purest type ; if Art meant the power to stimulate, as well as to satisfy the *appetito di bellezza*, then this was Art !

"He has captured the true spirit of the ancients !" said Marsilino Picino.

"He is more Greek than the Grecians!" said old Giovanni Tornabuoni.

"Compared with Sandro's rendering, the poem of Lucretius is but stale fish!" said Lorenzo the Magnificent.

"Is but stale fish!" repeated Luigi Pulci, who was always on the look-out for the chance of dashing off an impromptu ; and, picking up Politian's lute, he sang :

Anderson photo] [Academy, Florence.

"A PICTURE THAT MARKED A NEW EPOCH."

"The fish that was hatched by Lucretius the Roman
Was caught and beflowered by Poliziano
And served up with music and singing, that so men
Might gaze, and admire Lucretius Romano.
Then Il Botticello, he painted!—and no man
Would look at Lucretius or Poliziano.
For, whilst Botticelli mused, lectured and painted,
The fish of Lucretius turned stale and grew tainted!"

It was not a witty rhyme, and it was—like most of Pulci's impromptus—somewhat vulgar, but it served to relieve the tension. One group gathered round the drawing, praising, suggesting, criticising—for if the good God has not given to all the power to create, He has given to all the power of criticism, which is just as satisfactory; Pulci and Pico of Mirandula captured Poliziano, jesting at him unmercifully; Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, Giovanni Tornabuoni, and others besieged Sandro with requests for pictures in the new manner; but he would only pledge himself to this and one other painting for Lorenzo, and to the execution of some frescoes for the Tornabuoni. Lorenzo the Magnificent looked on and smiled.

Ever since he had reached manhood, Lorenzo had piped whilst all Italy had danced to his piping; but no success had given him such unmixed pleasure as this which crowned his efforts on behalf of Sandro Botticelli. For Sandro was his friend, Sandro had genius, and Sandro would never have won this triumph, nor would he even have developed the true bent of his talents, if it had not been for his help. And this help had not been in the nature of an alms or subsidy or commission, but it had been the true help which helps a man to help himself. Seeing that Sandro's new patrons had become

busy discussing some personal question, Lorenzo drew him on one side.

"Have you, at last, found a theme that satisfies you?" he asked.

"You have given me freedom!" answered Sandro Botticelli.

The moon was casting long shadows before Sandro managed to slip away from the villa, and he sang to himself as he strode down-hill towards Florence—for was not his winter past, and his springtime come! Left to himself, he knew that he would have gone on painting such subjects as the Adoration of the Magi—each picture more workmanlike, each picture more sophisticated, each picture less sincere than the first one which he had painted in the bottega at Prato—he would have gone on painting Magi and other set subjects until the end of his life.

But now he was free. Free from the whims and demands of his patrons—free from the eternal struggle to compete with Ghirlandajo and to excel the Pollaiuoli and Verrocchio—free to follow his own ideals.

Free to follow his own ideals? The recollection of spring passed. His song ceased. And he became lost in picturing his new Madonna of St. Barnabas.

CHAPTER XV

A SITTING

"LIKE this, Sandro mio?" Alessandra Lippi trod a slow measure across the studio floor, holding her hands above her head and leaning the aforesaid head on one side in a very fascinating manner.

Sandrina had arrived on a visit to her brother Filippino only the evening before, whilst Sandro was at the Villa Medici; and, as soon as Jacopo, Il Toso, Biagio and the other journeymen went to their dinner, Sandro had called his god-daughter into his studio for a trial sketch of a preliminary study of something that might develop into one of the three Graces for his picture of Springtime.

"Yes. Go on dancing, *carissima*!" he answered, holding his pencil in the air and watching her intently.

It was the first time he had seen her since he had returned from Rome, and during those two years the pretty child had grown into an unusually lovely woman, but otherwise he had found her unchanged: her trick of calling him "Sandro mio," which she had caught from Lucrezia, was still there, and with it the habit of treating him as a spoilt sister treats an indulgent (and adopted) elder brother.

Her feet moved slowly, her body swayed gracefully, yet Sandro stood with his pencil poised.

"Ebbene!" she cried at last. "Not one stroke have you drawn—and I have danced for hours!"

"Are you tired?" he asked.

"No," she answered, continuing her movement, "but I feel like Salome dancing before the dead, as she dances for ever in purgatory. You have not even the enthusiasm of King Herod!"

He laughed, and, rousing himself, drew quickly; then, since a pencil of lead and silver makes very faint lines, he reached for a pen and inked them over. "Come and see, O daughter of Herodias!" he said. "Behold! Here is your head on a charger!"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, looking over his shoulder. "Am I really as pretty as that?"

Again he laughed; for, if the head on the charger was more beautiful than anything he had ever drawn, the head which had asked the question was far prettier. "Virtue is better than fair looks," he answered sententiously.

"But," said she, standing back and examining the sketch like one who had been brought up in the atmosphere of the studio, "you have also given me the virtue of the Madonna!"

"Eh?" he muttered, and his thoughts travelled.

His Madonnas of the past had always been mature, with the maturity of Madonna Lucrezia; the real Madonna had been young. His Madonnas had always shown that type of purity which Lucrezia had won through much suffering; the real Madonna had been innocent. Here was this girl. "Sit on that throne,

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI,
By Filippino.

LUCREZIA,
By Fra Filippo.

FILIPPINO LIPPI,
By himself.

ALESSANDRA (?)
By Botticelli.

Sandrina," he said, nodding towards a seat against the further wall. "The mood for drawing even the most graceful of the Graces is not on me, and I would try another subject. Besides," he added, "my Grace must dance on the grass, and she must dance in the open air, and this is the month of May, and we have Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco's garden at our disposal, and to-morrow is to-morrow!"

"We will visit this garden of the Medici to-morrow?" she inquired, seating herself.

"Yes," he answered, studying her features.

Her face was strangely like Lucrezia's, and yet strangely unlike; for on each feature that was modelled like her mother's the strong personality of her father seemed to have set its stamp. Her chin was Lucrezia's, yet the dent and point of the chin had drawn something from Fra Filippo; the mouth was Lucrezia's, with a certain generous fullness of modelling inherited from the friar; the nose was most emphatically Lucrezia's, and so was the shape of the eyebrows, and so was the fullness above the eyelids, but the eyes themselves were long, like Fra Filippo's. Taken as a human face—and more, as the face of one who was thoroughly good—it seemed to Sandro as an ideal of beauty; but as the Madonna's face—well, St. Joachim, and not Fra Filippo, was the father of Our Lady, and St. Joachim was not Fra Filippo!

Suppose St. Joachim, and not Fra Filippo, had been the father of Alessandra—Lucrezia was good enough to be the mother of any saint, even of Our Lady! Suppose St. Joachim had been Alessandra's father. Instinctively his pencil began to trace lines on

the paper, and his tongue to rattle on in that irresponsible way which becomes a second nature to many painters when their minds are busy with the double task of awaking their models' interest and carrying on the work of creation.

"This Springtime is going to be an easy picture to paint," said he, drawing hard; "it is almost going to paint itself, for it keeps on clamouring! You know how work goes, Sandrina? Sometimes each figure—almost each stroke of the brush—calls for concentration, and each stroke is an effort. Sometimes one feels exactly what one is aiming at down to the tips of one's fingers, and one knows exactly what is coming next, and one almost has to hold oneself back in the painting. The only thing which puzzles me in this Springtime is the sort of wood that I shall have as a background to the figures."

"A beech wood, with fresh spring foliage?" suggested she.

"I fear that the green of the beech would be too light to serve; besides, the beech would tempt one to paint too naturally. My goddesses will be in human form, painted naturally; your beech wood must be a real wood, painted naturally; the whole would be a group of pretty women passing through a beech wood. Is not that so?"

"You might paint the wood formally?"

"Which would only make the wood wooden!"

"Or paint the goddesses——"

"With celestial trappings! Pretty girls playing May-games in a beech wood! No, the background must be something more—something more." He felt

that those eyes of Alessandra's were certainly inherited from Fra Filippo, and not from St. Joachim: they were very beautiful eyes, and very maidenly eyes, but Our Lady's eyes were *sine labe originale*. "Eh? What was I saying?"

"That beech foliage would be too naturalistic," replied she, without a smile; for the painter's daughter knew that a painter's chatter must be encouraged without interrupting his train of thought. Besides, experience had taught her that such conversation was sometimes very interesting.

"Exactly! We need a supernatural background, a celestial background, or even a super-celestial background—something that is dark without being gloomy, formal without being wooden! Now suppose, for instance, we take an orange grove for the background—Pierfrancesco has a delightful grove at Castello—and I relieve the high lights on my orange-leaves with gold-leaf? I'll wager the Hesperides underlaid their leaves with gold, instead of with stuff that gives ugly white high lights."

"Exactly," murmured Alessandra.

"Again, orange trees—especially in the garden of the Hesperides—bear fruit all the year round, and I could fill in the left-hand corner of my design with a god gathering oranges," remarked Botticelli, inking in his lines, and stepping back to examine the effect. "This would carry out the true ideal of spring; for a spring that began and ended with blossoms would be mere wantonness. Flowers are the promise of fruitfulness, fruitfulness brings fruit: that is logic! My god plucks the fruit, and at the same time fills up

the awkward space in my picture: which is common sense!"

"Most excellent!" murmured Alessandra.

"Thus my idea is logical, theological, and mythological," he concluded, comparing the eyes of his Madonna with those of his model.

"It is also natural, supernatural, and preternatural," she added wickedly.

No! The eyes of his Madonna were not so beautiful as the half-closed eyes of Alessandra—half-closed to shroud their laughter and wickedness—but still they were beautiful, and they were free from the suspicion of Fra Filippo's originality. "And," he mused, "what painter could imagine, much less paint, the true beauty of the eyes of the Madonna?" Next to consider the mouth——

The studio door opened with a crash, and Biagio and Il Toso entered.

"Go away!" said Botticelli.

"But, master," said they, looking at their easels, "our pictures are here!"

"Go away!" he repeated testily. Next to consider the mouth——

That mouth of Alessandra's, still saucy with the recollection of her impudence, with its corners puckered at the discomfiture of the journeymen, was altogether too full of original wickedness. He must try to eliminate the sauciness and smooth out the dimples before he considered the mouth.

"Do you find me changed?" he asked, leading up to his subject.

"You have grown more dignified," she answered,

Anderson photo] [Academy, Florence.

DETAIL FROM MADONNA DI SAN BARNABÀ.

glancing at the ample curves of his figure; "you have grown so famous that you frighten me; and"—she looked round the studio—"and, I am afraid, Sandro mio, you have grown most shamefully luxurious!"

"Fat and luxurious! Never mind the luxury, Sandrina! A touch of poverty, and my precious statues will be handed over to the care of my patrons —Palle! the three golden circles of the Medici are both the antidote for luxury and the pledge of holy poverty. But this fatness? You too have grown plump, Sandrina!"

"Assassin! Traducer! Calumniator! I am as slim as a goddess!"

"You were thin, my child, very thin; you are still, perhaps, slim; but your figure shows ample promise of a most generous development!"

"Not really, Sandro mio?" There was such genuine anxiety in her voice that Sandro left this side issue and passed on to his subject.

"I was but joking!" he acknowledged. "However, this is the truth: before I left for Rome, you were so thin that this girl"—he took a sketch from his portfolio and handed it to her—"was fat compared with you."

"Who was she?" said Alessandra, asking the expected question.

In reply, he handed her another drawing: it depicted a girl, young as Sandrina, sitting beside the closed doorway of a Roman palace in an abandonment of grief.

"Who was she?" repeated Alessandra.

"It is a long story," said Botticelli, picking up his

pencil and returning to his study of the Madonna, "and I must work whilst I talk. It happened during my first summer in Rome. I had been supping with Ghirlandajo and Il Perugino, and we had sat talking until morning crept into the sky. As I sought my lodging, the beauty of the morning and the freshness of the air tempted me onwards until I found myself amongst narrow streets full of malodorous garbage; then, suddenly, I found myself standing in a small piazza with the palace of some great noble facing me. What I saw there—that have I drawn!"

"Eh?" murmured Sandrina, looking up from the picture with her lips parted.

The story he told was the old one: a girl, the daughter of some small official in the prince's retinue, had been betrayed, disowned by her parents, and then forsaken by her lover—the only element of newness lay in the fact that he, Sandro, had found her, abandoned by all, crouching on the palace steps so that she might make one despairing appeal for mercy when the palace gates should be opened, and that he, Sandro, had befriended her. But he told his story well, and presently he had been able to draw lips that were parted in breathless interest and a mouth that had drooped a little with sympathy; also, he had been enabled to add something to the eyes.

"And how did you help her?" asked Sandrina.

"What could I do except employ her as a model? Even though I am, as you say, fat and old, the proprieties——"

"I never said you were old!" she cried. "Your heart is younger than Filippino's! And it is just

because your heart is so young and strong and big, that your body is big too ! "

"It was not kindness that made me help her," he answered, biting his lip and looking hard at his drawing. "To help a woman who is in trouble is the surest way to help one's self to trouble, and to employ this girl as model was unwise."

"Then why did you help her, Sandro ?"

"I fancied—mind, it was only fancy, and the fancy was a very small one—I fancied that she was a little like my god-daughter." Wise Sandro ! By the word "god-daughter" he had put himself (to himself) in his proper place, whereas if he had said, "I fancied that she was a little like you"——

Laying down the drawing that she had been examining, Alessandra picked up the first sketch and inspected it curiously. "Yes," she said. "This girl is a little like me."

"It was only her exceeding thinness that made the resemblance, *carissima*," he answered. Then there was silence.

"Tell me more about this model," asked Alessandra presently.

"I painted her as a daughter of Jethro in the fresco of the life of Moses ; that is the sketch which I first showed you. The other drawing was also worked into a picture."

"I mean about the girl herself."

"She married one of my plasterers ; her father paid a small dowry to get rid of her ; she is growing fat : that is all. She was a most uninteresting girl and rather foolish."

"Oh!" said Sandrina.

Whether Sandro's romance was true, as its lame ending seems to testify, or whether it was invented to sadden Alessandra's mouth, and the story collapsed as soon as the end was achieved, must remain a mystery. Anyhow, he now put down his pencil and, going to the door, called: "Ohé! Filippino! Filippino!"

"Will he have returned?" asked Alessandra, for her brother, although he was only twenty-six, was engaged on the honourable task of completing Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine.

"He will have told the plasterers to lay in only a small patch of plaster," said Sandro, "for he had the caution of a saint; he will have covered that patch two hours ago, for he has the diligence of the devil. Listen!" They heard steps on the stairs, and a slim, loose-limbed young man joined them. He had an honest, intelligent face, and bore that resemblance to Alessandra which a somewhat plain young man may bear to his very pretty sister.

"What think you of my new Madonna?" asked Sandro, stepping aside from his drawing.

"Eh?" answered Filippino cautiously. "She is very new! She is also a masterpiece—of that there can be no doubt. But whether I like her or no; whether she will even pass for a Madonna—the mouth, for instance? Her extreme youth? Her——"

"Oh, go away and leave me!" laughed Sandro, half amused and half impatient. "Take your sister to eat sweetmeats at the shop by Santa Maria Novella, and then on to the May dances in the piazza. No! Take

her to the orange groves on Monte Oliveto, and ask her to tell you about my Springtime."

"Will not you come too?" begged Sandrina.

"Alas, sweetheart!" he answered, "I am somewhat tired; besides, I would start my chalk drawing of our Madonna. The saints go with you, and do not forget the sweetmeats at the shop by Santa Maria Novella; they are most excellent!"

Left to himself, Botticelli covered up the Madonna, and took out the sketch of Alessandra's head which he had first fashioned. The words of Dominica, the hill girl, came back to him: "Some day," she had said, "you will fall in love with that baby!"

"The saints forbid," he had answered. "She is my god-daughter."

Then Dominica had uttered something that seemed almost a prophecy. "I tell you that you will either fall in love with one like this Lucrezia of Fra Filippo's, or else you will fall in love with some big coarse animal of a woman!"

Well, part of the prophecy had come true, and he had been stirred by his passion for the huge German girl; he must see that the second part failed. Thank God she was his god-daughter!

Then he tore these thoughts from his brain, and worked most resolutely at his red-chalk drawing of the Madonna.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE NEW MANNER

SANDRO was busy. First two huge panels of perfectly seasoned wood had to be prepared for his pictures of Spring and St. Barnabas ; then the pictures themselves would have to be planned so that there should be perfect harmony in colouring as well as perfect harmony of design.

"It is a great undertaking," he had said anxiously, when the panels were first delivered in his studio.

"After your greater undertaking of the Roman frescoes ?" Filippino had inquired.

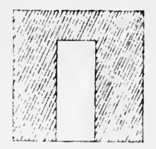
"Without my experience in Rome I would not have dared to undertake the task," he had replied. "Nevertheless, the plaster of the fresco sucks in the pigments as kindly as the earth sucks in the rain, whereas the hard surface of the *gesso* needs to be humoured like a woman."

"They say that the new medium of oil lends itself to the blending and humouring of colours on a large surface ?"

"Am I a child to play with the mud ? Thank heaven I can yet handle my tempera cleanly and neatly like a craftsman ! Nevertheless, as I say, the covering of this huge surface frightens me."

"They look large," Filippo had owned as he felt the surface with his thumb; "but the wood is beautiful."

"Large?" Sandro had scoffed, taking a long white panel, and placing it against the panel that had been prepared for St. Barnabas. "This narrow panel is the same size as that on which I painted San Stephano—and San Stephano is the largest panel picture I have so far ventured. See! one of these new panels will be as big as all the panels I have painted up to now taken together. Ebbene! It frightens me!"



"Patience!" Filippino had answered, turning away his face to hide a smile. "There is still time to withdraw, for you have not yet signed these contracts."

"Madonna mia!" Sandro had answered. "Having put my hand to the plough, shall I turn aside to eat cherries? There, graceless one, you may well laugh at me; but, O Filippino, this is a great undertaking!"

Well, a month had passed since then. The panels had been covered with a *gesso* that gave them the texture of fairy egg-shells; the composition and pose of the various figures that were to embody the spirit of Springtime had been planned, and part of the Madonna di San Barnabà had even been painted. His new freedom had inspired Sandro with a new life, and he was beginning to breathe this life into his figures.

The two pictures grew side by side, for now Sandro would paint a bit of his sacred picture just as a man might say his rosary, and now he would turn to Springtime just as a man might take up his Horace when he had laid his rosary aside—and the same spirit

seemed to inspire both. Pouf! Why should not a good classic be a good Christian? And why should not a good Christian be a fine poet?

In Springtime, Sandro had determined to use a background of conventional orange trees so as to give a sense of poetry to the naturalism of his figures; in San Barnabà, he resolved to paint conventional saints with a similar object.

St. Barnabas, who had promised victory to the Guelfs of Florence over the Ghibellines of Arezzo, and in whose honour the church had been built, was to be painted with a sprig of laurel; but there should be nothing mystical or mysterious or soul-inspiring about this saint; he should be the typical saint of pictorial art, symbolical rather than suggestive; also St. Catherine, St. John Baptist and the rest should be the ordinary figures of the ordinary painter. Then, in the midst, Our Lady and the Divine Child must glow and live!

And this Madonna? Well, who can paint a poplar unless he shall have seen a tree? And who can paint a Madonna unless he shall have seen a woman? That is logic! Of course one can take some gracious woman and paint her as the Madonna, just as Sandro had painted Lucrezia, but such a Madonna can only be like Our Gracious Lady in the same proportion that the model was like Our Lady. Again, one can take parts and features of many models and blend them into one whole, but how can one make a soul that will actuate this patchwork? And lastly, one can—so to speak—take a woman as the mother of one's Madonna; and, picturing the soul of one's Madonna,

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MADONNA DI SAN BARNABÀ.

one can fashion the outward form of the Madonna from the form of her mother. This last plan was Sandro's new method ; Lucrezia, with her natural sweetness of disposition and simple straightforwardness of character, was the best woman he had ever met, and Lucrezia was his St. Anne. Alessandra, as the half-sister of Our Lady, supplied the contour of the face, the freshness of complexion, and the general feeling of youthfulness.

Taking the picture as it already stood, the Madonna di San Barnabà had not reached—and never would reach—the highest conception of Our Lady ; but, on the other hand, it promised a spirituality that was beyond any work of Fra Filippo, whilst it was showing a reality that was lacking in the Madonnas of Fra Angelico. The colour scheme of gold and purple, tempered by the green draperies of St. Catherine, the azure of the Madonna's mantle, and the armour of St. Michael, would be magnificent.

* * * * *

"Sweet breath of Spring that curbs Apollo's ardour,
Bearing the hum of honey-bringing bees,
Stirring the blossoms round Pomona's arbour,
Rippling the meadow-grass with scented breeze,
Kissing those lovers who have sought a harbour
Amidst secluded shade of woodland trees.
  The lute's in tune, the sap of life runs gay
  As lover sips the maiden's lips in May.

Sweet breath of Spring, now flaked with orange-petals,
Raped by the Zephyr from the branch o'erhead,
Draped in the falling—as the shower settles
On Mother Earth the bridal sheet is spread;
Peeping above, the buttercup be-metals,
With shimmering gold, Pomona's marriage bed.
  The blossoms come, the petals blow away,
  But fruit will last when Spring is past—and May.

Love-time is Life? Then life is lived in Maytime,
Crowned with the roses, bedded on the grass.
Life-time is Love? Then May is but the playtime,
Dawn of the morning on the lad and lass;
Pledges redeemed, and wifehood is the daytime,
Bearing its fruit as months and seasons pass.
The lute is stilled, yet still sweet love holds sway,
For love will last when youth is past—and May!"

As the song ceased, and his three models flung themselves on the grass beneath the plane trees, Sandro stretched himself: he had completed his first satisfactory study of the figures of the Graces. "There," he said complacently, "that is not altogether bad!"

"It is as I told you," replied Poliziano, making the lute sing the refrain of his melody softly to itself: "although the poem must be pruned and erased and clipped to a nail's breadth—*praesectum decies non castigavit ad unguem*—in the privacy of one's chamber, the studies of life must be made amidst life, and the studies of nature amidst nature. You would never have achieved that drawing in your studio, Sandro!"

"But," objected Alessandra, picking a frond of grass with which to tickle the neck of Sandrina Filepepi, Botticelli's plump little niece, who was lying beside her, "we have already visited these gardens twice, dancing for Sandro until our feet dropped off."

"That may be so," answered Agnolo Poliziano, looking at Alessandra with unveiled admiration; "but even the Graces must find this glade of Venus incomplete without others of the divine company. For how can the Graces dance unless Apollo tunes his lute to set the measure?"

"Certainly it is but dull work to dance without

music," she owned, tucking away her bare toes out of sight. " 'Twas your song that made the dance, Messer Poliziano!"

"And 'twas your dancing that inspired the song," said he simply, in a way that carried belief. It was extraordinary how fascinating this wry-necked poet, with his indefinite nose and squinting eyes, could make himself on occasion; and this occasion, when he and Luigi Pulci had ridden out to the orange groves of Castello to find the prettiest girl he had seen for many a day, dancing bare-foot on the grass, was certainly an occasion paramount.

"Where did you get your theme, Politian?" asked Sandro, seating himself on a tree-bole beside Pulci so that his back might rest comfortably against the tree-trunk. "The sentiment in your stanzas is unlike that of the usual dance song."

Again the poet's fingers passed over the strings of his lute; again his eyes sought Alessandra's:

> " 'Felices ter et amplius,
>   Quos inrupta tenet copula nec malis
> Divulsus querimoniis
>   Suprema citius solvet amor die.'

Horace is right! Why should love cease with Maytime?"

"Because men care only for May-blossoms," answered Sibella di Piero delle Pelle, Sandro's third model. "Old Silenus and the rest may romp with the girls, but who will look at a woman of thirty?"

"You miss the point, Sibella," remarked Alessandra, "for Horace is speaking only of marriage—a happy marriage where folks do not quarrel."

"Bah!" laughed the girl, "I may not understand the ancients, but I understand marriage better than you do: I understand marriage very well indeed! See here! A woman is a bride for four weeks and a wife for a lifetime, a mistress for a month and a slave until death releases her: the husband drinks at the tavern whilst the wife scrubs the floor and prepares the dinner. I should like to see myself marrying! Thank God I am not such a fool!"

"Listen to her!" broke in little Sandrina indignantly, raising herself on her elbow and picking up the cudgels in Alessandra's behalf. "The vixen could not reach the grapes: 'Behold,' said she, 'those grapes are sour!'"

"Grassuccio! What does a baby know of a woman's marriage?"

"I know this," answered the child calmly: "my mother says that although Sibella may be a good girl, her conversation is not very wise nor very modest; for a maiden to talk of marriage is but foolishness."

"O Botticellina! Botticellina!" cried Alessandra, throwing her arm round the child's neck and pulling her backwards on to her lap. "You saucy little barrel! Yet, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings!" The garden rang with their laughter, but Sibella sulked.

"To return to our theme," said Luigi Pulci, so soon as the laughter had died away: "Horace has a fine conception of love:

> 'A, te meae si partem animae rapit
> Maturior vis, quid moror altera,
> Nec carus aeque nec superstes
> Integer?'

You think that true love between man and maid should be thus binding, Madonna Alessandra?" And he looked at her with an admiration which, if more respectful, was no less ardent than that of Politian.

"*Ille dies utramque ducet ruinam*," said she, capping his quotation. "No! Indeed no! Self-destruction would be a very great sin!"

"I alluded to the lasting nature of the love itself, not to its threatened climax."

"Then I agree! True love will never fade."

"Take my case," said Sandro, schooling himself to speak lightly and keep the conversation general. "You know of my affection towards you, *carissima*? When your youth is past, and you are growing old, do you think I shall still love you?"

"Why, of course," she answered, "what you love in me will never grow old. Petrarch loved Laura with constant ardour—young, mature, living, dead. No! True affection will never wither!"

"Therefore," he said, with a sudden inspiration, "the Venus of my picture must be neither young nor old nor middle-aged, for true love is without age."

"What do wrinkles matter?" said she, with all the lofty disdain of youth. "He who adores the image and not the divinity is an idolater, and he who worships the body and not the soul is no true lover."

"You are both right and wrong, madonna mia," replied Politian softly. "It is indeed your beautiful mind, with its thoughts and impulses, its goodness and purity, its wit and gladness, that compels my homage; but it was the radiance of that mind, shining through your perfect features, which first stirred my senses.

Am I an idolater if I worship this outward form of an inward grace as well as the soul which animates it?" And, knowing how to leave well alone, Poliziano struck some chords and passed on from song to song until he had returned to the level of dance music.

"Come, my children," cried Sandro, preparing to make a fresh study of lines flowing in motion. "Return to your dancing!"

Daylight had faded, and the moonlight was mingling with the last of the afterglow. Sandro and Politian and the rest had been joined by Lorenzo de' Medici and his two cousins di Pierfrancesco, and the tables had been spread on the orange-scented lawn, and the moonbeams were glistening on the silver and crystal and sparkling in the girls' eyes as the men lingered over their wine. The air moved softly, for nature was breathing after the heat of the day.

Presently, at a nod from Lorenzo, Politian struck his lute, and sang:

> "Fair is sweet Spring, and destitute of sorrow;
> Yet, remember! Love-time flies away.
> Naught ye know of what may chance to-morrow.
> Youth and maiden, live and love to-day!"

"Look!" whispered Alessandra, clutching Sandro's arm nervously. A face, grotesque, horned, hideous, was peering out from the trees of the orange grove.

"Look!" she whispered, for suddenly a bevy of nymphs, their white limbs gleaming through their gauze-like drapery, had glided silently from the thicket, and were fleeing in mock fear and tempting confusion from a company of satyrs. The thin, reedy notes of

pipes sounded from the grove, and the voices of unseen singers trilled an elfish melody :

> "These glad Satyrs, warm and wanton-eyed,
> Seek the witching Nymphs, their paramours,
> Chase them hotly through the forest glades,
> Weaving nets to catch their loves in bowers,
> Spreading snares to trap them in the groves,
> Capturing them at length amidst the flowers.
> Care they not for what may hap to-morrow,
> Nymph and Satyr live and love to-day."

The scent of the flowers, the radiance of the moonlight, the magic of the woodland—the very nymphs and satyrs—were true. Morals were as a forgotten dream, for this was nature !

The measure changed ; the music softened and grew more full ; the old gods, the gods of Lucretius and Sandro and Politian, walked the glade :

> "Ave, Flora ! Goddess of the Springtime ;
> Primavera ! stirred by amorous breeze ;
> Graces ! swaying with your sensuous measure ;
> Mercury ! who robs love's orange-trees.
> Over all rules Venus, gently, firmly,
> Teaching us her Springtime Laws are these :
> 'Care ye not for what may hap to-morrow,
> Lass and lover, love and live to-day !' "

Time had ceased. This was the reality. They were living in the age when the world was young. Alessandra was swept by new emotions, which seemed as though they were no emotions, for she was caught in the wheel of nature. "These are your gods ?" she whispered to Politian, not knowing what she said. She felt Poliziano's hand touch hers softly, and touched it back again.

Again the music changed, reaching its full joyfulness

as a crowd of youths and lasses came, crowning each other with flowers, and singing :

> "Spring has come, and passing slowly onward,
> Fades before the dawn of Summer day ;
> Fades before her flowers have lost their dew-drops,
> Fades before her flush has died away.
> Thus your youth will lose its Springtime ardour :
> Seize its joys and blossoms whilst ye may !
> Caring not for what may hap to-morrow,
> Youth and maiden, love and live to-day."

The procession was lost in the grove : its music died away in the distance, whilst Politian's lute awoke to carry on the melody, and his voice sang :

> "Fair is sweet Spring, and destitute of sorrow ;
> Yet, remember ! Love-time flies away !
> Naught ye know of what may chance to-morrow,
> Youth and maiden, live and love to-day ! "

"Oh ! " cried Sibella in excitement. "Your noonday talk was but moonshine, hatched in a convent ! This is life ! "

Then Alessandra came to earth with a crash. "I am weary," she said. "Will you take me home, Sandro mio ? "

Once—it was at the beginning of their ride back—Sandro spoke with her. "Little one," he asked, "how did you learn to quote from the classics, and to hold your own with such as Politian and Pulci ? "

"My mother taught me," she answered ; "I am not uninstructed. But, oh, Sandro mio ! I am weary ! " She remembered nothing more until she awoke before the gates of Florence, to find Sandro's arm round her holding her in the saddle.

Alessandra was in her room, disrobing. A note fluttered from her girdle and fell to the floor. For a moment she felt too tired even to pick it up ; then, curiosity awakening, she stooped down and opened it, and read :

"At last I have found that which I desired, that which I have always sought, the love long sighed for, the love beheld in my dreams !

"A maiden of perfect beauty, of grace which is natural and not acquired ; a maiden skilled in Latin, polished in conversation, accomplished in the dance, in which qualities, veiled by her modesty, she is the rival of the Graces.

"I have found her ! But what doth it profit me, if I, who parch for her, cannot speak with her alone ?

"AGNOLO."

She flung the letter on her table impatiently, and, slipping off the rest of her garments, crept into bed.

CHAPTER XVII

LOVE

FROM the moment that the ancient statue, dug up in the field or unearthed amongst the ruins, was first admired, the revival of classical art became a possibility; from the moment that the ancient poems, resting unheeded in some Roman palace or lying mouldy in some monastery cellar, were first read and appreciated, the Renaissance became inevitable. For the human love of the expression of beauty—whether the beauty be wrought by the human hand, or fashioned by the human brain—is a part of human nature that will last until the end of the world; and when Christianity slew paganism, and buried pagan art in the same grave, this art was only stunned, not killed; and when, after the sleep of ten centuries, art was exhumed, pagan art brought something of the spirit of paganism from her resting-place. This was the spirit of the Renaissance—the revival of the spirit of paganism.

Now when the revival of classical art was unreasonable, as in the case of Messer Leon Battista Alberti, who adorned the Christian church at Rimini with reliefs of Venus, or in the case of those Roman philosophers who strode about in sandal and toga, men only laughed, and morals were untouched; but where

the revival was reasonable, as in the hands of Lorenzo de' Medici, Christian morals received an injury.

For what is paganism except the worship of nature? And what are the pagan gods except the embodiment of man's joys and fears as they are felt through his intellect, senses, and passions? Keep Venus amidst her Grecian groves, drape her with Grecian thoughts, trap her with classical allusions, and, although she may perchance appear somewhat artificial, one may sing her praises from morn till night without doing an atom of harm to any one. But revive Venus in the form of a Florentine maiden, place her in some familiar chamber or in the woods of Careggi, sing of her in the language of warm flesh and blood, and one is singing a song that is at once the hymn and gospel of paganism. If Lorenzo de' Medici sometimes sang of Venus as though she were a goddess of the ancients, he seldom failed to press the gospel of Venus right home.

It must not be imagined for one moment that Lorenzo regarded his paganism as more than a classical refinement; it must not be imagined that the licence of his love songs was other than a poetic licence, to be laid aside when he laid aside his lyre; it must not be imagined that his pageants were intended to do aught except amuse his friends or occupy the minds of those who might otherwise be plotting; but the fact remains that his carnivals, triumphs, and dance-songs must have excited the senses and swayed the passions of those who shared in them.

The dawn broke; the sun gained power; and, as the strange woodland creatures that had been playing

around her went back to dreamland, Alessandra stretched herself: slowly and lazily she opened her eyes. Yes! The tester-curtains were the same; the room, with the small round Madonna by Filippino hanging opposite her couch, was unaltered; her white gown was still hanging over the foot of the bed; and yet, something was changed. A little shiver ran through her, for she realised that the change was in herself.

It was an impalpable change that had come to her, the indefinite change that comes over water as it grows stale or to wine as it grows flat; she was not the same girl who had woke up yesterday and the day before. Then, as her full waking senses returned, Alessandra remembered the doings of Castello. There had been a luxurious supper in the twilight, with the clever talk of the most cultured men in Florence to amuse her, and the incense of deference and admiration to intoxicate her. The moon had risen; Messer Poliziano had sung a verse in his honey-sweet voice; nymphs and satyrs had trooped out into the moonlight, and she had been carried away, without any volition on her part, into a sensuous world of love and passion. The finding of the note in her girdle flashed into her memory, and, flushed and miserable, she scrambled out of bed to see exactly what this man had dared to write.

"At last I have found that which I desired, that which I have always sought, the love long sighed for, the love beheld in my dreams!

"A maiden of perfect beauty, of grace which is natural and not acquired; a maiden skilled in Latin, polished in conversation, accomplished in the dance, in

which qualities, veiled by her modesty, she is the rival of the Graces.

"I have found her! But what doth it profit me, if I, who parch for her, cannot speak with her alone?"

At first she felt sick with disgust; then, as she read and re-read the note, Politian's declaration began to fall into perspective. He had made no actual statement of love, he had taken nothing for granted, his letter was only allusive.

He had sought and sighed for a dream-maiden of infinite perfection; he had found her, but what did this profit him unless he could speak with her alone? Of course he meant her to understand that she was the maiden in question and had taken care that his meaning should be very plain; but he had only, so to speak, metaphorically touched her hand, and waited for her to return the touch before he actually committed himself. Thank God! she was now in her sober senses, free from the glamour of moonlight and love-songs.

She might ignore this letter of Politian's, but that would only leave him free to suppose that it had slipped from her belt during her ride home, and leave herself open to a fresh approach. No! She must answer this epistle in a way that would be a metaphorical withdrawal from the contact of his touch. Of course, since no Italian parent was foolish enough to confound innocence with ignorance—Lucrezia least of all—Alessandra could read between the lines of Politian's declaration; but she saw that by taking the statement of her accomplishments literally, and assuming that he merely wished to hold converse with this accomplished maiden, she might pen a very pretty

answer. As she dressed herself, fetched something with which to break her fast, and sat down to write to Poliziano, the world looked brighter.

"There is nothing better," she wrote, "than the praise of a man of worth, and with what glory do thy praises cover the lady of thy quest! But as for thy dreams, have a care that thou interpret them truly!

"A Hercules of learning, thou art called upon to show thy strength in labours upon"—she paused to recall some of the subjects in which Politian was reputed to excel—"astronomy, physics, arithmetic, poetry, law, and medicine. Thy lady's accomplishments are things as light as the flowers and the dew, and yet thou desireth to hold converse with her!

"Shall she stand by thy side because she hath a little learning, or, as saith the proverb, shall the gnat stand beside the elephant because both have a proboscis?"

Alessandra laughed as she wrote the concluding proverb; then, as she read through the letter, she smiled joyfully at the impulse which had made her insert the poet's supreme accomplishment in the midst of his arithmetic, law and medicine. The touching of Poliziano's hand fell into its proper place amongst the venial sins of unpremeditated and impulsive foolishness, and she resolved to tell Sandro of her indiscretion and show him the letter. This would at once safeguard her against any unpleasant consequences that might arise from the correspondence and relieve her feelings, and she was sure of Sandro's affectionate sympathy. Again she dipped her pen in the ink, and subscribed herself: "A Maiden of Springtime."

When Alessandra had sought her couch, Sandro had sought his; but whereas the girl had retired to sleep,

the sleep of utter exhaustion, the man had retired with the memory of the ride home filling his mind, and the girl's touch still warm on the arm which had supported her. But why attempt to describe Sandro's night, when there is his own account in *Anonimo Gaddiano*?

It must have been some ten days afterwards that Sandro met one, Tommaso Soderini, and "being pressed by Messer Tommaso to take a wife, he replied to him: 'I would have you know that, not many nights since, it happened to me that I dreamed I had taken a wife, and I was so greatly troubled at the thought of it that I awoke; and in order that I might not fall asleep a second time and dream it over again, I arose and wandered about all night through Florence, like one distracted'; by which Messer Tommaso knew that that was no soil wherein to plant a vineyard." Which erroneous conclusion was exactly the one that Sandro meant Messer Tommaso to arrive at.

But to return to Alessandra. After waiting until she judged that the journeymen and apprentices had departed to eat their dinner, Sandrina concealed Politian's letter and her reply in her girdle, and, with a glance in the mirror, and a touch to her locks, she went along the passage and up the stairs that led to Sandro's studio. Here, at the door of the studio, she paused, for she heard a voice that was not Sandro's.

"It is, as I say," she heard, "a wonderful drawing, and none except our Sandro could have imagined such a subject; but it wants the very essence of Spring—that for which every proper man would die, and yet lack."

"Per Bacco!" she heard Sandro answer. "I am

too stupid this morning to guess your riddles, Leonardo. What is it that every proper man would die for and yet lack ?"

"A woman's smile !"

"Bah ! It is you who are stupid, not I ! Having died for the smile, how should he lack it ?"

"Patience ! A little consideration will show you that I am right."

"How ? If your proper man had died for the smile, he must first have won it—otherwise he would have died for the lack of the smile."

"My poor friend ! Truly the gods have made you somewhat mad ! The smile faded at his death."

"True, O Leonardo ! As you say, I must be a little mad this morning. But if I am mad, I suspect that last night's wine-flask has dimmed your eyes: look again whether you can see a smile in my picture."

Alessandra listened delighted, for this was the typical talk of the studio which painters only indulge in amongst themselves—sense mingled with nonsense, false logic, false admissions, false abuse, all used with a purpose, all leading up to some climax.

"I can see no smile," answered the stranger, evidently examining the picture carefully and in detail. "The Graces dance like mourners ; Venus is not feeling very well ; Spring has eaten some green stuff which is disagreeing with her violently ; and Flora is hurrying to get out of her way."

"Tut ! Tut ! Of course ! You are again right, and I wrong ! The smile I speak of formed and faded, changing all the while—otherwise it would have been a grin ! A smile that remains fixed, whether it

be fixed on the face of a woman or in the picture of an artist, is but a grin. Eh, Leonardo ?"

"By the chains of St. Peter, that is true! And yet——" Straining her ears to the utmost, Alessandra could hear no more, and, looking through the crack of the door, she could see the heads of Sandro and a handsome man of about thirty bent close together over the drawing. There was no sound of laughter; the secret of the studio badinage lay in the gravity with which it was carried out. There was a movement, and Sandrina fled to a neighbouring room—it was little more than a cupboard—in which Sandro kept his commoner pigments and other odds and ends, until the stranger had taken his departure. Then, entering the studio, she greeted Sandro and inquired the name and profession of his visitor.

"One, Leonardo of Vinci," he answered, turning his eyes away from the girl and fixing them resolutely on his drawing. "He was Verrocchio's most famous pupil, and has great talent. Unfortunately, instead of devoting himself to his craft, he is ever scheming to turn his art into a science and life into a riddle."

"And now he schemes to make the figures in your picture smile, eh, Sandro? No," she added, "you need not look astonished. I was listening outside the studio door."

"You do not like the figure of Flora?" he suggested.

"Least of all the figures," she answered.

"I have never liked my Flora," he owned, shaking his head. "When Spring is bearing the flowers, and the flowers themselves are growing well and strong,

what is the sense of depicting Flora? She is Lucretius's creation, not mine; she is clad in Politian's gown, not mine; she shows—and how this came about puzzles me—she shows Pollaiuolo's touch, not mine; and now, by heaven, she shall wear Leonardo's smile!" He began to sketch the head of a smiling Flora on the margin of his drawing, well pleased that he had got himself so well in hand and his feelings towards his god-daughter so thoroughly under control. "How did you enjoy Lorenzo's pageant, *carissima*?" At last he could trust himself to look at her. "Last night you were too tired to say aught about it."

"Last evening I felt like one bewitched; but to-day——" and she shrugged her shoulders expressively.

"Eh? That is what I always feel in the morning. One has gone to sleep a pagan, and one wakes up in Christian Florence."

Alessandra nodded.

"To study the ancients is good, to love Nature as the ancients loved her is very good, to picture the spirit of Nature by means of symbolical figures is also good; but to play at being one of the ancients is not good for one at all."

"It is bad!" she cried. "It is very bad indeed! And, oh, Sandro mio, I knew that you would understand!" Gradually and fully she told her tale, from the touching of Politian's hand to the finding of the letter; and, as she told, Sandro raged inwardly.

"Ah! You did well to tell me, little one," he said, treating the subject lightly so as not to magnify the incident and shame Alessandra's self-respect. "When one has to do with a soft creature, half priest, half

woman, and altogether poet, a creature that sings love-songs in the sunshine, and sits in his coat and slippers before the fire in the winter, one cannot act too cautiously. Show me this reply that your have written."

"It is a wise letter, *carissima*," said he, handing her back the note, "for you have made Poliziano appear ridiculous; but if he should write again—and these effeminate men are often most persistent—you will not stoop to reply?"

"No," she answered.

"A bee may break through one strand of a spider's web, *carissima*; but, unless the insect pursues its way, many strands will entangle it."

"Yes," she murmured absently.

"To answer a fool once according to his folly is an act of wisdom, but to reply further is to take part in his foolishness."

"Sandro," said she, placing the note in her girdle, "this letter from Messer Poliziano has made me think much of another matter that I would speak of."

"I am not very wise, Sandrina," he answered gently; "but I am of a prudent age and thy god-father."

"As you know," said she, looking down, "I am not without a dowry, and I shall have more some day, and therefore I am not without those who seek my hand."

"It is right for a maiden to marry," he answered.

"Oh! How shall I tell you?" she exclaimed. "He is not young. He is not even so young as Poliziano. He has known me since I was a child."

"Yes, little one," he muttered.

"The others send me flowers, and sing below my window; this one says nothing—only, his eyes watch me always, and he goes out of his way to meet me, and his face grows happy when I come near him."

Sandro felt dizzy. His age and stoutness had made any idea of marriage with Alessandra seem unnatural; and this, coupled with their relationship—for a man may not marry his god-daughter without a dispensation—had forced him to wander all night through Florence, like one distracted, rather than risk dreaming that he was married to her. His heart was beating like a sledge-hammer, and he had to lick his lips before he could speak. "Do you love him?" he asked.

"That is a difficult question to answer," said she demurely, "a very difficult one indeed; for he is not young, and he is somewhat fat, and there is none of that romance of which the poets sing. But if you ask me if I would rather marry him than any of the others, or all the others, or any one in the world, I answer yes. But, alas! he has never asked me for my hand nor even said that he loves me"; and she gave the pretence of a sigh, knowing well that she had only to lift her finger to bring him to her.

"Perhaps," he answered uncertainly, "this one worships you so deeply, and values you so dearly, that he dare not risk speaking of his love."

"Eh? That is what I also think."

"And you might give him some token of your favour."

"I might take a rose, like this," and she turned to a vase that stood on a table hard by, to pluck a blossom; "and give it him—like this?"

"Sandrina!" He stood for one moment irresolute, then caught her hand.

"Was there ever any one with such sympathy?" she cried. "Was there ever any one who understood like you?"

Sandro gave a strange laugh in which amazement struggled with joy and triumph.

"I think you will like him," she whispered, squeezing his hand which held hers; "I think you have met him; I think you have supped with him; I think you have even said that you liked him."

"Eh?"

"He is Giovanni—Giovanni Ciardi."

He summoned up strength to murmur a blessing and kiss her tenderly on the forehead. Then Alessandra left the room and went singing down the stairs and along the passage, whilst Sandro was left alone.

CHAPTER XVIII

WORK

SANDRO worked! Heaven, how he worked! When the evening drew in and he was forced to think, his thoughts were not those that would make one laugh, but from the beginning of the June morning until dusk had closed his studio he lived in the land of Springtime.

There were the different figures to be drawn two-thirds life size and transferred to the panel; there was the shimmer of flesh to be shown through gauze-like drapery, and the clinging or fluttering folds of this same drapery; there was the flow of graceful lines to be checked by the crook of some elbow or to be brought up sharply against the contortion of a frightened hand; there was the rhythmic sway of the Graces to be balanced by the rapid stride of Flora and the restful dignity of Venus; and the whole, with all its detailed elaboration and wealth of imagery, had to be worked into one big, dignified poem. And so the picture grew into something that no artist had so far dreamed of, and the like of which no artist has since accomplished—sometimes delighting its creator, sometimes overwhelming him, and always fascinating him.

There was work in the picture, elaborate detail that

was to be broad in spirit, flesh that was to be sweet, gauze that was to be diaphanous, a conventional background that was to be welded to the living figures by a delicate tracery of foliage—and all this had to be managed in obstinate, intractable tempera!

There was fun in the picture too—a Zephyr that should have plump, bulging cheeks, and yet be altogether zephyrous—a Flora that should embody all the influences of those who had influenced him—Lucretius, Politian, Pollaiuolo and Leonardo—and who yet insisted on becoming more truly Botticellesque than any of his other figures; and sometimes, when the magnitude of his conception and the difficulty of its execution frightened him, he thought of himself as a hen that had hatched a brood of ducklings, or, still better, as a peaceful citizen who had brought forth a whole bevy of wayward nymphs and goddesses.

It is true that Mercury was more or less the portrait of his patron—since he had eliminated the Pierfrancesco double chin, it was rather less than more—but otherwise he refused to be worried with models. He had made his studies, partly in the orange groves of Castello, chiefly during the craftsmanship of a lifetime; and he painted straight from the storehouse of his imagination, using enough shading to give substance, and avoiding the suggestion of bas-relief or the illusion of the open window. Maledetto! He was painting a picture for the walls of Castello, not adding a window through which Lorenzo might gaze at the perpetual spectacle of a Carnival tableau!

As for Alessandra—he removed every trace of her features from those of the dancing maidens, for he was

not going to display his Sandrina before Politian's wanton eyes; and, although they never referred again to the topic of Poliziano, Alessandra understood this reserve, and appreciated it.

But stay! Politian had written two more letters to Alessandra, both of which she had shown to Sandro. The first one ran as follows:

"Thou sendest me pale violets, O Sandra, and I faint and die for love of thee. Thou sendest me flowers and leaves, fair imagery of Springtime, but 'tis the sweet fruit for which I long!"

"What do you think of it?" she had asked, as he had handed it back.

"His language is very beautiful," Sandro had answered, keeping his feelings well under control.

"Bah!" she had said, with her chin in the air. "Over-ripe plums may suit Messer Poliziano, but they are not to my taste!"

The second letter had a despairing ring in it, which sounded as though Poliziano's love was genuine, if improper:

"I am not permitted to see thee or to hear from thee, O Alessandra, but at least thou mightest send me two lines in reply."

"You might send him the wherewith to hang himself," Sandro had suggested cruelly. "The creature only asks for a line!"

"He asks for two lines," she had corrected, and, taking up Sandro's pen and a scrap of his drawing paper, had written, reading as she wrote: "'If, O

Poliziano, the sight of thee disgusts me,'—that is one line—'thy letters make me very sick indeed!'—that is the second line." Then she and Sandro had made a fire in the studio stove, and had burnt Politian's letter and her reply.

This incident had happened some days after Alessandra had confessed her affection for Ciardi, by which time Sandro had schooled himself to behave like a wise man and an honest godparent—for a wise man does not cry for the moon, and an honest godfather desires to secure the true happiness of his godchild.

One feels that Sandro's attitude sounds somewhat philosophical and somewhat phlegmatic; but what would one have otherwise? Of course he might have fought for Alessandra, and if he had been like Fra Filippo he would have upset heaven and earth to make her love him; but he lacked the headstrong, overwhelming virility of the friar, and his love for Alessandra was the tender love of the affections rather than the fiery love of the passions—a love which prompts the sacrifice of self rather than one which demands the sacrifice of another.

Who was he—a middle-aged man of delicate health, lavish habits, and uncertain income—that he should ensnare his godchild, when Giovanni Ciardi would make her a responsible and admirable husband? For Giovanni was the owner of a comfortable villa and considerable property in Prato, and, in spite of Alessandra's unflattering description, he was none too fat for a man of thirty, whilst, if he had not the looks and person of an Adonis, he had a face that betokened a contented disposition coupled with a kind heart.

Very well! Sandrina loved this Giovanni, and her god-father must do his best to help on the match. Thank God! his god-daughter had not even suspected his secret, and he could still meet her without any constraint.

This reasoning served him fairly well during the day—that is to say when his thoughts were not absorbed in the painting of Springtime—but during the night it failed lamentably; for night is the time when no philosophy will banish troubles, and during the night Sandro suffered from the same vague, hopeless longings that assail a sensitive child in its first experience of home-sickness.

It might be said that, from the outset, Sandro had intended that his relations with Alessandra should be those of godfather and god-daughter, and that his resolution now was exactly the same as it had been at the beginning; and this is the light in which Sandro tried to see his position. But the memory of an Advent sermon which he had heard in San Marco came back to him: "What is it," the preacher had asked, "that marks the difference between a soul on earth which turns its eyes away from Almighty God, and the same soul when it has been banished from Him for ever? There is this difference," the preacher had answered—"there is this very great difference: the soul in hell has seen God face to face, if only for an instant; and the soul in hell knows what it has lost!" Well! he, Sandro, had seen love face to face, if only for an instant; and he, Sandro, knew what he had lost. This was the secret of that vague, hopeless emptiness which came over him before he went to sleep, and also, especially, when he first awoke.

But, as the days slipped by, and Sandro grew used to his trouble, just as an anchorite grows accustomed to his hair-shirt, he awoke to the fact that his work had attained a new and very precious quality. It was a quality that defied his analysis and which he did not attempt to account for, but it was nevertheless a quality which forced itself on his notice: San Sebastiano had possessed something of this quality, and so had the first drawing of Primavera, and so had the panel of the Magi which he had painted at Prato; and he remembered that each of these pictures had been executed under some strong emotion or with some special effort. It may have been that in the past Sandro's inventive brain and technical skill had enabled him to plan and paint his pictures with too much facility—that they had been executed with the same ease, and produced the same impression, as the alms of a very rich man or the speech of a very fluent speaker; it may have been that he needed a very strong incentive to detach him from the world and bury him in his work; it may have been that the episode of Alessandra made him get away from his thoughts and his surroundings, and throw all that was best and strongest and realest of himself into his picture: anyhow, Sandro found himself living in the painting of Springtime, and his conception grew with the growth of the picture, and the picture grew with the growth of the conception, until Springtime became as much a part of Sandro as a newly-born infant is a part of its mother.

The autumn air throbbed with the clang of shuttles, Sandro's bottega echoed with the tramping and voices

of Messer Antella's cloth-weavers, the whole house seemed to vibrate in such a manner that painting had ceased to be a possibility; and yet Sandro and Filippino, as they looked down from the studio window at the workshop next door, seemed to feel amusement rather than anger. Presently the noise from the new cloth factory was swelled by the rumble of a cart and the cries of carters, and Biagio entered hurriedly.

"Master," he exclaimed, "master, the workmen have come and are ready; and, oh, master, the sugar-plum is a fine one!"

"The masons are here," asked Sandro, "as well as the carpenters and quarrymen?"

"Of a truth, and all are wondering what is in the air."

"That is a riddle," said Sandro: "That which is now in the air is not in the air, and when it is in the air it will have ceased to be in the air. Now go at once to Messer Antella, and say to him—pull a grave face, you foolish one, and stop grinning like a monkey!—and say to him that since he has added two new looms to his workshop, making eight in all, the noise has become absolutely intolerable; say to him that the bottega trembles like a jelly and that we cannot paint or even think; tell him that Messer Sandro is distracted, and begs him, in the name of all the saints and for the sake of neighbourly charity, to abate this intolerable nuisance. And remember, Biagio, that we are all in despair."

"Alas! master," replied the journeyman sadly, "unless he listens to your request, the bottega

must be closed, and my means of livelihood will vanish!"

"How truly, in this wicked world, doth each one think only of his own profit or his own loss! Now go quickly, Biagio, and I will await the answer of Messer Antella with what patience I can summon."

"Sandro," asked Filippino, as soon as they were alone, "why do you take so much trouble and run to so great an expense? Surely an appeal to the magistrates, or even a word to the Prior of the Cloth-workers, would have put the hobbles on this donkey!"

"Possibly!" answered Sandro with a shrug, "but possibly not, for the law is uncertain and the Cloth-workers are a very close guild; but apart from that, as long as I can keep within the law, I prefer to fight my own battles with my own weapons." And they returned to the window, listening with one ear for the coming of Biagio, and with the other for some sign of a cessation of the tumult: but the noise of the shuttles continued without abatement.

"Alas, master!" They started, for Biagio had stolen in like a whipped and frightened child. "Alas! master," he repeated, "we are ruined, for Messer Antella biddeth me repeat what he hath said before: the workshop is his own, and he both can and will do what he pleaseth in his own house."

"It is just!" sighed Sandro; "and, moreover, I believe he hath the law behind him. But before I close my bottega, I will erect a boundary-stone to mark where the bottega of Sandro Botticelli once stood."

"Call it rather 'the rock of Peter'!" chuckled

Filippino; "for, on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind——"

"Hush!" said Sandro. "Such a thought must not even be whispered!" Then they descended to the street, and, taking to them certain of the workmen, mounted to the edge of the roof that overlooked the workshop of the weavery. A small space at the corner had been stripped, leaving the outer wall standing stark and bare.

"This will never support yon block of marble," said the master-quarryman, shaking his head.

"The wall is very good," answered the master-mason. "My father's father built it, and I have just examined the pointing. 'Tis thin, but strong and supple as steel."

"It is a very good wall, a very good wall indeed," replied the quarryman politely, "otherwise this incessant earthquake would have cracked it; but see!"—and he placed his hand on the upper course—"it trembleth like a maiden when she is first kissed."

"Ho! The advances of those hairy weavers opposite may make my wall tremble, but they will not destroy her virginity!"

"That is true! Yet it is unwise to balance a heavy burden on the head of a maid that trembleth; for though the girl may not fall, the burden will topple over."

"This block of marble is of no great value," suggested Sandro.

"I was considering the weavers," answered the quarryman.

"If the weavers cease their advances," remarked

the mason, "my maiden will cease to tremble; and if the maiden ceases to tremble, her burden will remain secure."

Then the quarryman looked first at the mason and then at Sandro, and, since he was no fool, he slapped his thighs, winked his eye, spat on his hands, and set to work with great good-will.

How they managed to raise the stone, whether they laid down a timber causeway and brought it across the roof or up through the house, or whether Botticelli had some repairing right-of-way through his neighbour's premises, Vasari does not relate. But presently the looms were stilled, and a huge block of marble was frowning down on the frightened weavers.

Messer Antella might fume; Sandro smiled. Messere entered to protest; Sandro suggested a *novena* to St. Peter. Messere threatened the law; Sandro laughed. "For," said he, "since you have given me a holiday from work, it is but generous that I should give you a rest also; since you have done as you liked in your house, it is but just that I should do what I like in mine; for this workshop is my own, and I both can and will do what I please in my own house. However, when your *novena* is ended, you will find me ready to strike a bargain."

Then, without more ado, Sandro turned to Primavera, and, calling one of his apprentices to grind some fresh pigments, he commenced to paint diligently, whilst Filippino tarried on, watching and wondering. For if the calmness with which Botticelli had vanquished the weaver was a marvel, and the self-confidence with which he worked at his picture was a marvel, the calmness

and self-confidence with which he turned from his victory and resumed his painting was nothing less than a miracle: popularity might account for the first, success might account for the second; but, since Filippino was ignorant of Sandro's self-conquest regarding his affection towards Alessandra, he missed the key to the whole.

CHAPTER XIX

A PROBLEM

SANDRO finished the Primavera and completed the altar-piece for the Church of San Barnabà.

He painted a *tondo* of Our Lady writing the Magnificat, which *tondo* measured three feet eight inches in diameter, and was very beautiful ; but, since the restorers have repainted Our Lady's face until it is as pretty as a sugar-plum, its strength and character are lost. This picture is now in the Uffizi Gallery of Florence.

Sandro painted a portrait of a young man, which measured eleven inches by one foot two inches, and which now hangs in the National Gallery of London.

Sandro painted a Madonna enthroned between the two St. Johns. This picture was painted in his finest manner for the Chapel of Messer Agnolo dei Bardi in the Church of San Spirito. It measured two feet six inches by six feet, and is now in the Royal Museum of Berlin.

Sandro painted a panel for the bed-head of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici. This panel, measuring five feet eight inches by two feet three inches, depicted a lady watching over her warrior whilst he slept, and is the most beautiful furniture panel that has ever been

painted. It now hangs in the National Gallery of London.

In the Guardaroba of the same patron, he painted a Bacchus raising a wine-flask to his lips with both hands —a truly animated picture.

In Casa Pucci, likewise, Sandro painted Boccaccio's Novella of Nastagio degli Onesti, in four compartments; the figures are small, but the work is very graceful and beautiful.

Then Sandro, having painted these and other pictures within the space of three years, besides superintending the work of his bottega, commenced a series of frescoes for Messer Giovanni Tornabuoni.

Florence was awaking as Sandro left his house ; the workmen were starting for their workshops ; the merchants were taking down their shutters ; and the sellers of vegetables and provisions were preparing their stalls against the coming of the thrifty housewife. Sandro paused, then, after entering the nearest wine-shop for a draught of wine to stir his blood, took his way towards the Medici Palace ; for he had a deep problem to solve, and, just as a dried rosebud might give some poet an idea of the freshness of spring, so the sight of the ancient sculpture in Lorenzo's collection might give him the needed inspiration.

The first of the Tornabuoni frescoes had gone well, for both the north light which had illuminated the picture and the subject itself had made his work simple—that is to say, as simple as any portrait-work painted on the surface of freshly drying plaster can be said to be simple ; but the following paintings promised the most

perplexing difficulties. The first picture had been a portrait of Giovanni Tornabuoni, clad in the red robes of a Gonfalonier, and standing with his arm round his daughter ; this, with its background of hills and river, had offered no problem ; but the other ideas of his patron seemed to hold as many difficulties as the sea holds fish. One fresco must portray young Lorenzo Tornabuoni amidst classical surroundings ; the other must display his bride, Giovanna degli Albizzi, amidst classical surroundings ; these portraits must be genuine portraits, and not mere suggestions like the suggestion of Pierfrancesco in the Mercury of the Primavera, and yet the pictures must be of a similar quality to the Primavera. Again, these paintings were to be on a wall that faced a window through which the changing lights of the afternoon sun would play tricks with the colouring and upset the values ; and these paintings, showing all there finement of Primavera, must be painted, bit by bit, on the drying plaster. Lastly, and this was the crux of the matter, these pictures must combine lightness and dignity, mythical figures and living persons, without looking ridiculous.

"Madonna mia!" muttered Sandro hopelessly ; then his brow cleared, for he saw a familiar and well-liked figure on ahead of him. "Eh!" chuckled Sandro, for he noticed that his friend, in carrying out his theory that an artist should continually study the faces of the passers-by, was eyeing all the pretty girls diligently. "Ah!" murmured Sandro, as the man stopped before the cages of one who sold birds, and, purchasing the captives, loosed them, and watched them fly away into freedom. "Of a truth, my friend,"

said Sandro, clapping him on the back, "if men call Lorenzo 'The Magnificent,' they should name you 'The Compassionate.'" But Leonardo da Vinci neither started nor looked round.

"Watch!" said he gravely, loosing a captive mavis. "See! the thrushes and other small birds are able to make headway against the course of this wind because they fly in spirts; they first take a long course by dropping in a slanting direction towards the ground, with their wings half-closed; then they open their wings, catching the wind in them with the reverse movement, and so rise to a height; and then they drop again in the same way."

"This is most interesting!" answered Sandro, with his eyes twinkling.

"It is, for I am planning, together with a friend of mine, to test the possibility of human flight."

"For which reason, I noticed that you not only studied the flight of birds, but also the flightiness of maidens."

"Believe me, Sandro, that I am serious! Of course, our Bird should have no other model than the bat, since we must bind together the framework of our wings with a membrane like that of a bat, and not with feathers that are separated from one another so as to allow the air to pass through them; in fact, I am at present engaged in dissecting a bat and studying it carefully, as the model for our machine."

"Therefore you study the flight of birds?"

"Certainly! For a bird is an instrument working according to mathematical law, which instrument it is possible for man to reproduce with all its movements,

but not with a corresponding degree of strength ; and so, consequently, I am studying chiefly the movements of the greater birds which glide, and the manner in which they overcome, and make use of, the air-currents. Already I have fashioned the model of a bird furnished with a tail that can be twisted to an angle of various degrees ; and, in our finished Bird, I shall fit helms[1] on the shoulders of the wings so that it may be enabled to bend either upwards or downwards, to the right or left."

"I understand! I quite understand, Leonardo! You watch the progress of the sparrows and thrushes, and of other small birds that fly in jerks, so as to study the flight of the large birds that glide!"

"If twenty soldi are worth one libra, my Sandro, surely the flight of twenty sparrows is the same as the flight of one eagle!"

"How foolish of me!" said Sandro. "I ought to have understood this principle, for I myself have devised a machine whereby flying creatures support men with their feathers!"

Then Leonardo's face became very serious, and slipping his arm within that of Botticelli, "Sandro," said he, "save for my jest about the value of the flight of sparrows—and that I own that I released those thrushes because it pains me to see them captive—I am in earnest."

"That you plan to fly?" cried Sandro.

"That I plan a machine which will make human flight possible? Yes, my friend!"

[1] The *ailerons* of the modern aeroplane. The whole of this essay on flight, which might have come from the recent pages of some aerostatic journal, has been taken from Leonardo's note-books. Compare Leonardo's theory of gliding with Wilbur Wright's experiments in this year of grace 1911.

"If you say that you are in earnest," said Sandro cautiously, almost convinced, yet fearing a sell, "I must believe you. Nevertheless, Leonardo, this Bird of yours seems over-venturesome."

"No! For the Bird that I have planned ought to be able, by the help of the wind, to rise to a great height. And this should prove its safety, for, even if misfortune should befall, it would still have time to regain a condition of equilibrium: besides, the wind at a great elevation will be of straight course, and not perpetually full of eddies and whirlwinds."

Sandro shook his head. "I prefer my machine," said he; "for in my machine flying creatures support men with their feathers."

"And what is your machine?" asked Leonardo.

"A feather bed!"

"Bene! Your machine is an accomplished fact, whilst there is the same difference between my model and its accomplishment, as there is between the glance of yonder pretty maiden and the touch of her lips."

"Or as there is between my idea of the frescoes for Giovanni Tornabuoni, and their accomplishment on plaster!" And he fell to talking of his problems and difficulties: "For," said he, "if I were to draw Dante and Virgil wandering through hell, my subject would have the dignity of a vision; but if I were to draw Lorenzo and his bride chattering with the gods and goddesses, I should make both them and myself ridiculous."

Leonardo shook his head. "You have been set a hard task," said he, "a very hard task indeed, and one

that does not rightly come within the province of our art. But stay! would not it be possible to depict Lorenzo and Madonna Giovanna, and then add the rest as though seen in a vision?"

"I have thought of that," answered Sandro. "Indeed, I seem to have contemplated everything that is possible or impossible until my head is filled with wool. It would be possible to draw a vision of the Inferno, because hell is real; it would be possible to depict a vision of the Angels and Madonna, because they exist; on the other hand, a vision of the pagan gods and goddesses would be but a dream, and my picture but a fairy-story for children."

"That is true," owned Leonardo.

"It is true," answered Sandro.

It was afternoon. Sandro and Leonardo had searched the Medici Palace and the classic gardens in the Piazza di San Marco in the hope of finding ideas, but without avail; now they sought the studio of Piero di Cosimo, one of the most talented, as well as the most eccentric, amongst the younger artists of Florence.

They passed through an ill-kept garden—Piero loved nature far too much to kill a weed or prune a fig-tree—and, finding the door of the building at the end of the garden unlocked, entered. The room was empty.

"Did mortal man ever see such a pig-sty?" said Leonardo, looking round and sniffing. He had been in Milan for some years, and had not seen Piero since the latter left the bottega of old Cosimo Rosselli.

"He will not have an apprentice," remarked Sandro; "boys irritate him. He does everything himself."

"Except clean the floor. Per Bacco! what on earth is this?" and Leonardo tilted a bucket that stood three-parts full of eggs. "Has the fellow turned egg-merchant?"

"It is his breakfast," explained Sandro. "It is also his dinner and supper for the next three weeks. He will not light a fire if he can help; he says that fires are the devil. He will not have a woman to serve him; he says that women are the devil. So every three weeks, when he has to heat his varnish and boil his oils, he cooks enough eggs to last him until he again has to light his stove. It is all so very simple—at least, so he says."

"Ebbene!" murmured da Vinci helplessly.

"Now," said Sandro, picking up a panel that stood face to the wall, and placing it on an easel, "we will find his pictures as clean and workmanlike as his studio is slovenly, so we will examine his latest panel and try to steal an idea."

Sandro stood back, whilst Leonardo, seating himself on an empty box, gave vent to a low whistle. "This is never by Piero of Cosimo Rosselli!" he said.

"Miracles still happen," answered Sandro.

"Notice the feeling of sunshine, the truth of the atmosphere, the colouring of the distance! One might be looking through an open window!"

"Notice the expression of the satyr, half curious, half pitying!"

"Notice the relief of the modelling, and the manner in which he has wrought from the clear shadows on the

flesh, through the shading, until the high-lights stand forth ! "

" Notice the craftsmanlike manner in which he has handled his tempera, working the shading without labour ! "

" It is a masterly picture ! " ended da Vinci. And of a truth, as Piero's 'Death of Procris' hangs in the National Gallery to-day, one cannot help pondering whether any later artist has succeeded in giving a finer impression of the open air than this Quattrocento Tuscan. A satyr is stooping over the dead body of the jealous Procris, her hound stands beside her, and a sea with low blue cliffs stretches away into the distance.

Then da Vinci began to criticise : "That is a most absurd hound," said he.

"That is Piero's artifice," answered Sandro, laughing. " He says that Procris was killed in a thicket, whereas he has painted her in the open ; he says that Procris was dead like one of Pollaiuolo's corpses, whereas he has painted her living flesh ; he says he has painted the woman from a model, whereas he has created the satyr from his imagination. Therefore he has painted this absurd hound, so that, laughing at the hound, people may forget to notice the other incongruities."

" Which reasoning is at least ingenious," said Leonardo.

"In the same manner, when Piero draws a portrait or paints a Venus that does not satisfy him, he adds a pet rabbit to attract notice. No wonder men call him eccentric."

"Sandro," answered da Vinci, looking him straight in the face, "we are old friends and good comrades. May I tell you the truth without offence?"

"Our friendship will bear plain speaking," he replied.

"Do you know that men are beginning to call you eccentric?"

Sandro stared.

"I have heard this from the artists," insisted da Vinci; "I have heard it from some amongst the nobles that you deem your friends."

Sandro looked bewildered.

"They say you have become possessed with the idea that painting, like poetry, is a method of depicting thoughts and fancies, and that you are sacrificing all your sound craftsmanship to this whim."

"But," cried Sandro, conscious that his craftsmanship was near perfection; then words failed him.

"Before Giotto's time," pursued Leonardo remorselessly, "pictures were flat, without shading or modelling or relief. Now"—he pointed to Piero's panel—"now painting has become an art miraculous, making things intangible appear tangible, presenting in relief things which are flat, in distance things near at hand. You, my Sandro, are neglecting all this progress, all this mastery of illusion, so that you may attempt to describe by painting what could be better rendered by the pen of Poliziano."

He waited a minute for Sandro to make his answer, but, as Sandro remained silent, continued:

"It was but yesterday that Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco showed me your panel of Mars and Venus——"

Mansell photo] [National Gallery.

"MAN FIGHTS, LOVES, AND SLEEPS, WHILST THE TENDER AFFECTION OF THE WOMAN WATCHES OVER HIM" (p. 227).

"Politian says that it is Alexander and Roxana," interrupted Sandro coldly.

"And which do you say it is?"

"Neither. It is only the panel for a bed-head: the passion of the man fights, loves and sleeps, whilst the tender affections of the woman watch over him. It is merely the panel for a bed-head."

"It is also flat, and destitute of relief and richness of colouring! Then, seeing this"—Leonardo's voice took a persuasive tone—"I sought Santa Maria Novella, and examined your old painting of the Adoration of the Magi: the composition, the design, and the colouring of your old picture are so beautiful that I marvelled. Sandro, why have you forsaken your old mastery for this absurd whim?"

"My old picture which you praise," answered Sandro, beginning to grow angry, "was but a tableau painted to win honour: my new manner is a part of Sandro Botticelli."

"Look at this panel of Piero's," cried Leonardo, "and remember that he has not one-hundredth part of your talent! You have painted your figures without relief, you have drawn hard, clear lines to mark the features and surround the contours, whereas Piero has conformed to the laws of nature!"

"Those lines are a part of Sandro Botticelli," he answered doggedly.

"But the boundary of a substance is a surface which is neither part of the body nor part of the atmosphere, and which is of invisible thickness. There are no lines in nature!"

"Whether they are in nature or not, they express what I desire to express."

"But why not express your fancies so that they should appear true? Even this fancy of Piero's—and he has not one-hundredth part of your talent—seems a natural thing seen in a great mirror."

"Who wants a mirror as a bed-head?" snapped Sandro.

"If I have angered you, I have angered you," answered Leonardo bitterly. "I do not care to hear my friend spoken of as 'eccentric.'"

There was silence for a time, Sandro struggling with his just indignation, Leonardo smarting at the non-reception of his honest and disinterested advice; then, slowly, friendship triumphed, and Leonardo laid his hand on Sandro's shoulder. "Now, as to this problem of the Tornabuoni with goddesses," said he, "suppose one takes a leaf from Piero's book, adding something to the subject that will draw attention away from its incongruity?"

"Madonna Giovanna presenting Venus with a rabbit, for example?"

"No," answered da Vinci, smiling, "I am serious. Suppose that you paint your subject in a landscape of such exceeding beauty—keeping the figures small and making the landscape of much importance—that the vision of the onlooker is attracted by the beauty of the surroundings?"

In reply Sandro took his friend's arm and, leading him over to the further wall, pointed out various paint-stains and smudges: some, which had been left untouched, bore a natural resemblance to stretches of

sea or grassy plains with mountains in the distance; others had been worked into quaint fancies of fighting horses, strangely ordered cities, and the most extraordinary landscapes. "That is Piero's pastime," said he; "and you have but to throw a sponge soaked with different colours against a wall, and you at once obtain upon that wall a stain, wherein you may distinguish a landscape.

"You ask me to take this vanity," continued Sandro, not without a touch of malice, for Leonardo was devoted to the study of landscapes—"a vanity that can be attained by the use of a dirty sponge and blank wall—and make it the chief feature of my fresco. But see!" he added, returning to the panel and covering the hound of Procris with a cloth: "Piero's painting compels belief, not through the artifice of the hound, but through the courage and conviction with which it was painted."

"And the courage and conviction of Sandro's painting—— ?"

"Are equal to the courage of Leonardo's attempt at flying!"

"Then return to the feather-bed, my Sandro," answered da Vinci shrewdly, "and avoid experiments; for no artist can afford to be thought eccentric."

That night Leonardo da Vinci made entries in two of his note-books:

"Flying creatures will support men with their feathers."

"I will not refrain from setting among these precepts a new device for consideration which, although it may appear trivial and almost ludicrous, is never-

theless of great utility in arousing the mind to various inventions. And this is that if you look at any wall spotted with various stains . . . if you are about to invent some scene, you will be able to see in it a resemblance to various different landscapes adorned with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, plains, wide valleys, and various groups of hills."

But it was not until six years later, when life at Milan had clouded his recollection, that he wrote :

"Our Botticelli was wont to say that this study of landscapes was vain, for you had but to throw a sponge soaked with different colours against a wall, and you at once obtained upon that wall a stain, wherein you might distinguish a landscape. And indeed this artist painted very poor landscapes."

CHAPTER XX

GRACES AND ARTS

OF all the young Florentine matrons of the period, Giovanna, bride of Lorenzo Tornabuoni, is said to have been the sweetest. Daughter of the noble house of Albizzi, singled out by Il Magnifico as the chosen wife of his favourite cousin, escorted to the altar by a hundred damsels of the first families of Tuscany, married amidst public rejoicings in the presence of nobles and ambassadors, Giovanna might have eclipsed the memory of Simonetta ; but, instead of ruling over the hearts of many, madonna (as the saying is) chose to reign in the heart of one.

There had been a shower at sunrise, and the rain-drops were still on the roses in the Tornabuoni garden. Upon the lawn, and close to the rose bushes, stood a tall and exceedingly graceful damsel ; amongst the bushes a youth of eighteen wrestled with a scarlet-rambler. "Maledetto ! " said he, groaning. "All roses, save and except mine own blossom, have thorns!" Then, shaking off the thick of the moisture, he flicked the flowers which he had gathered into the air so that the few remaining drops fell in a sprinkle round the girl, and offered her a double handful of roses.

"Oh, graceless one ! " she cried : "man without

manners! And see, Lorenzo mio, you are offering me these blossoms so that the thorns point every way, and I shall prick my hands to a certainty. Of a truth, you needed a wife to tame you!"

"Listen to this Xantippe!" he murmured. "Who would have imagined such venom in one so young? And I likened her to roses without thorns!"

"Roses without thorns, indeed! Who would value a rose without a thorn? Besides, thorns only prick clumsy fingers."

"Then I will avoid the thorns," quoth he, dropping the flowers and putting his arm around her, "whilst I gather my roses." They were boy and girl, their marriage was but a fortnight old, and they were still busy teaching each other its mysteries.

> "I gazed and gazed,"

sang a voice.

> "Hard task it were to tell.
> How lovely were the roses in that hour."

The lovers started apart. "Quick!" whispered the girl, true to her sex, "pluck me yonder white blossoms."

> "One was but peeping from her verdant shell,
> And some were faded, some were scarce in flower
> Then Love said: Go pluck from the perfumed bower
> Those that thou seest ripe upon the spray."

"Welcome!" cried the girl, looking over her shoulder with a nod and smile, for Sandro Botticelli was well liked by the young people of the Medici family. "How go the frescoes, Messer Sandro? And have you passed another restless night, haunted by visions of the Tornabuoni?"

"Welcome, madonna!" he answered. "The secret of my problem is solved, and I have slept like the men of Ephesus."

"And the secret?" asked she.

"Is courage," he replied, keeping his distance. "Only a bold man can win a fair maiden, and only a brave artist can paint a fine picture. But stay as you are, madonna! Stay exactly as you are!" For the youth had stepped out from the bushes, and, after a word of greeting to Sandro, was pouring the blossoms into his wife's hands, whilst she, holding out her kerchief to receive the thorny posies, looked the picture of graceful dignity.

"Why?" she asked, wondering why he wished her to keep her position, and also wondering, as a woman would, if he had caught sight of her husband's folly and had sung the song of the roses to give warning of his arrival.

"You will see presently," he answered, taking out a small sketch-book and drawing rapidly. "Boldness," said he, "is the secret of all success. The meek may possess the earth, but the bold take the corn, wine, and olives that it produces; the Sabines marry wives, the brave Romans capture them: it is what the good God wills!" There was a pause whilst his pencil raced over the paper. "Yes," he continued, "the industrious grow the corn—that is good, since it permits them to exercise their vocation: the brave conquer the industrious and capture most of the harvest—this not only allows the brave to pursue their vocation, but it also enables them to live." Again a pause and rapid drawing. "So the industrious man marries the lady

and gathers roses for her, whilst the bold man captures her and puts her in his picture." Then Sandro closed his sketch-book with a snap, and, without more to-do, carried off the girl, kerchief, and roses to the long chamber where he was painting the frescoes.

"If you will stand here, madonna," said Sandro, his manner blending friendship with deference, for, although he had known her from her childhood, Madonna Giovanna Tornabuoni was a very great lady, "and if you will hold the roses exactly as you held them in the garden—there! that is admirable! Now rest a moment whilst I make preparations." And, fetching a sheet of paper that was large enough to take a drawing that might be transferred to the fresco, Sandro affixed it to a board on his easel, and placed the whole at his chosen station point. "Now, if you are ready, madonna," said he, picking up a stick of charcoal, "and remember to tell me the moment your arms grow tired." Then Sandro commenced to work like one inspired. "Madonna," asked Sandro, as soon as he had noticed her hands begin to tremble, and had called a rest, "will you answer me a question truthfully?"

"I shall answer your question," said she, "either truthfully or not at all. One is not permitted to tell a lie."

"That is not what I meant," he explained; "no one would suspect madonna of untruthfulness or even dissimulation. But the question is a personal one, affecting myself, and I am anxious for an exact answer that does not spare my feelings."

"If I promise to answer your question, Messer Sandro, will you promise to answer one of mine?"

"Without reserve, madonna."

"Then what would you ask me?"

"Have you ever heard my paintings spoken of as eccentric, Madonna Giovanna?"

"Eccentric!" said she. "You are surely spreading you nets for compliments, Messer Sandro."

"No, madonna. I am told that my paintings are called eccentric, not only by the painters, but also by some of the nobility."

"May I ask who told you this story?"

"An old friend of mine, Leonardo da Vinci."

"He who fashioned a silver lute in the form of a horse's skull?"

"The same, madonna."

"Which act is the mark of one who is reasonable, sensible, and a fine judge of eccentricity in others!" and she tossed her head scornfully. "Now I will tell you the truth, Messer Sandro: there are some who admire your work, and there are some who do not—what else could you expect? Amongst those who admire your vast talent are such as Il Magnifico, my cousins the di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, the Vespucci, and my own people—this is surely enough to satisfy the ambition of the most ambitious! Those who do not like your paintings say—well, they say what people always say when any one makes a pathway of his own instead of following the beaten track."

"That I am eccentric?" suggested Sandro, smiling.

"I have never *heard* them call you eccentric," she replied, with an answering smile; "but, since you demand the truth, I have seen them raise their eyebrows." Then her face grew grave, and she spoke as

one who combined the enthusiasm and certainty of youth with the extraordinary culture of an Italian lady of the Quattrocento. "Messer Sandro," said she, "you are achieving something in your paintings which I do not understand. Men say that Fra Girolamo is eccentric and that Fra Mariano is a beautiful preacher, and yet the Dominican stirs me whilst Fra Mariano leaves me cold. In the same way, your pictures speak to my heart whilst those of Messer Ghirlandajo and the rest leave me absolutely unmoved. I do not admire your paintings!" she cried impulsively; "I never think whether I admire them or not: I love them!"

"Madonna!" he exclaimed, whilst the hot blood throbbed through his veins and burnt in his cheeks. "And Leonardo wants me to follow Ghirlandajo," he burst out, "and make my paintings the illusion of reality seen in a mirror!"

"Bah!" said she. "I have but to take a large mirror, and, placing this mirror in an apartment of the Casa Medici, group before it a tableau of the Medici and their servants dressed for the Carnival, and I have at once a finer picture than ever Messer Ghirlandajo can paint. But yours"—and she paused—"whenever I visit the villa at Castello," she continued, "I slip away from the others and stand before your Primavera. It is not the illusion of a reality seen in a mirror! It is truer and better than life itself!" Then she resumed her pose, whilst he, after trying to make answer but failing, took up his charcoal and continued his work.

"Messer Sandro," said Giovanna presently, "it is my turn to ask a question." She was careful to keep

her pose and look straight before her. "Yesterday you were in despair over this fresco; to-day you arrived as though you were walking on air, and commenced to draw without delay. What did you mean when you said that the secret of your problem was courage?"

"My despair was a very simple matter," he replied; "it was a very simple matter indeed; it is quite easy to explain. You see, it is like this, madonna." The idea of the picture was beginning to come to him, and his hand was moving quickly.

"Yes?" said she.

"Sometimes one's head is like a dried pumpkin, and sometimes it is like an egg."

"Yes?" said she, looking very straight before her and biting her lip.

"I think," he continued absently, "that your father-in-law disquieted me when he wished this fresco to be similar to the Castello picture of Springtime, and Dante completed my confusion."

"Yes," said she, biting her lip still harder.

"But when I saw Piero's Procris, I realised that courage can conquer incongruity."

"Oh!" she cried, with a catch in her voice. "Springtime, Dante, Procris! Do you always talk in riddles, Messer Sandro?"

"Eh?" he asked, puzzled; then, as the absurdity of his explanation dawned on him, he continued, laughing: "I once knew an English goldsmith, madonna; he worked for Baccio Baldini, and was a funny fellow who delighted in riddles: 'After I had crossed the Ponte Vecchio,' said he, 'I found a

maiden hanging, I sucked her blood, and squeezed her dry, and left her hanging.' The answer is quite simple when one remembers Baldini's orange grove across the Arno, for Baldini's oranges are as red as pomegranates and are without pips, and my riddle is of equal simplicity."

"Ah, yes! Quite simple when one knows the answer!"

"Like all riddles, madonna! But in the *Vita Nuova* Dante writes of your namesake, 'I saw coming towards me a certain lady who was very famous for her beauty. This lady's name was Giovanna, but because of her comeliness (or at least it was so imagined) she was called of many Primavera.' When Messer Giovanni desired that this picture should be like my picture of Springtime, my thoughts became confused. If I could have repeated my picture of Primavera, with you as the lady of spring, my task would have been easy; but what has been written has been written, and what has been painted has been painted, and I could not repeat the subject of Springtime worthily. You understand this?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Next, this difficulty in the subject overwhelmed me: I could not paint a dignified young matron, clad in her matron's robes, in the midst of pagan gods and goddesses, for this would make both me and my picture look ridiculous! I could not dress you as a pagan goddess, for that would make you appear absurd! Believe me, it was a pretty kettle of fish!"

"I had not thought of that," she exclaimed, for-

getting her pose and turning to face him. "It is indeed a problem!"

"Then, yesterday, I saw a painting of the Death of Procris, by Piero di Cosimo—a painting in which the incongruities and difficulty of the subject had been overcome by the courage and conviction with which the picture had been painted—and I realised that if the artist approaches his subject bravely and boldly, there need be no fear and no danger: it is only when an experienced artist becomes nervous and diffident that he runs the danger of detection—a bold man may do almost anything."

"That is true," she acknowledged.

"So this morning I came with the scheme of painting your portrait well and boldly, a dignified young matron in her matron's dress; and the rest is in the hands of the gods."

"Have you no scheme for this picture?" she asked with astonishment.

"I had none when I started; but now——" and he smiled happily to himself.

"And now?"

"God knows," he answered, "that you are sweet enough to be painted amidst the Graces."

She smiled, looking at him very kindly. "I think," said she, "that you have proved your contention." She meant that his sincerity had condoned the boldness of his compliment and that a bold man, so long as he be sincere, may do almost anything; but he, thinking that she referred to his argument, answered: "Yes. It is very sound logic indeed!"

Then she laughed a little and resumed her pose.

For some time the sitting passed in silence, she wondering at the simplicity and directness of Sandro's character, and so catching some faint glimmer of the reason why his paintings appealed to her ; whilst he, for his part, wove out the theme which he was to elaborate in his picture. Strictly speaking, madonna could not be called beautiful—Sandro had not realised this until he came to draw her features ; but, somehow or other, her ways, and the tones of her voice, and all that she said or did, conveyed an intense suggestion of joyousness and beauty ; this impression of joyousness and beauty he was now planning to display in his fresco.

Twenty years ago—even four years ago—Sandro would probably have argued that Giovanna's beauty was the reflex of her soul, and, following Dante's precept, he would have tried to paint her soul appearing in her features and looking out through the window of her eyes. But the troubles and efforts of the past three years had broadened his mental horizon and given him a bigger and wider grasp of his art. He had realised that a picture is one great whole, bound together by a unity of expression as well as by the artifices of composition.

In Springtime, Sandro had painted the figure of Spring, yet Spring had not begun and ended with the maiden embraced by the Zephyr, but had included the whole picture. Very well ! he would carry out the same principle to its full conclusion, for, in this fresco, not only should the actual figure be that of Madonna Giovanna, but the whole picture, with every flowing line and every nymph, should be the portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni.

Anderson photo] Louvre, Paris.

"THE WHOLE PICTURE SHOULD BE THE PORTRAIT OF GIOVANNA TORNABUONI."

Yes, a very noble and proud young matron had treated a stout and middle-aged craftsman with ineffable graciousness, and he would paint her so that men should love Madonna Giovanna Tornabuoni long after Il Magnifico had become an incident of history. And Sandro laughed to himself as he handled his stump and charcoal.

"How is the drawing progressing?" asked Giovanna. "Will the portrait be a good one?"

"The lute may be a graceful instrument," he answered; "but, after all, it is only a little wood and a few strings, whilst the true beauty of the lute lies in its sound."

"Yes," she answered, wondering what was coming.

"The peach is a very fair fruit, but the true beauty of the peach lies in its flavour."

"Yes," she answered doubtfully.

"The violet is but a small, purple flower until one detects its scent."

"And the answer to this riddle, Messer Sandro?" said she quickly, fearing another simile.

"Your portrait, madonna, if you will forgive my saying so, will be but the likeness of a little flesh and blood, clad in a matron's robe; your personal graces—like the sound of the lute, the sweetness of the peach, the perfume of the violet—will fill the rest of the picture. Thus, my painting will not be a picture of the Three Graces with Madonna Giovanna, but a portrait of Madonna Giovanna and her own natural graces."

"It seems a beautiful idea," she answered; "but I scarcely understand——"

"If I gaze at you steadfastly, madonna, I can see something of your character in the expression of your features and the glance of your eyes; but how could I hope to depict all this on the difficult surface of quickly-drying plaster? You understand?"

Madonna nodded her head.

"But, if I am talking with you—not staring at you rudely, but glancing at you from time to time—or, perhaps, talking with you when the dusk has veiled your features, or perhaps talking with you whilst I am busy painting—I am as acutely conscious of your presence, of your personality, of your character, as I would be if I were gazing at you in a strong light. Is that clear, madonna?"

"Perfectly," she answered.

"Therefore the Graces shall be your graces, and your character shall run through the whole of the picture, and men who look at this picture shall receive the same feeling of sweetness, graciousness, and joyousness that they would receive if they talked with you yourself."

Madonna smiled. Who would not smile at such an honest compliment? "It is a most beautiful idea," she said, "an idea that is full of poetry."

"It is logic," he answered; "for if one's picture were but reality seen in a mirror, how could one suggest the sound of the lute, the flavour of the peach, or the scent of the violet?"

"Of your imagery, I prefer the likeness of the lute."

"Why, madonna?"

"Because the wife is the lute, whilst the husband is the voice that sings."

"And, without the accompaniment of the lute, the voice is barren and desolate. Per Bacco!" he cried in excitement. "I shall paint Lorenzo as the voice, expressed by the Seven Sciences of Dante, and so we shall have pictures of the lute and the voice!"

"The two making the harmony of marriage;" and she came round to watch him sketching in the dainty features of the Graces.

"But why am I carrying the roses?" she asked.

"We started with the roses, madonna. Also," he added truthfully, "the roses add a useful touch of colour to the composition. Presently we will also paint in a figure of Venus, as though she were bringing the roses for your cheeks."

"Is your imagination never at a loss?" she laughed.

"It is, madonna," he answered bitterly, "when men deem me eccentric!"

"What!" cried Giovanna, "you mind the judgment of these painters of mirrors?"

"No," he replied. "So long as it is only Ghirlandajo and the rest who call me eccentric, I do not care; but if it should be those whose opinions I value—those like yourself—I should paint no more. Could a poet speak his thoughts if men deemed them foolish? And could an artist paint the subjects of his imagination if men called them eccentric?"

The fresco was completed, and Messer Giovanni Tornabuoni stood before it.

"This is a strange conception," he said, turning to his son, "and, if Sandro be logical and consistent, where will his fancy end?"

"If he paint the virtues of Giovanna as concrete figures," answered Lorenzo, "why should not he people a fresco with the vices of Cæsar Borgia?"

"Because the world itself would not contain his subject!"

"I, for my part," continued Lorenzo, "do not like this portrait: Giovanna's features do not flatter her. It is as though an architect were to build an ugly cathedral encircled by fine houses, and say: 'You will feel,' he would say, 'the beauty of this duomo in the mansions of the clergy that surround it.' Sandro is growing too fanciful!"

"He is becoming eccentric! Nevertheless, Lorenzo, it is foolish to look at the horse which one has bought, and cry: 'He is spavined!' One keeps such mistakes to one's self, or others laugh."

"Besides, there is no need to pain Sandro, for he means well, and is a good fellow."

"Yet, when it comes to the decoration of our chapel at this villa——" and Messer Giovanni Tornabuoni paused suggestively.

"Ghirlandajo is proving himself a clever craftsman," answered Lorenzo; "and Ghirlandajo has a safe imagination."

CHAPTER XXI

THE CLOSING GLORY

THE Tornabuoni frescoes were finished, but the friendship between Sandro and Madonna Giovanna remained ; for it seemed to have been one of those rare friendships which sprang from the ashes of mediæval chivalry and reached their full development in the ages of the Italian Renaissance. England tried such friendships, only to lose the Platonic ideal in the realities of love or marriage ; France tried them, to find that abstract love spelt concrete intrigue ; Italy, and only Italy, succeeded in evolving a sexual friendship that was free from a suspicion of flirtation.

It must not be imagined that Giovanna supplanted Alessandra, or that Sandro's feelings towards the lady of the Tornabuoni were anything except "celestial and altogether Platonic" ; but Sandro, like all artists, craved for sympathy in his undertakings, and Sandro found appreciation and understanding in the friendship of Madonna Giovanna. And so it came to pass that Sandro Botticelli fell under the influence of a Florentine lady of the cultured class, and that Sandro's work during this period obtained a quality of intellectual idealism which separates it from all else that he painted.

Outside, in the gardens of the Villa Tornabuoni, the

thrushes were singing their spring-songs and the roses were putting forth their blossoms ; inside, madonna was busily writing to her dearest friend, Vittoria Orsini, for the post would start for Rome before next morning's sunrise, and her friend's letter contained many questions to be answered.

"Thou askest me about our Sandro's *tondo*," she wrote, "the one which he had commenced for the audience chamber of the Magistrato de' Massai della Camera when thou wast in Florence : to my thinking, the finished picture is somewhat sad, but altogether beautiful."

She paused and knit her brows, for Vittoria had asked for the full description of a picture that was beyond her power to describe. Then she smiled, and her pen flowed on : "Thou wilt remember the drawing which he showed us—for if thou hadst forgotten the drawing thou wouldst not have remembered the picture —and thou, who hast studied the astrology of Albertus Magnus as well as the mysticism of Dante, wilt recollect the artist's description of his theme far better than I can hope to describe it. It sufficeth to say that our Sandro has succeeded in his task ; the circle of celestial heads, drawn in perspective, forms the ring or circle of an astrolabe, the whole picture depicting an armillary sphere which displayeth the Holy Infant as"—she hesitated, then drew her bow at a venture—"the Morning Star. To me, ignorant of celestial astrology, the picture is a tender and perfect composition ; to thee, versed in this science, the painting will prove a poem of Il Paradiso, carrying in itself the diagram whereby thou mayest unravel its mysteries."

Anderson photo] [Uffizi, Florence.

"SOMEWHAT SAD, BUT ALTOGETHER BEAUTIFUL."

She read through what she had written, laughing softly to herself at her evasion; for, although she could enjoy Sandro's Madonna of the Pomegranate, just as she could delight in the Divine Comedy of Dante, she knew that she could not appreciate its mystical beauty in the same way as a philosopher who was versed in the science and influence of the heavenly bodies. Then she resumed her letter, writing of what she could appreciate:

"Yet this *tondo* is but an old song, for since its completion our artist has fashioned a Venus of which all Florence is talking. Picture to thyself, *carissima*, a pale blue ocean, pale as the sea at daybreak; it is rippled by the morning breeze, and yet these waves are not depicted after the modern manner, but are shown by faint lines drawn thus VVVV. My Lorenzo declareth that Sandro's method remindeth him of the makeshifts of the ancient Egyptians, who symbolised the water in their intaglios by a waving line; Poliziano saith that the sea is showing its teeth, adding rudely that these same teeth are like sharks' teeth; but to me this imagery suggesteth a mystic ocean that is fit to bear its celestial burden. For on this sea there rideth a shell; and in this shell, ready to step on land, there standeth one who is beyond compare.

"Imagine, O Vittoria, a most perfect maiden, born newly from the foam, and wearing the garment of nakedness as though it were the robe of chastity. This maiden, like every true maid, is a little shy, and a little sad at leaving her maidenhood behind her; but her face is full of the promise of a love that is ready and waiting to be awakened.

"The men are saying that this girl is no true Venus, but some maid who has wandered from the cloister and has remembered that she has forgotten to clothe herself; even Messer Erberto Cornelio, who readeth our Sandro better than most, saith that this Venus cometh on with a high, ineffable blitheness, which savoureth rather of the circles of Paradise than of the heights of Olympus. But we, who are women, know that this maiden is woman before the Fall; for, whether we fall into joys like those of heaven or into the miseries of hell—and this dependeth mostly on the good or evil will of our husbands—marriage is a fall from the state of maidenhood; and so, although this maiden cometh on blithely, for already her heart loveth, she beareth herself a little shyly, and a little sadly at leaving her maidenhood behind her. How Sandro understandeth this mystery, which is hidden from even our beloved husbands, surpasseth"—Madonna looked over her shoulder to see who had entered the room.

"Sandro," said she, rising to welcome him, "I am busy singing the praises of your new picture to Madonna Vittoria, and I want your guidance, for there are some questions that puzzle me."

"To talk of one's own picture, madonna," he answered, "is always pleasant."

"Now this is what I would know," said Giovanna, reading from her letter the passage which described the ripples of the sea, but omitting the term "make-shifts" and the allusion to the "sharks' teeth": "are these jagged lines symbols like those of ancient Egypt, or are they the sea showing its teeth, or are

they meant to suggest an ocean that is mystic and celestial ?"

"I am ignorant of the symbolism of ancient Egypt," answered Sandro ; "otherwise the reply is simple."

"Then here," she said, "are some Egyptian intaglios that Lorenzo brought from the Medici collection to compare with your picture. "See"—and she placed a carnelian and two amethysts in his hand, pointing out the hieroglyphics—"this symbol is said to be a garden and this is evidently water."

"Per Bacco!" he cried, laughing gleefully. "This one is very like my orange grove, and the other is the image of my sea. These Egyptians were very wise fellows!"

"Because they were like you?" she asked, smiling somewhat sadly.

"Yes, madonna! Because they knew that the symbol of a reality might convey its meaning as strongly and as truthfully as a copy of that reality. Is it needful that a poet, when he voices the lament of a weeping maiden, should cry like a woman? Besides, did those who criticised my waves also criticise the breath of my Zephyrs?"

"No," she replied.

"Bene! And yet, to paint invisible air is more eccentric than to paint symbolical waves. But who could expect reason from a mule, or logic from a critic?"

"He who angers the mule," she answered gently, "is apt to get kicked. There is but little consolation

in saying afterwards: 'The mule was wrong to kick me; he has no sense of logic!'"

"Then what would you have, madonna? Shall I paint so as to please every pair of heels?"

She hesitated a moment, for her own instinct told her that Sandro was right in his convention; but those around her had been criticising the picture, and Giovanna could not bear to hear her friend ridiculed. "Was it needful to paint the waves as you have painted them?" she asked.

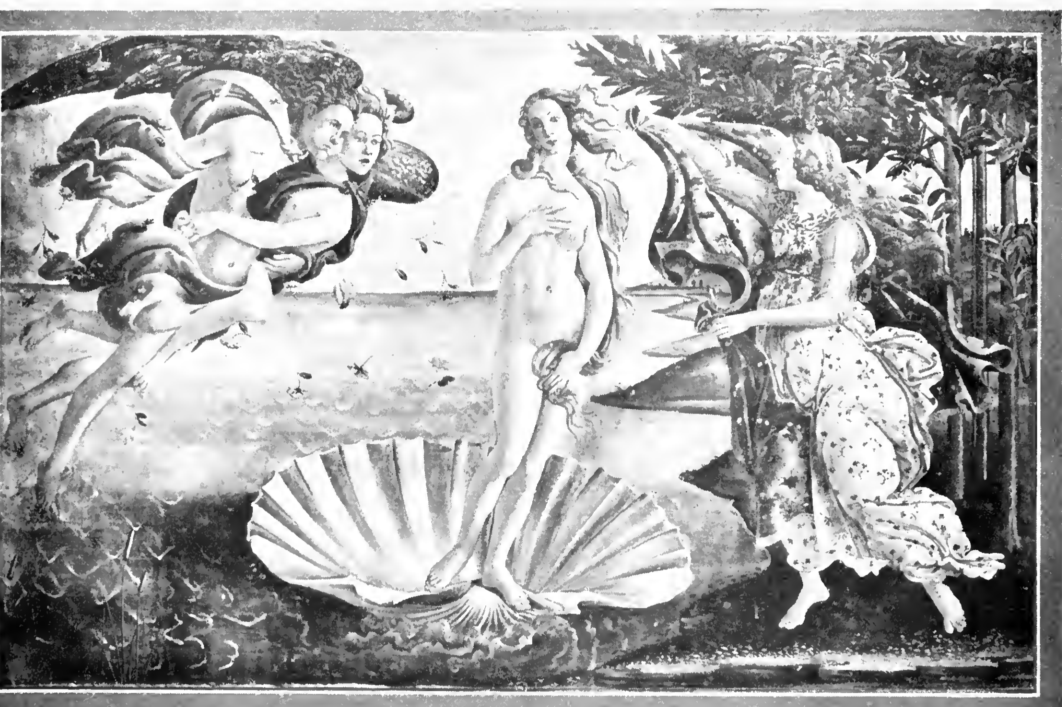
"Listen, madonna," he replied. "You shall answer that question for yourself. The Zephyrs are blowing the maiden to the shore, so the sea must be showing its teeth: that is evident. But if I were to paint the sea faithfully and the waves truthfully, I should either have to paint my maiden rowing ashore in a boat, which would be absurd, or else I should have to paint her wading to land, which would be ridiculous; for no shell could swim on a real sea, and no maiden could stand on the edge of a real shell without overbalancing."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, marvelling at the simplicity and directness of his reasoning.

"Therefore, since an illusion of the real sea is out of the question, I have painted a symbolical sea that raises no mental doubt as to the stability of my cockle-shell. Besides, the whole of my subject is symbolical."

"Yes?" she said eagerly; for his argument had convinced her of the essential rightness of his treatment, and she was anxious to hear his full explanation.

"Now what is Venus, madonna, but Love? And



Anderson photo] [Uffizi, Florence.

"THE AWAKENING OF LOVE." (p. 251).

what is the birth of Venus but the awakening of Love? Is that clear?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Very well; I might have painted the birth of love in the wanton heart of some guilty woman; but why should I paint so vile a subject, or why should I imagine that my patron desired so vile a picture? There remained, therefore, as my subject, the birth of love in the heart of a maiden. Is not that right, madonna?"

"Yes," she answered softly.

"Very well! As all men know, Venus is said to have been born from the foam of the sea—and as God only knows whence love cometh, and how she cometh, or why she cometh to one man and"—then he realised that he was thinking of Alessandra, and that the face of his Venus was in reality the face of Alessandra—"and that is all," he ended lamely.

"And so," said Giovanna, reading from her letter, "although this maiden cometh on blithely, for already her heart loveth, she beareth herself a little shyly, and a little sadly at leaving her maidenhood behind her."

"Madonna!" he murmured, for Giovanna had reached the heart of his picture, putting into words what he had tried to express in paint.

"You see," she answered, "that, although I questioned, I understood." Then they talked of his work, and of the picture of Pallas with a Centaur which he was painting for the Medici—he promised her to make this as mirror-like as possible—and of the Coronation of the Virgin which he was planning for San Marco. And in all their talk she, feeling that

he was her friend who needed sympathy, encouraged and understood.

So they talked : for those who had once welcomed Primavera were growing weary of Sandro's revolutionary idealism, the pendulum had swung towards naturalism, and, if it had not been for the sympathy and understanding of Madonna Giovanna, Sandro's artistic life would have been very solitary.

In that same year Giovanna Tornabuoni died. Politian wrote a Latin epitaph in her honour, but Sandro Botticelli painted no more great pictures.

Book IV

EVENING

COMMENCES IN THE YEAR 1490,
WHEN BOTTICELLI WAS FORTY-SIX

ENDS IN THE YEAR 1510,
WHEN BOTTICELLI DIED

Book IV

PERIOD: 1490 to 1510

1491. Sandro sits on a Commission for selecting designs for the façade of the Duomo.

Sandro receives a commission to assist with some mosaics for the Duomo, which commission never matured.

1492. Lorenzo de' Medici dies.

1493. Simone Filepepi returns from Naples, and lives with Sandro.

Piero de' Medici is expelled from Florence.

1494. Sandro and Simone buy a farm for 155 golden florins.

1496. Savonarola makes the first Bonfire of Vanities.

Michelangelo writes to L. di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, care of Sandro Botticelli.

1497. Sandro is paid for decorations at Castello.

Sandro and Simone are living at their old home in the Via Nuova, and are owners of the above farm.

1498. Savonarola is burnt.

1499. Sandro holds conversation with Doffo Spini.

1500. Sandro paints Nativity, now in National Gallery.

1502. Letter from agent of Isabella d'Este, showing that Sandro is not very busy.

1503. Sandro consulted as to site for Michelangelo's statue of David.

1510. Sandro Botticelli dies, and is buried in the family vault in the Church of the Ognissanti.

CHAPTER XXII

ISOLATION

ART—not the small, personal ideal of art that any one individual may hold, but that big Art which endows academies, builds museums, and buys pictures—Art is always conventional!

Her conventions may change, now tending towards the Byzantine, now towards the classical, now towards idealism, now towards realism ; but any new convention that is contrary to the spirit of existing conventions is deemed an impropriety.

Consider! Titian was accepted because he merely amplified the existing feeling after colour, Velasquez was accepted because he only developed the existing convention of illusion ; but our fathers saw the French Impressionists ridiculed, we have seen Whistler scoffed at, whilst our children will wonder how the Impressionists could have called the Post-Impressionists "madmen."

Three painters were chatting in Ghirlandajo's studio: there was old Benozzo Gozzoli, who had left his home in Pisa and come to visit his friends in Florence, there was Piero Pollaiuolo, and lastly, there was Domenico

Ghirlandajo himself. It was Benozzo who set the ball a-rolling.

"In the name of all the saints," said he, "or rather in the name of all the gods and goddesses, whatever has happened to Sandro Botticelli? It is enough to make Fra Filippo turn in his grave!"

"What do you mean?" asked Piero, glancing at Ghirlandajo with a flicker of the eyelid. "What could have happened to Sandro Botticelli? I saw him but yesterday, and he looked fat and healthy, praise the saints!"

"Pish! You know what I mean very well! What has happened to his painting?"

"He has become famous," replied Ghirlandajo, with a smile at Piero. "He has become a poet amongst painters."

"I know that! Although I live at Pisa, Pisa is not Constantinople, and I am not deaf, thank God! I have heard about the Primavera, and, although the colouring is not good, for Sandro never loved colour, I have sense enough to admire the picture. But what has befallen him in his later pictures?"

"What fault do you find?" asked Piero.

"He paints a Mars and Venus: Mars is asleep, Venus is very ugly; Mars is snoring, Venus is very cross; presently Mars will awake, then Venus will talk with him; I too am married, and I know what Mona Lena says to me when I have kept her awake with my snoring. If this be their marriage, no wonder Venus left her husband for that shepherd."

"His pictures are poems round which one may weave one's fancies," said Piero, anxious to lead him on;

for Benozzo, although he was very old and garrulous, was still amusing.

"A pretty poem, indeed, to raise such fancies! A snoring man, a cross woman! Ha! I have it! The wife hath placed her husband against a tree wherein there are hornets—I am not blind, thank God!—so that he may not snore too long. It is a poem like one of Pulci's."

"Since you have seen the Mars and Venus," suggested Piero, "you must also have seen the Birth of Venus, for that too is at Castello."

"There is a picture of a girl riding in a scallop-shell," answered Benozzo, "but she has not the appearance of a plump and comely Venus. Indeed, she has rather the carriage and expression of a Magdalene, a Magdalene who has grown thin and sorrowful through much repentance. She is a very miserable girl, and the picture is very fanciful and foolish. Now answer me: what has happened to Sandro?"

"His painting of Springtime," replied Ghirlandajo, "turned his head. He painted it so as to show Poliziano that painting was an art—as truly an art as is poetry—and the praise which he received made him believe that he was in truth a poet. Thus, as might have been expected, his painting has become both fanciful and eccentric."

"Fanciful?" laughed Benozzo. "I have seen his *tondo* of the Madonna with a pomegranate; the expression of the Madonna's face shows that the pomegranate has given her the stomach-ache: a fine fancy, indeed, and fine poetry!" Then his mood changed and he

spoke seriously: "This is a sad pity," he said; "for, although Sandro never had a true love of colour, and although his manner has always been somewhat beyond me, I have had an affection for his paintings."

"He used to colour well enough when he chose," answered Ghirlandajo.

"It was his colouring," broke in Piero, "that first won the admiration of my brother and myself."

"To his power of colouring," continued Ghirlandajo, "there was added an extraordinary gift of draftsmanship, a fine sense of composition, and a truly marvellous imagination. What he lacks is the gift of reality."

"Do you mean that his anatomy is defective?" asked Pollaiuolo. "He mastered anatomy—in a superficial way, of course, for he himself never dissected—when he was in our bottega."

"I was not speaking of his anatomy," answered Ghirlandajo, "although, indeed, his anatomy is shamefully careless. What I mean is that his painting is superficial—it is all on the surface of his picture—there is no depth, no illusion of reality."

"He could paint the illusion of reality well enough when he came to us," answered Pollaiuolo. "The paragon of the Magi, which he first brought to show us, was a masterpiece both in colouring and depth of shading."

"That is what I contend," retorted Ghirlandajo: "Sandro can paint anything that he chooses, but he has no love for reality. He sacrifices truth in anatomy, truth in colouring, truth in illusion—he sacrifices all this to his imagination, and his imagination has now

run away with him and degenerated into fancy. He has become very fanciful."

"He has become very eccentric," answered Pollaiuolo.

"Most eccentric!" assented old Benozzo sadly. "It is enough to make Fra Filippo turn in his grave!"

Whilst the three painters were talking in Ghirlandajo's studio at Florence, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici and Lorenzo Tornabuoni were walking with Poliziano in the garden of the villa at Castello.

"A strange fellow visited me to-day," remarked di Pierfrancesco—"old Benozzo Gozzoli, the painter. I imagined that he was dead. Do you remember him, Politian?"

"He has been at Pisa for many years," answered the poet, "and I remember him but slightly. He was a fine craftsman in his time; one of the old school."

"He came to see my pictures," continued di Pierfrancesco, "and I showed him the paintings myself. He nearly wept over that Venus of Sandro's, saying that it was enough to make Fra Filippo turn in his grave. Maledetto!" he added, "I am growing very weary of the Venus of Sandro's!"

"I do not marvel," answered Tornabuoni, with a sigh. "Sandro's fresco of Giovanna has almost driven me away from the Villa Tornabuoni."

"Mind!" said di Pierfrancesco. "As a painting to decorate the walls, Sandro's Venus is a fine picture. It is the endless questioning and criticism from every one who sees the picture that wearies me. And yet,"

he added thoughtfully, "there is something about the Venus herself that I find distasteful."

"I fancy," suggested Politian, "that poor Sandro confused the Divine love which appeals to the intellect—that love which Plato speaks of and which we call friendship—with the earthly or passionate love; and, forgetting that the sensual love alone is under the protection of Venus, whilst the higher love has nothing to do with the goddess, he has evolved a kind of Platonic Astarte."

"There is much in what you say," responded Lorenzo.

"Perhaps I can express my meaning better in verse:

Our Sandro's Venus stands without compare,
As pale as moonlight, and as wan and dim:
The mystic shimmer of her gilded hair,
Th' unearthly umber-line beneath her chin,
Combine to form a rare celestial air
That saves her votary from vernal sin.
For only spirit could obtain felicity
Within the arms of Sandro's eccentricity.

Is it not this that displeases you, Lorenzo?"

"Scarcely," replied di Pierfrancesco; "for I admire this Venus immensely—and yet, I resent her appearing as Venus."

"Your feeling is but natural," answered Politian; "for a poet would have treated the goddess, either in classical language with dignified phrasing, or else as one filled with earthly and sensual passions; this painting of a modest maiden posturing as an unclad Venus offends one's sense of propriety."

"That is true," said Lorenzo: "this Venus is no classical goddess; and, if Sandro's maiden had been a

reality, she would have been a girl worthy of respect and not one that could be pictured as an unclad wanton. It is a strange failure on Sandro's part, for Primavera approached poetry in its feeling."

"This too is poetry," answered Poliziano, "but it is Sandro's poetry—poetry gone mad ! So long as he could borrow his theme from Lucretius he did well enough, but he has neither the learning nor culture to elaborate a theme for himself."

They walked along the terrace in silence, then Tornabuoni spoke : "We have commissioned Ghirlandajo to paint the frescoes in our chapel at the villa," said he. "I am sorry for this, as I am fond of Sandro ; but he has become so eccentric that no longer can one trust him."

"I am afraid there are many more who think as you do," replied Politian : "the Vespucci, for instance."

"I have been considering what you said, Politian," remarked di Pierfrancesco presently, "and your statement is correct : so long as Sandro has a poet's theme to elaborate he may be trusted, but when he evolves his own subject it is, as you say, like poetry gone mad. Therefore I shall commission no more original pictures."

"Poor Sandro ! " murmured Lorenzo Tornabuoni.

"But," continued di Pierfrancesco, "I have already spoken to him about some drawings from Dante ; and, with his skill in draftsmanship, there is no reason why he should not illustrate the Divine Comedy in a fine manner. But no more original pictures ! " And Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici shook his head.

It was evening, and Sandro was alone. A large panel, eight foot wide by twelve foot high, which was to bear a painting of the Coronation of Our Lady for the Church of San Marco, had been delivered in his studio ; and there it stood, reflecting the glow of the fire and suggesting the subject which should fill it. He seemed to behold visions of the Madonna crowned by the love of the Eternal Father, and there appeared the possibility of depicting that heaven of which Dante sang :

> "There is a light above, which visible
> Makes the Creator unto every creature,
> Who only in beholding Him has peace ;
> And it expands itself in circular form
> To such extent that its circumference
> Would be too large a circle for the sun.
> The semblance of it is all made of rays
> Reflected from the top of Primal Motion,
> Which takes therefrom vitality and power."

At the foot of the picture there should stand saints ; and in the mystic circle surrounding the Creator, endowed with the vitality of Primal Motion, there should be :

> "That other host, that flying sees and sings
> The glory of Him who doth enamour it,
> And the goodness that created it so noble,
> Even as a swarm of bees, that sinks in flowers
> One moment, and the next returns again
> To where its labour is to sweetness turned."

One of the logs in the fire shifted with a tiny crash amidst a flight of ascending sparks, the light died away, and Sandro's thoughts moved on.

Only that afternoon he had visited Santa Maria Novella and seen the frescoes which Ghirlandajo was

painting for Messer Giovanni Tornabuoni, and Sandro could not help comparing his idea of a sacred picture, mystic in its conception, poetic in its treatment, with the mirror-like realism of Ghirlandajo.

How their ways had diverged since the time when he had been appointed master of the works in the Vatican, with Ghirlandajo under him! Ghirlandajo had gone his way of technical perfection, ever growing more polished and illusive in his methods—illusive of what? Sandro smiled to himself, for what did the illusion in the Santa Maria Novella frescoes of the Lives of the Baptist and the Madonna amount to? Simply this—an illusion of the members of the Tornabuoni family and their friends, gorgeously arrayed, and posing in Scriptural tableaux! A pest on realism!

But stay! Had not Sandro himself painted the Medici posing as the Wise Men and grouped around the Divine Infant? What moral right had he to look at Ghirlandajo's frescoes and cry: "A pest on realism!" Ghirlandajo was a very fine craftsman, and these were very fine pictures, and he, Sandro Botticelli, was a very uncharitable man! What did Ghirlandajo and the rest think of Sandro Botticelli? That was a better question!

He turned his back on the panel, and, seating himself, stretched out his legs towards the warmth of the fire. What must his contemporaries think of him? Leonardo da Vinci had told him sufficient to form a sound basis for his surmises.

Here were da Vinci, Ghirlandajo, and the other leading artists, singly and as a whole, striving to master illusion and obtain a new feeling of depth in their pictures. The old painters before Giotto's time had

been content with the dimensions of height and width; but, since Giotto started the movement, pictorial art had been struggling—first by the study of shading and perspective, later by the study of atmosphere—to obtain a new quality of depth in painting, a quality that should make a picture equal a scene viewed in a mirror or through an open window.

Here, on the other hand, was he, Sandro Botticelli, deliberately turning his back on their quest as well as on many other artistic principles which they held dear. The worst of it was—at least from their point of view—that he had won his reputation with composition, design, and colouring that had compelled their admiration and astonishment, and had then turned aside in order to carry out his own ideals.

And yet, after all, how empty was this idea of illusion; for he had but to visit one of the religious spectacles on any great festival, and he would see a sacred tableau that was quite as artistic and far more illusive than any picture which Ghirlandajo had painted; and he had only to ride out to one of the villas of Il Magnifico, and, opening a window, gaze on a landscape which was far more beautiful than any that Leonardo had painted—a living landscape, with swaying trees, and moving clouds, and changing shadows. "An illusion of reality," thought he, "can never equal the reality; whereas Art, if it be true Art, must surpass reality."

He flung a log on the embers, and, turning, looked at the panel. "This vision," he murmured, "must surpass any illusion of a reality, as truly as heaven surpasseth earth."

CHAPTER XXIII

IN 1490

IT was in the spring of fourteen-hundred-and-ninety, in the forty-sixth year of his life and during the painting of the Coronation of Our Lady, that the trouble came on Sandro.

He had finished the four saints at the foot of the picture—solid men standing on solid ground, meditating, defining, teaching, blessing—fitting types of God's Church on Earth ; these he had painted with sufficient realism to proclaim the fact that the Church Militant is real, solid, and visible. He had finished the choir of angels, a mystic host circling rhythmically amidst a shower of falling roses. But when he came to paint the Almighty Father placing the crown on the head of the Madonna, his inspiration failed him.

So long as he was painting the foundation of his picture, the dignified saints who were perceiving and proclaiming the vision, his strength and mastery had served ; so long as he was fashioning the setting of his jewel, the glad angels which should surround the Divinity, something of his old spirit with its verve, its swing, and its rhythm had carried him on ; but when he attempted to paint the jewel itself—God and Our

Lady—his imagination proved as dry as a pathway in summer.

He stood before the half-finished panel, finding his work very good, and knowing that it only needed the figures of God and the Blessed Virgin to make it near perfection. He fetched a large sheet of paper, and, fixing it on his drawing-board, stood before it ready to commence the figures ; but his paper remained blank. It was just as though his invention were exhausted and his mind barren.

He waited for a time, with the empty sheet of paper before him ; then he put the drawing-board aside and stood before the panel. The setting for his subject showed a perfection which told him that the subject itself, God the Father crowning the gracious Madonna, must be more perfect than anything he had so far painted. He experienced a diffidence that almost touched on panic, and words from *Il Paradiso* seemed to form themselves in his brain :

> "As the geometrician, who endeavours
> To square the circle, and discovers not,
> By taking thought, the principle he wants,
> E'en such was I. . . .
> I wished to see how the image to the circle
> Conformed itself, and how it there finds place ;
> But my wings were not enough for this."

He covered the panel, and, locking the door after him, left the studio. "This will pass !" he muttered nervously, for all painters know what it is to grow heavy-witted and leaden-fingered. "This will pass !" he repeated.

Leaving his studio, and turning quickly to the right, Sandro sought the banks of the Arno. Heavy storm

clouds were coming up over Fiesole, and the road beside the river would be deserted : the first instinct of one whose invention fails him is towards solitude. Then gradually, without knowing what he did, Sandro turned his steps in the direction of the Tornabuoni Palace ; as soon as the animal instinct towards solitude has found vent, the human instinct craves for sympathy.

"Maledetto!" he muttered, pulling himself up with a jerk, for he had realised that Madonna Giovanna was no longer at the Palazzo Tornabuoni. But, even though she who had been his friend was dead, the human desire for companionship came strong, the distaste for his own company came stronger, and Sandro paused irresolute. Alessandra, as he knew, was with her husband at Prato; Filippino was in Rome; Leonardo, who, although he and Sandro might differ in every fundamental of their art, was still his comrade, had settled at Milan ; his old patrons of the Medici circle seemed to have drifted away from him. Then, since anything was better than the company of his own thoughts, he faced the coming storm, and made his way to the Dominican church at the foot of the heights of Fiesole, where Fra Angelico had painted an altar-piece of the Coronation.

During the constant work of the past eight years Sandro had found but little time to study the paintings of the older masters ; and now, as he faced Fra Angelico's masterpiece, the force of the simplicity of the angelic painter struck him like a gust of fresh air from snow-clad mountains. This was not his ideal ; in fact, the enthroned figure of the Almighty Father

surrounded by courtier-like saints was contrary to his conception of the subject ; but the absence of illusion, the pure tones of the flat colouring, almost destitute of shading, spoke in a language that was similar to his, and the graceful dignity of the young Madonna appealed to him. What Fra Angelico had done for the last generation, Sandro Botticelli would try to do for the present, and next morning he would start on the completion of his picture.

Again, next morning, Sandro brought out his drawing-board, and, placing the board on an easel and the easel in front of the half-finished panel, stood before it. Again he waited patiently for the idea of God and Our Lady to materialise. If he could only once see how the vision conformed itself to the circle of angels, and there found place, he felt that he would be able to picture these figures ; but the more he took thought, the more barren became his power of invention. "This will pass !" he muttered. "This will pass !"

But the day passed, the week passed, the month passed, and yet the mental incapacity of picturing these figures remained. For an artist's mind is like a stream ; unless the fish happen to be on the feed, no amount of patience will fill the basket, and unless the imagination should chance to rise, no toil of anxious thought will complete the picture.

For days and weeks the Coronation of the Virgin remained unfinished ; then, since the Guild of Silk-weavers who had ordered the picture for San Marco were pressing for the fulfilment of the commission, Sandro forced himself to paint in the best figures that

Anderson photo] [Academy, Florence.

CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.

he could. Possibly, through his desire to contrast these two figures with the realistic saints below, Sandro painted God and Our Lady conventionally in the vain hope of making them appear mystical. Possibly a letter from Filippino, who had just completed his father's monument at Spoleto, recalled Fra Filippo's Coronation on the apse of Spoleto Cathedral, and Sandro, after gleaning what he could from the older painters, sought to repeat the same idea. Probably he realised that Fra Angelico and Orcagna were nearer to his ideals than any of his contemporaries, and, despairing of his own powers of invention, he studied their pictures—especially Orcagna's Last Judgment in Santa Maria Novella —in the hope of obtaining inspiration. Certainly Dante's conception of the angels, "even as a swarm of bees," seems to have affected him, causing him to paint the principal figures out of scale with the angelic host; his intellect lost its sense of proportion; the image failed to conform itself to the circle, nor "there finds place"; his mind, so to speak, drooped, and Sandro could only paint with an uninspired melancholy.

What the silk-weavers said on the delivery of their picture is unrecorded; what all Florence thought is merely a matter of conjecture. Sandro had won their favour by work that they could appreciate; he had delighted the most cultivated of them by the conception of the Primavera, and received a crowd of commissions in consequence; then, having obtained these commissions, he developed his own imaginative idealism in a way that was contrary to the whole artistic spirit of the age. To them, this Coronation of the Virgin, realistic

in the four saints, highly imaginative in the circle of angels, and Giottesque—almost Byzantine—in the two chief figures, must have been the crowning folly of Sandro's "eccentricity"; besides, as they would have noticed, the figures of God and the Madonna do not even bear the marks of fine technical skill. One can almost hear them murmur, "Sandro must be mad!"

At any rate, this picture of the Coronation was the end of Sandro's career as a painter of the first class, and this picture of the Coronation was the last important commission for either panel or fresco that Sandro ever received.

At first it seems strange that the *Anonimo Gaddiano* makes no mention of Sandro's collapse, and that Vasari has never heard of it.[1] But, on second thoughts, is it strange? For the nightmare that haunts all writers, as well as all painters, is the dread of the failure of the imagination—the loss of the power of expression—and this is the one subject which they shrink from mentioning. Even if Sandro had whispered his secret to his anonymous friend, he would have kept the secret inviolate.

It seems strange that none of the modern writers on Botticelli should have detected his sudden rise to the full individuality of his power, his brief triumph, and his sudden collapse. But, from the time of Vasari until the modern æsthetic impulse, Botticelli passed

[1] Vasari's two statements—that Sandro became eccentric and gave up painting in order (*a*) to illustrate Dante, which he did about this date, (*b*) to become a follower of Savonarola, who preached in Florence from 1490 to 1498—look as though Vasari had heard a rumour of Sandro's failure, but not the exact reason.

unnoticed, and the chronological arrangement of his pictures is a thing of yesterday.

The *Anonimo Gaddiano* is right—there are some things that do not bear the telling. Conscious madness is one, the conscious loss of expression in a great artist is another. And yet it is necessary that we should pierce the tragedy of Sandro Botticelli's life if we would apprize his pictures, and place our artist where he should be, amongst the greatest of the masters.

During the eight years that ended in 1490, Sandro Botticelli painted at least fifteen masterpieces, of which twelve are still extant: each of these is perfectly original, each absolutely distinctive. Then, in the midst of the sixteenth, his power of expression ceased just as though the cord of his genius had been cut with a knife, and Sandro Botticelli painted no more great pictures. Cover up the two chief figures in the Coronation, and see how dramatic and complete was the collapse: the four saints and the circle of angels equal Sandro at his best. Uncover the figures of God and Our Lady, and they appear so poor and out of proportion that Mr. Berenson considers they were painted by an inferior hand. So they were; but that same hand painted the Madonna in the Nativity of 1500, and that hand was Sandro's.[1]

During the twenty years that elapsed between 1490 and Sandro's death, there is no doubt that he painted much, and a letter of the agent of Isabella d' Este, dated September 1502, tells us that Sandro worked willingly, and that he was not hindered by a press of

[1] Compare the Virgin in this picture with the Virgin in the authentic Nativity of 1500, p. 286.

commissions. Some of these later paintings show marks of Botticelli's old genius, others are doubtless considered to have been painted by another and "inferior hand," but not one has that unity of expression which stamps all Sandro's masterpieces of his greatest period. His power of will seems to have carried him through a part of some of his later paintings, then there comes the same collapse that mars the Coronation.

Now what had happened to Botticelli?

In the first place one must dismiss Vasari's statement that he gave up his work in order to write a commentary on Dante or in order to become a disciple of Savonarola; for there is no trace of, or contemporary allusion to, any written commentary, and the illustrations which he executed for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, and which are now in Berlin, are simple drawings in outline that could not have affected his paintings seriously; as to Savonarola, Sandro did not become his follower until at least six years after the painting of the Coronation.

In the second place, the technical qualities of Sandro's illustrations of Dante, his Communion of St. Jerome, the Ambrosiana *tondo* and the Calumny of Apelles, must forbid the idea that he suffered from any kind of physical seizure.

Lastly, although it is more than probable that Sandro's failure in the picture of the Coronation may have been due to an overwrought brain and an overtaxed imagination—there are few conscientious painters, musicians, or writers who have failed to experience a touch of the same ailment—rest and relaxation would have allowed a healthy man of forty-six to recuperate

his energies and recover the full strength of his faculties.

Well, what is it that cripples the imagination and fetters the power of expression, that makes one who has something to tell falter and lose all brilliancy? The lack of a sympathetic understanding in those whom he is addressing! Active opposition may stimulate a man to put forth his best energies, but a chilling indifference will crush any one who has that highly-strung disposition that we call the artistic temperament.

This must be so; for an artist like Sandro Botticelli lives to express the imaginings and picturings of his mind in the form of visible pictures; and if others fail to understand and share his emotions, he feels that his efforts have been fruitless. It is no good to say that he ought to be brave, and paint on in the calm courage of his conviction: the man is an artist, not a philosopher, and to credit him with the possibility of a philosophic equanimity is to assume the lack of an artistic temperament.

At the most, an artist may despise popularity; he may make his appeal to a small circle of the elect; he may, conceivably, work for the understanding and appreciation of one only; but no painter ever has, or ever will, paint worthy pictures unless he has some one who both understands and sympathises. Only madmen write letters to themselves.

With the painting of Primavera, Sandro had become the favourite artist of the Medici clique; and, from the customs of the times, the names of his patrons, and the subjects and execution of his pictures, we may

justly assume that the crowd of Sandro's masterpieces was the immediate result of his Springtime triumph, or, at the furthest, that these commissions were given within three years of the time when Primavera was finished.

I think we may go further, and assume that Botticelli's idealism was never fully understood or really appreciated by the Florentine mind, and that, as soon as the boldness and novelty of Sandro's methods had ceased to be a novelty, and the sensation caused by Primavera had died down, Sandro went out of fashion: poetry was poetry; poetry was a fine art; the mechanical art of painting was never meant to usurp the functions of the poet—and that was an end of the matter and the end of Sandro Botticelli. The pictorial movement was already carrying the artistic world on, through Filippino Lippi, towards the classicalism of Raphael; and this movement was to make Botticelli despised, neglected, and forgotten for nearly four centuries. He had played a bold game, he had made a brave bid for the recognition of true æstheticism, and he had failed to win the European taste. Was it strange that Sandro's imagination dried up, and that his power of expression ceased?

> "Stirpe fui, forma, natoque, opibusque, viroque
> Felix, ingenio, moribus atque animo,"

was Poliziano's epitaph on Giovanna Tornabuoni; and, when Sandro's popularity began to wane, the friendship of this noble lady, with her singular culture as well as her natural refinement, seems to have heartened him—in fact his finest work was achieved between the time of

the Tornabuoni frescoes and the date of Giovanna's death. Then, because of the lack of any one to whom he might address himself, Sandro's power of expression ceased, and from the date of Giovanna Tornabuoni's death, Sandro Botticelli completed no more great pictures.

CHAPTER XXIV

SANDRO'S LAST PERIOD

THE highest act of a being is the act of expression, the highest type of expression is personal expression, and the highest form of personal expression is creation. Strictly speaking, man is always hindered from perfect expression by the drag of earth-made words, earth-ground paints, or earth-bound muscles; but, nevertheless, a work of real genius sometimes shows so much of the artist's personal feeling, so much of his animate vitality, that it approaches actual creation.

During his greatest period, Botticelli's pictures throbbed with his vitality; they were stamped with the three qualities of vivid imagination, decorative feeling, and simplicity of expression, and these three qualities were so evenly balanced that they formed one quality which is akin to poetry. Possibly a painting of Sandro's best period may be most easily understood by comparing it to a rhythmic and imaginative poem, written in a language which is so natural and beautiful that one is carried away into a new land of reality.

But when Sandro came to his later period—that is to say, during the last twenty years of his life—he

seemed to have lost confidence in himself, and his later pictures never displayed that peculiar blend of imagination, decoration, and simplicity that made his finest works so delightful. It is just as though others had failed to understand his natural method of expression, and he, seeing this, had cast about for some new style that they could understand; sometimes he approached the realism of his contemporaries, sometimes he turned to the conventional idealism of the older school; but, whether he attempted the realism of Ghirlandajo, or whether he essayed the idealism of Fra Angelico, something of his own style always crept into his painting.

But the natural style of Sandro was exceedingly individual, so individual that it refused to harmonise with the borrowed style of others; and the style of Sandro was exceedingly energetic, so energetic that, unless it were curbed by his sense of decoration and marshalled by his sense of rhythm, it was apt to become exaggerated; and his conception of a picture had such completeness and unity that the whole picture must be painted in his natural manner, and it was impossible for him to alter his natural manner, or add to his picture, or even remove a single figure, without ruining the whole.[1] In short, as long as Sandro had been able to work out his own theme in his own way, his natural sense of fitness had wrought the theme into a poem, and this poem was so perfectly proportioned that it is impossible for the greatest living artist to

[1] It is interesting to cover up a part of one of Botticelli's pictures, and to notice how the whole effect is ruined. Any detail from his work is, by itself, unsatisfactory.

take any one of Sandro's greatest pictures and make an improvement. But when Botticelli lost his freedom of expression, he lost his sense of artistic proportion.

Take the finest of his later realistic pictures, the Calumny of Apelles, and notice how Sandro's energy runs riot in the central group: the rendering of movement, which was softened by idealism in Primavera, which was converted into the scheme of decoration in the Birth of Venus, here exceeds all artistic limits.

Take the finest of his later religious pictures, the Ambrosiana *tondo*: the theme is ideal—the maternal instinct of Our Lady anticipating the hunger of the Divine Infant—but the whole dignity of the picture is ruined by the size of the angels. The older masters had been wont to draw their angels as small, conventional beings performing conventional actions; Sandro, in his greater period, had been accustomed to draw them the size of children approaching adolescence, and, since his conception of angels was not unlike his conception of innocent and beautiful children, the result was altogether satisfactory; but in this *tondo* he has drawn the angels very small, and has yet made them like human beings performing human actions, with the result that they have the appearance of comely midgets or animated dolls. Take the Nativity of 1500, in parts strongly reminiscent of the work of Fra Angelico, and notice how the Botticellesque circle of angels, perfect in itself, makes the rest of the picture appear archaic.

The accusations of over-vehemence, restlessness, and fantastic exaggeration, which are so often brought against Botticelli, seem to be based on the paintings of

Anderson photo] [Ambrosiana, Milan.

"HE HAS DRAWN THE ANGELS VERY SMALL."

his later period or on the productions of his bottega. By the paintings which he executed in the period of his freedom—that is to say, from the date of Primavera to the commencement of the Coronation—must Sandro be judged.

The wave of popularity had swept by, leaving Sandro stranded ; and when, in 1490, he found himself without any commission of importance, he took the brave and manly course of throwing his whole energy into the work of his bottega. Any orders that came along were promptly executed. Messer Tommaso, the wool-merchant, wanted the panel for a coffer executed in the modern style and with the best finish : very well! Messer Piero, the silk-weaver, desired a *tondo* for his sitting-room ; it must contain a religious subject and be painted by Sandro himself: very well! The nuns of Santa Scapula wished for some frescoes on their chapel wall, but the price must be extremely moderate : very well ! Messer Girolamo would like a very cheap picture, something like the Madonna of the Pomegranate : very well, Biagio should paint this! Even when Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici required his villa at Castello decorated in an inexpensive manner, Sandro took on the job at the wages of a common house painter, eight golden florins for three months' work.

Yes! It was a fine, brave life ; for Sandro had his journeymen and apprentices to think of as well as himself, and, as Vasari tells us, "he had an extraordinary love for those whom he knew to be zealous students in art." So he kept his bottega in full swing, refusing nothing from embroidery to fresco, and ever

ready to help, assist, or design for those who were under him. And so, although we can recognise scores of pictures as having come from Sandro's bottega, it is very difficult to tell which were painted by the master himself, or which were painted from his designs or under his direction.

Yet, during all this hack-work, Sandro had the consolation of illustrating Dante for di Pierfrancesco; and one may imagine that these sketches—many of them tentative and unelaborated—carried him back into the days when he had lived in the inferno of Pollaiuolo's studio, through the purgatory of his love for Alessandra, and during the paradise of his greatest period, when he was living only in the heaven of unfettered creation. And, perhaps, throughout this labour of love, there hovered the vision of a copy of the Divine Comedy, in which the illustrations equalled the perfection of the text.

CHAPTER XXV

IN A GARDEN OF OLIVES

"Never was there so sweet a gladness,
Joy of so pure and strong a fashion,
As with zeal and love and passion
Thus to embrace Christ's holy madness."

SANDRO paused, resting heavily on his sticks, and let his eyes wander down the valley of the Arno until they rested on the mountains of Carrara. Then he resumed his constitutional up and down the path through his olive grove, humming to himself, as old men will :

"They who are mad in Jesus slight
All that wise man seeks and prizes ;
Wealth and place, pomp, pride, delight,
Pleasure and fame, their soul despises ;
Sorrow and tears and sacrifices,
Poverty, pain, and low estate,
All that the wise men loathe and hate,
Are sought by the Christian in his madness."

The day was very hot for April, one of those days when the wind dies away and the showers hold off, and Sandro smiled to think of the foresight which had prompted his brother and himself when they joined their small savings and brought this property. It was true that the farm only produced about four

barrels of wine and two bushels of fruit a year, and that they had to pay a pair of fat capons to the Rector of Santa Maria Nuova as the annual rent-charge ; it was true that Lorenzo da Sansepolero took the house and much of the produce in return for tending the property ; but the price had been very cheap, the air was very fine, the view was very beautiful, and, above all, the property was their very own, something that always stood between them and destitution. Yes, the day was hot for April, so Sandro sat down and closed his eyes.

Perhaps it was the song that carried him back, but, as he sat with his eyes closed, he seemed to see the Piazza of San Marco. It is Carnival time, and the piazza is thronged with a waiting, expectant crowd ; a procession enters the Square—boys dressed in the form of beautiful angels, boys rattling alms-boxes, boys carrying their gleanings of playing-cards, doubtful books, and other anathema which should presently be burnt, boys to the number of thousands ; after these come religious and clergy, all clad as angels ; after these come men, then women, then girls, all clad as angels ; after these there is carried the image of the Saviour. The whole of this huge procession moves forward, dancing as David danced before the Ark, and, as they dance, they shout : " Viva Gesù Cristo, Re nostro ! Viva Gesù Cristo, Re nostro ! "

He seemed to see all this as clearly as in a dream, and yet he could hear the olive-leaves rustling about him.

He is standing in the crowd, merely as an onlooker, and a tall gaunt man is standing beside him.

" These men are clearly mad," he mutters.

"It is even as Fra Girolamo hath prophesied," answers the stranger. "He hath foretold that we should confound the wise by our actions, becoming as fools for Christ's sake. 'Viva Gesù Cristo, Re nostro!'" And the man begins to sing the hymn of Girolamo Benivieni—the hymn which Sandro had sung under the olive-trees, and which had aroused this vision.

The door of the convent of San Marco opens, the friars come forth following Fra Girolamo Savonarola, their Prior; they are clad in white albs, each one wearing a garland on his head, and they form a great circle round the entire piazza, dancing and singing psalms.

A huge bonfire stands in the Square; it is piled with profane pictures, naked statuary, books such as Boccaccio's, cards, cosmetics, false hair, daggers, and a thousand other kinds of anathema that the boys have collected. This is lit, and Lorenzo di Credi, Baccio della Porta, and others of his friends stagger forward with their arms full of studies from the nude, and fling them into the flames. "Viva Gesù Cristo, Re nostro!" shrieks the crowd in a frenzy of religious fervour.

"Hast thou, Sandro Botticelli, nothing to destroy?" asks the man beside him.

But he, knowing that he is without reproach in this matter, and that his undraped figures are clothed in modesty, shakes his head and moves away. "These men are clearly mad," he thinks.

The cries of the multitude soften, and become merged together like the sound of troubled waters; this, in turn, gives place to the rustling of the olive-

leaves, for a breeze has sprung up. Sandro stretched himself, and, rising, sought a seat that was sheltered from the wind, whilst the sun fell on his rheumatic knees with a comfortable warmth. Again he closed his eyes.

This new stove for his studio was a great success. When he sat before the old one, the heat used to scorch his legs, but this one warmed without scorching. If they had only used such a fire for Fra Girolamo Savonarola, a fire that would warm without scorching and burning.

He had been a wonderful man, this Fra Girolamo, and, in spite of his eccentricity. he felt almost compelled to believe in him. Simone had believed in him, and Simone believed in him now, and Simone was not eccentric.

Fra Girolamo's earnestness had been marvellous, his self-denial a miracle, and his prophecies almost compelled belief. And yet, in spite of all his seeming virtues, his judges had found him guilty of death—and his judges had examined him most thoroughly in secret—and his judges were good and honest citizens.

Ah! Here is Doffo Spini—it was strange that he had not noticed him before—and Doffo was one of the chief persons who had always been chosen to examine Fra Girolamo—and Doffo was a most honest and truthful man.

"Doffo, my friend," he asks, "tell me the plain truth as to what faults you find in Fra Girolamo, by which he deserved to die so infamous a death!"

"Sandro, have I to tell you the truth?" answered Doffo.

"The whole truth!"

"Then, not only did we never find in him mortal sin; but, moreover, neither was venial sin found in him!"

"Wherefore," he asks, wondering, "did you cause him to die in so infamous a fashion?"

"Not I," answers Doffo sadly, "but Benozzo Federighi was the cause of it. And if this prophet and his companions had not been put to death, and had they been sent back to San Marco, the people would have put us to the sack, and we should all have been cut to pieces."

Then the fire begins to scorch his face, even as it had scorched Fra Girolamo, and Sandro woke up to find that the sun had shifted and was shining in his eyes.

It was a wonderful dream that he had dreamed, vivid, and true to every word that Doffo Spini had told him. Unlike most dreams, it did not fade away as he woke. Could he wonder now that he had, for a time, become a convert to the truth of Fra Girolamo's prophesies, and that he had painted that picture from the Apocalypse—the victory of the saints, and the Madonna that was delivered of the Child, and the accusers cast down and hiding themselves in the clefts of the rocks, and the joy of the heavens and of those who dwell in them.

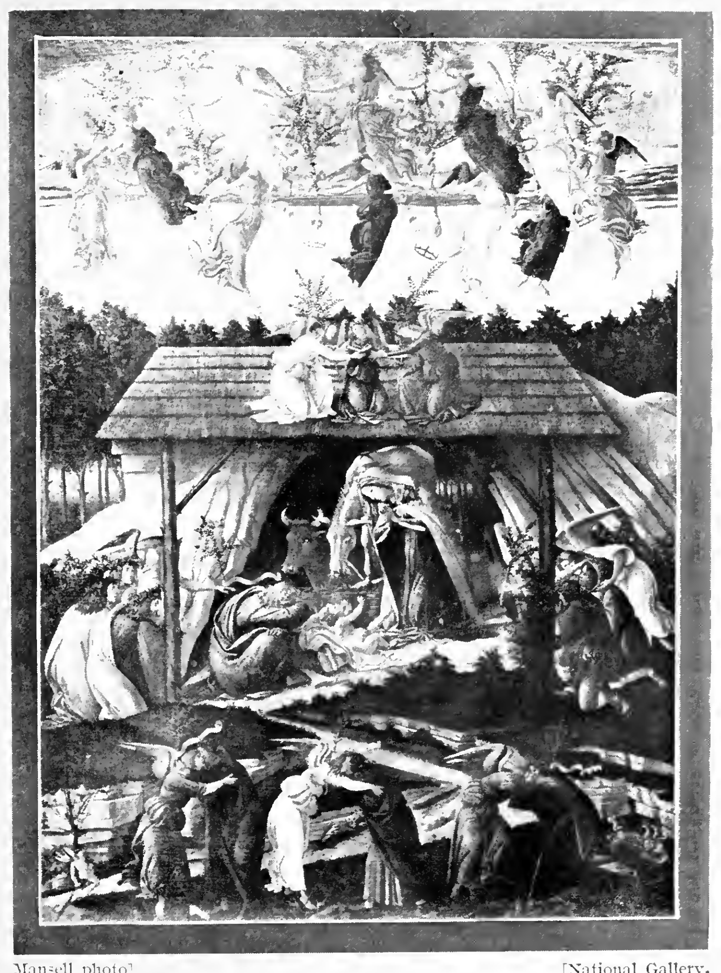
Well, thank God, he had realised the fanaticism of Savonarola's followers that had worked so much plotting and tyranny and bloodshed in Florence, and

had come to his sober senses. Why! even in this picture from the Apocalypse which he had painted under the Piagnone influence, he himself had painted the Bambino pointing to His mouth, whilst the Madonna was so wrapped up in her sad meditations that she forgot to satisfy His hunger! Of a truth, the "holy madness" of the Piagnone led to very unholy results.

But he was getting very feeble, and, if he would have his usual gossip with the pious Brothers of the Ognissanti before his supper, it was time for him to totter down the hill. He gave one long glance at the landscape, feeling that God was very good to give him this quiet and peaceful end to a busy life; then he started homeward.

They had finished supper, and Sandro had settled himself before the fire whilst Simone busied himself with his writing. Save for the scratching of Simone's pen, there was silence. Then, as had often happened of late, Sandro's thoughts wandered back to the days when Il Magnifico had deferred to his opinion and Poliziano had woven poems about his pictures. He had done his best to establish a new ideal in art, an ideal of sweetness, imagination and poetry; and, if his efforts had fallen barren, Almighty God, Who had given him his talents, would know that he had never wasted them nor used them unworthily.

It was in May, the month of the Primavera, that Sandro left his idealism for reality—a reality that was far more ideal than anything he had dreamed of. There



Mansell photo] [National Gallery.

"PICTURE FROM THE APOCALYPSE."

he understood, and was understood, and none called him eccentric.

In the Book of the Dead, which belonged to Sandro's Guild of the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, we find : "May, 1510, Sandro di Botticello, painter, on the 17th day, buried in Ognissanti."

CONCLUSION

SANDRO'S dealings with Dominica and Hilda, his affection towards Alessandra, and his friendship with Madonna Giovanna, are avowedly supposition; but the attempt to reconstruct the society amongst which Sandro moved, and the influences under which he worked, has been honest.

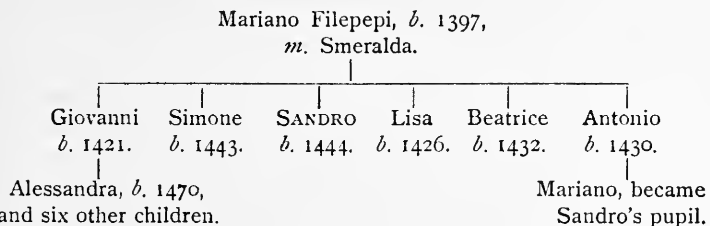
If I have helped to destroy Mr. Pater's theory—founded on Vasari's confusion of Botticini with Botticelli—that Sandro was tainted with the Alexandrine heresy of Matteo Palmieri, I shall not have written in vain: for the author's scholarly pen seems to have endowed this theory with Pater's vitality, and it has become a phœnix amongst fables.

Sandro was no Alexandrine who, like those imaginary angels that failed to side with either Michael or Lucifer, missed the spiritual joys of the Christian as well as the natural joys of the ancient pagan. He was a perfectly normal, perfectly orthodox Tuscan of the Quattrocento; and any attempt to show that his classical leaning towards the gods and Graces overstepped the poetic limits of Christianity and common sense approaches libel.

NOTES

Since "The Romance of Sandro Botticelli" is a story woven out of deductions that are founded on facts, and since its historical value depends entirely on the rightness of these deductions, the only reasonable course is to state both facts and deductions in the form of notes on each chapter.

SANDRO FILEPEPI was the fourth son of Mariano Filepepi, a tanner of the Via Nuova, in the parish of Santa Lucia of Ognissanti, of Florence. He was afterwards called "Del Botticelli," after his eldest brother Giovanni, the acting head of the family, who was nick-named *Il Botticello*, "The Barrel," or, as we might say, "Tubby." The following tree shows Sandro's relationship with the more important of his family:



CHAPTER I

From the Denunzia, or tax-return of 1547–8, Sandro seems to have been constitutionally delicate, for Mariano wrote down: "Sandro, my son, at the age of 13, is at his books and is in ill health." (See Horne, p. 3.)

Vasari tells us: "His father, Mariano Filepepi, a Florentine citizen, brought him up with care, and caused him to be instructed in all such things as are usually taught to children before they choose a calling. But, although the boy readily acquired whatever he wished to learn, yet was he constantly discontented."

After Sandro left school, Vasari continues: "The father, disturbed by the eccentric habits of his son, turned him over to a gossip of his called Botticello, who was a goldsmith and considered a very competent master of his art, to the intent that the boy might learn the same"; but as there is no record of any goldsmith of the name of Botticello, and as careful lists of the master goldsmiths were kept, we can only assume that he worked with his brother Antonio the goldsmith, and that Vasari was misled by the nickname.

About 1458 Sandro became the pupil of Fra Filippo Lippi—the arrangement might well have been made when the friar was working in Florence during the summer of 1457—and Vasari writes: "Devoting himself entirely to the vocation he had chosen, Sandro followed the directions and imitated the manner of his master so closely, that Fra Filippo conceived a great love for him, and instructed him with so much effect that Sandro rapidly attained to a degree of art which no one would have expected from him."

The story opens in 1462, the year after Pope Pius II had granted the dispensation which released Fra Filippo Lippi and Lucrezia Buti from their religious vows, making them man and wife. (See "The Romance of Fra Filippo.") Fra Filippo was working on the frescoes in the Pieve at Prato, with Fra Diamante as his assistant, Jacopo del Sellajo as his journeyman or apprentice, and Sandro as his pupil.

Lucrezia Buti, p. 17.—At this period, surnames were only in the process of formation, and married women were often described by their maiden names. In Filippino's will he describes himself as "Filippus alterius Filippi thomasii de Lippis," and his mother as "domine Lucretie ejus dilecte matris et filie olim Francisci de Butis de Florentia."

Portrait of Messer Spighi, p. 19.—The dignified prelate in the fresco of "The Funeral of St. Stephen" is a portrait of Carlo de' Medici, *proposto* of Prato, "while the figures on either

side of him represent, according to Baldanzi, his Vicar, Messer Paolo della Torricella, and a canon of the Cathedral, Messer Niccolao Spighi by name." (Strutt, p. 143.)

CHAPTER II

Some writers of a Renaissance-classical tendency have tried to show that Botticelli was inspired by the poems of Poliziano and the purely imaginary romance of Giuliano de' Medici and Simonetta; others, of a religious tendency, ignoring the fact that Savonarola did not appear on the scenes until after Sandro had painted his last great picture, have detected a premonition of the grief of the Piagnone in the faces of his Madonnas; others, again, confused by the mistake which attributed Botticini's "Assumption" to Botticelli, have accredited poor Sandro with an imaginary Alexandrine heresy that Messer Matteo Palmieri was falsely accused of holding—a heresy which is said to have taught that the human race was an incarnation of those angels who would side with neither Michael nor Lucifer at the Fall.

In this book I have tried to show that where Sandro was swayed by any other influence than his own graceful fancy, he was certainly swayed by Dante, especially, I believe, by the influence of *Il Convito.*

Moreover, since it is highly improbable that a middle-aged man who was introduced to Dante's ideals in the midst of a busy life—with the gossip of his assistants and fellow-artists on the one hand, with the doings of fashionable Florence on the other, and with the excitement of his Roman journey before him—should have assimilated the spirit of the Divine poet in such a vital manner, one has to seek for Botticelli's introduction to Dante in his earlier and more impressionable life. The following table shows Sandro's connection with the poems of Dante, and conveys a strong suggestion that Lucrezia Buti was his first instructor.

Who was this Francesco da Buti who was lecturing and writing a commentary on Dante, at Pisa, in 1386? Buti was a small town between Florence and Pisa, and any one who has studied the connection of names in Florence and Pisa will realise that the Pisan professor must have been some very near relation to

Francesco da Buti, the fourteen-year-old boy of Florence; and it remains for future scholars to determine whether he was the uncle or grandfather of Lucrezia da Buti, the wife of Sandro's first master.

Dante and Botticelli		*Suggested Source of Influence*
Dante died	1320	
	1372	Francesco da Buti, merchant of Florence, born.
Francesco da Buti of Pisa lectures on Dante at Pisa .	1386	
	1430	Buti of Florence marries.
	1433	Lucrezia Buti born.
	1457	Filippino Lippi born.
Botticelli with Lippi . .	1458	
	1461	Marriage of Lippi with Lucrezia legalised.
Botticelli leaves Lippi . .	1467	
Paints Judith and Holofernes	1470	
Illustrates Landino's Dante .	1480	
Paints the "Primavera" .	1483 (?)	
Illustrates Dante for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici	?	
Paints the mystical Nativity .	1500	

Of course this suggestion of mine cannot be conclusive, since, even though it were shown that Madonna Lucrezia were the professor's grand-daughter, there could be no proof that she had inherited his tastes—all the same, inherited tastes often skip a generation. But, whether it were Lucrezia or no, some one must have introduced Sandro to Messer Dante early in his life.

Beautiful ideas, and paint them, p. 35.—Lippi was the prime mover in the Quattrocento impressionism, which developed in Pollaiuolo and culminated in da Vinci—an impressionism which sought to render the truthful outward appearance of things; Sandro was the "post-impressionist" who rebelled against this naturalism, and strove to express his thoughts.

Grinning women, p. 36.—The only time when Sandro departed from this rule was in the figure of Flora in the "Primavera," a figure which was clearly inspired by the influence of Leonardo da Vinci.

CHAPTER III

At first sight this chapter may appear fanciful and imaginative; but I defy any one to examine the rich colouring of the Magi panel in the National Gallery, then pass on to the colder and harder colouring of the Magi *tondo* in the same collection (which *tondo* was painted some years after Botticelli had left Fra Filippo), and end with an examination of the "Mars and Venus," and devise any other theory which will explain the absolute mastery of colouring and composition in the first. "Devoting himself thereupon entirely to the vocation he had chosen, Sandro followed the directions and imitated the manner of his master so closely, that Fra Filippo conceived a great love for him," writes Vasari. With a natural tendency to express himself in line rather than in colours, we can only conclude that it was Fra Filippo's magnificent grounding in colour which prevented Botticelli's work from ever becoming anæmic.

Plaster sufficiently moist, p. 38.—As I write this, Bellini's fresco of the Virgin and Child, No. 1696 in the National Gallery, is furnishing an object-lesson on the danger of painting after the plaster has dried. The plaster, which was in the proper condition for the painting of the robe and face, had dried before the eyes were painted, and consequently the left iris is peeling off in one round flake of paint.

Meddling with plaster that has dried thoroughly, p. 39.—The Tornabuoni frescoes, which were moved from the Villa Lemmi to the Louvre, show how dangerous it is to tamper with plaster that has once set.

Jacopo di Sellajo, p. 40.—Jacopo afterwards became an ardent follower of Botticelli. If the Venus with Cupids, National Gallery, 916, which has just been labelled with his name, is really his work, Jacopo developed considerable power.

Sprezzatura, p. 40.—"*Sprezzatura* is indeed the fountain from which all grace springs. . . . In painting, one careless line, one slight pencil sketch, shows at once the skill and knowledge of the artist." (From Castiglione's *Cortegiano.*)

Paragon, p. 46.—A "paragon" was a picture painted to show the painter's qualifications as an artist.

Jacopone da Todi, p. 46.—Entered the Franciscan brotherhood

in the fourteenth century. "No fear of hell or hope of heaven, but God's infinite goodness and beauty, impelled him to embrace the monastic life and to submit himself to the severest discipline."

> "Amor amor Jesu desideroso,
> amor voglio morire a te abracciando,
> amor amor Jesu dolce mio sposo
> amor amor la morte i' ademando,
> amor amor Jesu si delectoso
> tu me t' arendi en te transformando,
> pensa ch' io vo pasmando: Amor non so o me sia
> Jesu speranza mia: Abyssame en amore."

CHAPTER IV

Answer me at once, p. 47.—See "The Romance of Fra Filippo," p. 179. We gather from his letters that Filippo Lippi had a highly-strung, artistic temperament, which was emotional without being sentimental.

Convito, p. 48.—*Il Convito*, Treatise IV. cap. xxi.

Settignano, p. 51.—In "Souvenirs de Sandro Botticelli," *Revue Archéologique*, July, 1901, Mr. Horne draws attention to a small fresco in a hill shrine near Settignano, known as the "Madonna della Vannella." Although this has been attributed to Lippi, and has been much repainted, Mr. Horne points out that the quality of the line is that of Botticelli, and deems it a genuine work of about the year 1465.

Rucellai-Medici marriage, p. 51.—The details of this wedding, recorded by Giovanni Rucellai in his *Zibaldone*, are taken from Signor Guido Biagi's "Men and Manners of Old Florence."

Subject for the painter, p. 55.—I have taken this "Subject" from Alberti's *Della Pittura*, Book III.

This temple, etc., p. 56.—From here to the end of the chapter I have quoted the words of that worthy and inestimable pagan-Catholic, Messer Leon Battista Alberti: the translation is by Mr. J. A. Symonds, "The Renaissance in Italy: Italian Literature," Part I. p. 216

CHAPTER V

Until quite recently this panel, entitled "The Adoration of the Magi; or, the Wise Men's Offering," No. 592 in the National Gallery, has been attributed to Filippino Lippi. Following Mr. Berenson, Mr. Horne, and the other experts, the authorities in Trafalgar Square have now labelled the picture "Sandro Botticelli."

This is undoubtedly a very early work, showing the influence of Fra Filippo, and I am strongly of the opinion that Lippi exercised some supervision over its painting. If Lucrezia Buti was the model for Lippi's later Madonnas, then Lucrezia was certainly the model for the Madonna in this panel; and my suggestion as to its inception would account for the colouring, composition, and chiaroscuro, all of which are dissimilar to Sandro's usual technique.

The Magi for the predella, p. 61.—This panel is now in the Municipal Gallery at Prato. Taking Botticelli's self-portrait in the "Adoration" of Santa Maria Novella as our guide, and remembering that this depicted Sandro some ten years later, it is easy to imagine that Lippi painted the ordinary Sandro, whilst Sandro painted himself inspired, and in his finest clothes. The portrait which I have spoken of as that of Fra Filippo is remarkably like Filippino's portrait of his father on the Spoleto monument.

CHAPTER VI

Prior of the Gesuati, p. 65.—The price of the Prior's ultramarine is taken from a letter by Benozzo Gozzoli, written a few years earlier. The Prior might have raised his prices by 1467.

Rupture, p. 67.—"The Romance of Fra Filippo," pp. 16 *et seq.*

My wife will be left well provided for, p. 67.—In 1488 Filippino's will shows that Lucrezia was still living in the same house, well provided for.

Antonio Pollaiuolo, p. 69.—"He not only dissected many human bodies to study their anatomy, but was the first to investigate the action of the muscles and afterwards give them their due place and order in his drawings of the human frame." (Vasari.)

Pollaiuolo's bottega, p. 71.—From the mixed callings of

Pollaiuolo's craftsmen, from the undefined status of the painter's model, from the lack of such conventions as the dressing-screen, and through what we gather from Cellini's autobiography, we may assume that Pollaiuolo's bottega was no convent.

CHAPTER VII

A coat of varnish, p. 82.—The Pollaiuoli were two of the first Tuscans to adopt oil as a medium; they were also skilled in varnishes.

Dog of the Bologna breed, p. 85.—This dog figures in Pollaiuolo's "Tobias with Three Archangels" at Turin; it also appears in the "Raphael and Tobias," No. 781 in the National Gallery—but then, after ascribing this picture to Dom. Ghirlandajo, Antonio Pollaiuolo, the School of Verrocchio (perhaps Perugino), the Gallery authorities have just labelled it "Botticini." Many pictures have been labelled "Botticini" since the authorities discovered that Botticini painted the "Assumption" which had been ascribed to Botticelli.

An engraving, p. 90.—"The Battle of the Nudes," ascribed to Antonio Pollaiuolo and Maso Finiguerra the engraver in *niello*—one of the finest of the early Italian engravings in the broad manner. "Andrea," his brother, is an imaginary character; so are the rest of Pollaiuolo's craftsmen.

CHAPTER VIII

Stories of Boccaccio, p. 92.—The *novellinos* of the Renaissance were remarkably outspoken; the writers laughed at the virtue of the woman and the chastity of the clergy, with the freedom of those who were living amongst friends that would neither misunderstand nor take them seriously; no tale was too *risqué* to be told, so long as it had the wit that would justify its telling. Mr. J. A. Symonds pertinently remarks: "That the Novelle were written to amuse both sexes seems clear; and we must imagine that the women who read so much vituperation of their manners, regarded it as a conversational play with words. Like Sofrona,

they knew their satirists to be fair husbands, fathers, brothers, and, in the capacity of lovers, ludicrously blind to their defects." (" The Renaissance in Italy : Italian Literature," Part I. p. 212.)

Ladies of Florence, p. 92.—Could anything be more delightful than Giuliano de' Medici's description of a woman, in Castiglione's *Cortegiano*? " For as a man should show a certain manliness, strong and steadfast, it is well for a woman to have a soft and delicate tenderness, with a kind of womanly sweetness in all her movements ; that whether she go, or stand, or speak, she will ever appear to be a woman without any likeness to a man. . . . A lady of the Court must also have a certain pleasing affability and sweetness of manner, with a quick vivacity of mind, and quiet, modest ways." Those interested in Florentine ladies of the period will find very truthful and scholarly descriptions in " Women of the Renaissance," by R. de Maulde la Clavière (G. H. Ely's translation), and in " Women of Florence," by Isidoro del Lungo (Miss Mary C. Steegmann's translation).

Marietta Strozzi, p. 92.—Authentic accounts of Madonna Marietta's doings will be found in " Women of Florence," above.

Natural children, p. 93.—The only record of the morality of the Florentine men is the record of their natural children. As it was the universal custom for a father to adopt his natural children, this record is very trustworthy. Selecting twelve cases from the characters in this book, at random :

Cosimo de' Medici . .	2 legitimate children ;	1 natural child.
Piero de' Medici . . .	5 ,, ,,	
Lorenzo de' Medici . .	7 ,, ,,	
Giuliano de' Medici . .		1 ,, ,,
Mariano Filepepi . . .	6 ,, ,,	
Giovanni Filepepi . .	7 ,, ,,	
Leonardo da Vinci . .	(unmarried—none).	
Filippino Lippi . . .	3 legitimate children	
Antonio Pollaiuolo . .	2 ,, ,,	
Piero Pollaiuolo . . .		1 ,, ,,
Sandro Botticelli . . .	(unmarried—none).	
Simone Filepepi . . .	,, ,,	

Carlo de' Medici, Cosimo's natural son, was afterwards *proposto* of Prato, and a man of the highest character. Giulio, Giuliano's son, was afterwards Pope Clement VII. Lisa, Piero Pollaiuolo's

natural daughter, received a dowry of 150 lire from Antonio on her marriage in 1497. It is the fashion to speak slightingly of the morals of the Renaissance; but the above list, which is thoroughly representative, tells another story.

Madonna Aspasia, p. 93.—See Signor Biagi's "Tullia of Aragon."

Felicia of noble beauty, p. 93.—"Aretino, naturally an expert in such a matter, declares that no one has a greater horror of a gratuitous display of her charms than a courtesan." (La Clavière's "Women of the Renaissance," p. 201.)

> "Hoc jacet ingenuae formae Catharina sepulcro;
> Grata fuit multis scita puella procis, etc."
>
> *Id.* p. 359.

Small studio, p. 93.—"Sandro—he is a painter, he works in the house when he will." (From Mariano Filepepi's *denunzia*, given in his house in the Via Nuova, January 30th, 1480–1.) The violent perspective of the figures in this picture show that the model must have been posed close to the artist.

Judith, p. 99.—The picture referred to is "Judith with the Head of Holofernes," now No. 1156 in the Uffizi. Mr. Horne points out that some of the details are from vestments completed for the church of San Giovanni by Antonio Pollaiuolo in 1470; so the studies for this picture might well have begun about this time.

I went a-roaming etc., p. 100.—This particular dance song was by Poliziano, and could not have been written until a few years ater. The delightful translation is by Mr. J. A. Symonds. Since modern slang has the unhappy knack of giving a second meaning to words, I have ventured to change Mr. Symonds's "blooming bowers" into "perfumed bowers," and "ruddy hue" into "crimson hue," which last rendering is, I am afraid, hardly satisfactory.

CHAPTER IX

Mechanical arts, p. 104.—"And those are operations which Reason considers and does in its own proper act which are called rational, such as are the arts of speech (poetry, for example). And those are operations which it considers and does in material

beyond itself, such as are the Mechanical Arts." (Dante's *Il Convito.*) "You have set painting amongst the mechanical arts!" lamented Leonardo da Vinci. "Truly, were painters as readily equipped as you are to praise their own work in writing, I doubt whether it would endure the reproach of so vile a name."

Love, p. 106.—Both Alberti and Landino were followers of Plato; but Landino seems to have leant towards Ficino's development of Platonism.

Dante's words, p. 107.—Sandro is quoting from *Il Convito*, Treatise IV. cap. xxii.

But if this life of contemplation, p. 108.—I have taken the speech of the inestimable Alberti from Landino's *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, Roscoe's translation.

CHAPTER X

Tourney, p. 113.—Since it has become the fashion to write of the Florentine tournaments as "toy tournaments," it must be remembered that this and Giuliano's tourney of 1475 were as genuine as any tournaments of the age. Even in the "festival made upon a night of carnival for a lady, daughter of Lorenzo di Messer Palla degli Istrozi," in 1464, when, after tilting under the window of Marietta Strozzi, the nine knights "went to break lances and show their tilting before the houses of the ladies of each one of the Lord's companions," the Signoria made a special "provision against cases of accident," holding no one responsible for damage to life.

Lorenzo's own modest record of this tournament is of some interest: "That I might take part in everything, and bear me like the rest, I did tilt in the Piazza of Santa Croce; and although I was very vigorous neither of my years nor blows, yet was the first prize awarded unto me, namely a helmet adorned with silver and having a figure of Mars for the crest." The rest of the account is taken chiefly from the *Giostra* of Luca Pulci.

Hilda Lochener, p. 116.—Like Mr. Berenson's *Amico di Sandro*, Hilda is a necessity rather than an invention. At this period, there must have been some great coarse woman who exercised a strong outside influence over Sandro's otherwise spiritual mind. We find him idealising the memory of this same

huge woman, towards the close of his life, when he came to illustrate Dante's Divine Comedy.

The wedding of Lorenzo, p. 116, to Clarice Orsini, took place on June 4th, 1469.

Faith and Prudence, p. 116.—The Pollaiuoli's "Virtues" are still preserved, hopelessly damaged, in the Uffizi.

Saturday until Monday, p. 122.—This sounds unnaturally modern, but week-ends in the country were as popular with the Quattrocento Tuscans as they are with modern Londoners.

CHAPTER XI

Bronzes, medals, and intaglios, p. 127.—Benvenuto Cellini describes the Roman peasants digging up antiquities, and selling them to merchants who disposed of them to collectors.

Some one running fetched me, p. 128.—In "The Romance of Fra Filippo" I have made Sandro accompany his master to Spoleto. In this I was clearly wrong, as he was in Florence at the time of Fra Filippo's death. However, for several reasons, it is probable that Lucrezia was with her husband.

CHAPTER XII

In spite of Vasari's assertion that, after Fra Filippo's death, Botticelli was held to be the best painter in Florence, his only known pictures of this period are two small panels of Holofernes measuring ten inches by eight inches, and there is no trace of any popularity until after the execution of San Sebastiano in 1473-4.

Botticelli was an exceedingly industrious painter, for we can identify at least two important pictures per annum, painted between 1473 and 1488. He painted "Fortitude" as one of a set of seven Virtues, of which the Pollaiuoli executed six. He painted St. Stephen for Lorenzo de' Medici in 1473-4, and Pollaiuolo painted a St. Stephen for Antonio Lucci in 1474-5, which latter was an obvious attempt to surpass Sandro's picture. Taking these facts into consideration, the only reasonable assumption seems to be that which I have adopted in this chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

Purest white the maiden, p. 151.—It seems impossible to translate the stanzas of Poliziano's *Giostra* into English verse that will convey the same feeling. The original runs :

> "Candida è ella, e candida la vesta,
> Ma pur di rose e fior dipinta e d'erba ;
> Lo inanellato crin dall' aurea testa
> Scende in la fronte umilmente superba.
> . . . .
> E come prima al giovan pose cura,
> Alquanto paurosa alzò la testa ;
> Poi con la bianca man ripreso il lembo,
> Levossi in piè con di fior pieno un grembo."

(White is she, and white the robe,
Even moreover painted with roses and flowers and grasses ;
The wavy hair of her haloed head
Descends on her brow in its superb humility.
. . . .
When first she perceived the youth,
She raised her head a little shyly ;
Then with her white hands she lifted the edge of her skirt,
And rose to her feet with her lap full of flowers.)

Simonetta, p. 152.—Simonetta Cattaneo, a Genoese who came to Florence as the sixteen-year-old bride of Marco Vespucci—also sixteen—in 1469, and died in 1476. She seems to have been a universal favourite with both men and women. Lorenzo de' Medici wrote : "Independent of her beauty, her manners were so engaging that almost every person who had any acquaintance with her flattered himself that he had obtained the chief place in her affections." No true historian can find the slightest trace of impropriety in her relations with Giuliano de' Medici, and she appears to have been held in equal affection by both the Medici brothers. Since modern writers are fond of speaking of her as the consumptive source of a *maladive* type of beauty which they profess to detect in Sandro's figures, the following is worthy of mention : during her last rapid illness, Lorenzo sent his own physician, Stephano, to attend her ; and Piero Vespucci, her

brother-in-law, wrote: "Messer Stephano declareth that it is neither a hectic fever nor yet a consumption, and Messer Moyse holdeth the contrary." So much for the nineteenth-century fables wound round Simonetta and the "Primavera."

Our Lady with St. Barnabas, p. 157.—The Church of San Barnabà, built in 1322, was committed to the "Consoli" of the "Arte de' Medici e degli Speziali" in 1335 and was not granted to the Carmelite nuns until 1522, so Vasari's statement that this picture was painted for the Carmelites must be incorrect. In 1717 the nuns redecorated the church, and Agostino Veracini added to both the top and bottom of the picture. The part reproduced is that which was originally painted by Botticelli, probably in 1483-4.

CHAPTER XIV

The Date of "Primavera."—The date of a picture seems a small matter, but so much hinges on the date of the painting of "Primavera" that it demands special consideration. For if "Primavera" were painted in 1477, then Botticelli's artistic development is incomprehensible; but if it were painted in 1483-4, we find this comprehensible progress:

Pre-Roman Period: pictures moderate in size, religious in subject, including many of the Magi, more or less conventional in treatment.

Roman Period: in which Sandro won technical freedom, and learnt to handle large surfaces.

Post-Roman Period: starting with the painting of "Primavera," —a panel that was more than four times as large as his largest previous panel—through which commission he won intellectual freedom, and which was followed by:

Secular.	*Religious.*
Primavera.	Altar-piece of San Barnabà
Portrait, Nat. Gal. 626.	Madonna of the Magnificat.
Mars and Venus.	Bardi Madonna.
Tornabuoni Frescoes.	
Birth of Venus.	Madonna of the Pomegranate.
Pallas with a Centaur.	Coronation, San Marco.

Expert evidence in favour of 1477.—Before calling expert evidence, I must point out that the old view, which held that Lorenzo the Magnificent ordered this picture on account of Botticelli's success with the "Adoration of the Magi" in Santa Maria Novella, is out of date; for the experts themselves have proved that "Primavera" was painted for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, Lorenzo's cousin, and hung in his villa at Castello.[1] Now, gentlemen!

Mr. Horne: There is a similarity between the head of Venus in the "Primavera" and the head of the Madonna in the "Adoration of the Magi," painted in 1476–7. True, sir. But if you examine the head of the Hermitage Madonna, painted in 1482, you will find a similar likeness, and we only claim that "Primavera" was painted in the following year, 1483.

Mr. Berenson: There are strong traces of Pollaiuolesque influence in the figures of Mercury and the Graces of "Primavera." Granted. But are there not traces of this same influence in Mars, of "Mars and Venus," of about 1476, and in the "Birth of Venus" of 1488?

Herr Jacobsen: The type of Graces in "Primavera" marks the transition from the egg-shaped faces of Botticelli's earlier manner to the perfect oval of his maturer style. Please examine the "Daughters of Jethro," painted in 1481–2.

To sum up: On the strength of this expert evidence, which, after all, is of much the same value as the evidence of experts on handwriting, we are asked to believe that Botticelli painted this huge epoch-making picture in the midst of his smaller and more conventional work, and that he painted nothing similar for nine years; we are asked to imagine that Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici commissioned this revolutionary masterpiece at the age of fifteen—which is to assume him over-precocious even for a Medici. On the other hand, if we take 1483 as the date of "Primavera," we see Sandro gaining technical and intellectual

[1] I have passed over Col. C. F. Young's notes on Botticelli ("The Medici," Murray, 1909, Ap. VII.) without mention. His opening translation of Vasari's *oggi ancora* as "at the present time," instead of as "still," renders what follows valueless. Vasari says that the "Birth of Venus" and "Spring" are *still* at Castello—*i.e.* that they had been there always. To assume that these large and important pictures were painted for Magnifico, and yet not included in his catalogue, is to assume an improbability; to argue that they were bought by the Pierfrancesco after the Medici sale is moonshine.

breadth during his stay at Rome, and returning to undertake the two largest panels that he had so far painted; and we see Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, now twenty, commissioning "Primavera."

The Inspiration of "Primavera."—The older race of critics considered that Sandro's picture was inspired by Politian's *Giostra*. Modern critics, following the lead of Professor Warburg, have recognised the similarity between the "Primavera" and a passage from the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, which poem Poggio Bracciolini had discovered in a German monastery about 1417.

Whilst recognising the influence of *De Rerum Natura*, and also of the *Giostra*, one can detect the decided influence of Dante's *Il Convito*, of which Sandro was undoubtedly a student: in fact the picture might well have originated as I have described.

Nothing can be translated without breaking its harmony, p. 165. —*Il Convito*, Treatise I. cap. vii.

Time according to Aristotle, p. 166.—*Il Convito*, Treatise IV. cap. ii.

Love, the son of Venus, p. 167.—*Id.* Treatise II. cap. vi.

Little flames of fire, p. 167.—*Id.* Treatise III. cap. viii.

Each of the plants, p. 167.—*Id.* Treatise III. cap. ii.

CHAPTER XV

Alessandra Lippi, p. 171.—The earlier type of Botticelli's Madonnas is strongly reminiscent of Fra Filippo's *tondo* in the Pitti Gallery; in fact, these mature Madonnas seem to have been taken from studies of Lucrezia Buti made at Prato. But, from the time of the Madonna of St. Barnabas, we find a new and younger type that is both like and unlike Lucrezia: this type is found in its full perfection in the "Birth of Venus." After allowing for the fact that no artist paints his model as though he were painting her portrait, we are forced to conclude that some new model had a strong influence on Botticelli.

Lucrezia's daughter was now eighteen, and I leave it to my reader to decide whether this new model was Alessandra Lippi. Personally, if there is anything in heredity and family likeness, I am convinced that this model was the daughter of Fra Filippo

and Lucrezia, and the sister of Filippino, and I have given their respective portraits so that my readers may judge for themselves. Anyhow, if this maiden were not Alessandra Lippi, she was some one else—I mean some real person—and, whether she were Alessandra, or whether she were Madonna Ignota, we are perfectly safe in speaking of her as the "Maiden of Sandro."

Now, since this particular type survived from 1483, when he painted the Madonna of St. Barnabas, until after 1488, when he painted the "Birth of Venus," we are justified in assuming that the maiden had a strong influence over Botticelli and that she attracted him greatly. And moreover, he painted her with superlative tenderness, but with none of that happy familiarity with which the old artists—Lippi, Titian, Raphael, Del Sarto, Rembrandt, Rubens, and a score more—were wont to paint their wives and mistresses. And moreover, from 1483 a certain pathos and melancholy crept into Sandro's paintings which—except in the single instance of the "Daughter of Jethro"—were absent from his previous works.

Let us imagine the possible causes of melancholy—money troubles, political troubles, religious troubles, physical troubles, love troubles—and eliminate the impossible. Sandro was earning a large income; his political horizon was absolutely clear until 1492; Savonarola had no influence over him until after Simone's return to Florence in 1493; the clarity of his colouring points to normal health; but if his relations with the maiden of Sandro were such as I have suggested in my story, then the pathos of his pictures would be accounted for.

After all, it is in reality far more natural, and far less sentimental, to attribute the pathos of Sandro's pictures to an affair of the affections, than to make him the victim of a hopeless attempt to reconcile pagan and Christian ideals, which came before him "as the subject of a vain desire and an immeasurable, ever-reiterated regret." ("Sandro Botticelli," by A. Streeter.)

Jacopo, Il Toso, etc., p. 171.—Sandro's apprentices in 1480 were Jacopo di Dominico Toschi, *b.* 1463; Giovanni di Benedetto Cianfanini, *b.* 1462; Rafaello di Lorenzo Tosi, called Il Toso, *b.* 1469; Biagio di Antonio Tucei, *b.* 1466.

This girl was fat compared with you, p. 177.—A drawing of the "Daughter of Jethro" from the Sistine fresco of the "Life of Moses."

A girl sitting beside the closed doorway of a Roman palace, p. 177.—"The Outcast" in Prince Pallavicini's collection. It is not certain whether this picture is by Botticelli or not. He might have been given the drawing, and have used it as a peg on which to hang the story which should interest Alessandra.

CHAPTER XVI

Huge panels, p. 182.—"St. Sebastian," the largest panel that Sandro had so far painted, measured about 16 square feet; whereas "Primavera" measured over 68, and "St. Barnabas" over 73 square feet.

Felices, etc., p. 187.—Horace, CI. 13, 17–20.

A, te meae, etc., p. 188.—Horace, CII. 17, 5–8.

What you love in me, p. 189.—From Dialogue between Nifo and Phausina.

Fair is sweet Spring, p. 190.—This song is founded on Lorenzo de' Medici's "Triumph of Bacchus," altered to suit the subject.

At last I have found, etc., p. 193.—This, Alessandra's reply, and Politian's two subsequent letters are taken, almost verbatim, from the correspondence between Agnolo Politian and the beautiful Alessandra Scala. (Professor Isidoro del Lungo, "Women of Florence.")

CHAPTER XVII

Anonimo Gaddiano, p. 199.—Mr. Horne's translation in "Botticelli," p. 326. It is impossible to imagine Botticelli walking the streets of Florence through fear of dreaming of the bondage of marriage; but it is quite possible to imagine a delicately minded man, who was in love with a girl whom he respected, acting exactly as Sandro did.

Leonardo, p. 200.—This was just before Leonardo da Vinci left for Milan. Flora certainly wears Leonardo's smile to the life, and this is the only smiling woman that Sandro ever painted.

Secret of studio badinage, p. 201.—A Tuscan artist who is engaged in assisting Mr. Hutton in the translation of Vasari tells me that he is greatly struck with the similarity of the life and conversation of the Florentine artist of the Quattrocento and the

Florentine studio life of to-day. The whole secret of the studio joke lay in the perfect gravity with which it was carried through; and to us Englishmen, who like our jokes well elaborated and well explained, the account of a joke by Vasari, or even by Boccaccio, is as dull as the words of a play without the inflection, action, and scenery of the stage. I hope to dress up Vasari's story of the joke Botticelli played on Biagio in a future work on the Renaissance.

Sits before the fire, p. 203.—"Here I stand by the fireside, in my great-coat and slippers, that you might take me for the very figure of melancholy." (From Politian's letter to Lucrezia de' Medici, written from Caffagiolo.)

CHAPTER XVIII

Ciardi, p. 209.—We learn from Filippino's will, made in 1488, that Alessandra was then "uxor Ciardi Johannis Ciardi de Villa Tabule, Comunis Prati."

Clang of shuttles, p. 211.—This story is told by Vasari.

CHAPTER XIX

Bacchus raising a wine-flask, p. 218.—Vasari.

Boccaccio's Novella, p. 218.—These four panels from the "Decameron" are mentioned by Vasari, but it is very doubtful if the panels now in the possession of Messrs. Spiridon and Watney are the ones in question.

Tornabuoni frescoes, p. 218.—Recently these three frescoes were discovered in the Villa Lemmi, once the Villa Tornabuoni. The first, which was covered with whitewash and much damaged, depicted an old man dressed as a Gonfalonier, with his right arm round a young girl—probably a portrait of Giovanni and his daughter. The two described in this chapter have been removed to the Louvre.

See! the thrushes, p. 220.—The whole of Lorenzo's description of flight and flying-machines has been taken, almost verbatim, from the pages of his note-books. Also the riddle about the feather-bed.

Piero di Cosimo, p. 223.—Piero Chimenti was adopted by Cosimo Rosselli the painter, and took his name. In his description of this clever and eccentric artist, Vasari relates that he would take his stand before a wall on which various impurities had been cast, and in these detect combats of horses, strangely ordered cities, and the most extraordinary landscapes.

Men are beginning to call you eccentric, p. 226.—"Having completed the work assigned to him (in the Sistine Chapel) he returned at once to Florence, where, being whimsical and eccentric, he occupied himself . . ." (Vasari.)

Painting has become an art miraculous, p. 226.—Leonardo's theories on art, the illusion of the mirror, etc., are taken from his note-books.

Mars and Venus, p. 226.—Mr. Horne's suggestion that this panel was originally intended for a bed-head seems correct. The Mid-Victorian critics, discovering that Giuliano de' Medici wore silver armour in the tourney of 1475, identified these figures as Giuliano and Simonetta. Modern critics, realising that in Lucian's account of the bridal of Alexander and Roxana, the "cupids" were playing with Alexander's weapons, identify the figures as Alexander and Roxana. But, if one only turns to Lucian's account, one reads: "The scene is a handsome inner chamber with a nuptial bed in it, on which Roxana, a most beautiful virgin, is reclining, with her eyes fixed on the ground, as though ashamed of looking up at Alexander, who stands by her," and one sees the discrepancy.

CHAPTER XX

Called of many Primavera, p. 238.—Dante's *Vita Nuova*, 24.

Venus bringing the roses, p. 243.—According to Florentine commentators, Venus was about to drop a handful of flowers into the linen cloth which Giovanna held. (Horne.)

CHAPTER XXI

Circle of celestial heads, p. 246.—The resemblance between this *tondo* and the diagram of an armillary sphere is certainly striking. Mr. Horne points out that the figures round the

Madonna form a circle within a circle, seen in perspective, and remarks on the originality as well as on the beauty and simplicity of the composition; but I fancy that my idea of the armillary sphere is right, especially as Sandro must have been deep in his preparation for the illustration of Dante.

Messer Erberto Cornelio, p. 248.—Mr. Herbert Horne.

CHAPTER XXII

Post-Impressionists, p. 255.—I am not referring to the exaggerations of some of the modern Post-Impressionists, but to their theory that the artist should paint, not Nature herself, but the feelings which Nature inspires in the mind. Compare with this the old Japanese theory: "The beauties of Nature are but the mirrors in which the disciple should see the miracles of his own soul repeated."

"*I resent her appearing as Venus*," p. 260.—Love, according to the Renaissance standards, may be divided into three divisions: (*a*) Platonic love, which was altogether fine and noble, and which was the theme of philosophers—instance Castiglione's praise of the bridal couple who spent six months in conjugal intimacy and perfect continence. (*b*) Natural love, which sought to reproduce the form of the parent: a love which might be excused, and even justified by its result; but this was a love which was neither a subject for philosophers nor a theme for poets. (*c*) Sensual love, or the love of Venus: a love which was condoned on account of its classical character, and which formed a fitting theme for both poets and novelists.

Fortunately, religion and human nature combined are stronger than any philosophic theory, and Florence was distinguished by its number of happy marriages; but a refined bachelor like di Pierfrancesco would have held, in all probability, the views which I have ascribed to him. On the other hand, Giovanna Tornabuoni, who was most happily married, might well have appreciated Sandro's idealism.

There is a light above, p. 262.—*Il Paradiso*, xxx.

The other host, p. 262.—*Il Paradiso*, xxxi.

Art must surpass reality, p. 264.—Contemporary Japanese artists of the Zen school were working with ideals similar to those which

actuated Sandro; but it was not until four hundred years had elapsed that Maeterlinck wrote: "Art is not really true until it is greater and finer than life."

CHAPTER XXIII

As the geometrician, p. 266.—*Il Paradiso*, xxxiii.

Agent of Isabella d' Este, p. 271.—Isabella d' Este wrote to her Florentine agent, Francesco Malatesta, asking if Periguino would undertake a picture for the Camerino in the ducal palace at Mantua. On September 23rd, 1502, Malatesta replied that "Perusino" would not be in Florence for eight days, and that he was uncertain in the performance of his commissions. He recommended Filippino Lippi as a most excellent painter, who was, however, at the time much engaged, ending up:

"Another, Alessandro Botechiella, has been much extolled to me, both as an excellent painter, and as a man who works willingly, and has no hindrances, as the aforesaid. I have spoken with him, and he says that he would undertake the work at once, and would serve your Ladyship with a good will."

Periguino was so busy that he hardly ever finished a picture which he had begun; Filippino could not undertake any fresh work for six months; but Sandro had no hindrances in the way of engagements.

Vasari's statement, p. 272.—"By his (Roman) works Botticelli obtained great honour and reputation among the many competitors who were labouring with him. . . . Having completed the work assigned to him, he returned at once to Florence, where, being whimsical and eccentric, he occupied himself with commenting on a certain part of Dante, illustrating the Inferno, and executing prints, over which he wasted much time, and, neglecting his proper occupation, he did no work, and thereby caused infinite disorder in his affairs. He likewise engraved many of the designs he executed, but in a very inferior manner, the work being badly cut. The best attempt of this kind from his hand is the "Triumph of Faith," by Fra Girolamo Savonarola, of Ferrara, of whose sect our artist was so zealous a partizan that he totally abandoned painting, and not having any other means of living, fell into great difficulties."

On the first count, Sandro executed all his greater paintings

after his return to Florence, and after 1490, seems to have taken all the commissions he could secure. On the second count, he was painting for di Pierfrancesco in 1497, he dated the Nativity 1500, he sought work from Madonna Isabella in 1502. Vasari was probably confusing Sandro with his favourite brother Simone, who was one of the 363 citizens that signed the petition for the Pope to remove the excommunication from Savonarola in 1497, and who fled to Bologna at the time of the friar's arrest in 1498. It seems as though Vasari had heard rumours that (*a*) Sandro became "eccentric," (*b*) illustrated Dante, (*c*) ceased to rank as a great master through his eccentricity; and, adding two to two so that they made five, came to the above conclusions.

Friendship of this noble lady, p. 274.—The friendship between Sandro and Giovanna Tornabuoni is merely my supposition, and is assumed on the following grounds: A popular artist has an accumulation of commissions to work off, nor do his commissions cease suddenly; consequently Sandro's wave of popularity must have passed by 1486–7, and yet there was some strong influence which seemed to inspire his finest and most imaginative efforts between 1486 and 1488.

The noble ladies of the Renaissance were the friends and good angels of the poets and painters. Sandro must have become intimately acquainted with Giovanna Tornabuoni during the painting of the Tornabuoni frescoes in 1486; he completed no more great pictures after Madonna Giovanna's death in 1488. As I say, the friendship between Sandro and Madonna Giovanna is pure supposition, and the name of any other gentle lady—or, as far as that goes, the name of any cultivated man—may be substituted for that of Giovanna Tornabuoni without altering the construction of the story.

CHAPTER XXIV

Villa at Castello, p. 279.—Mr. Horne quotes the payment of moneys, on July 3rd, 1497, for work done at Castello, by Sandro Botticelli:

57 days' work, at 14 soldi the day . . . lire	39	18	0
16 " " " 10 " " "	8	0	0
18 " " " 7 " " "	6	6	0
	54	4	0

CHAPTER XXV

Never was there so sweet a gladness, p. 281.—The hymn of Girolamo Benivieni, written under the influence of Savonarola, is taken from Mr. J. A. Symonds's translation.

Bought this property, p. 281.—Simone Filepepi, who was in the service of a Florentine merchant at Naples in 1493, returned to Florence in 1493–4, and lived with his brother Sandro. On April 19th, 1494, the brothers bought from Don Bernardo della Volta, Hospitaller and Rector of Santa Maria Nuova, "a farm with a house for the owner, and with tilled vine, olive, and fruit-bearing lands, situated in the parish of San Sepolcro, near and without the gate of San Frediano." It was sold for 155 golden florins "and for the yearly rent-charge, or due, of one pair of capons."

In the "Portata" of the tax-gatherer, Sandro and Simone state that they are in possession of a "gentleman's house," situated in the parish of San Sepolcro, "with half an acre of land of old vineyard, part planted with fruit trees. Lorenzo da Sansepolcro farms the said vineyard, and lives in the said house at our charges." The property yielded 4 barrels of wine and 2 bushels of figs and other fruit per annum.

The villa still stands on the right-hand side of the Via di Monte Oliveto, a little without the Porta San Frediano, up past the entrance of the monastery of Monte Oliveto. It is half mansion, half farmhouse; the central tower, which rises above the rest of the building, had been built a couple of centuries when Sandro and Simone took possession. The house is "delightfully situated on the slope of the hill of Bellosguardo, in a garden of olive trees, and looks out over the lower valley of the Arno, towards the distant Pisan hills and the crests of the Carrara mountains." (See Horne, pp. 267–8.)

In the first edition of Vasari's "Lives": Sandro, "finally growing old and disabled, used to walk with two sticks; whereby being no longer able to work, infirm and decrepit, reduced to a most pitiable condition, he passed from this life."

In the second edition, Vasari tells us that "at the end he found himself old and poor to a degree, that had not Lorenzo de' Medici, whilst he lived, assisted him, and afterwards had not his friends and many men of wealth had a care for his genius, he would almost have died of hunger."

Fortunately, the record of the purchase of the above property disproves Vasari's second statement.

Bonfire, p. 283.—The Bonfire of Vanities here referred to is that of 1496. Simone was a follower of Savonarola; but Sandro, although he seems to have been friendly with the friar's party, did not become a Piagnone until later. In July 1496, Michelangelo wrote from Rome to L. di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, the political enemy of the Piagnone, addressing his letter for safety to "Sandro di bottjcello infirenze"; and Sandro worked for di Pierfrancesco in the summer of 1497.

Doffo Spini, p. 284.—Sandro's conversation with Doffo Spini is taken verbatim from Simone Filepepi's "Chronicle," being "a record which I made on November 2nd, 1499."

Simone was a man of high character and real piety; he was also the owner of a considerable library. His "Chronicle" begins in 1489 and ends in 1503. It is spoken of by Lorenzo Violi:

> "Simone, brother of the said painter, being also present there, made a record of it in his Chronicle; that is to say, in a book of his in which Simone described all the notable things of those times."

On April 9th, 1503, Doffo Spini told Simone that if he had been acquainted with Fra Girolamo, as Simone was, he would have been an even greater partisan.

Brothers of the Ognissanti, p. 286.—The monastery of the Ognissanti was then occupied by the Lombard Order of Humiliati, which did so much to improve woollen manufacture in Florence.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

AUTHENTIC PAINTINGS BY BOTTICELLI

THE following paintings are, with one exception, arranged in Mr. Horne's chronological sequence, and are of undoubted authenticity.

FIRST PERIOD, 1465 to 1482

During these eighteen years, Sandro was developing his talents, making his reputation and painting set themes.

(1) Madonna della Vannella. Corbignano, near Florence, towards Settignano, in the Capella Vannella. A repaired fresco, attributed to Botticelli by Mr. Horne and Mr. Berenson. Probably painted about 1465.

(2) Adoration of the Magi. London, National Gallery, No. 592. Tempera on wood, measuring 4 ft. 7 in. by 1 ft. 8 in.

1469–70. (3) Fortitude. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1299. Tempera on wood, measuring 2 ft. 10 in. by 5 ft. 4 in.

(4) Holofernes Dead. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1158. Tempera on wood, measuring 8 in. by 10 in.

(5) Judith with the Head of Holofernes. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1156. Tempera on wood, measuring 8 in. by 10 in.

(6) Portrait of a Young Man with a Medal. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1154. Tempera on wood, measuring 1 ft. 2 in. by 1 ft. 9 in.

1473–4. (7) St. Sebastian. Berlin, Royal Museum, No. 1128. Tempera on wood, measuring 2 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. 6 in.

(8) Chigi Madonna (with ears of corn). Boston,

U.S.A., Mrs. J. L. Gardner's Collection. Tempera on wood.

(9) Adoration of the Magi (*tondo*). London, National Gallery, No. 1033. Tempera on wood, measuring 4 ft. 3½ in. diam.

1476–7. (10) Adoration of the Magi (painted for Giovanni Laini). Florence, Uffizi, No. 1286. Tempera on wood, measuring 4 ft. 5 in. by 3 ft. 7 in.

1480 . (11) St. Augustine. Florence, Ognissanti, fresco, 3 ft. 8 in. by 5 ft.

1481–2. (12) Three frescoes: Temptation of Christ; Scenes from the Life of Moses; Punishment of Core; also several portraits of early Popes. Rome, Sistine Chapel.

1482 . (13) Adoration of the Magi (painted in Rome). St. Petersburg, Hermitage Gallery, No. 163. Tempera on wood, measuring 3 ft. 5 in. by 2 ft. 4 in.

CLASSICAL PERIOD, 1483 to 1489

During these seven years, Sandro was free to develop his own individuality.

(14) Primavera. Florence, Academy, No. 80. Tempera on wood, measuring 10 ft. 4 in. by 6 ft. 8 in. Mr. Horne dates this picture about 1478, but, for reasons stated in the notes on Chapter XIII, I date it about 1483.

(15) Altar-piece of St. Barnabà, with Predella. Florence, Academy, No. 85, with predella panels Nos. 157–8, 161–2. Tempera on wood, original measurements 8 ft. 10 in. by 8 ft. 4 in.

(16) Madonna of the Magnificat (*tondo*). Florence, Uffizi, No. 1267*bis*. Tempera on wood, measuring 3 ft. 8 in. diam. Madonna's face ruined through much restoration.

(17) Portrait of a Young Man. London, National Gallery, No. 626. Tempera on wood, measuring 11 in. by 1 ft. 2 in.

1485 . (18) Altar-piece of San Spirito (Bardi Madonna). Berlin, Royal Museum, No. 106. Tempera on wood, 2 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft.

(19) Mars and Venus (bed-head). London, National Gallery, No. 915. Tempera on wood, measuring 5 ft. 8 in. by 2 ft. 3½ in.

1486–7. (20) Giovanna Tornabuoni with Venus and the Graces. Paris, Louvre, No. 1297. Fresco, removed from Villa Lemmi; the portion left measuring 9 ft. 4 in. by 6 ft. 1 in.

1486–7. (21) Lorenzo Tornabuoni with the Liberal Arts. Paris Louvre, No. 1298. Companion to above, measuring 8 ft. 11 in. by 7 ft. 10 in.

(22) Birth of Venus. Florence, Uffizi, No. 39. Tempera on canvas, measuring 9 ft. 1 in. by 5 ft. 8 in.

(23) Madonna of the Pomegranate (*tondo*). Florence, Uffizi, No. 1289. Tempera on wood, measuring 4 ft. 8 in. diam.

(24) Pallas with a Centaur Florence, Pitti Palace, private apartments. Tempera on canvas, 4 ft. 10 in. by 7 ft. 10 in. Face of Pallas ruined by restoration.

(25) Coronation of the Virgin. Part of, *i.e.* Saints and Angels.

LAST PERIOD, 1490 to 1509

During these twenty years Sandro, realising that he was deemed to have become eccentric, lost power, confidence, and balance.

1490 . (25) Coronation of the Virgin. Florence, Academy, No. 73, with predella No. 74. Tempera on wood, measuring 8 ft. 1 in. by 12 ft. 4 in. During the painting of this picture Sandro lost power of expression: his collapse is evident in the figures of God the Father and the Blessed Virgin.

(26) Communion of St. Jerome. Florence, Palazzo Capponi. Tempera on wood, measuring 9½ in. by 12¾ in.

(27) Madonna and Child with Angels (*tondo*). Milan, Ambrosiana, No. 72. Tempera on wood, measuring 2 ft. 2 in. diam.

(28) Calumny. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1182. Tempera on wood, measuring 3 ft. by 2 ft.

(29) St. Augustine in his Cell. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1179. Tempera on wood, measuring 10 in. by 1 ft. 3 in.

(30) Virginia. Bergamo, Morelli Collection. Tempera on wood, measuring 5 ft. 5 in. by 2 ft. 8 in.

(31) Lucrece. Boston, U.S.A., Mrs. J. L. Gardner's Collection. Tempera on wood, measuring 5 ft. 10 in. by 2 ft. 9½ in.

1500 . (32) The Nativity. London, National Gallery, No. 1034. Tempera on canvas, measuring 2 ft. 5½ in. by 3 ft. 6½ in.

Although the chronological arrangement (with the exception of the placing of "Primavera") is Mr. Horne's, I must take the sole responsibility for the division of the work into three periods and for the statement of Sandro's collapse.—A.J.A.

PAINTINGS THAT ARE UNCERTAIN, OR ONLY IN PART BY BOTTICELLI

The following paintings are of sufficient importance to demand consideration. The dates are only approximate.

About 1479 . Adoration of the Magi. Florence, Uffizi, No. 3436. Tempera on wood, measuring 5 ft. 7 in. by 3 ft. 5½ in. This was laid in by Botticelli and finished by some later artist. A story has been woven round the picture, stating that the two figures disputing on the left are Savonarola urging Lorenzo de' Medici to acknowledge the Infant Christ as King of Florence; but, as Mr. Horne shows, the composition must have been painted long before Fra Girolamo's crusade.

1481–2 (?) . The Outcast. Rome, Prince Pallavicini's Collection. Mr. Berenson ascribes this most interesting picture to Botticelli, Mr. Horne does not. One finds the same simplicity of treatment in Botticelli's small predella panel of "The Vision of St. Augustine," and I know of no contemporary

artist who had the imagination for such a picture. Assuming that Botticelli saw and painted such a scene when he was in Rome, we find a new type appearing in his work, which culminated in the Nativity Madonna of 1500.

About 1484 . Sandro painted four panels from the "Decameron." The three panels in the possession of M. Spiridon, of Paris, and a fourth in the possession of Mr. V. Watney, of London, are usually ascribed to Botticelli, but Mr. Berenson divides these between Sellajo and A. di Domenico.

About 1488 . Annunciation. Florence, Instituto de' Minoresini. Mr. Berenson omits this from his list; Mr. Horne considers that there may be some remains of Botticelli's genuine work beneath the restoration.

About 1488–9. Annunciation. Florence, Uffizi, No. 1316. Measuring 5 ft. 0½ in. by 4 ft. 9¾ in. Mr. Berenson omits this; Mr. Horne deems it a school piece.

Madonna and Child. Milan, Poldi-Pezzoli Collection, No. 156. Mr. Berenson gives this to Botticelli; but the lack of character in the beautifully painted face of the Madonna seems rather to stamp it as the work of Mr. Berenson's friend, "Amico di Sandro."

Judith with the Head of Holofernes in her Hand. Berlin, Collection of Professor Rich. Von Kaufmann. Measuring 7½ in. by 13¾ in. Mr. Horne ascribes this to Botticelli.

Virgin and Child. London, Collection of Mr. J. P. Heseltine. Measuring 1 ft. 2 in. by 1 ft. 6 in. A school piece with a frieze of nudes and horses touched in by Botticelli.

Virgin in Adoration. Boston, Mrs. Gardner. A school piece omitted by Mr. Berenson.

Christ Crucified and Magdalen. Lyons, Collection of M. Aynard. Mr. Berenson does not mention this picture, but Mr. Horne considers that the figure of the Magdalen is undoubtedly by Botticelli, and a very interesting example of his late work.

Stories of the Legend of St. Zenobio. Two panels in Mr. Ludwig Mond's Collection, London, and one in the Dresden Gallery, No. 9. These are merely furniture work, and are omitted from Mr. Berenson's list.

GUIDE TO BOTTICELLI'S PICTURES

GROUPED together for the convenience of students and tourists. A few of the more important doubtful pictures are included, as well as those which are authentic.

ENGLAND . . . National Gallery.
592, Adoration of the Magi (panel).
626, Portrait of a Young Man.
915, Mars and Venus.
1033, Adoration of the Magi (*tondo*).
1034, Nativity.

FRANCE . . . Paris, Louvre.
1297, Giovanna Tornabuoni (fresco).
1298, Lorenzo Tornabuoni (fresco).

GERMANY . . . Berlin, Royal Museum.
106, Bardi Madonna.
1128, St. Sebastian.
Berlin, Professor R. Von Kaufmann.
Judith with Head of Holofernes (uncertain).

ITALY . . . . Florence, Accademia.
73, Coronation of the Virgin (San Marco).
74, Predella of the same.
80, Primavera.
85, Altar-piece of St. Barnabà.
157 to 162, Predella panels of same.
Florence, Uffizi.
39, Birth of Venus.
1154, Young Man with Medal.
1156, Judith with Head of Holofernes.
1158, Holofernes Dead.
1179, St. Augustine in Cell.
1182, Calumny.

ITALY . . . . Florence, Uffizi (*continued*).
1267*bis*, Madonna of the Magnificat (*tondo*).
1286, Adoration of the Magi (painted for G. Laini).
1289, Madonna of the Pomegranate (*tondo*).
1299, Fortitude.
3436, Adoration of the Magi (laid in by Botticelli).
Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Private Apartments.
Pallas and a Centaur.
Florence, Palazzo Capponi.
Communion of St. Jerome.
Near Florence, Corbignano, towards Settignano.
Madonna Vannella (fresco in hill shrine).
Bergamo, Morelli Gallery.
Virginia.
Milan, Ambrosiana.
72, Madonna and Child with Angels (*tondo*).
Milan, Poldi-Pezzoli Museum.
156, Madonna and Child (doubtful).
Rome, Sistine Chapel.
Three large frescoes; several Popes.
Rome, Palazzo Pallavicini.
The Outcast (doubtful, but important).

RUSSIA . . . . St. Petersburg, Hermitage.
163, Adoration of the Magi.

UNITED STATES . Boston, Mrs. Gardner's Collection.
Chigi Madonna.
Lucrezia.

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Only facts, deductions, and reasonable suggestions have been indexed. Fiction has been passed over.—A. J. A.

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The most powerful story Miss Arabella Kenealy has written. It is at the same time a passionate love story, and a profound study in the psychology of emotions. Here are two men, opposite as the poles in temperament and *morale*, the ascetic Anglican priest, and the "woman-hunter" of the title, man of the world and libertine. Both are in love with Nerissa, the charming heroine; one is her husband. The theme of the book is the widely-differing effects on temperament and conduct which result from love in these two widely-differing men. The one, the ascetic priest, concerned for his soul's salvation, fights his passion for his young bride as a deadly and besetting sin; the other comes by way of his passion to regeneration. An adept in the conquest of women, he brings all his powers to the siege of the beautiful unhappy wife, wooing her in every mood and tense, ringing the changes of his wooing through strategy, and bribery and temptation, through force of mastery, through guile and wile and passionate assault, and so at last to love, profound and true. The story, though eminently modern, is picturesquely set in a romantic old tower.

The Consort. MRS. EVERARD COTES (SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN). Author of "The Burnt Offering," "Cousin Cinderella," "The Path of a Star," etc.

The story of a little man married to a great woman, of their relations and interactions, their battles and despairs, written round the strong and familiar interests of passion and power and politics. The story moves at a gallop, and it is for the reader to meditate and moralise when the book is laid aside.

The Villa Mystery. HERBERT FLOWERDEW

Author of "The Second Elopement," "The Third Wife," etc.

Another of those psychological-sensational romances which Herbert Flowerdew has made a speciality of his own. Woven in with the mystery of a crime as baffling as anything imagined by Gaboriau, the pretty love story of Esmond Hare and Elsa Armandy engages the reader's sympathy from the moment of their first meeting. This is in a lonely country road, at midnight, where Elsa is on her knees picking up handfuls of sovereigns that do not exactly belong to her, and the atmosphere of mingled mystery and romance continues to surround their moving and unconventional love story up to the moment of its happy ending.

Prince and Priest. BERYL SYMONS

Author of "A Lady of France."

Readers fortunate in having read this author's stirring novel 'A Lady of France' will appreciate this new romance of mediæval France, which contains atmosphere, colour, life and movement. 1207 is the date when the story opens. Count Bertrand de Crein falls in love with the beautiful Lady Rosamund, whom he is escorting to the Lord of Gervandan in Toulouse, whose wife she is to be. In the meantime the Count of Toulouse is threatened with Rome's curse and an armed crusade to put down heresy. In the subsequent siege and sack of Beziers, Rosamund's husband is killed, and the love of Rosamund and de Crein culminates in marriage. The book is full of excitement, adventure, thrilling escapes, and heart-stirring romance.

Brass Faces. CHARLES McEVOY

An exciting modern story of grip and power, some of the most startling episodes of which concern the kidnapping of a girl who has been turned out of house and home by her father and imprisoned in a house in Kensington. She is rescued by a bachelor, who in turn finds himself in a delicate position. An American female detective plots his arrest and ruin. The story rushes on in a whirl of excitement through a maze of plots and counterplots to a dramatic *dénouement.*

The Meteoric Benson. VINCENT MILLS-MALET

A decidedly new note has been struck in this most readable and interesting novel. As the name indicates it is an aeroplane story, and one of those rare books which must be read at a sitting; incident follows incident in ever-increasing interest, until the reader, breathless from excitement, learns from the last page "what really did happen."

Who Did It? HEADON HILL

Author of "Troubled Waters."

The principal theme of this volume is the abnormal astuteness of the Conductor of a railway restaurant-car, whose powers of observation and deduction enables him to solve the many absorbing "mysteries" that come under his ken, and which, as a preventer and detector of crime, put him on a par with any of the great puzzle-readers of fiction. Mr. Headon Hill goes direct to the point, and carries the reader rapidly along from the first page to the last.

A Robin Hood of France. MICHAEL W. KAYE

Hated at court and falsely accused of murder, the young Sieur de Pontenac flees to the Forest of Fontainebleau, and becomes the leader of a band of robbers (King Mandrin), beloved of the oppressed canaille, but hated of the nobles, whom he defies and robs. Claire d'Orgiuel, the only child of the Comte d'Orgiuel, having lost heavily at cards, wagers the winner—who has her in his power, and who hopes to force her to marry him—that she will lure "King Mandrin" into the power of his enemies; but, arriving in the Forest of Fontainebleau, ends in falling in love with the "Robin Hood of France."

Neighbours of Mine. R. ANDOM

Author of "We Three and Troddles," "In Fear of a Throne," etc. With 60 original illustrations.

This broadly farcical story of types and incidents of suburban life will afford as much amusement as the famous "Troddles" books which have in volume form successfully appealed to something like 200,000 readers of all classes, and should prove as popular with those who like a rollicking story. Now and again the author conveys a moral, discreetly, but generally he is content to be extravagantly amusing in depicting adventures, which are sufficiently out of the ordinary to be termed "singular." The book is cleverly and amusingly illustrated throughout the text by a popular artist, who has admirably succeeded in catching the drollery of the narrative.

The Loves of Stella. MRS. SHIERS-MASON

Stella O'Donovan, a very poor but also very beautiful and quite unsophisticated Irish girl, lives in an old castle on a lovely but lonely Bay on the Irish coast. She has Spanish blood in her veins, and much of the impulsive and fascinating temperament of the Andalusians. Becoming heiress to a million of money, she decides to go to London and enter Society. Before her departure, a young Norwegian sculptor, Olaf Johansen, of striking appearance, comes to reside in the village. He at once falls in love with Stella, who returns his affection, but who, doubtful of herself, flees to London. Here she appears to meet Olaf again, but it is his twin brother impersonating him. Stella at once succumbs to his love-making, and many highly dramatic scenes follow.

Every Dog His Day. HAROLD AVERY

Author of "A Week at the Sea," etc.

Basil Relaver and Angela kiss in a garden at Avesbury, youthful and innocent lovers. Circumstances divide them. Basil is whirled away into the vortex of commercial life and spends some years building up business and making himself a position. Prospering, he revisits Avesbury to learn from Helen Sutherly, Angela's aunt, that Angela, proud and independent, lives in London and earns her own livelihood as a secretary. They meet and misunderstand. Helen Sutherly intervenes, but the lovers are again about to part when they meet once more in the old garden and "love awakens and does not wake in vain." It is a pleasant, quiet story which grows in interest as it proceeds, and leaves a sense of satisfaction in the mind of the reader when it is finished.

The Long Hand. SIR WILLIAM MAGNAY, BART.

Author of "Red Chancellor," "Count Zarka" and "A Prince of Lovers."

The setting of the story is Bavaria at the end of the 18th century, when that very remarkable, but now almost forgotten genius, Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, was for a short time actually Regent of Bavaria, and was standing forth as the saviour of Munich, threatened at once by the French and Austrian armies. At this juncture a young English traveller arrives in that city, and by chance is drawn into a tragic adventure, being mistaken by an emissary of vengeance for a young officer who has given offence at Court, and whom the "long hand" of royalty is seeking to clutch. This episode proves to be but the first of many exciting adventures, and from it is developed a love interest which becomes the engrossing theme of the story. Readers who have enjoyed the Author's previous novels will find no falling off in this, his latest novel of the same genre, which offers a feast of romance and stirring adventure.

Exotic Martha. DOROTHEA GERARD

Author of "The City of Enticement," "A Glorious Lie," etc.

Martha Grant, betrothed to a Dutchman whom she has met at an Alpine health resort, but who resides in Java, arrives at Batavia to find her lover married to another woman. Rather than face the humiliation of a return to her Scotch home she engages herself as a lady's maid to an invalid Dutchwoman. Suspected of poisioning her mistress, she is condemned to penal servitude for life. Effecting her escape, with the aid of an eccentric French doctor, who is the real, though unsuspected, poisoner, she is on the point of yielding to the advances of her rescuer, when George Pether, the friend of her girlhood, appears upon the scene, and in his company "exotic Martha"—quite cured of an ill-regulated passion for the tropics—regains her native land.

The Cardinal. NEWTON V. STEWART

Author of "A Son of the Emperor," "Across the Gulf," etc.

An historical story of Italian life in the 13th century, the time of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, when the Pope and Emperor with their factions were opposed. Ottaviano Maldini is the cardinal. He is all-powerful in Rome, and more of a soldier and a statesman than a churchman. Ariadne, the heroine, is a princess who is kidnapped and falls into the hands of the Moors. She is an exquisite little creature and her dancing uniquely beautiful, but she deliberately lames herself to escape harem life. She is offered as a slave to the cardinal, who out of pity buys her. With the cardinal she is happy, interest and affection develope into passionate love between them, and in the end Ariadne dies by her own hand, and relieves the cardinal of the embarrassment of her presence. It is an intensely interesting romance, and presents a lively and accurate picture of the times.

The Qualities of Mercy. CECIL ADAIR

Author of "The Dean's Daughter," "Cantacute Towers," etc.

The Mercy of the Qualities is a girl who, having inherited property, is free from the necessity which often leads to marriage, for which she is temperamentally disinclined. Captain Dare, whose little kinsman Colin is Mercy's friend, has other views, but Mercy will have none of him, and in pique he marries Alys, a timid little friend of Mercy's, who runs away from him and is hidden by the vicar's wife. Mercy and Colin swear eternal friendship; the latter has no desire to marry and perpetuate the house of Dare. Dare is found dead, a victim of the vendetta. The wholesome story is full of interesting ingredients—Riches, High Place, lovely Country, Beautiful Weather, some Excitement, and Mystery.

The Unholy Estate; or, the Sins of the Fathers.

DOUGLAS SLADEN. Author of "A Japanese Marriage," "The Admiral," "The Tragedy of the Pyramids," etc.

This is a present-day story of strong domestic interest. The problem which Mr. Douglas Sladen treats is the unhappiness inflicted by unsuitable marriages and the inconveniences which besiege those who defy the marriage convention and take their lives into their own hands

The story lies on the fringe of politics. An eminent political personage, thinly veiled, occupies a prominent position in it. He supplies one of the main elements in the book, and the other is supplied by a woman of great position who gives up everything for the man she loves and is content to live cut off from society for his sake.

The book differs from most books which deal with the same subject in the fact that neither party, in spite of straitened means and social ostracism, exhibits any remorse or regret. They are completely satisfied with what they have done. They live a simple life and their love match is an unequivocal success. The unexpected dénouement of the story is a happy one.

Hodson's Voyage. W. H. KOEBEL

Author of "In the Maoriland Bush," with 8 original illustrations on art paper by Fred Pegram.

This is a work of light humour from the pen of Mr. W. H. Koebel, better known of recent years as a travel writer of distinction, but who in taking up fiction again is returning to his first love. The plot deals with the trials of a commercial traveller on board a liner. He is mistaken for a country officer whom he resembles, and the complications that ensue include a love interest, and give rise to a rapid series of situations that contain frank elements of farce, especially when the hero finds that fragments of the past history of his military prototype are known to others and not to himself. The climax of the story arises when it is imperative that he should reveal his identity, and when he finds it impossible to convince his companions that circumstances have compelled him to act the lie. The book abounds in situations, and much amusement arises from the bewildering happenings of the unexpected. The fate of the unfortunate victim hangs in the balance until the last page.

The Baron of Ill Fame. HESTER BARTON

This story gives a faithful picture of Florence in the time of Dante. Besides Corso Donati, the hero of Campaldino, Dante and his wife; Giotto, the great artist; Giano della Bella, the popular demagogue, and other Florentines known to history, figure in the novel. The period dealt with was a stirring and brutal one, yet amid the clash of steel, the flow of blood, the hoarse yells of mutual hatred, the orgies of illicit passion, the violation of convents, the sacking and burning of towns, men and women plighted troth even as to-day, and the author of this romance of mediæval Florence has unified her graphic descriptions of historical incidents by a love story all the more idyllic because of the background of vice and crime.

Duckworth's Diamonds. E. EVERETT-GREEN

Author of "Clive Lorimer's Marriage," "The Lady of the Bungalow," etc.

Duckworth has entrusted a haul of diamonds to his friend, Dermot Fitzgerald, who brings them to England to await instructions. He is aware that he is shadowed by one, Pike, and gets Hilton, a friend of his, to come over to Ireland and advise him. Hilton advises him to bring the treasure and hide it in his own caves of Treversal. This they do, though not without adventure. In a little village, close to Treversal, stands a small cottage to which Barbara Quentin has retired on the death of her millionaire father, whose assets appear to be nil, and whose child is unprovided for. She lives in the cottage with a friend, making acquaintance with Hilton and Dermot. Later on, Phyllis Duckworth is drawn into the web of fate, and comes also to the cottage. Letters come ostensibly from Duckworth, demanding the surrender of the treasure to his sister; but Phyllis deems these forgeries, and Dermot holds on. In the end and in the nick of time, Duckworth himself turns up; there is a raid upon the caves of Treversal, but the villains are caught and arrested, and various pairs of lovers are made happy.

A Passion in Morocco. CHARLOTTE CAMERON

Author of "A Woman's Winter in South America."

The story opens on board a P. & O. steamer when it is ploughing its way steadily towards the Moroccan coast. A beautiful English girl, duly chaperoned, makes the acquaintance of a handsome Moorish prince who is returning to his native land after passing through the curriculum at Oxford, with the varied problems of East and West seeking solution in his mind. The presence of the girl presses one of these questions irresistibly to the forefront of his consideration. At Mazagan the ladies are invited by an officers' guide to visit the harem of the Kaid, where the beautiful English girl, separated from the party, is trapped by the wily owner, from whose hands she is duly rescued, at the eleventh hour, by Mohammed el Yumar, the Moorish Prince. Many adventures follow—amid strange scenes are enacted against a background of vivid Oriental colour, and in the end East and West effect a union, finding that "love levels all."

The Lotus Lantern. MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

Author of "The Reaping," "The Impersonator," "My Lady Clancarty," etc.

A love story of great charm and dramatic power, whose scene is laid in Japan of to-day. Lieut. John Holland, a military attaché of the British Embassy, and betrothed to the daughter of the British Ambassador, while witnessing the Buddhist festival of lanterns, symbolizing ships of the souls of the dead, meets Umé-San, who had been sold by her relatives and had become a Geisha girl in a Tokyo tea garden. A plot has been formed to place her in the power of an unscrupulous and cruel Japanese prince. Holland's sympathy is first enlisted, and finally he falls passionately in love with the little Japanese girl, pure, sweet, and devout, notwithstanding her surroundings. The story moves with dramatic force, is filled with interest from the opening chapter to the end, and Umé (flower of the plum) is one of the tenderest and dearest heroines of fiction.

Damosel Croft. R. MURRAY GILCHRIST

Author of "The Courtesy Dame," "The Two Goodwins," "The Firstborn," etc.

The heroine of this book is the last of a wealthy yeoman family in the High Peak Country; the hero is a young man from Yorkshire, of equal social standing but comparatively insignificent means. Janey Maskrey is beloved by three; her choice falls at last upon the most fitting suitor, with whom, without being aware of the fact, she has been in love for some considerable time. An author of distinguished reputation—akin to the Maskreys—presents with his curious entourage a remarkable contrast. Several old-world country-scenes, notably the Carrying of the Garland at Castleton, are presented with a wealth of colour. The book is full of sunlight, of happiness and of country mirth.

The Marriage of Lenore. ALICE M. DIEHL

Author of "A Mysterious Lover," etc.

Lenore has married more than once, and thereby hang numerous complications. Her first husband is an elderly roue, and the second, who is present at her first marriage, restores to her the bouquet which she drops, and in this act and its recognition eyes and souls meet. There is a rumour that the first husband was a bigamist. Thereupon Lenore marries her second, only to find that her first husband's *mésalliance* was no marriage and that she herself has committed bigamy. The old husband dies, and so matters are set right. The story flows on through troubles and distractions, raptures and pains, to its happy ending.

God Disposes. PELLEW HAWKER

A novel of quick changes, rapid movements, and striking dramatic situations, which opens with the description of a dead man sitting at his library table, his hand resting on his cheque book. The surreptitious visitor who makes the discovery secures the cheque book, forges the dead man's signature, and succeeds in cashing a cheque for a large amount. On the strength of the money he poses as a rich man, pushes himself into country society, and wins the heart of Lady Angela Dawson, who is affianced to Viscount Woolmer, the son and heir of Lord Bletchford, and the elder brother of the dead man. Later he claims to be the heir to the property, but in due course is discovered and exposed. The characterisation is good, the narrative interesting and the *dénouement* all that can be desired.

The Watch Night. HENRY BETT

A story of adventure in the exciting years of 1741-1746. The hero, when a young man in London, comes under the influence of Whitefield and Wesley, and joins the Methodists. Later he becomes involved in Jacobite plots in Lincolnshire and Northumberland, and falls in love with a lady who is acting as one of the Pretender's agents in England. The Jacobites suspect that he is a spy upon them, and he is kidnapped and carried to Holland. There his life is attempted, and he learns that the English Government has offered a reward for his apprehension. Since he cannot return, he journeys to the borders of Bohemia to visit Herrhut, the headquarters of the Moravian Brethren. Here he finds himself in the midst of the second Silesian war. He sees Frederick the Great, and meets the heroine once more unexpectedly at Dresden. It would be unfair to unravel the complex plot with all its surprises, it will suffice to say that while this is a lively narrative of love, intrigue, and adventure which hurries the reader on from page to page, it is also a serious attempt, the first in English fiction, to give a faithful picture of the life of the Eighteenth Century Moravians and Methodists. There are vivid glimpses of many famous men, especially John Wesley.

A Woman with a Purpose. ANNA CHAPIN RAY

With coloured frontispiece by Frank Snapp.

In characterization, in dramatic force, and in artistic treatment this is the best story Miss Ray has yet written. It deals with the married life of a strong, successful, self-willed man of affairs to a girl who has tried to support herself by her pen, and in failing has retained her high ideals and her respect for her own opinions. The story is so full of the life of to-day that it stirs our emotions while it delights us with its absorbing plot. People of rare quality and reality are portrayed, vital problems are inspiringly handled, and a love story of power and originality is developed to its logical conclusion.

Love's Old Sweet Song. CLIFTON BINGHAM

Mr. Clifton Bingham, who, thirty years ago, wrote the words of the famous song bearing this title, which is known and sung all the world over, has in this new novel—the first he has written—woven his sympathetic verses into a most interesting and human story, both dramatic and pathetic. Though containing only five characters (excepting the dog) it touches lightly and tenderly the chords of human life in a manner that will appeal, as in Molloy's song, to every heart. It is a book that will be appreciated by everyone who has heard or sung "Just a Song at Twilight, when the Lights are Low," and should make an appropriate gift book to lovers of music.

The Activities of Lavie Jutt. MARGUERITE and ARMIGER BARCLAY. Author of "The Kingmakers," "The Worsleys," etc.

Lavie, the heiress of a millionaire, is taken into society—for a handsome consideration. She is resourceful as well as charming, and when she falls in love with the impecunious Lord Loamington, who keeps a hat shop, she is able to tender very valuable advice. But Lavie is not satisfied with talking; she is full of activity and inventiveness, and she "makes things hum." This story of her many activities is bright and out of the common.

Opal of October. JOY SHIRLEY

For those born in the month of October, the opal is said to be a lucky stone, and this novel is based upon the assumption that it is so. It is a story of the times of the soothsayers and the witches, when people were all more or less trying to discover the philosopher's stone which turns everything to gold. The witch in this case is a young girl of great beauty, who narrowly escapes the stake.

The Mystery of Red Marsh Farm. ARCHIBALD H. MARSHALL. Author of "The Squire's Daughter," "Exton Manor," etc.

This novel deals with the mysterious disappearance of a child, who is heir to a property consisting of an old Manor House and a large marshland farm, which has been in the family for generations. Many people are concerned in the mystery, and suspicion falls first on one, then on the other, but the police fail to clear it up. The mystery is solved by a young squire who is in love with the sister of the missing child, but not until he has travelled half round the world in search of the solution.

Two Worlds: A Romance. LIEUT.-COL. ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD. Author of "The France of Joan of Arc," etc.

Colonel Andrew Haggard, so well known for his clever and amusing histories of French Court Life, is no less known as a novelist of distinction. In this story he introduces the reader to life in Vancouver Island, the scene opening in that gem of the Pacific, the beautiful city of Victoria. The heroine is a lovely young unbeliever, whose naturally generous and ardent temperament has become warped by the perusal of atheistic literature. The hero is a manly young Englishman, himself an agnostic but a seeker after the truth. They have some weird adventures in the realm of the occult. Then the scene changes to Europe, where we meet with a generous-minded and somewhat eccentric peer given to Christian Science, who has a great effect upon the subsequent development of the plot, and the many exciting incidents by land, sea and aeroplane with which this unusual romance is filled.

The Three Anarchists. MAUD STEPNEY RAWSON Author of "A Lady of the Regency," "The Stairway of Honour," "The Enchanted Garden," "The Easy-Go-Luckies," etc.

The Three, who dominate alike the romance of the world and the plot of this new story from the pen of the author of "The Enchanted Garden," are Love, Death, and Birth, and the title is based on a phrase in Mr. C. F. G. Masterman's fine volume of essays, "The Peril of Change." The puissance of this triumvirate is unfolded in the story of a simple woman, born nameless, and of no position, whose life, at first uneventful, is suddenly engulfed by social eminence, sensation, temptation and a dangerous love. The Three come to her aid in each crisis, and each leaves her stronger and more competent to hold the heritage of peace and happiness which eventually becomes hers.

Maids in Many Moods. H. LOUISA BEDFORD Author of "His Will and her Way."

This novel shows the feminine temperament and the feminine temper in its various and discordant phases, but it is a novel of incident rather than of psychological analysis, and will appeal to all who like a genuine unsophisticated love story.

The Second Woman. NORMA LORIMER

Author of "Josiah's Wife," "Mirry-Ann," "On Etna," and "The Pagan Woman," etc.

Tells of a woman married to a man younger than herself (not so much in years as in temperament), haunted by the fear of his awakening one day to the fact that his love for her has never been what he thought it was, but has only been affection. The plot is worked out on original lines, and the book is full of novel situations, unexpected complications and pungent dialogue.

Veeni the Master. R. FIFIELD LAMPORT

Readers and admirers of Marie Corelli's romances of the supernatural will find congenial excitement in following the fortunes of "Veeni the Master" in Mr. Lamport's romance of two worlds—the world Earth and the world Zan. The story of the dissolution of the world Earth is full of human interest, and that of the reincarnation in the world Zan is fired with real imaginative power. The book is full of surprises, in which love interest and passion play a prominent part. It should cause somewhat of a sensation.

Their Wedded Wife. ALICE M. DIEHL

Author of "The Marriage of Lenore," "A Mysterious Lover," etc.

This is the story of a tragic misunderstanding and its consequences. Nora le Geyt is happily married to Paul Wentworth, who adores her with a jealous adoration. Believing a slander against her, he leaves her. Years pass; Nora, believing him dead, marries again; then she discovers that Wentworth is still alive; she loves him still. With the skill of a deft artist Mrs. Diehl brings the story to a close on a note of happiness that will please the large and growing circle of her admirers.

Swelling of Jordan. CORALIE STANTON AND HEATH HOSKEN. Author of "Plumage," "The Muzzled Ox," etc.

Canon Oriel, an earnest worker in the East End, loved and respected, had, years before the story commences, while climbing with his friend Digby Cavan in Switzerland, found in the pocket of his friend's coat, which he had accidentally put on instead of his own, evidence that his friend had robbed his, the canon's, brother and been the cause of his committing suicide. Oriel in a struggle which took place between the two men hurled his friend from the precipice. Now the glacier gives up Cavan's rucksack, and any day it may yield up his body. To reveal subsequent developments would spoil the reader's enjoyment of a thrilling plot.

The Red Fleur De Lys. MAY WYNNE

Author of "Henri of Navarre," "Honour's Fetters," etc.

A thrilling story of the French Revolution presenting a little-known phase of that great social upheaval. It tells of the nobles of the White Terror who rose to avenge the atrocities of the Reds, banding themselves together, and wearing as their badge a Red Fleur De Lys.

The City of Enticement. DOROTHEA GERARD

Author of "The Grass Widow," "The Blood Tax," etc.

Mr. Spiteful visits Vienna with much the same results that follow the fly that visits a fly-paper—he sticks there till he dies. Two English sisters, his cousins, follow him in search of his fortune, and find the fly-paper just as attractive. An art-loving cousin despatched to fetch them home sticks fast also, as does a schoolboy who despatches himself, and others who follow with the same view. They are all held fast by the City of Enticement, which has a separate appeal for each of their foibles. An extremely entertaining novel.

Love in Armour. PHILIP L. STEVENSON

Author of "The Rose of Dauphiny," "A Gallant of Gascony," etc.

Major Stevenson's new historical romance, long announced, and eagerly awaited by many readers who enjoyed "The Rose of Dauphiny," is at length in the printer's hands. It is a long novel, dealing with love, intrigue and adventure, and the abortive conspiracy of Mardi Gras, just before the death of Charles IX. of France.

Major Stevenson writes historical romances with a vigour, verve and enthusiasm which have led several critics to compare him with Dumas. *The Times* critic, writing of his last novel, "The Rose of Dauphiny," said: "Mr. Stevenson is winning an honourable place among the school of Mr. Stanley Weyman."

Madge Carrington and her Welsh Neighbours.

"DRAIG GLAS." Author of "The Perfidious Welshman." 9th Edit.

In this story of Welsh village life "Draig Glas" employs his gift of satire in depicting various types of Welsh character, and gives incisive portraits of Welsh men and women, and graphic pictures of Welsh scenery. No visitor to the principality should fail to procure a copy of this novel. Tourists especially will find much interest in endeavouring to trace the original of the Welsh village, and its vicinage, which "Draig Glas" delineates in his volume.

Our Guests. ST. JOHN TREVOR

Author of "Angela."

The guests referred to are the paying guests of two impecunious young gentlemen who, finding themselves in possession of a dilapidated ancestral mansion, conceive the brilliant idea of running the place as a hydropathic establishment. The idiosyncracies of the guests, and the adventures of the two bachelor proprietors with love-lorn housekeepers, refractory charwomen, and a penniless nobleman, who is hired as a "decoy," provide Mr. Trevor with excellent material for a delightfully diverting story.

The Retrospect. ADA CAMBRIDGE

Author of "Thirty Years in Australia," "A Little Minx," etc.

The many admirers of Ada Cambridge—the old generation and the new—will appreciate this homely volume of reminiscences, which exhales a quiet charm. It is an intimate, confidential narrative, setting forth recollections, comparisons of past times with the present, accounts of homes and friends and relations. It takes one into the Seventies, and Sixties, and Fifties, and recreates the England of those times.

The Three Envelopes. HAMILTON DRUMMOND

Author of "Shoes of Gold," "The Justice of the King," etc.

In this story Mr. Hamilton Drummond breaks fresh ground—there is the thrill of the weird and supernatural. It tells of one, Corley, who, weary of a humdrum existence, makes the acquaintance of a strange society—"The Society for Promoting Queer Results." He is given three envelopes, each of which sends him forth on some lone, weird mission—in one instance he is sent to a small German town, Solzeim, where he has a remarkable experience connected with a very ancient house. This is but the beginning of adventures. How Corley goes to the Devil's Mill, where he is involved in a weird love tragedy, in which the old Mill plays a part, and how he meets Mary Courteleigh, whom he ultimately marries, we must leave the story to unfold.

The New Wood Nymph. DOROTHEA BUSSELL

In this work the author sets forth something of the dangers and problems which confront a girl whose senses and intellect are both keenly awake. To her the beauty of the forest speaks insistently, and with it she comes to identify her life. She meets with adventures and love interests, and goes to London, but the forest is always with her, and when the climax comes she finds the answer to perplexities therein.

A Modern Ahab. THEODORA WILSON WILSON

Author of "Bess of Hardendale," "Moll o' the Toll-Bar," etc.

Readers of Miss Wilson's former novels will need no urging to make their acquaintance of a new work from her pen. "A Modern Ahab" deals with modern life in a Westmorland dale, and is a tale of keen local dispute, love, passion, hate and humour.

A Star of the East: A Story of Delhi. CHARLES E. PEARCE. Author of "Love Besieged," "Red Revenge," etc.

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