

Barbara's Heritage eBook

Barbara's Heritage

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PRELUDE.

Each day the world is born anew
For him who takes it rightly;
Not fresher that which Adam knew,
Not sweeter that whose moonlit dew
Entranced Arcadia nightly.

Rightly? That's simply: 'tis to see
Some substance casts these shadows
Which we call Life and History,
That aimless seem to chase and flee
Like wind-gleams over meadows.

Simply? That's nobly: 'tis to know
That God may still be met with,
Nor groweth old, nor doth bestow
These senses fine, this brain aglow,
To grovel and forget with.

—James Russell Lowell.

Chapter I.

The Unexpected Happens.

And forth they passe with pleasure forward led.

—Spenser.

[Illustration: *Barbara's home.*]

"O Barbara! *do* you think papa and mamma will let us go? *Can* they afford it? Just to think of Italy, and sunshine, and olive trees, and cathedrals, and pictures! Oh, it makes me wild! Will you not ask them, dear Barbara? You are braver than I, and can talk better about it all. How can we bear to have them say 'no'—to give up all the lovely thought of it, now that once we have dared to dream of its coming to us—to you and me, Barbara?" and color flushed the usually pale cheek of the young girl, and her dark eyes glowed with feeling as she hugged tightly the arm of her sister.

Barbara and Bettina Burnett were walking through a pleasant street in one of the suburban towns of Boston after an afternoon spent with friends who were soon to sail for Italy.

It was a charming early September evening, and the sunset glow burned through the avenue of elm trees, beneath which the girls were passing, flooding the way with rare beauty. But not one thought did they now give to that which, ordinarily, would have delighted them; for Mrs. Douglas had astonished them that afternoon by a pressing invitation to accompany herself, her son, and daughter on this journey. For hours they had talked over the beautiful scheme, and were to present Mrs. Douglas's request to their parents that very night.

Mrs. Douglas, a wealthy woman, had been a widow almost ever since the birth of her daughter, who was now a girl of fifteen. Malcom, her son, was three or four years older. An artist brother was living in Italy, and a few years previous to the beginning of our story, Mrs. Douglas and her children had spent some months there. Now the brother was desirous that they should again go to him, especially since his sister was not strong, and it would be well for her to escape the inclemency of a New England winter.

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Barbara and Bettina,—Bab and Betty, as they were called in their home,—twin daughters of Dr. Burnett, were seventeen years old, and the eldest of a large family. The father, a great-hearted man, devoted to his noble profession, and generous of himself, his time, and money, had little to spare after the wants of his family had been supplied, so it was not strange that the daughters, on sober second thought, should feel that the idea of such a trip to the Old World as Mrs. Douglas suggested could be only the dream of a moment, from which an awakening must be inevitable.

But they little knew the wisdom of Mrs. Douglas, nor for a moment did they suspect that for weeks before she had mentioned the matter to them, she and their parents had spent many hours in planning and contriving so that it might seem possible to give this great pleasure and means of education to their daughters.

Even now, while they were hesitating to mention the matter, it was already settled. Their parents had decided that, with the aid of a portion of a small legacy which Mrs. Burnett had sacredly set aside for her children, to be used only when some sufficient reason should offer, enough money could be spared during the coming year to allow them to accompany Mrs. Douglas.

As the sisters drew near the rambling, old-fashioned house, set back from the street, which was their home, a pleasant welcome awaited them. The father, who had just come from the stable to the piazza, the mother and younger children,—Richard, Lois, Margaret, and little Bertie,—and even the old dog, Dandy,—each had an affectionate greeting.

A quick look of intelligence passed between the parents as they saw the flushed faces of their daughters, which so plainly told of unusual excitement of feeling; but, saying nothing, they quietly led the way into the dining room, where all gathered around the simple supper which even the youngest could enjoy.

After the children had been put to bed, and the older ones of the family were in the library, which was their evening sitting room, Bettina looked anxiously at Barbara, who, after several attempts, succeeded in telling the startling proposition which Mrs. Douglas had made, adding that she should not dare to speak of it had she not promised Mrs. Douglas to do so.

Imagine, if you can, the amazement, the flood of joyous surprise that the girls felt as they realized, first, that to their parents it was not a new, startling subject which could not for a moment be entertained; then, that it was not only to be thought of, but planned for; and more, that the going to Italy with Mrs. Douglas, Malcom, and Margery was to be a reality, an experience that very soon would come into their lives, for they were to sail in three weeks.

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After the hubbub of talk that followed, it was a very subdued and quiet pair of girls who kissed father and mother good night and went upstairs to the room in which they had slept ever since their childhood. The certain nearness of the first home-breaking, of the first going away from their dear ones, and a new conception of the tenderness of the parents, who were sacrificing so much for them, had taken such possession of their hearts that they were too full for words. For Barbara and Bettina were dear, thoughtful daughters and sisters, who had early learned to aid in bearing the family burdens, and whose closest, strongest affections were bound about the home and its dear ones.

Such busy days followed! Such earnest conferences between Mrs. Burnett and Mrs. Douglas, who was an old traveller, and knew all the ins and outs of her dear doctor's household!

It was finally decided that the dark blue serge gowns that had been worn during the last spring and on cold summer days with the warm spring jackets, would be just the thing for the girls on the steamship; that the pretty brown cloth suits which were even then in the dressmaker's hands could be worn almost constantly after reaching Italy for out-of-door life; while the simple evening gowns that had done duty at schoolgirl receptions would answer finely for at-home evenings. So that only two or three extra pairs of boots (for nothing abroad can take the place of American boots and shoes), some silk waists, so convenient for easy change of costume, and a little addition to the dainty underclothing were all that was absolutely needed.

Busy fingers soon accomplished everything necessary, and in a few swiftly passing days the trunks were packed, the tearful good-bys spoken, and the little party was on its way to New York, to sail thence for Genoa on the *Kaiser Wilhelm II.* of the North German Lloyd line of steamships.

Dr. Burnett had managed to accompany them thus far, and now, as the great ship is slowly leaving the wharf, and Mrs. Douglas, Malcom, Margery, Barbara, and Bettina are clustered together on her deck, waving again and again their good-bys, and straining their eyes still to recognize the dear familiar form and face among the crowd that presses forward on the receding pier, we will take time for a full introduction of the chief personages of our story.

Mrs. Douglas, who stands between her children, Malcom's arm thrown half-protectingly about her shoulders, was, or rather is (for our tale is of recent date and its characters are yet living), a rare woman. Slender and graceful, clothed in widow's dress, her soft gray hair framing a still fair and youthful face, she looks a typical American woman of refinement and culture. And she is all this, and more; for did she not possess a strong Christian character, wise judgment, and a warm motherly heart, and were she not ever eager to gain that which is noblest and best both for herself and her children from every experience of life, careful Dr. and Mrs. Burnett would never have intrusted their daughters to her.

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Her husband had been a young Scotchman, well-born, finely educated, and possessed of ample means, whom she had met when a girl travelling abroad with her parents, and her brief wedded life had been spent in beautiful Edinburgh, her husband's native city. Very soon after Margery's birth came the terrible grief of her husband's death, and lonely Elizabeth Douglas came across the sea, bringing her two fatherless children to make a home for herself and them among her girlhood friends.

Malcom, a well-developed, manly young fellow, has just graduated from the Boston Latin School. As he stands beside his mother we see the military drill he has undergone in his fine carriage, straight shoulders, and erect head. He has the Scotch complexion, an abundance of fair hair, and frank, steady eyes that win him the instant trust and friendship of all who look into them. Though full of a boy's enthusiasm and fun, yet he seems older than he is, as is usually the case with boys left fatherless who early feel a certain manly responsibility for the mother and sisters.

Proud and fond indeed is Malcom Douglas of his mother and "little Madge," as he calls her, who, petite and slender, with sunny, flowing curls, the sweetest of blue eyes, and a pure, childlike face, stands, with parted lips, flushed with animation, by her mother's side. Margery is, as she looks, gentle and lovable. Not yet has she ever known the weight of the slightest burden of care, but has been as free and happy as the birds, as she has lived in her beautiful home with her mother and brother.

Barbara and Bettina stand a little apart from the others, with clasped hands and dim eyes, as the shore, the home-shore, is fast receding from their sight. They are alike, and yet unlike. People always say "Barbara and Bettina," never "Bettina and Barbara." They are of the same height, each with brown hair and eyes.

Barbara's figure is a little fuller and more womanly, her hair has caught the faintest auburn hue, her eyes have a more brilliant sparkle, and the color on her cheeks glows more steadily. She looks at strangers with a quiet self-possession, and questions others rather than thinks of herself being questioned. As a child she always fought her own and her sister's battles, and would do the same to-day did occasion demand.

Bettina is more timid and self-conscious; her dreamy eyes and quickly coming and going color betray a keen sensitiveness to thought and impressions.

Both are beautiful, and more than one of their fellow-passengers look at the sisters with interest as they stand together, so absorbed in feeling that they take no note of what is passing about them. Just now both are thinking of the same thing—a conversation held with their father as the trio sat in a corner of the car just before reaching New York.

Dr. Burnett had explained to them just how he had been enabled to meet the expense of their coming travel.

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Then he said:—

“Now girls, you are, for the first time in your lives, to be away from the care and advice of your parents. Of course, if you need help in judging of anything, you are free to go to Mrs. Douglas; but there will be much that it will be best for you to decide without troubling her. You will meet all sorts of people, travellers like yourselves, and many you will see who are spending money freely and for what seems pleasure only, without one thought of the special education that travel in the Old World might bring them. Your mother and I have always been actuated by one purpose regarding our children. We cannot give you money in abundance, but we are trying to give you a liberal education,—that which is to us far superior to mere money riches,—and the only consideration that makes us willing to part from you and to sacrifice for you now, is our belief that a rare opportunity for gaining culture and an education that cannot be found at home is open to you.

“Think of this always, my daughters. Ponder it over while you are gone, and do your best to come home bringing a new wealth of knowledge that shall bless your younger brothers and sisters and our whole household, as well as your own lives. You are not going on a pleasure trip, dear girls, but to another school,—a thoroughly novel and delightful one,—but do not forget that, after all, it is a school.”

As the rapidly increasing distance took from them the last sight of the father’s form, Barbara and Bettina turned and looked at each other with tearful eyes; and the unspoken thought of one was, “We *will* come home all that you long for us to be, dear papa!” and of the other, “Oh, I do hope we shall understand what you wish, and learn what and wherever we can!” and both thoughts meant the same thing and bore the same earnest purpose.

“Come girls,” said Mrs. Douglas, who had keenly observed them without appearing to do so, “it is best for us all to go to our staterooms directly and unpack our steamer-trunks. Perhaps in even an hour or two we may not feel so much like doing it as we do now.”

As they passed through the end of the dining-saloon, whose tables were laden with bouquets of fresh and fragrant flowers, brought by loving friends to many of the passengers, Malcom’s quick eye spied a little pile of letters on the end of a corner table.

“I wonder,” said he, as he turned back to look them over, “if anybody thought to write to us.”

Returning with an envelope in his hands, he cried:—

“What will you give for a letter from home already, Barbara and Betty?”

“For us!” exclaimed the girls, “a letter from home for us! Why, we never thought such a thing could be! How did it get here? Did papa bring one and put it here?”

But no, for the letter addressed in the dear mother’s handwriting was clearly stamped, and its appearance testified that it had come through the mail to New York.

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Hurrying to their stateroom and sitting close to each other on the sofa under the port-hole, they read Mrs. Burnett's bright, sweet motherly letter, and a note from each of their brothers and sisters,—even a crumpled printed one from five-year-old Bertie. So bright and jolly were they all, that they allayed rather than heightened the first homesick feelings, and very soon the girls were chattering happily as they busied themselves with their unpacking.

The staterooms of the *Kaiser Wilhelm II.* are more commodious than can be found in most steamships, even those of the same line. It was delightful to find a small wardrobe in which to hang the warm wrappers so useful on shipboard, and the thick coats that might be needed, and a chest of drawers for underclothing, gloves, *etc.* Toilet articles were put on the tiny wall-shelves; magazines and books on the top of the chest of drawers; and soon the little room took on a bit of an individual and homelike look which was very pleasing.

Mrs. Douglas and Margery were just opposite them, and Malcom close at hand, so there was no chance of feeling too much adrift from the old life.

"Hello, girls! Are you ready to come upstairs?" in Malcom's voice.

"How nice your room looks!" cried Margery; and up to the deck they trooped to find that Malcom had seen that their steamer-chairs were well placed close together, and that Mrs. Douglas was already tucked in under her pretty Scotch rug.

How strange the deck looked now that the host of friends that had crowded to say good-by were gone! Already many hats and bonnets had been exchanged for caps, for the wind was fresh, and, altogether, both passengers and deck struck our party as wearing quite a ship-shape air. Mrs. Douglas held in her hand a passenger-list, so interesting at just this time, and was delighted to learn that an old-time travelling companion was on board.

"But, poor woman," said she, "she always has to spend the first three or four days in her berth, so I shall not see her for a time unless I seek her there. She is a miserable sailor."

"Oh, dear!" said Bettina, "I had forgotten that there is such a thing as seasickness. Do you think, Mrs. Douglas, that Barbara and I shall be seasick? It seems impossible when we feel so well now; and the air is so fine, and everything so lovely! Are you always seasick, and Malcom, and Margery?"

"I have never been really sick, save once, when crossing the English Channel," replied Mrs. Douglas; "neither has Malcom ever given up to it, though sometimes he has evidently suffered. But poor Margery has been very sick, and it is difficult for her to

exert enough will-power to quickly overcome it. It requires a prodigious amount to do this if one is really seasick."

"I wonder what it feels like," said Barbara. "I think if will-power can keep one from it, I will not be seasick."

"Come and walk, girls," called Margery, who, with Malcom, had been vigorously walking to and fro on the wide deck, while their mother, Barbara, and Bettina had been talking.



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So they walked until lunch-time, and then enjoyed hugely the novelty of the first meal on shipboard. After this, the young people went aft to look down upon the steerage passengers, and forward to the bow of the noble ship, while Mrs. Douglas took her little nap downstairs.

But alas! as the steamship took her course further into the open sea, and the wind grew more and more fresh, the three girls sank into their chairs, grew silent, and before dinner-time were among the great suffering company that every ship carries during the first days and nights of her voyage.

Chapter II.

Across Two Oceans.

Nobly, nobly Cape St. Vincent to the northwest died away; Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay: Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay: In the dimmest northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray ... While Jove's planet rises yonder silent over Africa.

—BROWNING.

[Illustration: A BIT OF GENOA]

"Betty!" called Barbara.

"What, dear?" answered a weak voice from the berth below.

"Do you know how much more quiet the water is? and, Betty, I think Mrs. Douglas looked really disappointed when she saw us still immovable in our berths."

It was the third morning at sea. The fresh wind of the first afternoon had blown a gale before morning. A storm followed, and for two days the larger part of the passengers had been absent from saloon and deck.

Among these were Barbara, Bettina, and Margery. Mrs. Douglas and Malcom had done their best to keep up the spirits of their little party, but had found it difficult. Now for the third time they had gone to breakfast alone.

Barbara was thinking hard; and, as she thought, her courage rose.

"Betty," said she again, "perhaps if you and I can get up and dress, it may help Margery to try, and you know how much her mother wishes her to do so, she so soon loses strength. And Mrs. Douglas is so good to you and me! I wonder if we can take the salt-water baths that she thinks help one so much on the sea. You remember how much

pains she took as soon as we came on board to get all our names on the bath-stewardess's list for morning baths!"

"I believe I will try!" added she, after a long silence.

And when the broad-faced, smiling stewardess came to see if the young ladies would like anything, Barbara gladdened her heart by saying she would have her bath.

"Oh, Betty, Betty dear! you have no idea how nice it is! The ship is quiet, the port is open in the bath-room, and it is just lovely to breathe the fresh air. Do try it. I feel like a new girl!"

Before another hour had passed the girls said good-by to poor Margery after having greatly encouraged her spirits, and climbed the stairs to the deck, where they found Malcom just tucking his mother into her chair after their breakfast and morning walk on the deck. Such a bright smile as Mrs. Douglas gave them! It more than repaid for all the effort they had made.

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“You are just bricks!” cried Malcom, with a joyous look. “No more seasickness! Now we will have jolly times, just so soon as Madge can come up.”

“Go down and persuade her, Malcom, after you have told the deck-steward to bring some breakfast for these girls. I will help her dress, and you can bring her up in your arms if she is too weak to walk.”

Before noon, Margery, looking frail as a crushed white lily, lay on a chair heaped with cushions and rugs close beside her mother; and the sweet salt air and sunshine did their best to atone for the misery that had been inflicted by the turbulent sea.

Bright, happy days followed, and sunsets and moonlight evenings, and the girls learned to love sea life. They roamed over every part of the ship. The good captain always had a smile and welcome for young people, and told them many things about the management of vessels at sea.

There was no monotony, but every day seemed full of interest. All the wonders of the great deep were about them—strange fish, sea porpoise, and whales, by day, and ever-new phosphorescent gleams and starry heavens by night. Then the wonderful interest of a sail at sea, or a distant steamship; some other humanity than that on their own ship passing them on the limitless ocean!

On the sixth day out the ship passed between Flores and Corvo, two of the northernmost islands of the Azores; and, through the glass, they could easily see the little Portuguese homes—almost the very people—scattered on the sloping hill-sides.

After two days more, the long line of the distant shore of Cape St. Vincent came into view, and Malcom, fresh from his history lesson, recalled the the fact that nearly a hundred years ago, a great Spanish fleet had been destroyed by the English under Admiral Nelson a little to the eastward on these very waters.

The next morning was a momentous one. In the early sunshine the ship entered the Bay of Gibraltar and anchored for several hours. Boats took the passengers to visit the town, and to Barbara and Bettina the supreme moment of travel in a foreign country had arrived; that in which they found another land and first touched it with their feet; and entering the streets found strange people and listened to a foreign tongue.

They drove through the queer, narrow, crooked streets, out upon the “neutral ground,” and up to the gardens; bought an English newspaper; then, going back to the ship, looked up at the frowning rock threaded by those English galleries, which, upon occasion, can pour forth from their windows such a deadly hail.

Leaving the harbor, the ship passed slowly along between the “Pillars of Hercules,” for so many centuries the western limit of the Old World, and entered the blue

Mediterranean. And was this low dark line on the right really Africa, the Dark Continent, which until then had seemed only a dream—a far-away dream? What a sure reality it would ever be after this!

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Mrs. Douglas had chosen happily when she decided to land at Genoa instead of at one of the northern ports; for aside from the fact that the whole Atlantic passage was calmer than it otherwise could have been, the beauty and interest of the days on the Mediterranean are almost without parallel in ocean travel.

The magnificent snow-capped mountains of the Spanish shore; the rugged northern coasts of the Balearic Islands; the knowledge that out just beyond sight lies Corsica, where was born the little island boy, so proud, ambitious, and unscrupulous as emperor, so sad and disappointed in his banishment and death; and then the long beautiful Riviera coast, which the steamships for Genoa really skirt, permitting their passengers to look into Nice, Bordighera, Monaco, San Remo, *etc.*, and to realize all the picturesque beauty of their mountain background—all this gave three enchanting days to our little party before the ship sailed into the harbor of Genoa, *La Superba*, a well-merited title.

The city seemed now like a jewel in green setting, as its softly colored palaces, rising terrace above terrace, surrounded by rich tropical foliage, glowed in the rays of the setting sun.

Here Mrs. Douglas was to meet her brother; and she, Malcom, and Margery were full of eager excitement. It was hard to wait until the little crowd of people collected on the wharf should separate into distinct individuals.

"There he is! there is Uncle Robert! I see him!" cried Malcom. "He is waving his handkerchief from the top of his cane!"

While Mrs. Douglas and Margery pressed forward to send some token of recognition across the rapidly diminishing breadth of waters, Barbara and Bettina sought with vivid interest the figure and face of one whom they remembered but slightly, but of whom they had heard much. Robert Sumner was a name often mentioned in their home for, as a boy, and young man, he had been particularly dear to Dr. Burnett and had been held up as a model of all excellence before his own boys.

Some six years before the time of our story he was to marry a beautiful girl, who died almost on the eve of what was to have been their marriage-day. Stunned by the affliction, the young artist bade good-by to home and friends and went to Italy, feeling that he could bear his loss only under new conditions; and, ever since, that country had been his home. He had travelled widely, yet had always returned to Italy. "Next year I will go back to America," he had often thought; but there was still a shrinking from the coming into contact with painful associations. Only his sister and her children were left of the home circle and it were happier if they would come to him; so he had stayed on, a voluntary exile.

Not yet thirty years of age, he looked even younger as with shining eyes he watched the little group on the deck of the big approaching steamship. Of the strength of his affections no one could be doubtful who witnessed his warm, passionate embraces when, after long delay, the ship and shore were at last bound together.

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“And can these be the little Barbara and Betty who used to sit on my knees?” he asked in wonder, as Mrs. Douglas drew forward the tall girls that they might share in his greeting.

“I thought I knew you, but am afraid we shall have to get acquainted all over again.”

The following morning when, after breakfast, the young people had been put into a carriage for a drive all about the city, Mrs. Douglas had a long conversation with her brother. He told her of the pleasant home in Florence which he had prepared for her, and some of his plans for the coming months.

“But will not the care of so many young people be too much for you, my sister? Have you counted well the cost of added thought and care which our dear Doctor’s daughters will impose? Tell me about them. Are they as sterling as their father and mother? I must believe they are neither giddy nor headstrong, else you would never have undertaken the care of them. Moreover, their faces contradict any such supposition. They are beautiful and very attractive; but are just at the age when every power is on the alert to have its fill of interest and enjoyment. Did you notice how their eyes sparkled as they took their seats in the carriage and looked out upon the strange, foreign sights?”

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Douglas. “We must do all we can for them that this visit to the Old World shall be as truly a means of culture as their parents desire. You know I wrote you that it is difficult for the Doctor to afford it, but that he felt so earnestly the good that such an opportunity must bring his girls that he could not bear to refuse it. As for me, I love Barbara and Betty dearly and delight to care for them as for my own. Their influence is wholesome, and our little Margery loves them as if they were indeed sisters. I have thought much about what is best for all our young people to do during the coming months in Italy. Of course everything they see and hear will be an education, but I think we ought to have some definite plan for certainly a portion of their time. I have wished to talk to you about it.

“‘Help my daughters to study,’ said Dr. Burnett, and his feeling has given me new thoughts regarding my own children. Now there is one great field of study into which one can enter in this country as nowhere else—and this is art. Especially in Florence is the world of Italian painting opened before us—its beginnings and growth. Ought we not to put all of them, Barbara, Bettina, Malcom, and Margery into the most favorable conditions for entering upon the study of this great subject, which may prove a source of so much enjoyment and culture all their lives? I well remember my own wonder and pleasure when, years ago, our dear mother called my attention to it; and how much it has been to both you and me! You can help me here, Robert, for this is so much a part of your own life.”

“I will think it all over, sister, and we will see what we can do. As for me, I am too happy just now in having you and the children with me to give thought to anything else. So talk to me to-day of nothing but your own dear selves.”

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Two days later our travellers were on their way down the western coast of Italy, threading tunnels, and snatching brief views of the Mediterranean on one side and smiling vineyards and quaint Italian cities on the other.

"We will not stop at Pisa," said Mr. Sumner, "but will come to visit it some time later from Florence; but you must watch for a fine view from the railway of its Cathedral, Leaning Tower, Baptistery, and Campo Santo. The mountains are withdrawing from us now, and I think we shall reach it soon."

"Oh! how like the pictures we have seen!" cried Malcom. "How fine! The tower does lean just as much as we have thought!"

"How beautiful it all is,—the blue hills, the green plain, and the soft yellow of the buildings!" said Bettina.

"Will you tell us something of it all, Mr. Sumner?" asked Barbara. "I know there is something wonderful and interesting, but cannot remember just what."

"There are many very interesting things about this old city," answered Mr. Sumner. "First of all, the striking changes through which it has passed. Once Pisa was on the sea, possessed a fine harbor, and in rich commerce was a rival of Genoa and Venice. She was a proud, eager, assertive city; of such worth that she was deemed a rich prize, and was captured by the Romans a few centuries B.C. Now the sea has left her and, with that, her commerce and importance in the world of trade. She is to-day so poor that there is nothing to tempt travellers to come to her save a magnificent climate and this wonderful group of buildings. The inhabitants are few and humble, her streets are grass-grown. Everything has stopped in poor old Pisa. Here Galileo was born, and lived for years; and in the Cathedral is a great swinging lamp which is said to have first suggested to his mind the motion of the pendulum, and from the top of the Leaning Tower he used to study the planets. The Tower is the Campanile, or Bell Tower, of the Cathedral. With regard to its position, there are different opinions. Some writers think it only an accident,—that the foundation of one side gave way during the building, thus producing the effect we see. Others think it was purposely so built, planned by some architect who desired to gain a unique effect and so prove his mastery over the subtleties of building. I confess that since I have seen the leaning towers of Bologna, which were erected about the same time, I am inclined to agree with the latter view."

"I should think, uncle," said Malcom, "that if such defective foundations had been laid, there would have been further trouble, and the poor Tower would have fallen long ago."

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"Yes," replied Mr. Sumner, "it does not seem very reasonable to believe that they would have given way just enough to make the Tower lean as it does now, and that then it should remain stationary for so many centuries afterward. The Baptistery, or place for baptism, was formerly built in Italy separate from the Cathedral, as was the Campanile, just as we see them here. In northern countries and in more modern Italian cathedrals, we find all united in one building. The most interesting thing in this Baptistery is a magnificent marble pulpit covered with sculptures designed by Nicholas Pisano. To see it alone is worth a visit to Pisa. The long, low building that you saw beyond the other buildings is the Campo Santo, a name given to burial places in Italy, which, as you know, is a Latin term, and means 'holy ground.'"

"I think it is a beautiful name," said Bettina.

"Yes, there is a solemn rhythm about the words that pleases the ear rather more than does our word 'cemetery,'" said Mr. Sumner.

"But there is something especially interesting about this Campo Santo, isn't there?" queried Barbara, and added: "I do hope I shall remember all such things after I have really seen the places!"

"You surely will, my dear," said Mrs. Douglas; "ever afterward they will be realities to you, not mere stories."

Mr. Sumner resumed: "The Campo Santo of Pisa is the first one that was laid out in Italy, and it is still by far the most beautiful. It possesses the dimensions of Noah's Ark, and is literally holy ground, for it was filled with fifty-three shiploads of earth brought from Mount Calvary, so that the dead of Pisa repose in sacred ground. The inner sides of its walls were decorated with noble paintings, many of which are now completely faded. We will come to see those which remain some day."

"How strange it all is!" said Bettina. "How different from anything we see at home! Think of ships sent to the Holy Land for earth from Mount Calvary, and their coming back over the Mediterranean laden with such a cargo!"

"Only a superstitious, imaginative people, such as the Italians are, would have done such a thing," said Mrs. Douglas; "and only in the mediaeval age of the world."

"But," she went on with a bright smile, "it is the same spirit that has reared such exquisite buildings for the worship of God and filled them with rare, sacred marbles and paintings that are beyond price to the world of art. I always feel when I come hither and see the present poverty of the beautiful land that the whole world is its debtor, and can never repay what it owes."



Chapter III.

In Beautiful Florence.

*For to the highest she did still aspyre;
Or, if ought higher were then that, did it desyre.*

—SPENSER.

[Illustration: CHURCH OF THE ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE.]

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One afternoon, about two weeks later, Barbara and Bettina were sitting in their pleasant room in Florence. The wide-open windows looked out upon the slopes of that lovely hill on whose summit is perched Fiesole, the poor little old mother of Florence, who still holds watch over her beautiful daughter stretched at her feet. Scented airs which had swept all the way from distant blue hills over countless orange, olive, and mulberry groves filled the room, and fluttered the paper upon which the girls were writing; it was their weekly letter budget.

The fair faces were flushed as they bent over the crowded sheets so soon to be scanned by dear eyes at home. How much there was to tell of the events of the past week! Drives through the streets of the famous city; through the lovely Cascine; up to San Miniato and Fiesole; visits to churches, palaces, and picture-galleries; days filled to overflowing with the new life among foreign scenes.

Suddenly Barbara, throwing aside her pen, exclaimed:—

“Betty dear, don’t you sometimes feel most horribly ignorant?”

“Why? when?”

“Oh! I am just writing about our visit to Santa Croce the other day. I enjoyed so much the fine spaces within the church, the softened light, and some of the monuments. But when we came to those chapels whose walls are covered with paintings,—you remember, where we met that Mr. Sherman and his daughters who came over on the *Kaiser* with us,—I tried to understand why they were so interested there. They were studying the paintings for such a long time, and I heard some of the things they were saying about them. They thought them perfectly wonderful; and that Miss Sherman who has such lovely eyes said she thought it worth coming from America to Italy just to see them and other works by the same artist. Mr. Sumner, too, heard what she said, and gave her such a pleased, admiring look. After they had gone out from the chapel where are pictures representing scenes in the life of St. Francis, I went in and looked and looked at them; but, try as hard as I could, I could not be one bit interested. The pictures are so queer, the figures so stiff, I could not see a beautiful or interesting thing about them. But I know I am all wrong. I do want to see what they saw, and to feel as they felt!”

“I liked the pictures because of their subject,” said Bettina; “that dear St. Francis of Assisi who loved the birds and flowers, and talked to them as if they could understand him. But I did not see any beauty in them.”

“We must learn what it is; we must do more than just look at all these early pictures that fill the churches and galleries just as we would look at wall paper, as so many people seemed to do in the Uffizi gallery the other day,” said Barbara, emphatically. “This must be one of the things papa meant.”

Just here came a knock on the door.

“May we come in, Margery and I?” asked Malcom. “Why! what is the matter? You look as if you had been talking of something unpleasant.”

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Bettina told of Barbara's trouble.

"How strange!" said Margery. "Mamma has just been talking to us about this very thing. She says that, if you like, Uncle Robert will teach us about the works of the Italian painters. You know he knows *everything* about them! He has even written a book about these paintings in Florence!"

"Yes," said Malcom with a comical shrug, "the idea is that we all spend one or two mornings every week studying stiff old Madonnas and Magdalenes and saints! I love noble and beautiful paintings as well as any one, but I wonder if I can ever learn anything that will make me care to look twice at some of those old things in the long entrance gallery of the Uffizi. I doubt it. Give me the old palaces where the Medici lived, and let me study up what they did. Or even Dante, or Michael Angelo! *He* was an artist who is worth studying about. Why! do you know, he built the fortifications of San Miniato and—"

"But," interrupted Barbara, "you know that whenever Italy is written or talked about, her *art* seems to be the very most important thing. I was reading only the other day an article in which the writer said that undoubtedly the chief mission or gift of Italy to the world is her paintings,—her old paintings,—and that this mission is all fulfilled. Now, if this be true, do we wish to come here and go away without learning all that we possibly can of them? I think that would be foolish."

"And," added Bettina, "I think one of the most interesting studies in the world is about these same old saints whom you dislike so much, Malcom. They were heroes; and I think some of them were a great deal grander than those mythological characters you so dote upon. If your uncle will only be so good as to talk to us of the pictures! Let us go at once and thank him. Now, Malcom, you will be enthusiastic about it, will you not? There will be so much time for all the other things."

Bettina put her arm affectionately about Margery, and smiled into Malcom's face, as they all went to seek Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Sumner.

"Here come the victims, Uncle Rob! three willing ones,—Barbara, who is ever sighing for new worlds to conquer; Betty, who already dotes upon St. Sebastian stuck full of arrows and St. Lucia carrying her eyes on a platter; Madge, who would go to the rack if only you led the way,—and poor rebellious, inartistic I."

"But, my boy—" began Mrs. Douglas.

"Oh! I will do it all if only the girls will climb the Campanile and Galileo's Tower with me and it does not interfere with our drives and walks. If this is to become an aesthetic crowd, I don't wish to be left out," laughed Malcom.

A morning was decided upon for the first lesson.

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"We will begin at the beginning," said Mr. Sumner; "one vital mistake often made is in not starting far enough back. In order to realize in the slightest degree the true work of these old masters, one must know in what condition the art was before their time; or rather, that there was no art. So we will first go to the Accademia delle Belle Arti, or Academy, as we will call it, and from there to the church, Santa Maria Novella. And one thing more,—you are welcome to go to my library and learn all you can from the books there. I am sure I do not need to tell those who have studied so much as you already have that the knowledge you shall gain from coming into contact with any new thing must be in a great degree measured by that which you take to it."

"How good you are to give us so much of your time, Mr. Sumner," said Barbara, with sparkling eyes. "How can we ever repay you?"

"By learning to love this subject somewhat as I love it," replied Mr. Sumner; but he thought as he felt the magnetism of her young enthusiasm that he might gain something of compensation which it was impossible to put into words.

* * * * *

"Are you not going with us, dear Mrs. Douglas?" asked Bettina, as the little party were preparing to set forth on the appointed morning.

"Not to-day, dear, for I have another engagement"

"I think I know what mamma is going to do," said Margery as they left the house. "I heard the housemaid, Anita, telling her last evening about the illness of her little brother, and saying that her mother is so poor that she cannot get for the child what he needs. I think mamma is going to see them this morning."

"Just like that blessed mother of ours!" exclaimed Malcom. "There is never anybody in want near her about whom she is not sure to find out and to help! It will be just the same here as at home; Italians or Americans—all are alike to her. She will give up anything for herself in order to do for them."

"I am glad you know her so well," said his uncle, with a smile. "There is no danger that you can ever admire your mother too much."

"Oh!" exclaimed Barbara, as after a little walk they entered a square surrounded by massive buildings, with arcades, all white with the sunshine. "Look at that building! It is decorated with those dear little babies, all swathed, whose photographs we have so often seen in the Boston art stores. What is it? Where are we?"

"In the Piazza dell' Annunziata," replied Mr. Sumner, "and an interesting place it is. That building is the Foundling Hospital, a very ancient and famous institution. And the 'swathed babies' are the work of Andrea della Robbia."

“Poor little innocents! How tired they must be, wrapped up like mummies and stuck on the wall like specimen butterflies!” whispered Malcom in an aside to Bettina.

“Hush! hush!” laughed she. “Your uncle will hear you.”

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"This beautiful church just here on our right," continued Mr. Sumner, "is the church of the S.S. Annunziata or the most Holy Annunciation. It was founded in the middle of the thirteenth century by seven noble Florentines, who used to meet daily to sing *Ave Maria* in a chapel situated where the Campanile of the Cathedral now stands. It has been somewhat modernized and is now the most fashionable church in Florence. It contains some very interesting paintings, which we will visit by and by."

"Every step we take in this beautiful city is full of interest, and how different from anything we can find at home!" exclaimed Bettina. "Look at the color of these buildings, and their exquisite arches! See the soft painting over the door of the church, and the sculptured bits everywhere! I begin, just a little, to see why Florence is called the *art city*."

"But only a little, yet," said Mr. Sumner, with a pleased look. "You are just on the threshold of the knowledge of this fair city. Not what she outwardly is, but what she contains, and what her children have wrought, constitute her wealth of art. Do you remember, Margery, what name the poet Shelley gives Florence in that beautiful poem you were reading yesterday?"

"O *Foster-nurse* of man's abandoned glory,
Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendor,
Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story,
As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender,"

dreamily recited Margery, her sweet face flushing as all eyes looked at her.

"Yes," smiled her uncle. "Florence, as *foster-nurse*, has cherished for the world the art-treasures of early centuries in Italy, so that there is no other city on earth in which we can learn so much of the 'revival of art,' as it is called, which took place after the barrenness of the Dark Ages, as in this. But here we are at the Academy. I shall not allow you to look at much here this morning. We will go and sit in the farther corner of this first corridor, for I wish to talk a little, and just here we shall find all that I need for illustration."

"You need not put on such a martyr-look, Malcom," continued he, as they walked on. "I prophesy that not one here present will feel more solid interest in the work we are beginning than you will, my boy."

When Mr. Sumner had gathered the little group about him, he began to talk of the beauties of Greek art—how it had flourished for centuries before Christ.

"But I thought Greek art consisted of sculptures," said Barbara.



“Much of it was sculptured,—all of it which remains,—but we have evidence that the Greeks also produced beautiful paintings, which, could they have been preserved, might be not unworthy rivals of modern masterpieces,” replied Mr. Sumner. “After the Roman invasion of Greece, these ancient works of art were mostly destroyed. Rome possessed no fine art of her own, but imported

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Greek artists to produce for her. These, taken away from their native land, and having no noble works around them for inspiration, began simply to copy each other, and so the art degenerated from century to century. The growing Christian religion, which forbade the picturing of any living beauty, gave the death-blow to such excellence as remained. A style of painting followed which received the name of Greek Byzantine. In it was no study of life; all was most strikingly conventional, and it grew steadily worse and worse. A comparison of the paintings and mosaics of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries shows the rapid decline of all art qualities. Finally every figure produced was a most arrant libel on nature. It was always painted against a flat gold background; the limbs were wholly devoid of action; the feet and hands hung helplessly; and the eyes were round and staring. The flesh tints were a dull brick red, and all else a dreary brown."

"Come here," said he, rising, "and see an example of this Greek Byzantine art,—this *Magdalen*. Study it well."

"Oh, oh, how dreadful!" chorussed the voices of all.

"Uncle Rob, do you mean to say there was no painting in the world better than this in the ninth—or thereabouts—century?" asked Malcom, with wondering eyes.

"I mean to say just that, Malcom. But I must tell you something more about this same Greek Byzantine painting, for there is a school of it to-day. Should you go to Southern Italy or to Russia, you would find many booths for trading, in the back of which you would see a Madonna, or some saint, painted in just this style. These pictures have gained a superstitious value among the lower classes of the people, and are believed to possess a miraculous power. In Mt. Athos, Greece, is a school that still produces them. Doubtless this has grown out of the fact that several of these old paintings, notably Madonnas, are treasured in the churches, and the people are taught that miracles have been wrought by them. In the Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, is an example (the people are told that it was painted by St. Luke), and during the plague in Rome, and also during a great fire which was most disastrous, this painting was borne through the city by priests in holy procession, and the tradition is that both plague and fire were stayed."

"What a painfully ridiculous figure!" exclaimed Barbara, who had been silently absorbed in study. "It is painful because every line looks as if the artist had done his very best, and that is so utterly bad. It means absolutely nothing."

"You have fathomed the woful secret," replied Mr. Sumner. "It shows no evidence of the slightest thought. Only a man's *fingers* produced this. All power of originality had become lost; all desire for it was unknown."

“Then, how did things ever get better?” asked Malcom.

“An interesting question. I wish you all would read some before I tell you any more. Find something, please, that treats of the beginnings of Christian art in the Catacombs of Rome. Read about the manuscript illuminations produced by monks of the tenth and eleventh centuries, which are to be found in some great libraries. In these we find the best art of that time,”

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[Illustration: ACADEMY, FLORENCE.

BYZANTINE MAGDALEN.]

"If you find anything about Cimabue and Giotto," he added, "you would better read that also, for the work of these old painters will be the subject of our next lesson. For it, we will go to the church Santa Maria Novella."

"And Santa Croce?" asked Barbara, more timidly than was her wont.

"And Santa Croce too," smilingly added Mr. Sumner.

"And now, Malcom, if you can find a wide carriage, we all will drive for an hour before going home."

Chapter IV.

A New Friend Appears.

*The first sound in the song of love
Scarce more than silence is, and yet a sound.
Hands of invisible spirits touch the strings
Of that mysterious instrument, the soul,
And play the prelude of our fate.*

—LONGFELLOW.

[Illustration: DUOMO AND CAMPANILE. FLORENCE.]

One day Malcom met an old fellow-student. Coming home, he told his mother of him, and asked permission to bring him for introduction.

"His name is Howard Sinclair. I did not know him very well in the school, for he was some way ahead of me. He is now in Harvard College. But his lungs are very weak; and last winter the doctors sent him to Egypt, and told him he must stay for at least two years in the warmer countries. He is lonely and pretty blue, I judge; was glad enough to see me."

"Poor boy! Yes, bring him here, and I will talk with him. Perhaps we can make it more pleasant for him. You are sure his character is beyond question, Malcom?"

"I think so. He has lots of money, and is inclined to spend it freely, but I know he was called a pretty fine fellow in the school, though not very well known by many. He is

rather 'toney,' you know,—held his head too high for common fellows. The teachers especially liked him; for he is awfully bright, and took honors right along.”

The next day Malcom brought his friend to his mother, whose heart he won at once by his evident delicate health, his gentlemanly manners, and, perhaps most of all, because he had been an orphan for years, and was so much alone in the world. She decided to welcome him to her home, and to give him the companionship of her young people.

Howard Sinclair was a young man of brilliant intellectual promise. He had inherited most keen sensibilities, an almost morbid delicacy of thought, a variable disposition, and a frail body. Both father and mother died before he was ten years of age, leaving a large fortune for him, their only child; and, since then, his home had been with an aged grandmother. Without any young companions in the home, and lacking desire for activity, he had given himself up to an almost wholly sedentary life. The body, so delicate by nature, had always been made secondary to the alert mind. His luxurious tastes could all be gratified, and thus far he had lived like some conservatory plant.

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The very darling of his grandmother's heart, it was like death to her to part from him when the physicians decided that to save his life it was an imperative necessity that he should live for a time in a warmer climate. It was an utter impossibility for her to accompany him. He shrank from any other companion, therefore had set forth with only his faithful John, who had been an old servant in the family before he was born, as valet. He went first to Egypt, where he had remained as long as the heat would permit, then had gone northwest to the Italian lakes and Switzerland, whence he had now come to spend a time in Florence.

Lonely, homesick, and disheartened, it was indeed like a "gift of the gods" to him when one day, as he was leaving his banker's on Via Tornabuoni he met the familiar face of Malcom Douglas. And when he was welcomed to his old schoolmate's home and family circle, the weary young man felt for the first time in many months the sensation of rest and peace.

His evident lack of physical strength, and the quickly coming and going color in his cheeks, told Mrs. Douglas that he could never know perfect health; but he said that the change of country and climate had already done him much good, and this encouraged him to think of staying from home a year or two in the hope that then all danger of active disease might have passed.

He so evidently longed for companionship that Malcom and the girls told him of their life, —of their Italian lessons,—their reading,—Mr. Sumner's talks about Italian painting,—Malcom's private college studies (which he had promised his mother to pursue if she would give him this year abroad), and all that which was filling their days. He was especially interested in their lessons on the Italian masters of painting, and asked if they would permit him to join them.

"If you will only come to me when you have any trouble with your Greek and Latin, Malcom," he said, "perhaps I can repay you in the slightest degree for the wonderful pleasure this would give me."

So as Mr. Sumner was willing, his little class received the addition of Howard Sinclair.

"Why so sober, Malcom?" asked his mother, as she found him alone by himself. "Is not the arrangement that your friend join you agreeable?"

"Oh, yes, mother, he is a nice fellow, though a sort of a prig, and I wish to do all we can for him; only—I do hope he will not monopolize Betty and Barbara always, as he has seemed to do this afternoon."

"My boy, beware of that little green imp we read of," laughed Mrs. Douglas. "You have been too thoroughly 'monarch of all' thus far. Can you not share your realm with this homesick young man?"

“But he has always had all for himself, mother. He does not know what it is to share.”

“Malcom! be yourself.”

The mother’s eyes looked straight up into those of her tall boy, and her hand sought his with a firm, warm pressure that made him fling back his noble young head with an emphatic “I am ashamed of myself! Thank you, mother dear.”

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That evening, as all were sitting on the balcony watching the soft, rosy afterglow that was creeping over the hills and turning to glowing points the domes and spires of the fair city, Mr. Sumner said:—

“If you are willing, I would like to talk with you a little before we make our visits to Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce to-morrow. You will understand better the old pictures we shall see there if we consider beforehand what we ought to look for in any picture or other work of art. Too many go to them as to some sort of recreation,—simply for amusement,—simply to gratify their love for beautiful color and form, and so, to these, the most beautiful picture is always the best. But this is a low estimate of the great art of painting, for it is simply one of man’s means of expression, just as music or poetry is. The artist learns to compose his pictures, to draw his forms, to lay on his colors, just as the poet learns the meanings of words, rhetorical figures, and the laws of harmony and rhythm, or the musician his notes and scales and harmonies of sound.”

“I see this is a new thought to you,” continued he, after a moment spent in studying the faces about him. “Let us follow it. What is the use of this preparation of study in art, poetry, or music? Is it solely for the perfection of itself? We often hear nowadays the expression, ‘art for art’s sake,’ and by some it is accounted a grand thought and a noble rallying-cry for artists. And so it truly is if the very broadest and highest possible meaning is given to the word ‘art.’ If it means the embodying of some noble, beautiful, soul-moving thought in a form that can be seen and understood, and means nothing less than this, then it is indeed a worthy motto. But to too many, I fear, it means only the painting of beauty for beauty’s sake. That is, the thought embodied, the message to some soul, which every picture ought to contain, and which every noble picture that is worthy to live *must* contain, becomes of little or no value compared with the play of color and light and form.

“Let me explain further,” he went on, even more earnestly. “Imagine that we are looking at a picture, and we admire exceedingly the perfection of drawing its author has displayed,—the wonderful breadth of composition,—the harmony of color-masses. The moment is full of keen enjoyment for us; but the vital thing, after all, is, what impression shall we take away with us. Has the picture borne us any message? Has it been either an interpretation or a revelation of something? Shall we remember it?”

“But is not simple beauty sometimes a revelation, Mr. Sumner?” asked Barbara,—“as in a landscape, or seascape, or the painting of a child’s face?”

“Certainly, if the artist has shown by his work that this beauty has stirred depths of feeling in himself, and his effort has been to reveal what he has felt to others. If you seek to find this in pictures you will soon learn to distinguish between those (too many of which are painted to-day) whose only excellence lies in trick of handling or cunning disposition of color-masses,—because these things are all of which the artist has thought,—and those that have grown out of the highest art-desire, which is to bear

some message of the restfulness, the power, the beauty, or the innocence of nature to the hearts of other men.

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“And there is one thing more that we must not forget. There may be pictures with bad *motifs* as well as good ones—weak and simple ones, as well as strong and holy ones—and yet they may be full of all artistic qualities of representation. What is true with regard to literature is true in respect to art. It is, after all, the *message* that determines the degree of nobility.

“Art was given for that. God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out.

wrote Mr. Browning, and we should always endeavor to find out whether the artist has loaned his mind or merely his fingers and his knowledge of the use of his materials. If we find thought in his picture, we should then ask to what service he has put it.

“If a poem consist only of words and rhythms, how long do you think it ought to live? And if a picture possess merely forms and colors, however beautiful they may be, it deserves no more fame. And how much worse if there be meaning, and it be base and unworthy!”

“Does he not put it well?” whispered Malcom to Bettina from his usual seat between her and Margery. “I feel as if he were pouring new thoughts into me.”

“Now, the one thing I desire to impress upon you to-night,” continued Mr. Sumner, “is that these old masters of painting who lived in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries had messages to give their fellow-men. Their great endeavor was to interpret God’s word to them,—you know that in those days and in this land there was no Bible open to the common people,—and what we must chiefly look for in their pictures is to see whether or not they told the message as well as the limitation of their art-language permitted.

“At first, no laws of perspective were known. None knew how to draw anything correctly. No color-harmonies had been thought of. These men must needs stammer when they tried to express themselves; but as much greater as thought is than the mere expression of it so much greater are many of their works, in the true sense, than the mass of pictures that make up our exhibitions of the present day.

“Then, also, it is a source of the deepest interest to one who loves this art to watch its growth in means of expression—its steady development—until, finally, we find the noblest thoughts expressed in perfect forms and coloring. This we can do here in Florence as nowhere else, for the Florentine school of painting was the first of importance in Italy.

“So,” he concluded, “do not look for beauty in these pictures which we are first to study; instead of it, you will find much ugliness. But strive to put yourselves into the place of the old artists, to feel as they felt. See what impelled them to paint. Recognize the

feebleness of their means of expression. Watch for indications in history of the effect of their pictures upon the people. Strive to find originality in them, if it be there, for this quality gives a man's work a certain positive greatness wherever we find it; and so learn to become worthy judges of that which you study. Soon, like me, you will look with pity on those who can see nothing worthy of a second glance in these treasures of the past.

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"There! I have preached you a sermon, I am afraid. Are you tired?" and his bright glance searched the faces about him.

Their expression would have been satisfactory without the eager protestations that answered his question.

When, a little later, Barbara and Bettina, each seated before her dainty toilet-table, were brushing their hair, they, as usual, chatted about the events of the day. Never had there been so much to talk over and so little time to do it in as during these crowded weeks, when pleasure and study were hand in hand. For though they read and studied, yet there were drives, and receptions in artists' studios, and, because of Robert Sumner's long residence in Florence, they had even begun to receive invitations to small and select parties, where they met charming people.

This very morning they had driven with Mrs. Douglas through some of the oldest parts of Florence. They were reading together George Eliot's "Romola," and were connecting all its events with this city in which the scenes are laid. Read in this way, it seemed like a new book to them, and possessed an air of reality that awakened their enthusiasm as nothing else could have done. And then in the afternoon had been the meeting with the new friend; tea in the little garden behind the house; and the evening on the balcony.

Naturally their conversation soon turned to Howard Sinclair.

"What a strange life for one so young!" said Bettina. "Malcom says there is no limit to his wealth. He lives in the winter in one of those grandest houses on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, and has summer houses in two or three places. And yet how poor in many ways!" she continued after a little pause—"so much poorer than we! No father and mother,—no brothers and sisters,—and forced to leave his home because he is so ill! Poor fellow! How do you like him, Bab? He seemed to admire you sufficiently, for he hardly took his eyes from you."

"Like him?" slowly returned Barbara. "To tell the truth, Betty, I hardly know. Somehow I feel strangely about him. I like him well enough so far, but I believe I am a bit afraid, and whether it is of him or not, I cannot tell. Somehow I feel as if things are going to be different from what they have been, and—I don't know—I believe I almost wish Malcom had not known him."

"Why, Bab dear! what do you mean? Don't be nervous; that is not like you. Nothing could happen to make us unhappy while we are with these dear people,—nothing, that is, if our dear ones at home are well. I wish he had not stared at you so much with those great eyes, if it makes you feel uncomfortable, but how he could have helped admiring you, sister mine, is more than I know,—for you were lovely beyond everything this afternoon;" and Betty impulsively sprang up to give her sister a hug and a kiss.

“To change the subject,” she added, “how did you like Mr. Sumner’s talk this evening?”

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“Oh! more than words can tell! Betty, I believe, next to our own dear papa, he is the grandest man alive. I always feel when he talks as if nothing were too difficult to attempt; as if nothing were too beautiful to believe. And he is so young too, in feeling; so wise and yet so full of sympathy with all our young nonsense. He is simply perfect.” And she drew a long breath.

“I think so too; and he practises what he preaches in his own painting. For don’t you remember those pictures we saw in his studio the other day? How he has painted those Egyptian scenes! A perfect tremor ran over me as I felt the terrible, solemn loneliness of that one camel and his rider in the limitless stretch of desert. I felt quite as he must have felt, I am sure; and the desert will always seem a different thing to me because I looked at that picture. And then that sweet, strong, overcoming woman’s face! How much she had lived through! What a lesson of triumph over all weakness and sorrow it teaches! I am so thankful every minute that dear Mrs. Douglas asked us to come with her, that our darling papa and mamma allowed us to come, and that everything is so pleasant in this dear, delightful Florence.”

And Bettina fell asleep almost the minute her head rested on her pillow, with a happy smile curving her beautiful lips.

But Barbara tossed long on the little white bed in the opposite corner of the room. It was difficult to go to sleep, so many thoughts crowded upon her. Finally she resolutely set herself to recall Mr. Sumner’s words of the evening. Then, as she remembered the little lingering of his eyes upon her own as he bade his group of listeners good night, the glad thought came, “He knows I am trying to learn, and that I appreciate all he is doing for me,” and so her last thought was not for the new friend the day had brought, but for Robert Sumner.

Chapter V.

Straws Show which Way the Wind Blows.

*Give these, I exhort you, their guerdon and glory
For daring so much before they well did it.*

—BROWNING.

[Illustration: SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE.]

It was a charming morning in early November when Mr. Sumner and his little company of students of Florentine art gathered before the broad steps which lead up to the entrance of Santa Maria Novella. The Italian sky, less soft than in midsummer, gleamed brightly blue. The square tower of the old Fiesole Cathedral had been sharply defined as they turned to look at it when leaving their home; and Giotto’s Campanile, of which

they had caught a glimpse on their way hither, shone like a white lily in the morning sunlight. The sweet, invigorating air, the bustle of the busy streets, the happiness of youth and pleasant expectancy caused all hearts to beat high, and it was a group of eager faces that turned toward the grand old church whose marble sides show the discoloration of centuries.

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At Mr. Sumner's invitation all sat on the steps in a sunny corner while he talked of Cimabue,—the first great name in the history of Italian painting,—the man who was great enough to dare attempt to change conditions that existed in his time, which was the latter part of the thirteenth century. He told them how, though a nobleman possessing wealth and honor, he had loved painting and had given his life to it; and how, having been a man arrogant of all criticism, he was fitted to be a pioneer; to break from old traditions, and to infuse life into the dead Byzantine art.

He told them how the people, ever quick to feel any change, were delighted to recognize, in a picture, life, movement, and expression, however slight. How, one day six hundred years ago, a gay procession, with banners and songs, bore a large painting, the *Madonna and Child*, from the artist's studio, quite a distance away, through the streets and up to the steps on which they were sitting; and how priests chanting hymns and bearing church banners came out to receive the picture.

"And through all these centuries it has here remained," he continued. "It is, of course, scarred by time and dark with the smoke of incense. When you look upon it I wish you would remember what I told you the other evening about that for which we should look in a picture. Be sympathetic. Put yourself in old Cimabue's place and in that of the people who had known only such figures in painting as the *Magdalen* you saw last week in the Academy. Then, though these figures are so stiff and almost lifeless, though the picture is Byzantine in character, you will see beyond all this a faint expression in the Madonna's face, a little life and action in the Christ-child, who holds up his tiny hand in blessing.

"If you do not look for this you may miss it,—miss all that which gives worth to Cimabue and his art. As thoughtful a mind as that of our own Hawthorne saw only the false in it, and missed the attempt for truth; and so said he only wished 'another procession would come and take the picture from the church, and reverently burn it.' Ah, Malcom, I see your eyes found that in your reading, and you thought in what good company you might be."

"What kind of painting is it?" queried Barbara, as a few minutes later they stood in the little chapel, and looked up at Cimabue's quaint *Madonna and Child*.

"It is called *tempera*, and is laid upon wood. In this process the paints are mixed with some glutinous substance, such as the albumen of eggs, glue, etc., which causes them to adhere to the surface on which they are placed."

"What do you think was the cause of Cimabue's taking such an advance step, Mr. Sumner?" asked Howard Sinclair, after a pause, during which all studied the picture.

“It must have been a something caught from the spirit of the time. A stir, an awakening, was taking place in Italy. Dante and Petrarch were in a few years to think and write. The time had come for a new art.”

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"I do see the difference between this and those Academy pictures," said Bettina, "even though it is so queer, and painted in such colors."

"And I," "And I," quickly added Barbara and Margery.

"I think those angels' faces are interesting," continued Barbara. "They are not all just alike, but look as if each had some thought of his own. They seem proud of their burden as they hold up the Madonna and Child."

"Oh, nonsense, Barbara! you are putting too much imagination in there," exclaimed Malcom. "I think old Cimabue did do something, but it is an awfully bad picture, after all. There is one thing, though; it is not so flat as that Academy *Magdalen*. The child's head seems round, and I do think his face has a bit of expression."

So they looked and chatted on, and took little note of coming and going tourists, who glanced with curiosity from them to the old dark picture above, and then back to the fresh, eager, beautiful faces,—the greater part ever finding in the latter the keener attraction.

"I always have one thought when I look at this," finally said Mr. Sumner, "that perhaps will be interesting to you, and linger in your minds. This *Madonna and Child* seems to form a link and also to mark a division between all those which went before it in Christian art and all those that have followed. It is the last Byzantine Madonna and is the first of the long, noble list which has come from the hands of artists who have lived since the thirteenth century.

"We will not stay here longer now, for I know you will come again more than once to study it. There is much valuable historic art in this church which you will understand better when you have learned more. Yonder in the Strozzi Chapel is some of the very best work of an old painter called Orcagna, while here in the choir are notable frescoes by Ghirlandajo; but now I shall take you down these steps between the two into the cloister and there we will talk of Giotto. I know how busy you have been reading about this wonderful old master, for I could not help hearing snatches of your talk about him all through the past week. His figure looms up most important of all among the early painters of Florence. You know how Cimabue, clad in his scarlet robe and hood, insignia of nobility, riding out one day to a little town lying on one of yonder blue hills, found a little, dark-faced shepherd-boy watching his father's sheep, and amusing himself by drawing a picture of one, with only a sharp stone for a pencil. Interested in the boy, he took pains to visit his father and gain his permission to take him as a pupil to Florence. So Giotto came to begin his art-life. What are you thinking of, little Margery?"

"Only a bit of Dante's writing which I read with mother the other day," said she, blushing. "I was thinking how little Cimabue then thought that this poor, ignorant shepherd-boy would ever cause these lines to be written:—

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“Cimabue thought to lord it over painting’s field:
But now the cry is *Giotto*, and his name’s eclipsed.”

“Yes, indeed! Giotto did eclipse his master’s fame, for he went so much farther,—but only in the same path, however; so we must not take from Cimabue any of the honor that is due him. But for Giotto the old Byzantine method of painting on all gold backgrounds was abolished. This boy, though born of peasants, was not only gifted with keen powers of observation of nature and mankind and a devotion to the representation of things truly as they are, but, beyond and above all this, with one other quality that made his work of incalculable worth to the people among whom he painted. This was a delicate appreciation of the true relations between earthly and spiritual things.

“Before him, as we have seen, all art was most unnatural and monastic,—utterly destitute of sympathy with the feelings of the common people. Giotto changed all this. He made the Christ-child a loving baby; the Madonna a loving mother into whose joy and suffering all mothers’ hearts could enter; angels were servants of men; miracles were wrought by God because He loved and desired to help men; the pictured men and women were like themselves because they smiled and grieved and acted even as they did. All this change Giotto made in the spirit of pictures; and in the ways of painting he also wrought a complete revolution. ‘There are no such things as gold backgrounds in nature,’ he said; ‘I will have my people out of doors or in their homes.’ And so he painted the blue sky and rocks and trees and grass, and dressed his men and women in pure, fresh colors, and represented them as if engaged in home duties in the house or in the field. He introduced many characters into his story pictures,—angel visitants, neighbors, wandering shepherds, and even domestic animals. He brought the art of painting *down* into the minds and hearts of all who looked upon them.”

“I never have realized until lately,” said Barbara, “how painting can be made a source of education and pleasure to everybody. It is so different here from what it is at home, especially because the churches are full of pictures. There we go into the art museums or the galleries of different art-clubs,—the only places where pictures are to be found,—and meet only those people that can afford luxuries; and so the art itself seems a luxury. But here I have seen such poor, sad-looking people, who seem to forget all their miseries in looking at some beautiful sacred picture. Only the other day I overheard a poor woman, whose clothes were wretched and who had one child in her arms and another beside her, trying to explain a picture to them, and she lingered and lingered before it, and then turned away with a pleased, restful face.”

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“Yes, it is the spirit of pictures and their truth to nature that appeal to the mass of people here,” replied Mr. Sumner, “and so it must be everywhere. I have been very glad to read in my papers from home that free art exhibitions have been occasionally opened in the poor quarters of our cities. Should the movement become general, as I hope it will, it must work good in more than one direction. Not only could those who have hitherto been shut out from this means of pleasure and education receive and profit by it, but the art itself would gain a wholesome impulse. A new class of critics would be heard—those unversed in art-parlance—who would not talk of line, tone, color-harmonies and technique, but would go to the very heart of picture and painter; and I think the truest artists would listen to them and so gain something.

“But we must get to Giotto again. I have told you what he tried to paint, but you will see that he could not do all this in the least as if he had been taught in our art-schools of to-day. How little could Cimabue teach him! His hills and rocks are parodies of nature. He knew not how to draw feet, and would put long gowns or stockings on his people so as to hide his deficiency. He never could make a lying-down figure look flat. But how he could accomplish all that he did in his pictures is more than any one can explain.

“We will now look behind this grand tomb at the foot of the stairs and find two of Giotto’s frescoes. There you see the pictures—the *Birth of the Virgin* and the *Meeting of St. Joachim and St. Anna*, the father and mother of the Virgin. Do you know the story of these saints?”

“Yes,” answered Malcom, “Betty read it to us last evening, for, you see, uncle, we had been dipping just a bit, so as not to get below our depth, into Mr. Ruskin’s ‘Mornings in Florence’; so we ought to be able to understand something here, if anywhere, oughtn’t we?”

“Well, look and see what you can find! I wonder what will appeal first to each one of you!”

After a few minutes of complete silence Mr. Sumner said: “Margery dear, I wonder what you are thinking of?”

“I am thinking, Uncle, that, just as Mr. Ruskin says, I cannot help seeing the baby in this picture. At whatever part I look my eyes keep coming back to the dear little thing wrapped up so clumsily, whom the two nurses are tending so lovingly and with such reverence.”

“Yes, my dear, old Giotto knew how to make the chief thing in his pictures seem to be the most important; something that not all of us artists of to-day know how to do by any means.”

“But the pictures are so queer!” burst forth Malcom. “I do see some of the fine things of which you speak, Uncle Robert, but there are so many almost ridiculous things; the shepherds that are following St. Joachim—do look at the feet of the first one; and the second has on stockings. I can see the different lines that poor old Giotto drew when he was struggling over those first feet; I wonder if he put the others into stockings just to save trying to draw them. And the funny lamb in the arms of the first shepherd; and the queer, stiff sprigs of grass which are growing up in all sorts of places! and the angel coming out of the cloud! and—”

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"Do stop, Malcom," cried Bettina, "just here at the angel! Why! I think he is perfectly beautiful with one hand on St. Joachim's head and the other on St. Anna's. He is blessing them and drawing them together and forgiving, all in one."

"And the people, all of them! just look at the people!" cried Barbara, impetuously. "Each one is thinking of something, and I seem to know what it is! How could—" But her voice faltered, and stopped abruptly.

"It is not difficult to understand what Howard is thinking of," whispered Malcom in Bettina's ear. "Did you see what a look he gave Barbara? I don't believe she likes it."

Mr. Sumner, turning, surprised the same look in the young man's eyes and gave a quick, inquiring glance at the fair, flushed face of Barbara. He felt annoyed, without knowing exactly why. A new and foreign element had been introduced into the little group, whose influence was not to be transient.

After a few more words, in which he told them to notice the type of Giotto's faces—the eyes set near together, their too great length, though much better in this respect than Cimabue's, and the broad, rounded chins—they turned away.

"We have seen all we ought to stay here for to-day, and now we will drive over to Santa Croce. There are also notable frescoes by Giotto in Assisi, and especially in the Arena Chapel, Padua. Perhaps we may see them all by and by."

On leaving the church, Bettina looked back, saying:—

"This is the church that Michael Angelo used to call 'his bride.'"

"Used to," laughed Malcom. "You have gone back centuries this morning, Betty."

"I feel so. I should not be one bit surprised to meet some of these old artists right here in the Piazza on their way to their work."

"Let us go over to Santa Croce by way of the Duomo, and through Piazza Signoria, Uncle," said Margery. "I am never tired of those little, narrow, crooked streets."

"Yes, that will be a good way; for then we shall go right past Giotto's Campanile, and though you have seen it often you will look upon it with especial interest just now, when we are studying his work."

At Santa Croce they were to meet Mrs. Douglas by appointment; and as they pressed on through the broad nave, lined on either side by massive monuments to Florence's great dead, they espied her at the entrance of the Bardi Chapel in conversation with a lady whose slender figure and bright, animated face grew familiar to the young people of the steamship as they approached; for it was the Miss Sherman whom Barbara and

Bettina had admired so much on the *Kaiser Wilhelm*, and whom, with her father and sister, they had met once before in this same church.

Coming rapidly forward, Mrs. Douglas introduced her companion.

“She is alone in Florence,” she explained to her brother a moment later when the others had passed on, “for her father has been suddenly summoned home, and her sister has accompanied him. She is a bright, charming young woman, who loves art dearly, and I am sure we all shall like her. I felt drawn to her as we talked together several times on our way over. I think we must have her with us all we can.”



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After an hour spent in the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels, whose walls are covered with Giotto's frescoes, the little group separated. Malcom, Margery, Barbara, and Bettina walked home along the Via dei Pintti, or Street of the Painters. While the others chatted, Barbara was unusually silent. She was thinking how much she had learned that morning, and exulted in the knowledge that there was not quite so vast a difference between herself and Miss Sherman as existed the last time they met in Santa Croce.

For Barbara had entered into the study of this subject with an almost feverish fervor of endeavor. Though she felt there was much to enjoy and to learn all about her, yet nothing seemed so important as a knowledge of the old painters and their pictures; and the longing to be able to think and to speak with some assurance of them haunted her continually.

Bettina sometimes looked at her sister with wonder as she would sit hour after hour poring over Mr. Sumner's books.

"I always thought / loved pictures best," she thought; "but Bab cares more for these old ones than I do."

Chapter VI.

Lucile Sherman.

In life's small things be resolute and great To keep thy muscle trained; Knowest thou when Fate Thy measure takes? Or when she'll say to thee, "I find thee worthy. Do this deed for me?"

—LOWELL.

[Illustration: A GLIMPSE OF FLORENCE.]

The tourist who devotes a few days to Florence, or a few weeks even, can have no conception of what it means to live in this city; to awake morning after morning and look out upon the lines of her hills and catch glimpses of their distant blues and purples; to be free to wander about at will through her streets, every one of which is crowded with legend and romance; to look upon her palaces and churches, about which cluster so many deeds of history; to visit the homes of her immortal men—poets and artists; to walk step by step instead of whirling along in a carriage; and to grow to feel a close intimacy with her sculptures and paintings, and even with the very stones that are built into her palace walls.

For Florence is comparatively a small city. A good pedestrian can easily walk from Porta Romana on the south to Porta Gallo on the north; or from Porta San Niccolo on the east, along the banks of the Arno, to the Cascine Gardens on the west. It is only an

afternoon of genuine delight to climb the lovely, winding ways leading up to San Miniato, or to Fiesole, or to the Torre del Gallo,—the “Star Tower of Galileo.” And what a feeling of possession one has for a road which he has travelled foot by foot; for the rocks and trees and vine-covered walls, and the ever-changing views which continually demand attention! One absorbs and assimilates as in no other way.

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So when, at breakfast one morning, Mr. Sumner suggested a walk up to Fiesole, a picnic lunch at the top in the grounds of the old monastery, and the whole day there, coming down at sunset, his proposition met with delighted assent. It was planned that Mrs. Douglas should take a carriage, and invite Miss Sherman and Howard Sinclair to go with her, but the others were ready and eager for the walk. Anita, the little housemaid, was to accompany them and carry the luncheon, and she was on tiptoe with joy, because a whole day under the open sky is the happiest fortune possible for an Italian girl; and, besides this, they would have to pass close by her own home, and perhaps her little brother could go with her.

All felt a peculiar affection for Fiesole, because from the house in which they were living they could look right out upon the historic old city nestling into the hollow of the hill-top, and watch its changing lights and shadows, and say "good morning" and "good night" to it.

Barbara and Bettina had often tried to fancy what life there was like so many centuries ago, when the city was rich and powerful; and afterward, when the old Romans had taken possession of it, and the ruined amphitheatre was whole and noisy with games; or in later times, when the venerable Cathedral was fresh and new. They felt a kind of pity for the forlorn old place, peopled with so much wrinkled age, and forever looking down upon all the loveliness and treasures of the fair Florence which had grown out from her own decay.

As the party left the house, and, before disappearing from the view of Mrs. Douglas, who stood watching them, turned and waved their hands, she thought that she had not seen her brother looking so young, care-free, and happy for many years.

"This is doing Robert a world of good," said she to herself. "Those who have heretofore been only children to him are now companions, and he is becoming a boy again with them. Oh! if he could only throw off the morbid feeling he has had about going back to America to live, and return with us, and be happy and useful there, how delightful it would be!"

Second only in the life of Mrs. Douglas to the great loss of her husband had been the separation from this dearly loved brother, and it was one of the strongest wishes of her heart that he should come back to his native land. To have him living near her and experiencing the delights of home life had been a long dream of whose realization she had wellnigh despaired, as year after year had passed and he had still lingered in foreign lands. Now, as she turned from the window and went back into the large, sunny rooms, so quiet with the young people all gone, her thoughts lingered upon her brother, and into them came the remembrance of the sweet-faced Miss Sherman, whom they had met yesterday and who seemed destined to come more or less into their lives.

“Perhaps”—she thought, and smiled at her thought so evidently born of her wish; and then hastened to despatch a message to Miss Sherman and Howard, lest she might miss them.

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Lucile Sherman differed somewhat in character from the impression she had made upon Mrs. Douglas. Lovely in face and figure, gifted with winning ways, possessed of a certain degree of culture, and very desirous of gaining the friendship of cultured people, she was most attractive on short acquaintance. An intimacy must always reveal her limitations and show how she just missed the best because of the lack of any definite, earnest purpose in her life,—of real sincerity and of the slightest element of self-sacrifice, without which no character can grow truly noble.

She was very dear unto herself, and was accustomed to take the measure of all things according to the way in which they affected Lucile Sherman. When her father, for whose health the present journey to Italy had been primarily planned, was imperatively summoned home, her disappointment was so overwhelmingly apparent that her sister Marion was chosen to accompany him back to America, and Lucile was permitted to spend the winter as she so much wished.

She was fond of society, of music, of literature and art; had seemingly an enthusiastic admiration and desire for all things good and true, and thought she embodied all her desires; but these were ever a little too languid to subdue the self-love and overcome the inertia of all high principles of life. It is not difficult to understand her, for the world has many such,—in whom there is nothing really bad, only they have missed the best.

On board the steamship, she had been much attracted by the little party from Boston, and had made advances toward Mrs. Douglas; and when, on that day so soon after reaching Florence, she had met Mr. Sumner and the young people in Santa Croce, her remark that it was worth a journey from America just to see Giotto's frescoes there—the remark that had won a look of interest from Mr. Sumner, and that poor Barbara had brooded over because it had caused her to feel so sorely her own ignorance—had been spoken with the design that it should be overheard by that distinguished-looking man who, she felt sure, must be the artist-brother whom Mrs. Douglas had come to Italy to meet; and though she did enjoy the old Florentine masters very much indeed, yet she had haunted the churches and galleries a little more persistently than she would otherwise have done, in the hope that fortune might some day favor her by granting a meeting with Mrs. Douglas and her brother. All things come to those who wish and wait; and so the time came when Mrs. Douglas found her in Santa Croce, and the desired introduction and invitations were given.

When, therefore, the request that she join the picnic party on Fiesole reached her, and was soon followed by Mrs. Douglas's carriage, Miss Sherman's satisfaction knew no bounds. The lovely eyes, that Barbara and Bettina had so much admired, were more softly brilliant than ever in their expression of happiness, and Mrs. Douglas looked the admiration she felt for her young companion.

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Meanwhile, Mr. Sumner, Malcom, Margery, Barbara, and Bettina had gloriously enjoyed the walk out of the city through Porta Gallo, along the banks of the Mugello, up the first slope of the hill, past Villa Palmieri, and upward to San Domenico,—church and monastery,—which stands about half way to the top.

Here they stopped to rest, and to talk for a few minutes about Fra Angelico, the painter-monk, whose name has rendered historic every spot on which he lived.

Mr. Sumner told them very briefly how two young men—brothers, hardly more than boys—had come hither one day from the country over yonder, the same country where Giotto had lived when a child, about one hundred years before, and had become monks in this monastery. “They took the names of Giovanni and Benedetto; and Giovanni, or John, as it is in English, was afterward called Fra Angelico by his brethren because his life was so holy, or because, as some say, he painted angels more pure and beautiful than have ever been pictured before or since. He lived here many years before he was transferred with his brethren to the monastery of San Marco down in Florence, and painted several pictures in this church, only a part of one of which is remaining. Little did the young monk think, as he painted here in humility, that one day emissaries from the great unknown world would come hither, cut his frescoes out of the walls, and bear them away to foreign art galleries, there to be treasured beyond all price.”

They went into the church to give a look at the remaining picture over the altar in the choir, a *Virgin with Saints and Angels*, the lower part, or predella, of which is now in the National Gallery, London; but Mr. Sumner said they must not stay long, for this was not the object of the day. Since, however, Fra Angelico was to be their next subject of study, he wished them to know all about him they possibly could before going to San Marco to really study his pictures.

Lingering on the terrace outside, they looked at the lovely Villa Landor close at hand, where the English poet, Walter Savage Landor, spent several years. Here Malcom quoted, in a quietly impressive way:—

“From France to Italy my steps I bent,
And pitcht at Arno’s side my household tent.
Six years the Medicean Palace held
My wandering Lares; then they went afield,
Where the hewn rocks of Fiesole impend
O’er Doccia’s dell, and fig and olive blend.”

“How did you come to know that?” asked Margery, the usual poetry quoter.

“I didn’t have to go far for it. I came across it in my ‘Hare’s Florence,’ and I rather think the quaint fancy of the *Lares* ‘going afield’ caught my attention so that I cannot lose the words.”

“It is easier to think how one must write poetry in such a lovely spot than how one could help it,” said Bettina, with shining eyes.

“Or could help painting pictures,” added Barbara. “Just look at the colors of sky, hills, and city. No wonder Fra Angelico thought of angels with softly glittering wings and dressed in exquisite pinks and violets, when he lived here day after day.”

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“Just wait, though, until we come down at sunset,” said Mr. Sumner. “This is indeed beautiful, but then it will be most beautiful, and you can enjoy the changing colors of sunset over Florence, as seen from Fiesole, far better as we loiter along on the road, as we shall do to-night, than when in a carriage, as we were two or three weeks ago. Of course, there is less color now than in summer, yet it will be glorious, I am sure. We are most fortunate in our choice of a day, for it is warm, with a moisture in the atmosphere that veils forms and enriches color. We should call it ‘Indian summer’ were we at home.”

Before they had quite reached the old city at the top, the carriage containing Mrs. Douglas, Miss Sherman, and Howard overtook them, and the latter sprang out to join the walking-party.

Such a day as followed! Lunch in the grove behind the ancient Monastery!—visits to the ruined Amphitheatre, the Cathedral, and Museum so full of all sorts of antiquities obtained from the excavations of ancient Fiesole!—loitering in the spacious Piazza, where they were beset by children and weather-beaten, brown old women, clamoring for them to buy all sorts of things made of the straw there manufactured; and everywhere magnificent views, either of the widely extended valley of the Mugnone on the one side, or of Florence, lying in her amethystine cup, on the other!

Finally, giving orders for the carriage to follow within a certain time, so that any tired one might take it, all started down the hill. They soon met a procession of young Franciscan monks, chanting a hymn as they walked—their curious eyes stealing furtive glances at the beautiful faces of the American ladies.

“I feel as if I were a part of the fourteenth century,” said Miss Sherman. “Surely Fra Angelico might be one of those passing us.”

“Only he would have worn a white gown instead of a brown one,” replied Mrs. Douglas, smiling. “You know he was a Dominican monk, not Franciscan.”

“But look on the other side of the road,” cried Malcom, “and hear the buzzing of the wires! an electric tramway! Here meet the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries!”

In a minute it all had happened. Just how, no one knew. An agonized scream from the little maid, Anita, who was walking behind them, a momentary sight of the tiny, brown-faced Italian boy, her brother, right in the pathway of the swinging car as it rounded the curve—Malcom’s spring—and then the boy and himself lying out on the roadside against the wall.

The vigorous crying of the little boy as he rushed into his sister’s arms, evinced his safety, but there was a quiet about Malcom that was terrifying.

He had succeeded in throwing the child beyond the reach of the car, but had himself been struck by it, and consciousness was gone.

The little group, so happy a moment before, now hung over him in silent fear and agony. Howard hastened back to get the carriage, and returned to find Malcom slowly struggling to awaken, but when moved, he again fainted; and so, lying in his uncle's arms, with his pale mother and tearful Margery sitting in front, and the others, frightened and sympathetic, hurrying behind, Malcom was brought home through the wonderful sunset glow upon which not one bestowed a single thought.

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Chapter VII.

A Startling Disclosure.

'Tis even thus:

*In that I live I love; because I love
I live: Whate'er is fountain to the one
Is fountain to the other.*

—TENNYSON.

[Illustration: CLOISTER, MUSEUM OF SAN MARCO, FLORENCE.]

Many days of great distress followed. Everything else was forgotten in the tense waiting. There were moments of half consciousness when Malcom's only words were "All right, mother." It seemed as if even in that second of plunging to save the child he yet thought of his mother, and realized how she would feel his danger. But happily, as time wore on, the jarred brain recovered from the severe shock it had received, and gradually smiles took the place of anxious, questioning looks, and merry voices were again heard, and the busy household life was resumed.

Although Malcom could not accompany them, the proposed visit to the old monastery, San Marco, for study of Fra Angelico's paintings was made by the others.

As they wandered through the long corridors, chapel, refectory, and the many little cells, now vacant, from the walls of which look forth soft, fair faces and still fresh, sweet colors laid there almost five hundred years ago by the hand of the painter-monk, they talked of his devotion, of his unselfish life and work; of his rejection of payment for his painting, doing it unto God and not unto men. They talked of his beginning all his work with prayer for inspiration, and how, in full faith that his prayer had been answered, he absolutely refused to alter a touch his brush had made; and of the old tradition that he never painted Christ or the Virgin Mary save on his knees, nor a crucifixion save through blinding tears; and their voices grew very quiet, and they looked upon each fresco almost with reverence.

"Fra Angelico stood apart from the growth of art that was taking place about him," said Mr. Sumner. "He neither affected it nor was affected by it. We should call him to-day an 'ecstatic painter'—one who paints visions; the Italians then called him 'Il Beato,' the blessed. There are many other works by him,—although a great part, between forty and fifty, are here. You remember the *Madonna and Child* you saw in the Uffizi Gallery the other day, on whose wide gold frame are painted those angels with musical instruments that are reproduced so widely and sold everywhere. You recognized them at once, I saw. Then, a few pictures have been carried away and are in foreign art galleries, as I told you the other day. During the last years of his life the Pope sent for

him to come to Rome, and there he painted frescoes on the walls of some rooms in the Vatican Palace. From that city he went to Orvieto, a little old city perched on the top of a hill on the way from Florence to Rome, in whose cathedral he painted a noble *Christ*, with prophets, saints, and angels. He died in Rome.”

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"And was he not buried here?" asked Barbara; "here in this lovely inner court, where are the graves of so many monks?"

"No. He was buried in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, a church close by the Pantheon in Rome, and the Pope himself wrote his epitaph. But it is indeed a great pity that he could not lie here, in the very midst of so many of his works, and where he lived so long."

"Did Fra Angelico live before or after the prophet Savonarola, uncle?" asked Margery. "We came here a little time ago with mother to visit the latter's cell, and the church, in connection with our reading of 'Romola.'"

"He lived before Savonarola, about a hundred years. So that when Savonarola used to walk about through these rooms and corridors, he saw the same pictures we are now looking at."

* * * * *

"I say, uncle, don't you think I am having the best part of this, after all?" brightly asked Malcom, the following day, as Mr. Sumner entered the wide sunny room where he was lying on the sofa, propped up by cushions, while Barbara, Bettina, and Margery were clustered about him with their hands full of photographs of Fra Angelico's paintings, and all trying to talk at once. "The girls have told me everything; and I am almost sure I shall never mistake a Fra Angelico picture. I know just what expression he put into his faces, just how quiet and as-if-they-never-could-be-used his hands are, and how straight the folds of his draperies hang, even though the people who wear them are dancing. I know what funny little clouds, like bundles of cigars, his Madonnas sit upon up in the heavens."

"I am not quite sure, uncle dear, but I like your instructions best when second-hand," he laughingly added. "Betty has made me fairly love the old fellow by her stories of his unearthly goodness. Was it not fine to refuse money for his work, and to decline to be made archbishop when the Pope asked him; and to recommend a brother monk for the office? I think he ought to be called *Saint* Angelico."

[Illustration: FRA ANGELICO. UFFUZI GALLERY, FLORENCE.

GROUP OF ANGELS. FROM CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.]

"Some people have called him the 'St. John of Art,'" Mr. Sumner replied, with a bright smile at Malcom's enthusiasm. "I am not sure but yours is the better name, however."

About this time people who frequented the Cascine Gardens and other popular drives in and about Florence began to notice with interest an elegant equipage containing a tall, slender, pale young man, two beautiful, brown-eyed girls, and oftentimes either a gray-

haired woman in black or a sunny-haired young girl. It had been purchased by Howard, and daily he wished Barbara and Bettina to drive with him. Indeed, it now seemed as if the young man's thoughts were beginning to centre wholly in this household; and suddenly warned by a few words spoken by Malcom, Mrs. Douglas became painfully conscious that a more

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than mere friendly interest might prompt such constant and lavish attentions. With newly opened eyes, she saw that while Howard generously gave to them all of such things as he could in return for their hospitality, yet there was a something different in his manner toward Barbara and Bettina. Their room was always bright and fragrant with the most costly flowers, and not a wish did they express but Howard was eager to gratify it.

She was troubled; and since the air of Florence was beginning to take on the chill of winter—to become too cold for such an invalid as Howard—she ventured one day, when they happened to be alone together, to ask him if he would soon go farther south for the winter.

“Malcom told me you had stopped for only a time here on your way to the south of Italy,” she added.

The color rushed in a torrent over Howard's pale face, and he did not speak for a minute; then, turning abruptly to her, said:—

“I cannot go away from Florence, Mrs. Douglas. Do you not see, do you not know, how I have loved Barbara ever since I first saw her? You must have seen it, for I have not been able sometimes to conceal my feelings. They have taken complete possession of me. I think only of her day and night. I have often thought I ought to tell you of it. Now, I am glad I have. Do you not think she will sometime love me? She *must*. I could not live without it.” And his voice, which had trembled with excitement, suddenly faltered and broke.

Poor Mrs. Douglas strove for words.

“You must not let her know this,” she finally said. “She is only a little girl whom her father and mother have entrusted to me. What would they say if they knew how blind I have been! Why, you have known her but a few weeks! You must be mistaken. It is a fancy. It will pass away. Conquer yourself. Go away. Oh, do go away, Howard, for a time at least!”

“I cannot, I will not. Mrs. Douglas, I have never longed for a thing in my life but it has come to me. I long for Barbara's love more than I ever wished for any other thing in the world. She must give it to me. Oh, were I only well and strong, I know I could compel it.”

“Listen to me, Howard. I know that Barbara has never had one thought of this. Her mind is completely occupied with her study, the pleasures and the novelties that each day is bringing her. She does not conceal anything. She has no reason to do so. She



and Bettina are no silly girls who think of a lover in every young man they meet. They are as sweet and fresh and free from all sentimentalities as when they were children. Barbara would be frightened could she hear you talk,—should she for a moment suspect how you feel. You must conceal it; for your own sake, you must.”

“I will not show what I feel any more than I already have. I will not speak to Barbara yet of my love. Only let me stay here, where I can see her every day. Do not send me away. Mrs. Douglas, you do not know how lonely my life has been—without brother or sister—without father or mother. It has been like a bit of Paradise to go in and out of your household; and to think—to hope that perhaps Barbara would sometime love me and be with me always. My love has become a passion, stronger than life itself. Look at me! Do you not believe my words, Mrs. Douglas?”

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As Mrs. Douglas lifted her eyes and looked full into the delicate, almost transparent face so swept by emotion, and met the deathless fire of Howard's brilliant eyes, she felt as never before the frailty of his physical life, and wondered at the mighty force of his passionate will. The conviction came that she was grappling with no slight feeling, but with that which really might mean life or death to him.

An unfathomable sympathy filled her heart.

"I can talk no more," she said, gently taking in her own the young man's hand. "I will accept your promise. Come and go as you have, dear Howard. But always remember that very much depends on your keeping from Barbara all knowledge of your love."

As soon as it was possible, Mrs. Douglas, as was her wont when in any anxiety, sought a conference with her brother. After telling him all, there was complete silence for a moment. Then Mr. Sumner said:—

"And Barbara,—how do you think Barbara feels? For she is not a child any longer. How old were you, my sister, when you were married? Only nineteen—and you told me yesterday that we must celebrate Barbara's and Bettina's eighteenth birthday before very long, and Barbara is older than her years—more womanly than most girls of her age."

"She has never had a thought of this, I am confident. Of course, she may have known, have felt, Howard's admiration of her; but I doubt if the child has ever in her life had the slightest idea of the possible existence of any such feeling as he is cherishing. It is not ordinary, Robert, it is overwhelming; you know we have seen his self-will shown in many ways. The force of his emotion and will now is simply tremendous. Few girls could withstand it if fully exposed to its influence. There is all the more danger because the element of pity must enter in, because he is so evidently frail and lonely. I feel that I have been greatly in fault. I ought to have foreseen what might happen from admitting so freely into our home a young man of Howard's age and circumstances. I have never thought of Barbara and Betty otherwise than of my own Margery, and I know nothing in the world has ever been farther from good Dr. and Mrs. Burnett's minds than the possible involvement of one of their girls in a love-affair.

"And now I must write them something of this," she added, with a sigh. "It would not be right to keep secret even the beginnings of what might prove to be of infinite importance. Of course Howard's family, character, position, are above question; but his health, his exacting nature; his lack of so many qualities Dr. Burnett considers essential; the undesirability of such an entanglement! Oh! it would be only the beginning of sorrows should Barbara grow to care for him."

Poor Mrs. Douglas's face showed the sudden weight of care that had been launched upon her, as she anxiously asked:—

“What do you advise, Robert?”

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“Nothing; only to go on just as we have been doing. Fill the days as full as we can, and trust that all will be right. It is best never to try to manage affairs, I believe.”

And Barbara—how did Barbara feel? She could never have analyzed and put into definite thought the inner life she was leading during these days. Indeed, it is doubtful whether she had the slightest conception of the change that was gradually working within her. But rapidly she was putting away childish things, and “woman’s lot” was coming fast upon her. Mrs. Douglas would have been astounded, indeed, could she, with her eyes of experience and wisdom, have looked into the heart of Barbara, whom she still called “child.” That which the young girl could not understand would have been a revelation to her who had been a loving wife. With what an overwhelming pity would she have hastened to restore her to her parents before this hopeless love should grow any stronger, and she become aware of its existence!

Dr. Burnett’s admiration for Robert Sumner was unbounded. He had known him from boyhood, and had always been his confidant, so far as an older man can be with a younger. Many times he had talked to his children about him—about his earnestness and sincerity of purpose—his high aims, and his willingness to spare no pains to realize them.

Barbara, who, perhaps, had been more than any other of the children her father’s comrade, had listened to these tales and praises until Robert Sumner had become her ideal of all that was noble. No one had dreamed of such a thing, but so it was; and through all the excitement of preparation and through the journey to Italy, one of her chief anticipations had been to see this young man of whom her father had talked so much, and, herself, to learn to know him. The story of his marriage disappointment, which had led to his life abroad, and a notable adventure in Egypt, in which he had saved a woman’s life, had added just that romance to his reputation as an artist and a writer on art that had seized hold of the young girl’s imagination.

Now, as she was daily with him in the home, saw his affectionate care for his sister, Malcom, and Margery, and felt his good comradeship with them all, while in every way he was teaching them and inspiring them to do better things than they had yet accomplished, a passionate desire had risen to make herself worthy of his approbation. She wished him to think of her as more than a mere girl—the companion of none but the very young. She wished to be his companion, and all that was ardent and enthusiastic in her nature was beginning to rush, like a torrent that suddenly finds an outlet, into the channels indicated by him.

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She did not realize this. But the absorbing study she was giving to the old pictures, the intensity of which was surprising to Bettina, was an indication of it. Her quick endeavor to follow any line of thought suggested by Mr. Sumner—and her restlessness when she saw the long conversations he and Miss Sherman would so often hold, were others. It seemed to her lately as if Miss Sherman were always claiming his time and attention—even their visit to Santa Maria del Carmine to study the frescoes by Masaccio, who was the next artist they were to learn about, had been postponed because she wished Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Sumner to go somewhere with her. Barbara did not like it very well.

But to Howard she gave little thought when she was away from him. He was kind, his flowers were sweet, but they were all over the house,—given to others as well as to herself. It was very good of him to take herself and Betty in his fine new carriage so often; but, perhaps,—if he did not so continually ask them,—perhaps,—they would oftener drive with Mr. Sumner and Malcom; and she knew Betty would like that better, as well as she herself.

She was often annoyed because he evidently “admired” her so much, as Betty called it, and did wish he would not look at her as he sometimes did; and she felt very sensitively the signs of irritation that were so apparent in him when anything prevented them from being with him as he wished. But she was very sorry for his loneliness; for his exile from home on account of ill-health; for the weakness that he often felt and for which no pleasures purchased by money could compensate. She was grateful for his kindness, and would not wound him for the world; so she frankly and graciously accepted all he gave, and, in return, tried to bring all the happiness she could into his days.

Chapter VIII.

Howard's Questionings.

*When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,
Satan looks up beneath his feet—both tug—
He's left, himself, i' the middle: the soul wakes
And grows.*

—BROWNING.

[Illustration: PONTE ALLA CARRAJA, FLORENCE.]

At last the morning came when the postponed visit to Santa Maria del Carmine, on the other side of the Arno, was to be made. Miss Sherman had so evidently desired to join in the study of the old painters that Mrs. Douglas suggested to her brother that she be invited to do so, but he had thought it not best.

“The others would not be so free to talk,” he said. “I do not wish any constraint. Now we are only a family party,—with the exception of Howard, and I confess that I sometimes wish he did not join us in this.” Malcom was again with them, for the first time since they were at Fiesole, and this was enough to make the occasion a particularly joyous one.

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The romantic mystery of Masaccio's short life and sudden, secret death, and the wonderful advance that he effected in the evolution of Italian painting of the fifteenth century, had greatly interested them as they had read at home about him, and all were eager to see the frescoes.

"They are somewhat worn and dark," Mr. Sumner said, "and at first you will probably feel disappointed. What you must particularly look for here is that which you have hitherto found nowhere else,—the expression of individuality in figures and faces. Giotto, you remember, sought to tell some story; to illustrate some Bible incident so that it should seem important and claim attention. Masaccio went to work in a wholly different way. While Giotto would say to himself: 'Now I am going to paint a certain Bible story; what people shall I introduce so that this story shall best seem to be a real occurrence?' Masaccio would think: 'I wish to make a striking picture of Peter and John, or any other sacred characters. What story or incident shall I choose for representation that will best show the individual characteristics of these men?'

"Possessing this great love for people, he studied the drawing of the human figure as had never been done before in the history of Christian art. At this time, more than a hundred years after Giotto, artists were beginning to master the science of perspective drawing, and in Masaccio's pictures we see men standing firmly on their feet, and put upon different planes in the same picture; their figures well poised, and true to anatomy. In one of them is his celebrated naked, shivering youth, who is awaiting baptism,—the study of which wrought a revolution in painting."

A little afterward they were standing in the dim Brancacci Chapel of Santa Maria del Carmine, whose walls are covered with frescoes of scenes in the lives of Christ and His apostles. They had learned that there was an artist called Masolino, who, perhaps, had begun these frescoes, and had been Masaccio's teacher; and that a young man called Filippino Lippi had finished them some years after they had been left incomplete by Masaccio's early death.

All were greatly impressed by the fact that so little can be known of Masaccio, who wrought here so well; that even when, or how, or where he died is a mystery; and yet his name is one of the very greatest in early Italian art.

They talked of how the greatest masters of the High Renaissance—Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Raphael—used to come here to study, and thus this little chapel became a great art school; and how, at the present time, it is esteemed by many one of the four most important art-buildings in the world;—the others being, Arena Chapel, Padua, where are Giotto's frescoes; Sistine Chapel, Rome, where are Michael Angelo's greatest paintings; and Scuola di San Rocco, Venice, which is filled with Tintoretto's work.

He then called their attention to the composition of Masaccio's frescoes; asking them especially to notice that, while only a few people are taking part in the principal scene, many others are standing about interested in looking on; all, men with strongly marked characteristics,—individual, and worthy of attention.

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"May I repeat a verse or two of poetry right here where we stand, uncle?" asked Margery. "It keeps saying itself in my mind. I think you all know it and who wrote it, but that is all the better."

And in her own sweet way she recited James Russell Lowell's beautiful tribute to Masaccio:—

"He came to Florence long ago
And painted here these walls, that shone
For Raphael and for Angelo,
With secrets deeper than his own,
Then shrank into the dark again,
And died, we know not how or when.

"The darkness deepened, and I turned
Half sadly from the fresco grand;
'And is this,' mused I, 'all ye earned,
High-vaulted brain and cunning hand,
That ye to other men could teach
The skill yourselves could never reach?'

* * * * *

"Henceforth, when rings the health to those
Who live in story and in song,
O, nameless dead, that now repose
Safe in oblivion's chambers strong,
One cup of recognition true
Shall silently be drained to you!"

"But Masaccio does not need any other monument than this chapel. He is not very badly off, I am sure, while this stands, and people come from all over the world to visit it," exclaimed Malcom, as they left the Brancacci Chapel, and walked slowly down the nave of the church.

"Is this all he painted?" asked Barbara.

"There is one other fresco in the cloister of this same church, but it is sadly injured—indeed half obliterated," answered Mr. Sumner. "That is all. But his influence cannot be estimated. What he, then a poor, unknown young man, working his very best upon these walls, accomplished for the great world of painting can never be measured. He surely wrought 'better than he knew.' This was because he, for the first time in the history of modern painting, portrayed real life. All the conventionalities that had hitherto clung, in a greater or less degree, to painting, were dropped by him; and thus the way

was opened for the perfect representations of the High Renaissance which so soon followed. We will next give some time to the study of the works of Ghirlandajo and Botticelli, who, with Filippino Lippi, who finished these frescoes which we have just been looking at, make a famous trio of Early Renaissance painters.”

After they had crossed Ponte alla Carraja, Margery said she wished to do some shopping on Via dei Fossi, which was close at hand—that street whose shop windows are ever filled with most fascinating groups of sculptured marbles and bronzes, and all kinds of artistic bric-a-brac—and begged her uncle to accompany her.

“I wish no one else to come,” she said, with her own little, emphatic nod.

“Oh, ho! secrets!” exclaimed Malcom; “so we must turn aside!”

“Do go to drive with me,” begged Howard. “Here we are close to my hotel, and I can have the team ready right off.”

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So they walked a few steps along the Lung' Arno to the pleasant, sunny Hotel de la Grande Bretagne, which Howard had chosen for his Florentine home, and soon recrossed the Arno, and swept out through Porta Romana into the open country, behind Howard's beautiful gray horses.

The crisp, cool air brought roses into Barbara's and Bettina's cheeks, and ruffled their pretty brown hair. Malcom was in high spirits after his long confinement to the house, and Howard tried to throw off a gloomy, discouraged feeling that had hung over him all the morning. Seated opposite Barbara, and continually meeting her frank, steadfast eyes, he seemed to realize as he had never before done the obvious truth of Mrs. Douglas's words, when she had said that Barbara was perfectly unconscious of his love for her; and all the manhood within him strove to assert itself to resist an untimely discovery of his feeling, for fear of the mischief it might cause.

Howard had been doing a great deal of new thinking during the past weeks. He suddenly found himself surrounded by an atmosphere wholly different from that in which he had before lived.

Sprung from an aristocratic and thoroughly egoistic ancestry on his father's side, and a morbidly sensitive one on his mother's; brought up by his paternal grandmother, whose every thought had been centred upon him as the only living descendant of her family; surrounded by servants who were the slaves of his grandmother's and his own whims; not even his experience in the Boston Latin School, chosen because his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had been educated there, had served to widen much the horizon of his daily living, or to make him anything like a typical American youth.

Now, during the last two or three months he had been put into wholly changed conditions. An habitual visitor to this family into whose life he had accidentally entered, he had been a daily witness of Mrs. Douglas's self-forgetting love, which was by no means content with ministering to the happiness of her own loved home ones, but continually reached out to an ever widening circle, blessing whomever it touched. He could not be unconscious that every act of Robert Sumner's busy life was directed by the desire to give of himself to help others; that a high ideal of beneficence, not gain, was always before him, and was that by which he measured himself. The wealth, the position of both, served only to make their lives more generous.

And he saw that the younger people of the household had caught the same spirit. Malcom, Margery, Barbara, and Bettina forgot themselves in each other, and were most generous in all their judgments. They esteemed people according to that which they were in themselves, not according to what they had, and shrank from nothing save meanness and selfishness.

As we have seen, he had been attracted in a wonderful way to Barbara ever since he had first met her. Her beauty, her unconscious pride of bearing, mingled with her sweet,

unaffected enthusiasms, were a swift revelation to one who had never in his life before given a second thought to any girl; and a fierce longing to win her love had taken possession of his whole being, as he had confessed to Mrs. Douglas.

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But to-day there was a chill upon him. He had before been confident of the future. It must not, should not disappoint him, he had said to himself again and again. Somehow he was not now so sure of himself and it. There seemed a mystery before him. The way that had always before seemed to open to his will refused to disclose itself. How could he win the affection of this noble girl, whose life already seemed so full that she felt no lack, who was so warm and generous in her feelings to all, so thoroughly unselfish, so wholesome, so lovable? How he did long to make all her wishes centre on him, even as his did upon her!

But Barbara's ideals were high. She would demand much of him whom she could love. Only the other day he had heard her say in a voice deep with feeling that money and position were nothing in comparison with a life that was ever giving itself to enrich others. Whom did she mean? he wondered. It seemed as if she knew some one who was even then in her mind, and a fierce jealousy sprang up with the thought. She surely could not have meant him, for he had never lived for any other than himself, nor did he wish to think of anything but himself. He wanted to get well and to have Barbara love him. Then he would take her away from everybody else and lavish everything upon her, and how happy would he be! Could he only look into the future, he thought, and see that this was to come, he would ask nothing else.

Poor Howard! Could the future have opened before his wish never so little, how soon would his restless, raging emotions have become hushed into a great silence!

* * * * *

A few evenings afterward, as they were all sitting together in the library, and Howard with them, Mr. Sumner, knowing that the young people had been reading and talking of Ghirlandajo and Botticelli, said that perhaps there would be no better time for talking of these artists than the present.

"With Masaccio," he continued, "we have begun a new period of Italian painting,—the period of the Early Renaissance. All the former great artists,—Cimabue, Giotto, and Fra Angelico, whom we have particularly studied,—and the lesser ones, about whom you have read,—Orcagna, Taddeo Gaddi, and Uccello, the bird-lover (who gave himself so untiringly to the study of linear perspective),—belong to the Gothic period, literally the rude period; in which, although a steady advance was made, yet the works are all more or less very imperfect art-productions. All these are wholly in the service of the Church, and are painted in fresco on plaster or in *tempera* on wood. In the Early Renaissance, however, a new impulse was seen. Artists were much better equipped for their work, nature-study progressed wonderfully, anatomy was studied, perspective was mastered, the sphere of art widened to take in history, portraits, and mythology; and in the latter part of this period, as we shall see, oil-painting was introduced."

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"Can you give us any dates of these periods to remember, uncle?" asked Malcom.

"Roughly speaking, the Gothic period covers the years from about 1250 to 1400; the Early Renaissance, from about 1400 to 1500. Masaccio, as we have seen, was the first great painter of the Early Renaissance, and he lived from 1401 to 1428. But these dates are not arbitrary. Fra Angelico lived until 1455, and yet his pictures belong wholly to the Gothic period; so also do those of other Gothic painters whose lives overlap the Early Renaissance in point of time. It is the spirit of the art that definitely determines its place, although the general dates help one to remember.

"We will not talk long of Ghirlandajo,—Domenico Ghirlandajo (for there is another, Ridolfo by name, who is not nearly so important to the art-world). His composition is similar to that of Masaccio. A few people are intimately engaged, and the others are bystanders, or onlookers. One characteristic is that many of these last are portraits of Florentine men and women who were his contemporaries, and so we get from his pictures a knowledge of the people and costumes of his time. His backgrounds are often masses of Florentine architecture, some of which you will readily recognize. His subjects are religious.

"For studying his work, go again to Santa Maria Novella, where is a series of frescoes representing scenes in the lives of the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. I would give some time to these, for in them you will find all the characteristics of Ghirlandajo's frescoes, which are his strongest work. Then you will find two good examples of his *tempera* painting on wooden panels in the Uffizi Gallery: an *Adoration of the Magi*, and a *Madonna and Saints*, which are in the Sala di Lorenzo Monaco near Fra Angelico's *Madonna*—the one which is surrounded by the famous musical Angels. Others are in the Pitti Gallery and Academy. His goldsmith's training shows in these smaller pictures more than in the frescoes. We see it in his love for painting golden ornaments and decoration of garments."

"Is his work anything like that of Michael Angelo, Mr. Sumner?" asked Barbara. "He was Angelo's teacher, was he not?"

"Yes, history tells us that he held that position for three years; but judging from the work of both, I should say that not much was either taught or learned. Ghirlandajo's work possesses great strength, as does Michael Angelo's, but on wholly different lines. Ghirlandajo loved to represent grave, dignified figures,—which were portraits,—clad in long gowns, stiff brocades, and flowing mantles; and there are superb accessories in his pictures,—landscapes, architecture, and decorated interiors. On the other hand, Michael Angelo's figures are most impersonal, and each depends for effect simply on its own magnificence of conception and rendering. The lines of figures are of far more importance than the face, which is the farthest possible removed from the portrait—and for accessories of any kind he cared not at all."

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At this moment callers were announced and Mr. Sumner said they would resume their talk some other time.

"It will be well for you if you can look at these paintings by Ghirlandajo to-morrow morning if it be a bright day," he said, "while all that I have told you is fresh in your minds. I cannot go with you, but if you think of anything you would like to ask me about them, you can do so before we begin on Botticelli."

Chapter IX.

The Coming-out Party.

*Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.*

—LONGFELLOW.

[Illustration: PALAZZO PITTI, FLORENCE.]

"Well, have you seen Ghirlandajo's work?" asked Mr. Sumner, the next time the little group met in the library.

"Only his frescoes in Santa Maria Novella. We have spent two entire mornings looking at those," answered Bettina.

"We took your list of the portraits there with us, uncle," said Malcom, "and tried to get acquainted with those old Florentine bishops, bankers, and merchants that he painted."

"And oh! isn't that Ginevra de' Benci in the *Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth* lovely! and her golden brocaded dress!" cried Margery.

"You pay quite a compliment to the old painter's power of representing men and women," said Mr. Sumner, "for these evidently captivated you. I wish I could have overheard you talking by yourselves."

"I fear we could not appreciate the best things, though," said Barbara. "We imagined ourselves in old Florence of the fifteenth century, and tried to recognize the mountains and palaces in the backgrounds, and we enjoyed the people and admired their fine clothes. I do think, however, that these last seem often too stiff and as if made of metal rather than of silk, satin, or cloth. And when Howard told us that Mr. Ruskin says 'they hang from the figures as they would from clothes-pegs,' we could but laugh, and think he is right with regard to some of them. Ought we to admire everything in these old pictures, Mr. Sumner?" she earnestly added.



“Not at all; not by any means. I would not have you think this for a moment. Ghirlandajo’s paintings are famous and worthy because they are such an advance on what was before him. Compare his men and women with those by Giotto. You know how much you found of interest and to admire in Giotto’s pictures when you compared them with Cimabue’s and with the old Greek Byzantine paintings. Just so compare those by Masaccio and Ghirlandajo with what was done before. See the growth,—the steady evolution,—and realize that Ghirlandajo was honest and earnest, and gifted too; that his drawing is firm and truer to nature than that of most contemporary artists; that his portraits possess character; that they are well-bred and important, as the people they represent were; that his mountains are like mountains even in some of their subtle lines; that his rivers wind; that his masses of architecture are in good perspective and proportion; and then you will excuse his faults, though it is right to notice and feel them. We must see many in the work of every artist until we come to the great painters of the High Renaissance. You must find Ghirlandajo’s other pictures, and study them also.”

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"Now about Botticelli," he added. A little rustle of expectancy swept through the group of listeners. Bettina drew nearer Barbara and clasped her hand; and all settled themselves anew with an especial air of interest. "I see you, like most other people, care more for him. He is immensely popular at present. It is quite the fashion to admire him. But, strangely enough, only a few years ago little was known or cared about his work, and his name is not even mentioned by some writers on art. He was first a goldsmith like Ghirlandajo, then afterward became a pupil of Fra Filippo Lippi, father of the Filippino Lippi who finished Masaccio's frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel. Botticelli wrought an immense service to painting by widening greatly the field of subjects hitherto assigned to it, which had been confined to Bible incidents. Others, contemporary with him, were beginning to depart slightly from these subjects in response to the desires of the pleasure-loving Florentines of that day; but Botticelli was the first to come deliberately forth and make art minister to the pleasure and education of the secular as well as the religious world. By nature he loved myths, fables, and allegories, and freely introduced them into his pictures. He painted Venuses, Cupids, and nymphs just as willingly as Madonnas and saints.

"I hope you will read diligently about him. The story of how his pictures, and those of other artists who were influenced by him, led to the protest which Savonarola (who lived at the same time) made against the 'corrupting influence of profane pictures' and his demand that bonfires should be made of them is most interesting. Botticelli devotedly contributed a large number of his paintings to the burning piles."

"But he painted religious pictures also, did he not?" queried Barbara.

"Oh, yes. His works were wrought in churches as well as in private houses and palaces. He even received the honor of being summoned to Rome by Pope Sixtus IV. to assist in the decoration of the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, where Michael Angelo afterward performed his greatest work. There he painted three large religious frescoes—by the way, Ghirlandajo painted there also. Now we must find what is the charm in Botticelli's painting that accounts for the wonderful present interest in his work. I think it is in a large degree his attempt to put expression into faces. While Masaccio had taken a long step in advance of other artists by making man himself, rather than events, the chief interest in his pictures,—Botticelli, more imaginative and poetic, painted man's moods,—his subtle feelings. You are all somewhat familiar, through their reproductions, with his Madonna pictures. How do these differ from those of other painters?"

"The faces are less pretty."

"They are sad instead of joyous."

"In some the little Christ looks as though he were trying to comfort his mother."

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"The angels look as if they longed to help both," were some of the quick answers.

"Yes; *inner* feelings, you see. Sometimes he put a crown of thorns somewhere in a picture, as if to explain its expressions. His Madonna is 'pondering these things,' as Scripture says, and the Child-Christ and angels are in intense sympathy with her. We long to look again and again at such pictures—they move us.

"Another characteristic of his work is the action—a vehement impetuous motion. You will find this finely illustrated in his *Allegory of Spring*, a very famous picture in the Academy. His type of figure and face is most easily recognizable; the limbs are long and slender, and often show through almost transparent garments; the hands are long and nervous; the faces are rather long also, with prominent rounded chins and full lips. He put delicate patterns of gold embroidery about the neck and wrists of the Madonna's gown and the edges of her mantle, and heaped gold all over the lights on the curled hair of her angels and other attendants. You can never mistake one of these pictures when once you have grown familiar with his style.

"I think you should study particularly his *Allegory of Spring* in the Academy for full length figures in motion. You will find the color of this picture happily weird to agree with the fantastic conception. Then in the Uffizi Gallery you will find several pictures of the Madonna; notable among them is his *Coronation of the Virgin*, painted, as he was fond of doing, on a round board. Such a picture is called a *tondo*. Here you will find all his characteristics.

[Illustration: BOTICELLI. UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE.

CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.]

"Study this first; study figures, faces, hands, and methods of technique; then see if you cannot readily find the other examples without your catalogue. A noted one is *Calumny*. This exemplifies strikingly Botticelli's power of expressing swift motion. In the Pitti Palace is a very interesting one called *Pallas*, or *Triumph of Wisdom over Barbarity*,—strangely enough, found only recently."

"Found only recently; how can that be, uncle?" quickly asked Malcom.

"The picture was known to have been painted, for Vasari described it in his 'Life of Botticelli,' but it was lost sight of until an Englishman discovered it in an old private collection which had been for many years in the Pitti Palace, suspected it to be the missing picture, and connoisseurs agree that it is genuine. There was a great deal of excitement here when the fact was made known. The figure of Pallas, in its clinging transparent garment, is strikingly beautiful, and characteristic of Botticelli. The picture was painted as a glorification of the wise reign of the Medici, who did so much for the intellectual advancement of Florence."

Then Mr. Sumner told them that he was to be absent from Florence for a week or two, and should be exceedingly busy for some time, and so would leave them to go on with their study of the pictures by themselves.

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"I have been delighted," he said, "to know how much time you have spent in going again and again to the churches and galleries in order to become familiar with the painters whom we have especially considered. This is the real and the only way to make the study valuable. Do the same with regard to the pictures by Ghirlandajo and Botticelli, and if I have not given you enough to do until I am free again to talk with you, study the frescoes by Filippino Lippi in Santa Maria Novella, and compare them with those in the Brancacci Chapel; and his easel pictures in the Uffizi and Pitti Galleries. Get familiar also with his father's (Fra Filippo's) Madonna pictures. You will find in them a type of face so often repeated that you will always recognize it; it is just the opposite of Botticelli's,—short and childish, with broad jaws, and simple as childhood in expression. I shall be most interested to know what you have done, and what your thoughts have been."

"We certainly shall not do much but look at pictures for weeks to come, uncle; that is sure!" said Malcom, "for the girls are bewitched with them, and now that they think they can learn to know, as soon as they see it, a Giotto, a Fra Angelico, a Botticelli, or a Fra Filippo Lippi, they will be simply crazy. You ought to hear the learned way in which they are beginning to discourse about them. They don't do it when you are around."

"Oh, Malcom! who was it that *must* wait a few minutes longer, the other morning, in Santa Maria Novella in order to run downstairs and give one more look at Giotto's frescoes?" laughed Bettina.

* * * * *

Barbara's and Bettina's eighteenth birthday was drawing near. Mrs. Douglas had for a long time planned to give a party to them, and had fully arranged the details before she spoke of it to the girls.

"It shall be your 'coming-out party' here in Florence," she said; "not a large party, but a thoroughly pleasant and enjoyable one, I am sure."

And the circle of friends who were eager to know and to add to the pleasure of any one belonging to Robert Sumner seemed to ensure this. Mrs. Douglas further said that she did not wish them to give a thought to what they would wear on the occasion, but to leave everything with her. Every girl of eighteen years will readily understand what a flutter of joyous excitement Barbara and Bettina felt, and how they talked over the coming event, when they were alone. Finally Bettina asked:—

"Why does Mrs. Douglas do so much for us? How can we ever repay her?"

"We can never repay her, Betty," replied her sister. "Nor does she wish it. I do not know why she is so kind. She must love us, or,—perhaps it is because she is so fond of papa. Do you know, Betty, that our father once saved her life? She told me about it

only yesterday, and I did not think to tell you last night, there was so much to talk about.
It was when

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she was a little girl of twelve or thirteen years and papa was just beginning to practise. You know her father was very wealthy, and had helped him to get his profession because the two families were always so intimate. Well, Mrs. Douglas was so ill that three or four doctors said they could do nothing more for her, and she must die. Of course her father and mother were broken-hearted. And papa went to them, and for days and nights did not sleep and hardly ate, but was with her every moment; and the older doctors acknowledged that but for him she could never have lived.—And, just think! he never said a word about it to us!”

“Our father never talks of the good and noble things he does,” said Bettina, proudly. “No wonder she loves him; but I do really think she loves us too. Only the other day Malcom said he should be jealous were it anybody but you and me. So I think all we can do is to keep on doing just as we have done, and love her more dearly than ever.”

“I wonder if there are any other girls in the world so happy as we are,” she added after a moment’s silence—and the two pairs of brown eyes looked into each other volumes of tender sympathy and gladness.

What a day was that birthday! Barbara and Bettina will surely tell of it to their children and grandchildren! First of all came letters from the dear home—birthday letters which Mrs. Douglas had withheld for a day or two so that they should be read at the fitting time. Then the lovely gifts! From Margery, an exquisite bit of sculptured marble for each, chosen after much consultation with her uncle and many visits to Via dei Fossi; from Malcom, copies of two of Fra Angelico’s musical Angels, each in a rich frame of Florentine hand-carving (for everything must be purely Florentine, all had agreed); from Mr. Sumner, portfolios of the finest possible photographs of the best works of Florentine masters from the very beginning down through the High Renaissance.

Mrs. Douglas gave them most lovely outfits for the party—gowns of white chiffon daintily embroidered—slippers, gloves—everything needful; while Howard had asked that he might provide all the flowers.

When finally Barbara and Bettina stood on either side of Mrs. Douglas in the floral bower where they received their guests, it was indeed as if they were in fairy-land. It did not seem possible that any more pink or white roses could be left in Florence, if indeed all Italy had not been laid under tribute,—so lavish had Howard been. Barbara carried white roses, and Bettina pink ones, and everywhere through the entire house were the exquisite things, peeping out from amidst the daintiest greens possible, or superb in the simplicity of their own magnificence.

The lovely American girls were the cynosure of all eyes, and the flattering things said to them by foreigners and Americans were almost enough to turn their heads. Mrs. Douglas was delighted with the simple frankness and dignity with which they met all.

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"You may trust well-bred American girls anywhere," she said to her brother as she met him later in the evening, after all her guests had been welcomed, "especially such as are ours," and she called his attention to Barbara, who at that moment was approaching on the arm of a distinguished-looking man, who was evidently absorbed with his fair companion.

Perfectly unconscious of herself, she moved with so much of womanly grace that Robert Sumner was startled. She seemed like a stranger; this tall, queenly creature could not be the everyday Barbara who had been little more than a child to him. In passing she looked with a loving smile at Mrs. Douglas, and then for a moment her eyes with the light still in them met his, and slowly turned away. The soft flush on her cheek deepened, and Robert Sumner felt the swift blood surge back upon his heart until his head swam. When last had he seen such a look in woman's eyes? Ah! how he had loved those sweet dark eyes long years ago! Oh! the desolate longing!

Mrs. Douglas's look had followed Barbara—then had sought Bettina, who, with Margery by her side, was surrounded by a little group of admirers; so she was conscious of nothing unusual. But Miss Sherman, who stood near, had seen Barbara's flush and noted Mr. Sumner's momentary pallor, and afterward his evident effort to be just himself again. What could it mean? she thought.

All through the evening she had suffered from a little unreasonable jealousy as she had realized for the first time that these "Burnett girls,"—mere companions of Margery, as she had always thought of them,—were really young ladies, and most unusually beautiful ones, as she was forced to confess to herself. She envied them the occasion, the honor they gained through their intimate connection with Mr. Sumner and Mrs. Douglas, and the impression they were so evidently making on everybody. She was not broad or generous minded enough to be glad for the young girls from her own country as a nobler-minded woman would have been. But that there could be any especial feeling, or even momentary thought, between Mr. Sumner and Barbara was too absurd to be considered for a moment. That could not be.

Drawing near, she joined Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Sumner, and again sweetly congratulated them on the success of their party, the beauty of the rooms, *etc.*

"The young girls, too," she said, "I am sure do you great credit—quite grown-up they seem, I declare. What a difference clothes make, do they not? I have been a bit amused by some of their pretty airs, as an older woman could not fail to be," and an indulgent smile played about her lips.

As it was time to go to the dining room for refreshments, Mrs. Douglas, in accordance with a preconceived plan, asked her brother to lead the way with Miss Sherman. When Barbara entered the room soon after with Howard, she saw the two sitting behind the partial screen of a big palm. She felt a momentary wish that she could know what they

were so earnestly talking about, and, presently, was conscious that Mr. Sumner's eyes sought her.

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But how little she thought that she, herself, was the subject of their conversation, or rather of Miss Sherman's, who was saying how apparent the devotion of Mr. Sinclair was to every one, and that surely Barbara must reciprocate his feeling, else she would withdraw from him; and how pleasant it was to see such young people, just in the beginning of life, becoming so interested in each other; and how romantic to thus find each other in such a city as Florence; and what an advantage to become allied with such an old, wealthy family as the Sinclairs, and so on and on.

Chapter X.

The Mystery Unfolds to Howard.

*We are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life He makes us lead:
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel He laid the fetter: let it lie!*

—BROWNING.

[Illustration: SAN MINIATO AL MONTE, FLORENCE.]

The weeks sped rapidly on; midwinter had come and gone, and four months had been numbered since Mrs. Douglas had brought Malcom, Margery, Barbara, and Bettina to Italy.

Although social pleasures and duties had multiplied, yet study had never been given up. A steady advance had been made in knowledge of the history of Florence, and of her many legends and traditions. They had not forgotten or passed by the sculptured treasures of the city, but had learned something of Donatello, her first great sculptor; of Lorenzo Ghiberti, who wrought those exquisite gates of bronze for Dante's "Il mio bel San Giovanni" that Michael Angelo declared to be fit for the gates of Paradise; and of Brunelleschi, the architect of her great Duomo.

Through all had gone on their study of the Florentine painters. After much patient work given to pictures of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were now quite revelling in the beauty of those of the sixteenth century, or the High Renaissance. This was all the more interesting since they had seen how one after another the early difficulties had been overcome; how each great master succeeding Cimabue had added his contribution of thought and endeavor until artists knew all the laws that govern the art of representation; and how finally, the method of oil-painting having been introduced, they then had a fitting medium with which to express their knowledge and artistic endeavor.

They had read about Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest masters, so famous for his portrayal of subtle emotion, and were wonderfully interested in his life and work; had

been to the Academy to see the *Baptism of Christ*, painted by his master, Andrea Verrocchio, and were very positive that the angel on the left, who holds Christ's garment, was painted by young Leonardo. They had studied his unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi—his only authentic work in Florence—and had wished much that they could see his other and greater pictures. Mr. Sumner had told them that in the early summer they would probably go to Milan, and there see the famous *Last Supper* and *Study for the Head of Christ*, and that perhaps later they might visit Paris and there find his *Mona Lisa* and other works.

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They had been much interested in the many examples of Fra Bartolommeo's painting that are in San Marco—where he, as well as Fra Angelico, had been a monk;—in the Academy, and in the Uffizi and Pitti galleries; and had learned to recognize the peculiarities of his grouping of figures, and their abstract, devotional faces, his treatment of draperies, and the dear little angels, with their musical instruments, that are so often sitting at the feet of his madonnas.

They were fascinated by Andrea del Sarto, whom they followed all over the city wherever they could find either his frescoes or easel pictures. His color especially enchanted them, after they had looked at so many darkened and faded pictures. The story of his unquenchable love for his faithless wife, and how he painted her face into all his pictures, either as madonna or saint, played upon their romantic feelings. Margery learned Browning's poem about them, and often quoted from it. They were never tired of looking at his *Holy Families* and *Madonnas* in the galleries, but especially loved to go to the S.S. Annunziata and linger in the court, surrounded by glass colonnades, where are so many of his frescoes.

"Do you suppose it is true that his wife, Lucrezia, used to come here after he was dead and she was an old woman, to look at the pictures?" asked Margery one morning, when they had found their favorite place.

"I think it would be just like her vanity to point out her own likeness to people who were copying or looking at the frescoes, according to the old story," answered Bettina, with a disapproving shake of the head.

"Well," said Barbara, "the faces and figures and draperies are all lovely. But I suppose it is true, as Mr. Sumner says, that Andrea del Sarto did not try to make the faces show any holy feeling, or indeed any very noble expression, so that they are not so great pictures as they would have been had he been high-minded enough to do such things."

"It is a shame to have a man's life and work harmed by a woman, even though she was his wife," said Malcom, emphatically.

"All the more that she was his wife," said Barbara. "But I do not believe he could have done much better without Lucrezia. I think his very love for such a woman shows a weakness in his character. It would have been better if he had chosen other than sacred subjects, would it not, Howard?"

They were quite at home in their study of these more modern pictures, with photographs of which they were already somewhat familiar. Howard, especially, had always had a fine and critical taste regarding art matters, and now, among the works of artists of whom he knew something, was a valuable member of the little coterie, and often appealed to when Mr. Sumner was absent.

And thus they had talked over and over again the impressions which each artist and his work made on them, until even Mr. Sumner was astonished and delighted at the evident result of the interest he had awakened.

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But the chief man and artist they were now considering, was Michael Angelo; and the more they learned of him the more true it was, they thought, that he “filled all Florence.” They eagerly followed every step of his life from the time when, a young lad, he entered Ghirlandajo’s studio, until he was brought to Florence—a dead old man, concealed in a bale of merchandise, because the authorities refused permission to his friends to take his body from Rome—and was buried at midnight in Santa Croce.

They tried to imagine his life during the four years which he spent in the Medici Palace, now Palazzo Riccardi, under the patronage of Lorenzo the Magnificent, while he was studying with the same tremendous energy that marked all his life, going almost daily to the Brancacci Chapel to learn from Masaccio’s frescoes, and plunging into the subject of anatomy more like a devotee than a student.

They learned of his visit to Rome, where, before he was twenty-five years old, he sculptured the grand *Pieta*, or *Dead Christ*, which is still in St. Peter’s; and of his return to Florence, where he foresaw his *David* in the shapeless block of marble, and gained permission of the commissioners to hew it out,—the David which stood so long under the shadow of old gray Palazzo Vecchio, but is now in the Academy.

Then came the beginnings of his painting; and they saw the *Holy Family* of the Uffizi Gallery—his only finished easel picture—which possesses more of the qualities of sculpture than painting; and read about his competition with Leonardo da Vinci when he prepared the famous *Cartoon of Pisa*, now known to the world only by fragmentary copies.

Then Pope Julius II. summoned him back to Rome to begin work on that vast monument conceived for the commemoration of his own greatness, and destined never to be finished; and afterward gave him the commission to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican.

Returning to Florence in an interval of this work, he sculptured the magnificent Medici monuments, to see which they often visited the Chapel of the Medici. At the same time, since the prospect of war had come to the beautiful city, he built those famous fortifications on San Miniato through whose gateway they entered whenever they visited this lovely hill, crowned by a noble old church and a quiet city of the dead.

They drove out to Settignano to visit the villa where he lived when a child, and which he owned all his life; and went to Casa Buonarroti in Florence, where his descendants have gathered together what they could of the great master’s sketches, early bas-reliefs, and manuscripts. Here they looked with reverence upon his handwriting, and little clay models moulded by his own fingers.

They talked of his affection for the noble Vittoria Colonna, and read the sonnets he wrote to her.

In short, they admired his great talents, loved his character, condoned his faults of temper, and felt the utmost sympathy with him in all the vicissitudes of his grand, inspiring life.

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"It seems strange," said Mr. Sumner one day, as they returned from the Academy, where they had been looking at casts and photographs of his sculptured works, "that though Michael Angelo was undoubtedly greatest as a sculptor, yet his most important works in the world of art are his paintings. Those grand frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in Rome alone afforded him sufficient scope for his wonderful creative genius. When we get to Rome I shall have much to tell you about them."

* * * * *

The question as to the best thing to do for the remainder of the year was often talked over by Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Sumner. Barbara, Bettina, Malcom, and Margery were so interested in their art study that it was finally thought best to travel in such a way that this could be continued to advantage, and they were now thinking of leaving Florence for Rome.

There had been one source of anxiety for some time, and that was the condition of Howard's health. Instead of gain there seemed to be a continual slow loss of strength that was perceptible especially to Mrs. Douglas. He had recently won her sincere respect by the manful way in which he had struggled to conceal his love for Barbara. So well did he succeed that Malcom thought he must have been mistaken in his conjecture, and the girls were as unconscious as ever. In Bettina's and Margery's thought, he was especially Barbara's friend, but in no other way than Malcom was Bettina's; while Barbara was happier than she had been in a long time, as he showed less and less frequently signs of nervous irritability and hurt feelings whenever she disappointed him in any way, as of course she often could not help doing.

"Howard ought not to have spent the winter here in the cold winds of Florence," Mrs. Douglas often had said to her brother. "But what could we do?"

They were thinking of hastening their departure for Rome on his account, when one morning his servant came to the house in great alarm, to beg Mrs. Douglas to go to his young master at once.

"He is very ill," he said, "and asks for you continually."

When Mrs. Douglas and her brother reached Howard's hotel, they found that already one of the most skilful physicians of the city was there, and that he wished to send for trained nurses.

"I fear pneumonia," he said, "and the poor young man is indeed illy prepared to endure such a disease."

"Spare no pains, no expense," urged Mr. Sumner; "let the utmost possible be done."

“I will stay with you,” said Mrs. Douglas, as the hot hand eagerly clasped hers. “I will not leave you, my poor boy, while you are ill.” And, sending for all she needed, she prepared to watch over him as if he were her own son.

But all endeavors to check the progress of the disease were futile. The enfeebled lungs could offer no resistance. One day, after having lain as if asleep for some time, Howard opened his eyes, to find Mrs. Douglas beside him. With a faint smile he whispered:—

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"I have been thinking so much. I am glad now that Barbara does not love me, for it would only give her pain—sometime tell her of my love for her—"

Then by and by, with the tenderest look in his large eyes, he added, "May she come, to let me see her once more?—You will surely trust me now!"

"Oh, Howard! My noble Howard!" was all that Mrs. Douglas could answer; but at her words a look of wonderful happiness lighted his face.

When Mrs. Douglas asked the physician if a friend could be permitted to see Howard, he replied:—

"He cannot live; therefore let him have everything he desires."

And so, before consciousness left him, Barbara came with wondering, sorrowful eyes, and in answer to his pleading look and Mrs. Douglas's low word, bent her fair young head and kissed tenderly the brow of the dying young man who had loved her so much better than she knew. And Howard's life ebbed away.

It was almost as if one of the family were gone. They did not know how much a part of their life he had become until he came no more to the home he had enjoyed so much—to talk—to study—to bring tributes of love and gratitude—and to contribute all he could to their happiness.

Whatever they would do, wherever they would go, there was one missing, and their world was sadly changed.

Mr. Sumner sent the mournful tidings to the lonely grandmother over the ocean, and accompanied the faithful John as far as Genoa, on his way homeward with the remains of the young master he had carried in his arms as a child.

Then, as it was so difficult to take up even for a little time the old life in Florence, it was decided that they should go at once toward Rome.

Chapter XI.

On the Way to Rome.

*Fair Italy!
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all art yields, and nature can decree:
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility:*

*Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin grand
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.*

—LORD BYRON.

[Illustration: ORVIETO CATHEDRAL.]

“We will take a roundabout journey to Rome,” said Mr. Sumner, “and so get all the variety of scene and emotion possible. Something that crowds every moment with interest will be best for all just now.”

And so they planned to go first of all to Pisa: from thence to Siena, Orvieto, Perugia, Assisi, and so on to Rome.

Miss Sherman had asked to accompany them, since Florence would be so dull when they were gone. Indeed, she had stayed on instead of seeking the warmer, more southern cities simply because they were here.

Therefore one morning during the last week of February all bade good-by to their pleasant home in Florence.

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"It seems like an age since we first came here, doesn't it, Bab, dear?" said Bettina, as they entered together the spacious waiting-room of the central railroad station.

"Yes, Betty; are we the same girls?" answered Barbara, and her smile had just a touch of dreariness.

Mr. Sumner and Malcom were seeing to the weighing of the luggage; Mrs. Douglas, Margery, and Miss Sherman were together; and for a moment the two girls were alone.

Somehow Bettina felt a peculiarly tender care of her sister just now, and was never absent from her side if she could help it. Without understanding why or what it was, she yet felt that something had happened which put a slight barrier between them; that something in which she had no share had touched Barbara. She had been wistfully watching her ever since she had returned from the visit to Howard, and was striving to keep all opportunity for painful thought from her.

At present, Barbara shrank from telling even Bettina, from whom she had never before hidden a thought, of that last meeting with Howard. No girl could ever mistake such a look as that which had lighted his eyes as she stooped to kiss his brow in answer to Mrs. Douglas's request. There would be no need for Mrs. Douglas ever to tell her the story. The loving devotion that shone forth even in his uttermost weakness had thrilled her very soul, and she could not forget it for a moment when alone.

A certain sense of loss which she could not define followed her. Somehow, it did mean more to her than it did to any one else, that Howard was gone from their lives, but she knew that not even Betty would understand. Indeed, she could not herself understand, for she was sure that she had not loved Howard.

Though Barbara did not know it, the truth was that for a single instant she had felt what it is to be loved as Howard loved her; and the loss she felt was the loss of love,—not Howard's love—but love for itself alone. She was not just the same girl she was when she had entered Florence a few months ago, nor ever again would be; and between her and Bettina,—the sisters who before this had been "as one soul in two bodies,"—ran a mysterious Rubicon, the outer shore of which Bettina's feet had not yet touched.

The hasty return of Mr. Sumner and Malcom with two lusty *facchini*, who seized the hand-luggage, the hurry to be among the first at the opening of the big doors upon the platform beside which their train was drawn up, and the little bustle of excitement consequent on the desire to secure an entire compartment for their party filled the next few minutes, and soon they were off.

The journey led through a charming country lying at the base of the Apennines. Picturesque castles and city-crowned hills against the background of blue mountains, many of whose summits were covered with gleaming snow, kept them looking and

exclaiming with delight, until finally they reached Lucca, and, sweeping in a half circle around Monte San Giuliano, which, as Dante wrote, hides the two cities, Lucca and Pisa, from each other, they arrived at Pisa.

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Although they expected to find an old, worn-out city, yet only Mr. Sumner and Mrs. Douglas were quite prepared for the dilapidated carriages that were waiting to take them from the station to their hotels; for the almost deserted streets, and the general pronounced air of decadence. Even the Arno seemed to have lost all freshness, and left all beauty behind as it flowed from Florence, and was here only a swiftly flowing mass of muddy waters.

After having taken possession of their rooms in one of the hotels which look out upon the river, and having lunched in the chilly dining room, which they found after wandering through rooms and halls filled with marble statues and bric-a-brac set forth to tempt the eyes of travellers, and so suggestive of the quarries in which the neighboring mountains are rich, they started forth for that famous group of sacred buildings which gives Pisa its present fame.

They were careful to enter the Cathedral by the richly wrought door in the south transept (the only old one left) and, passing the font of holy water, above which stands a *Madonna and Child* designed by Michael Angelo, sat down beneath Andrea del Sarto's *St. Agnes*, and listened to Mr. Sumner's description of the famous edifice.

He told them that the erection of this building marked the dawn of mediaeval Italian art. It is in the old basilica style, modified by the dome over the middle of the top. Its columns are Greek and Roman, and were captured by Pisa in war. Its twelve altars are attributed to Michael Angelo (were probably designed by him), and the mosaics in the dome are by Cimabue. They wandered about looking at the old pictures, seeking especially those by Andrea del Sarto, who was the only artist familiar to them, whose paintings are there. They touched and set swinging the bronze lamp which hangs in the nave, and is said to have suggested to Galileo (who was born in Pisa), his first idea of the pendulum.

Then, going out, they climbed the famous Leaning Tower, and visited the Baptistery, where is Niccolo Pisano's wonderful sculptured marble pulpit.

Afterward they went into the Campo Santo, which fascinated them by its quaintness, so unlike anything they had ever seen before. They thought of the dead reposing in the holy earth brought from Mount Calvary; looked at the frescoes painted so many hundreds of years ago by Benozzo Gozzoli, pupil of Fra Angelico; at the queer interesting *Triumph of Death* and *Last Judgment*, so long attributed to Orcagna and now the subject of much dispute among critics; and then, wearied with seeing so much, they went into the middle of the enclosure and sat on the flagstones in the warm sun amid the lizards and early buttercups.

The next afternoon they went to Siena, and arrived in time to see, from their hotel windows, the sunset glory as it irradiated all that vast tract of country that stretches so grandly on toward Rome. Here they were to spend several days.

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The young travellers were just beginning to experience the charm which belongs peculiarly to journeying in Italy—that of finding, one after another, these delightful old cities, each in its own characteristic setting of country, of history, of legend and romance.

They were full of the thrill of expected emotion,—that most delicious of all sensations.

And they received no disappointment from this old “red city.” They saw its beautiful, incomparably beautiful, Cathedral, full of richness of sculpture and color in morning, noon, and evening light; and were never tired of admiring every part of it, from its graffito and mosaic pavement to its vaulted top filled with arches and columns, that reminded them of walking through a forest aisle and looking up through the interlaced branches of trees.

They visited the Cathedral Library, whose walls are covered with those historical paintings by Pinturricchio, the little deaf Umbrian painter, in whose design Raphael is said to have given aid.

But Mr. Sumner wished that the time they could give to the study of paintings be spent particularly among the works of the old Sienese masters. So they went again and again to the Accademia delle Belle Arti and studied those quaint, half-Byzantine works, full of pathetic grace, by Guido da Siena, by Duccio, Simone Martini, Lippo Memmi, and the Lorenzetti brothers.

Here, too, they found paintings by Il Sodoma, a High Renaissance artist, which pleased them more than all else. *The Descent into Hades*, where is the exquisitely lovely figure of Eve, whose mournful gaze is fixed on her lost son, toward whom the Saviour stoops with pity, drew them again and again to the hall where the worn fresco hangs; and after they had found, secluded in its little cabinet, that fragment which represents *Christ Bound to a Column*, of which Paul Bourget has written so tenderly, they voted this painter one of the most interesting they had yet found.

To Bettina, the “saint-lover,” as Malcom had dubbed her, the city gained an added interest from having been the home of St. Catherine of Siena, and the others shared in some degree her enthusiasm. They made a pilgrimage to the house of St. Catherine, and all the relics contained therein were genuinely important to them, for, as Betty averred again and again:—

“You know she did live right here in Siena, so it must be true that this is her house and that these things were really hers.”

They admired Palazzo Publico within and without; chiefly from without, for they could never walk from the Cathedral to their hotel without pausing for a time to look down into

the picturesque Piazza del Campo where it stands, and admire its lofty walls, so mediaeval in character, with battlemented cornice and ogive windows.

They walked down the narrow streets and then climbed them. They drove all over the city within its brown walls; and outside on the road that skirts them and affords such lovely views of the valley and Tuscan hills. They were sincerely sorry when at last the day came on which they must leave it and continue on their way.

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"Why are we going to Orvieto, uncle?" asked Malcom, as they were waiting at Chiusi for their connection with the train from Florence to Orvieto.

"For several reasons, Malcom. In the first place, it is one of the best preserved of the ancient cities of Italy. So long ago as the eighth century it was called *urbs vetus* (old city) and its modern name is derived from that. Enclosed by its massive walls, it still stands on the summit of its rocky hill, which was called *urbibentum* by the old historian, Procopius. It is comparatively seldom visited by the ordinary tourist, and is thoroughly unique and interesting. In the second place, in its Cathedral are most valuable examples of Fra Angelico's, Benozzo Gozzoli's, and Signorelli's paintings; and, in the third place, I love the little old city, and never can go to or from Rome without spending at least a few hours there if it is possible for me to do so. Are these weighty enough reasons?" and Mr. Sumner drew his arm affectionately into that of the tall young man he loved so well. "But here comes our train."

"This cable-tram does not look very ancient," said Malcom, when a half hour later they stood on the platform of the little railway station at Orvieto and looked up at the hillside.

"No; its only merit is that it takes us up quickly," replied his mother, as they reached the waiting car. "All try if you can to get seats with back to the hill, so that you will command the view of this beautiful valley as we rise."

The city did indeed look foreign as they entered its wall, left the cable-car, and, in a hotel omnibus, rattled through the streets, so narrow that it is barely possible for two carriages to pass each other.

"Is everybody old here, do you suppose?" slyly whispered Bettina to Barbara, as they were taken in charge by a very old woman, who led the way to the rooms already engaged for the party. "I should be afraid to come here all alone; everything is so strange.

"Oh! but how pleasant," she added, brightly, as they were shown into a sweet, clean room, whose windows opened upon a small garden filled with rose-bushes, and whose two little beds were snowy white. "How delightful to be here a little later, when these roses will be in bloom!"

The brown withered face of the old chambermaid beamed upon the two young girls, and showed her satisfaction at their evident delight, and when she found that they could understand and speak a little of her own language, her heart was indeed won, and she bustled about seeking whatever she could do to add to their comfort, just for the pleasure of being near them.

"It must be a delightful place to visit," said Barbara, when finally they were alone, "but I should not like to have to live here for any length of time, I know; so gray, so old, so

desolate it all seemed on our way through the streets,” and a slight shiver ran through her at the remembrance.

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Soon they went to the Cathedral; admired its facade, decorated with mosaics in softly brilliant colors until it looked like a great opal, shining against the deep blue sky; entered it and saw Fra Angelico's grand *Christ*, and calm, holy saints and angels; and, close to them (the most striking contrast presented in art), Luca Signorelli's wild, struggling, muscular figures.

They went into the photograph store on the corner for photographs, and to the little antique shop opposite, where they bought quaint Etruscan ornaments to take away as souvenirs,—and then gave themselves to exploring the city; after which they all confessed to having fallen somewhat under the spell of its charm.

The next afternoon found them on their way, around Lake Trasimeno, to Perugia.

Little had been said about this city, for their conversation had been engaged with those they had left behind. Malcom, only, had been looking up its history in his guide-book, and was interested to see the place that had been bold enough to set itself up even against Rome, and so had earned the title “audacious” inscribed on its citadel by one of the Popes.

“Magnificent in situation!” he exclaimed, and his eager eyes allowed nothing to escape them, as their omnibus slowly climbed the high hill, disclosing wide and ever widening views of the valley of the Tiber.

“I think,” said Mr. Sumner, who was enjoying the delighted surprise of his party, “that Perugia is the most princely city in regard to position in all Italy. It is perched up here on the summit as an eagle on his aeried crag, and seems to challenge with proud defiance these lower cities, that, though each on its own hill-top, look as if slumbering in the valley below.”

When a little later they were ushered into the brilliantly lighted dining-room, which was filled almost to overflowing with a gayly dressed and chattering crowd of guests, most of whom spoke the English language, all the way thither seemed as a dream. Only the voluminous head-dresses of the English matrons, and the composite speech of the waiters, told them surely that they were in a foreign land.

The next day, after a drive through the city, whose different quarters present some of the most interesting contrasts to be found in all Italy, Mr. Sumner took them to the Pinacoteca, or picture-gallery, and before looking at the pictures, told them in a few words about the early Umbrian school of painting.

“It grew out of the early Florentine, and is marked by many of the same characteristics. It was, however, much modified by the Sienese painting. It has less strength, as it has also, of course, less originality, than the Florentine. Its color, on the other hand, is better, stronger, and more harmonious. Its works possess a peculiar simplicity and

devoutness—much tranquillity and gentleness of sentiment. This gallery is filled with examples of its masters' painting. It just breathes forth their spirit, and the best way to absorb it would be to come, each one of us alone, and give ourselves up to its spell. This is no place for criticism; only for feeling. Study particularly whatever you find of Francesca's, Perugino's and Bonfiglio's work.

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"You all know," he continued, "that Perugino, who lived here and received his art name because he did so, had an academy of painting, and that Raphael was for some years one of his pupils. Perugino's influence on his pupils is strikingly apparent in their work. Raphael's early painting is exactly after his style. In Perugino's treatment of figures you will find a mannerism, especially in the way his heads are placed on the shoulders, and in his faces, which are full of sentiment, the wistful eyes often being cast upward, but sometimes veiled with heavily drooping lids.

"Look! here is one of his pictures. The oval faces with the peculiarly small mouth are characteristic. You will most readily recognize the work of this master after you have become a bit familiar with it."

He also took them to the Cambio, once a Chamber of Commerce, to see Perugino's frescoes, which he told them are more important in the world of art than are his easel pictures. Here they seated themselves against the wall wainscoted with rare wooden sculptures, on the same bench on which all lovers of the old painter's art who have visited Perugia through four centuries have sat.

[Illustration: PERUGINO. UFFIZI GALLERY FLORENCE.

HEAD OF MADONNA. FROM MADONNA AND SAINTS.]

And here they studied long the figures of those old Roman heroes chosen by Perugino to symbolize the virtues; figures which possess a unique and irresistible charm because of their athletic proportions and vigorous action, while their faces are sweet, womanish, and tender, full of the pensive, mystic devotion which is so characteristic of this old master and his pupils.

Chapter XII.

Robert Sumner Fights a Battle.

So nigh is grandeur to our dust, So near is God to man, When duty whispers low, Thou must, The youth replies, I can.

—EMERSON.

[Illustration: SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI.]

Barbara and Bettina had not realized how near they were to Assisi until talk of driving thither began. In their study of art St. Francis had figured quite largely, because the scenes in his life were such favorite ones for representation by the old masters. They had read all about him, and so were thoroughly prepared for the proposed trip to the home of this most important old saint.



Bettina was in a fever of excitement. Drive to Assisi! Drive to the home of St. Francis! Go through the streets in which he played when a little boy; walked and rode when a prodigal young man, clad in the richest, most extravagant attire he could procure; from which he went out in his martial array; out of which he was taken prisoner when Perugia conquered Assisi! Drive, perhaps, along that very street in which, after his conversion, he met the beggar with whom he changed clothes, giving him the rich garments, and himself putting on the tatters!

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Or along which his disappointed father followed him in the fury of persecution, after he had given his life to poverty and deeds of love! Look upon Mount Subasio, whither he so loved to retire for prayer! See those very scenes in the midst of which he and his brethren lived six or seven hundred years ago! Could it be possible that she and Barbara were about to do this? It was almost as exciting as when the first thought of coming to Italy had entered their minds.

Finally the morning came; and through the winding valley they drove fifteen miles, until they arrived at the church Santa Maria degli Angeli, situated on a plain at the foot of the hill on which sits Assisi. This immense church contains the Portiuncula,—that little chapel so dear to St. Francis, in which he founded the Franciscan order of monks, and in which he died,—and is a veritable Mecca, to which pilgrimages are made from all parts of the Roman Catholic world.

They spent some time here in visiting the different spots of interest within the church; in going out to see the tiny garden, where grow the thornless rose-bushes with blood-stained leaves, according to the old tradition, at which they were permitted to look through glass; and in listening to the rambling talk of a transparent-faced old monk in brown, Franciscan garb, who waxed more and more daring as he watched the interested faces of the party, until his tales of the patron saint grew so impossible that even poor Bettina's faith was sorely tried, and Malcom stole furtive glances at her to see how she bore it all.

At length they were free, and went on up the hill to the city. They stopped at a little hotel whose balcony commanded a magnificent view of the country, lingered a while, lunched, and then went out to visit the great double church of San Francesco, beneath which the saint is buried, and where are notable frescoes by Cimabue and Giotto.

When all was over, and they were taking their carriages for Perugia, Mr. Sumner said to his sister: "If you do not mind, I will drive in the other carriage," and so took his seat with Barbara, Bettina, and Malcom. All felt a little tired and were silent for a time, each busy with his own thoughts. Finally Barbara asked, in a thoughtful tone:—

"Did you notice the names on the leaves of the travellers' book at the hotel? I glanced over the opposite page as I wrote mine, and among the addresses were Australia, Germany, Norway, England, and America."

"I noticed it," answered Mr. Sumner, "and of course, like you, could not help asking myself the question, 'Why do travellers from all parts of the Christian world come to this small city, which is so utterly unimportant as the world reckons importance?' Simply because a good man was once born, lived, and died here. Surely one renews one's faith in God and humanity as one thinks of this fact."

“May not the paintings alone draw some visitors?” asked Malcom, after thinking for a few moments of his uncle’s words.

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"But even then we must allow that the paintings would not have been here if it were not for the saint; so it really amounts to about the same thing, doesn't it?" answered his uncle, smiling.

"What a pity it is," said Bettina, thinking of the garrulous old monk who so evidently desired to earn his *lira*, "that people will add so much that is imaginary when there is enough that is true. It is a shame to so exaggerate stories of St. Francis's life as to make them seem almost ridiculous."

When their drive was nearly over and they were watching the ever nearing Perugia, Malcom turned toward Mr. Sumner with a serious look and said:—

"Uncle Robert, these Italian cities are wonderfully interesting, and I think I have never enjoyed anything in my life so much as the fortnight since we left Florence and, of course, the time we were there; and yet I would not for worlds live here among them."

Then, as Mr. Sumner looked inquiringly at him, he continued, with an excited flush: "What is there in them that a man could get hold of to help, anyway? It seems to me as if their lives have been all lived, as if they now are dead; and how can any new life be put into them? Look at these villages we have been passing through! What power can make the people wish for anything better than they have, can wake them up to make more of the children than the parents are? In the present condition of people and government, how can any man, for instance, such as you are, really accomplish anything? How would one go about it? Now at home, you know, if one is only man enough, he can have so much influence to make things better; can give children better schools; can give people books; can help lift the low-down into a higher place. He can help in making all sorts of reforms, can be a *leader* in such things. He can go into politics and try to make them cleaner."

Malcom had spoken out of his heart, and, in sympathy with him, Bettina squeezed Barbara's hand under the cover.

Barbara, however, was looking at Mr. Sumner, and her quick eyes had noted the sensitive change of expression in his; the startled look of surprise that first leaped into them, and the steady pain that followed. An involuntary glance at Barbara told him that she recognized his pain and longed to say something to help, but she could not; and it was Bettina who, after a moment's silence, said gently:—

"I am sure you are right, Malcom, but I think I could live all my life in this dear, beautiful Italy if all whom I love were with me."

Malcom did not for a moment think that his words would so touch his uncle. He had spoken from his own stand-point, with thought of himself alone, and would have been

amazed indeed could he have known what a steady flame within his uncle's mind his little spark had kindled.

* * * * *

"What is the matter with Miss Sherman?" whispered Malcom in Margery's ear, as, soon after dinner, they went out upon the terrace close to their hotel to look at the moon rising over the distant hills.

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That young lady had disappeared as soon as they arose from the table, and Mrs. Douglas had sent Margery to her room to tell her they were going out, but she had declined to accompany them.

“Mother thinks she is not feeling quite well,” answered Margery, drawing Malcom’s face close to her own; “but I think she is vexed about something.”

The truth was that Miss Sherman was as nearly cross as she dared to be. Were she with father and sister, instead of Mrs. Douglas’s party, why! then she could give vent to her feelings; and what a relief it would be! But now she was trying her best to conquer them, or, rather, to hide them; but the habit of a lifetime will not easily give way on occasion.

She had never been so happy in her life as since she left Florence with Mrs. Douglas. Wherever she was, wherever she went, there was Mr. Sumner, always full of most courteous consideration for her as his sister’s guest. She had been so happy that her sweetness and gentleness were irresistible, and again and again had Mrs. Douglas congratulated herself on having found such an enjoyable companion; and Mr. Sumner felt grateful to her for enhancing his sister’s happiness.

But to-day a change had taken place in the satisfactory tide of affairs. Mr. Sumner had been willing—more than that—had *chosen* to drive all the way back from Assisi in the carriage with Malcom, Barbara, and Bettina, and it was all she could do to hide her chagrin and displeasure.

Mrs. Douglas, with her usual kind judgment, had decided that she was not quite well, and throughout the drive had respected her evident desire for silence, though she wondered a little at it.

So while she and Margery were talking about good St. Francis, whose heart overflowed with love to every living creature—mankind, animals, birds, and flowers, and whose whole life was given up to their service—Miss Sherman hugged close her little jealous grievance and, brooding over it, gave no thought to the associations of the place they had just visited, or to the glorious Italian landscape through which they were passing.

It was not that she really loved Mr. Sumner after all; that is, not as some women love, for it was not in her nature to do so; but she did wish to become his wife; and this had been her supreme thought during all the months since she had met him. Lately the memory of his agitation when Barbara had passed him that evening of the party had disagreeably haunted her. It had so moved her that, truth to tell, she mourned over Howard’s death more because it served to withdraw an obstacle between these two than for any other reason. That mere girl, she thought, might prove a formidable rival. All the more had it seemed so, since she daily saw what a lovely, noble young woman Barbara really was, and how worthy a companion, even for Mr. Sumner.

So every moment he had devoted to herself or had seemed to choose to be in her own society, was an especial cause for self-congratulation. But now she furtively clinched her little gloved hand, and the lids lowered over her beautiful eyes as they grew hard, and she did not wish to talk.

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"I wonder what is the matter with Lucile" (for so Miss Sherman had begged to be called), Mrs. Douglas queried with herself that night, and sought among the events of the day for some possible explanation. "She seems as if hurt by something." Suddenly the thought flashed into her mind: "Can it be because Robert left us to drive with the others? Can it be that she has learned to care for him so much as that?" And her woman's nature overflowed with sympathy at the suggestion of such an interpretation.

She had not forgotten the desire that crept into her heart that morning of the day they spent at Fiesole; and now came the glad belief that if Miss Sherman had really learned to love her brother, it must be that in time he would feel it, and yield to the sweetness of her affection. She did not wonder that Lucile should love her darling brother. Indeed, how could any woman help it? And she was so sensitive that she might acutely feel even such a little thing as his not returning in the carriage with them. And her quietness might have been caused by the disappointment. She would be herself the next morning; and Mrs. Douglas resolved to be only kinder and more loving than ever to her.

And, indeed, the next morning the clouds were all dissipated, and Miss Sherman accepted, with her usual sweet smile, her portion of the flowers that Mr. Sumner brought to the ladies of his party.

But the night just passed would never be forgotten by Robert Sumner, and had marked a vital change in his life. He had walked the floor of his moonlighted room until the early morning hours, his thoughts given wholly to the great subject Malcom's unconscious words had opened within his mind. Could it be that unconsciously, through weakness, he had yielded himself to a selfish course of living? He, whose one aim and ideal had ever been to give his life and its opportunities for the benefit of others? Had his view been a narrow one, when he had so longed that it should be wide and ever wider?

It really began to seem so in the pitiless glare of the light now thrown upon it. He had surely been living for his fellow-men. He had been striving to make his own culture helpful to those who were less happy in opportunity. But had his outlook been far and wide enough? Had not the personal sorrow to which he had yielded narrowed to his eyes the world,—*his* world, in which God had put him? Living on here in his loved Italy, the knowledge he had gained was being sent out to aid those who already had enough to enable them to follow into the higher paths he opened. His pictures, every one of which had grown out of his own heart, were bearing messages to those whose eyes were opened to read. But what of the great mass of humanity, God's humanity too, which was waiting for some one to awaken the very first desires for culture? For some one to open, never so little, the blind eyes? As Malcom had said, no one, no foreigner certainly, could ever reach this class of people in Italy. The Church and the heavy hand of past centuries of ignorance forbade this.

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But what of the great young land across the waters where he had been born—his own land—the refuge of the poor of all countries of the earth, even of his dear Italy? Surely no power of influence there could be forbidden. The good that wealth, culture, and art, guided by a heart consecrated to humanity, could work was limitless there.

He now saw that his personal sorrow, his own selfish grief, had come between all this and himself for six long years. In deep humiliation he bowed himself; and looking out over the great plain at his feet, in which lay Assisi and the paths the worn feet of St. Francis and his brethren had so often trod six centuries ago, now all gilded with the light of the same moon that was shining over the distant land of his birth, Robert Sumner pledged his life anew to God and his fellow-man, and determined that his old grief should be only a stepping-stone to a larger service; that, keeping Italy and her treasures in his life only as a recreation and a source of inspiration, he would hereafter live in his own America.

In the peace of mind that came after the struggle, which was no slight one, he slept and dreamed,—dreamed of the fair girl he had so loved with all the force of his young, strong nature, and whom he had so long mourned. She smiled upon him, and into her smile came the lovelight he had seen in Barbara's eyes that birthday evening, and then she changed into Barbara, and he awoke with the thought of the wistful look she had given him the afternoon before when Malcom's words wounded.

In the morning, as he gave the flowers he had chosen expressly for her, and their hands for a moment met, the remembrance of this dream flashed into his mind, and Barbara, surprised, felt a momentary lingering of his touch.

After breakfast Mrs. Douglas declared her intention to spend the morning in writing letters, and advised the others to follow her example.

"You know we go to Rome to-morrow, and I prophesy no one of us will feel like sparing much time for writing during our first days there," she said.

Barbara and Bettina spent an hour on their home-letter, then stole away alone, and finding a secluded spot on the grand terrace in front of their hotel, sat down, with the great valley before them. The blue sky, so clear and blue, was full of great white puffs of cloud whose shadows were most fascinating to watch as they danced over the plain, —now hiding a distant city,—now permitting just a gleam of sunshine to gild its topmost towers; and anon flitting, leaving that city-crowned summit all in light, while another was enveloped in darkness.

They talked long together, as only two girls who love each other can talk—of the sky and the land; of the impressions daily received; of the thoughts born of their present daily experiences; of the home friends from whom they were so widely separated. Then they grew silent, giving themselves to the dreamy beauty of the scene.

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By and by Barbara, her eyes dark with unwonted feeling, turned impulsively to her sister and began to talk of that which had been so often in her mind,—her visit to Howard just before he died. Something now impelled her to tell that of which she had before kept silence. Her voice trembled as she described the scene—the eyes that spoke so much when the voice was already forever silent—and the wonderful love she saw in them when she gave the tender kiss.

“He did love you, did he not, Bab dear?” said Bettina, in a hushed, awestricken voice.

“Should you ever have loved him?” she asked timidly after a pause, looking at her sister as if she were invested with a new, strange dignity, that in some way set her apart and hallowed her.

“No, dear, I am sure—not as he loved me. I wish, oh! so much, that I could have made him happy; but since I know that could never have been, do you know, Betty, I am beginning to be glad that he has gone from us; that I can never give him any more pain. I never before dreamed what it may be to love. You know, Betty, we have never had time to think of such things; we have been too young. Somehow,” and her fingers caressed the roses in her belt, “things seem different lately.”

Chapter XIII.

Cupid Laughs.

*From court to the cottage,
In bower and in hall,
From the king unto the beggar,
Love conquers all.
Though ne'er so stout and lordly,
Strive or do what you may,
Yet be you ne'er so hardy,
Love will find out the way.*

—ANONYMOUS

[Illustration: RUINS OF FORUM, ROME.]

Mr. Sumner and Mrs. Douglas had been most fortunate in getting possession of extremely pleasant apartments close to the Pincio. These were in the very same house in which they had lived with their parents twenty years before, when Mrs. Douglas was a young girl of eighteen years. Here she had first met and learned to love young Kenneth Douglas, so that most tender memories clustered about the place, and she was glad that her children should learn to know it.

She soon began to pick up the old threads of life. “Ah me! what golden threads they then were,” she often sighed. Mr. Sumner was at home here in Rome almost as much as in Florence, and was busy for a time making and receiving calls from artist friends.

Malcom had his own private guide, and from morning until night they hardly saw him. He averred himself to be in the seventh heaven, and there was little need that he should proclaim the fact; it was evident enough. Julius Caesar’s Commentaries, Cicero’s Orations, Virgil, all Roman history were getting illuminated for him in such a way that they would never grow dim.

But at first the others felt sensibly the change from dear, familiar little Florence. Rome is so vast in her history, legend, and romance! The city was oppressive at near sight.

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“Shall we ever really know anything about it all?” asked the girls of each other. Even Miss Sherman, who had been able to get a room in a small hotel close by, and so was still their constant companion, wore a little troubled air now and then, as if there were something she ought to do and did not know how to set about it.

They drove all over the city; saw its ancient ruins—the Colosseum, the Forums, the Palatine Hill, the Baths of Agrippa, Caracalla, Titus, and Diocletian; visited the Pantheon, Castle of St. Angelo, and many of the most important churches. They drove outside the walls on the Via Appia, and saw all the many interesting things by the way. They sought all the best points of view from which they could look out over the great city.

One afternoon they were all together on the wide piazza in front of San Pietro in Montorio, which commands a very wide outlook. Here, after having studied the location of chief points of interest, they gave themselves up to the delight of a superb sunset view. As they lingered before again taking their carriages, Malcom told some of his morning experiences, and Barbara wistfully said:—

“I wonder if we ought not to begin some definite study of Roman history and the old ruins. Betty and I have taken some books from the library in Piazza di Spagna, and are reading hard an hour or two every day, but it gives me a restless feeling to know that there is so much all about me that I do not understand,” and she looked inquiringly at Mr. Sumner.

“Robert and I have talked over this very thing,” replied Mrs. Douglas.

“Shall I tell them what we think?” she asked her brother, as he rather abruptly turned away. On his assent she continued:—

“It is a familiar question, since I very plainly remember hearing my father and mother talk of it when I was your age, and Robert was but a lad. My father said it would take a lifetime of patient study to learn thoroughly all that can to-day be learned of what we call ancient Rome—the Rome of the Caesars; and how many Romes existed before that, of which we can know nothing, save through legend and tradition! ‘Now, will it not be best,’ he asked, ‘that we read all we can of legend and the chief points of Roman history up to the present time, so that the subject of Rome get into our minds and hearts; and then try to absorb all we can of the spirit of both past and present, so that we shall know Rome even though we have not tried to find out all about her? We cannot accomplish the latter, and if we try I fear we shall miss everything.’ My mother agreed fully with him. And so, many evenings at home; father would read to us pathetic legends and stirring tales of ancient Roman life; and we would often go and sit amidst the earth-covered ruins on the Palatine. Here, children, I have heard your own dear father more than once repeat, as only he could, Byron’s graphic lines:—

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“Cypress and ivy, weed and wall-flower grown,
Matted and mass’d together; hillocks heap’d
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strewn
In fragments; choked-up vaults, and frescoes steep’d
In subterranean damp, where the owl peep’d
Deeming it midnight.

“He used to love to repeat bits of poetry everywhere, just as Margery does.

“We climbed the Colosseum walls and sat there for hours dreaming of what it once was—and so we went all over the city—until I really think I lived in ancient Rome a part of the time. Often did I weep over the tragic fate of Roman heroes and matrons as I was in the places sacred to their history, so deeply impressed was I by the reality of the past life of Rome. I had not followed the erudite words of any interpreter of the ruins; I had not learned which was the particular pile of stones which marks the location of the palace of Tiberius, Augustus, or Septimius Severus; I could not even give name to all the various ruins of the Roman Forum, but old Rome was very real to me, and has been ever since.

“Now,” she continued, as she glanced at the interested faces about her, “we are here for a very short time, and it does seem much the best to both Robert and me that you should try to get Rome into your *hearts* first. Don’t be one bit afraid to grow sentimental over her. It is a good place in which to give ourselves up to sentiment. We will take a guide for all that which seems necessary. This one afternoon, however, up here, when you have learned the location of the seven hills and have clearly fixed in your minds the relative positions of the most important ruins and old buildings is, in my opinion, worth more than would be many afternoons spent in prowling through particular ruins; that is, for you. Were we archaeological students, it would of course be a far different matter.”

“And we will at once resume our study of paintings,” said Mr. Sumner, drawing nearer. “To-morrow morning, if Malcom has no engagement, we will go to the Sistine Chapel to see Michael Angelo’s frescoes. I have been so busy until now that I could not get the time I wished for it.”

The next morning, as Barbara and Bettina were getting ready for the drive according to Mr. Sumner’s appointment, Bettina, who was vigorously brushing her brown suit, heard a sigh from her sister, and looking up saw her ruefully examining her own skirt.

“Rather the worse for wear, aren’t they, Barbara *mia*?”

“Indeed, they are. I didn’t notice it, though, until we came here into this bright Rome. We seem to have come all at once into spring sunshine and the atmosphere of new clothes; and, Betty, I believe I do feel shabby. I know you have been thinking the same

thing, too; for everybody else seems to have new spring dresses, and they are so fresh and pretty that ours look doubly worse. Oh, dear!" and she sighed again.

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Then, catching sight of her sister's downcast face, Barbara, in a moment, after her usual fashion, rose above her annoyance and cried:—

“For shame, Barbara Burnett! to think that you are in Rome, the Eternal City! that you are dressing to go to the Sistine Chapel to look at Michael Angelo's frescoes! and do you dare to waste a thought on the gown you are to wear! Oh, Betty! you are ashamed of me, too, I know.—There, you dear old brown suit! Forgive me, and I never will do such a mean thing again. To think of all the lovely places I have been in with you, and now that I should like to cheat you out of seeing Michael Angelo's frescoes!” and she adjusted the last button with such a comical, half-disgusted expression on her face that Betty burst into a merry laugh.

When the two girls came down stairs and stepped out upon the sidewalk beside which the carriages were waiting, their radiant faces gave not the slightest hint that any annoyance had ever lurked there; and no one, looking into them, would ever give a thought to the worn brown dresses. No one? not many, at least. Perhaps Miss Sherman, looking so dainty in her own fresh attire, did. Anyway, as Mr. Sumner handed her into one of the carriages, and himself springing in, took a seat beside her, she shot a triumphant glance at Barbara, who was seating herself in the other carriage with Bettina and Malcom. Mrs. Douglas and Margery had gone out on some morning errand and would follow them presently so Miss Sherman was alone with Mr. Sumner.

Robert Sumner was waging quite a battle with himself during these days. Ever since that night at Perugia, he had found to his utter dismay that he could not put Barbara out of his thoughts. Indeed, ever after the evening of the birthday party she had assumed to him a distinct individuality. It seemed as if he had received a revelation of what she was to become. Every now and then as he saw her at home, the vision of beautiful womanhood that had passed before him that evening would flash into his mind, and the thought would come that sometime, somewhere, she would find him into whose eyes could shine from her own that glorious lovelight that he had for an instant surprised in them.

It had not seemed to him that he then saw the present Barbara, but that which she was to be; and this future Barbara had no special connection with the present one, save to awaken an interest that caused him to be watchful of her. He had always recognized the charm of her personality,—her frank enthusiasms, and her rich reserve; the wide outlook and wise judgment of things unusual in one so young. But now he began to observe other more intimate qualities,—the wealth of affection bestowed on Bettina and the distant home; her tender regard to the feelings of those about her; her quick resentment of any injustice; her sturdy self-reliance; her sweet, unspoiled, unselfish nature; and her longing for knowledge and all good gifts.

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Then came Howard's death, and he realized how deeply she was moved. A new look came often into her eyes, which he noted; a new tone into her voice, which he heard. And yet he felt that the experience had not touched the depths of her being.

While they were on the way from Florence to Rome he had rejoiced every time he heard her voice ringing with the old merry tones, which showed that she had for the moment forgotten all sad thoughts. When he was ostensibly talking to all, he was often really talking only to Barbara, and watching the expression of her eyes; and he always listened to catch her first words when any new experience came to their party. He was really fast getting into a dangerous condition, this young man nearly thirty years old, but was as unconscious of it as a child.

At Perugia came the night struggle caused by Malcom's words; the dream, and the morning meeting with Barbara. When his hand touched hers as he put into them the roses, he felt again for an instant the electric thrill that ran through him on the birthday night, when he met that wonderful look in her eyes. It brought a feeling of possession, as if it were the hand of his Margaret which he had touched,—Margaret, who was so soon to have been his wife when death claimed her.

He tried to account for it. He was jealous for the beloved dead whose words, whose ways, whose face had reigned supreme over his heart for so many years, when he caught himself dwelling on Barbara's words, recalling her tricks of tone, her individual ways.

He set himself resolutely to the task of overcoming this singular tendency of his thought; and oh! how the little blind (but all-seeing) god of love had been laughing at Robert Sumner all through the days since they reached Rome.

Instead of driving and walking about with the others, he had zealously set himself the task of calling at the studios of all his artist friends; had visited exhibitions; had gone hither and thither by himself; and yet every time had hastened home, though he would not admit it to his own consciousness, in order that he might know where Barbara was, what she was doing, and how she was feeling. He had busied himself in fitting up a sky-lighted room for a studio, where he resolved to spend many morning hours, forgetting all else save his beloved occupation; and the very first time he sat before his easel a sketch of Barbara's face grew out of the canvas. The harder he tried to put her from his thoughts, the less could he do so, and he grew restless and unhappy.

Another cause of troubled, agitated feeling was his decision to return to America and there make his home. In this he had not faltered, but it oppressed him. He loved this Italy, with her soft skies, her fair, smiling vineyards and bold mountain backgrounds, her romantic legends, and, above all, her art-treasures. He had taken her as his foster-mother. Her atmosphere stimulated him to work in those directions his heart

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loved best. How would it be when he should be back again in his native land? He had fought his battle; duty had told him to go there; and when she had sounded the call, there could be no retreat for him. But love and longing and memory and fear all harassed him. He had as yet said nothing of this to his sister, but it weighed on him continually. Taken all in all, Robert Sumner's life, which had been keyed to so even a pitch, and to which all discord had been a stranger for so many years, was sadly jarred and out of tune.

Of course Mrs. Douglas's keen sisterly eyes could not be blind to the fact that something was troubling her brother. And it was such an unusual thing to see signs of so prolonged disturbance in him that she became anxious to know the cause. Still she could not speak of it first. Intimate as they were, the inner feelings of each were very sacred to the other, and she must wait until he should choose to reveal all to her.

She well knew that his heart had been wholly consecrated to the only love it had heretofore known, and the query had often arisen in her mind whether the approach of another affection might not in the first place work some unhappiness. That he could ever love again as he had loved Margaret she did not for a moment believe. She well knew, however, that the happiness of any woman who might give her life into her brother's keeping was safe, and her wish for him was that he might be so drawn toward some loving woman that he might desire to make her his wife, and so be blessed with family life and love; for the thought that he might live lonely, without family ties, was inexpressibly sad to her loving heart.

We have seen how the coming of Miss Sherman into their lives roused these hopes afresh; and she now wondered if his evident unrest might be caused by the first suggestion of the thought of asking her to become his wife. It was evident that he admired her and enjoyed her society; and, so far as Miss Sherman's feelings were concerned, she felt no doubt. Indeed, she sometimes shrank a bit from the free display of her fondness for his company, and hoped that Malcom and the girls might not notice it. She easily excused it, however, to herself, although the closer intimacy of daily intercourse was revealing, little by little, flaws in the character she had thought so fair.

How utterly mistaken was Mrs. Douglas! and how shocked would Lucile Sherman have been this very morning could she have known how strong a longing leaped into Robert Sumner's heart to take into his hungry arms that graceful figure in worn brown suit, with brave, smiling young face and steadfast eyes, put her into his carriage, and drive away, —anywhere,—so it only were away and away!

Or, how stern a grip he imposed on himself as he took his seat beside her dimpling, chattering self, radiant with fresh colors and graceful draperies.

Or, of the tumult of his thoughts as they drove along through the narrow streets, across the yellow Tiber and up to the stately entrance of St. Peter's.

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Chapter XIV.

A Visit to the Sistine Chapel.

*Deep love lieth under
These pictures of time;
They fade in the light of
Their meaning sublime.*

—EMERSON.

[Illustration: ST. PETER'S AND CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO, ROME.]

They first passed into the great Cathedral in order to give a look at that most beautiful of all Michael Angelo's sculptures—*Mary holding on her knees her dead Son*. Barbara and Bettina had studied it on a former visit to St. Peter's when Mr. Sumner was not with them. Now he asked them to note the evident weight of the dead Christ,—with every muscle relaxed,—a triumph of the sculptor's art; and, especially, the impersonal face of the mother; a face that is simply the embodiment of her feeling, and wholly apart from the ordinary human!

"This is a special characteristic of Michael Angelo's faces," he said, "and denotes the high order of his thought. In it, he approached more closely the conceptions of the ancient Greek masters than has any other modern artist—and now we will go to the Sistine Chapel," he added, after a little time.

They went out to the Vatican entrance, passed the almost historic Swiss Guards, and climbed the stairs with quite the emotion that they were about to visit some sacred shrine, so much had they read and so deeply had they thought about the frescoes they were about to see.

For some time after they entered the Chapel Mr. Sumner said nothing. The custodian, according to custom, provided them with mirrors; and each one passed slowly along beneath the world-famous ceiling paintings, catching the reflection of fragment after fragment, figure after figure. Soon the mirrors were cast aside, and the opera-glasses Mr. Sumner had advised them to bring were brought into use,—they were no longer content to study simply a reflected image.

At last necks and eyes grew tired, and when Mr. Sumner saw this, he asked all to sit for a time on one of the benches, in a corner apart from others who were there.

"I know just how you feel," he said. "You are disappointed. The frescoes are so far above our heads; their colors are dull; they are disfigured by seams; there are so many subjects that you are confused and weary. You are already striving to retain their

interest and importance by connecting them with the personality of their creator, and are imagining Michael Angelo swung up there underneath the vault, above his scaffoldings, laboring by day and by night during four years. You are beginning in the wrong place to rightly comprehend the work.

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“It is the magnitude of Michael Angelo’s *conceptions* that puts him among the very first of painters; and it is the conception of these frescoes that makes them the most notable paintings in the world. We must dwell on this for a moment. When the work was begun it was the artist’s intention to paint on the end wall, opposite the altar, the Fall of Lucifer, the enemy of man, who caused sin to befall him. This was never accomplished. Then he designed to cover the ceiling (as he did) with the chief Biblical scenes of the world’s history that are connected with man’s creation and fall—to picture all these as looking directly forward to Christ’s coming and man’s redemption; and then to complete the series, as he afterward did, by painting this great *Last Judgment* over the altar. Is it not a stupendous conception?

“Let your eyes run along the ceiling as I talk. God is represented as a most superbly majestic Being in the form of man. He separates light from darkness. He creates the sun and moon. He commands the waters to bring forth all kinds of fish; the earth and air to bring forth animal life. He creates Adam: nothing more grand is there in the whole realm of art than this magnificent figure, perfect in everything save the reception of the breath of eternal life; his eyes are waiting for the Divine spark that will leap into them when God’s finger shall touch his own. He creates Eve. In Paradise they sin, and are driven out by angels with flaming swords. Then, a sad sequence to the parents’ weakness, Cain murders his brother Abel. The flood comes and destroys all their descendants save Noah. He who has withstood evil is saved with his family in the ark, and becomes the father of a new race.”

“And do the pictures at the corners, and the single figures, have anything to do with this subject?” asked Malcom, after a pause, during which all were busy following the thoughts awakened by Mr. Sumner’s words.

[Illustration: MICHAEL ANGELO. SISTINE CHAPEL, ROME.

THE DELPHIAN SIBYL.]

“Yes, indeed; nothing here is foreign to the one great thought of the painter. The four irregular spaces at the corners are filled with representations of important deliverances of the Jewish people from evil,—David slaying Goliath, the hanging of Haman, the serpent raised in the wilderness, and Judith with the head of Holofernes. The connection in Michael Angelo’s mind evidently was that God, who had always provided a help for His people, would also in His own time give a Saviour from their sins.

“Ranged along the sides you see seven prophets and five sibyls: the prophets foretold Christ’s coming to the Jewish world, and the sibyls sang of it to the Gentile world.

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"Nowhere, however, do we see the waiting and the longing for the coming of the Redeemer more strikingly shown than in these families,—'Genealogy of the Virgin' they are commonly called,—that are painted in the triangular spaces above the windows. Each represents a father, mother, and little child, every bit of whose life seems utterly absorbed with just the idea of patient, expectant waiting. When troubled and weary, as we all are sometimes, you know, I have often come here to gain calmness and strength by looking at one or two of these groups;" and Mr. Sumner paused, with his eyes fixed on one of the loveliest of the Holy Families, as they are sometimes called, as if he would now drink in its spirit of hopeful peace.

"They are waiting," he resumed after a few minutes, "as only those can wait who confidently hope; and, therefore, there is really nothing in the rendering of all this grand conception that more clearly points to the Saviour's coming than do these.

"I think this part of the frescoes has not generally received the attention it merits.

"The decorative figures, called Athletes, that you see seated on the apparently projecting cornice, at each of the four corners of the smaller great divisions of the ceiling, are a wholly unique creation of the artist, and serve as a necessary separation of picture from picture. They are with reason greatly admired in the world of art.

"These many figures, each possessing distinct personality, were evolved from the mind of the artist. We can never think of him as going about through the city streets seeking models for his work as did Leonardo da Vinci. His figures are as purely ideal as the creations of the old Greeks. Now think of all this. Think of the sphere of the old master's thought during these four years, and you will not wonder that he could not sleep, but, restless, came again and again at night with a candle fixed in his paper helmet to light the work of his hands."

All were silent. Never before had they seen Mr. Sumner so evidently moved by his subject; and this made it all the more impressive. They became impatient as they heard a little group of tourists chatting and laughing in front of the *Last Judgment*; and when, finally, a crowd of travellers with a noisy guide entered the Chapel, they quickly decided to go away and to come again the next day.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Sumner," said Barbara, in a low, sympathetic voice, as she found herself beside him as they came out through the long corridor; "you have made it all very plain to us,—the greatness, the skill, the patience of Michael Angelo. It is as if he had been inspired by God."

"And why not?" was the gentle reply, as he looked down into the upturned face so full of sweet seriousness. "Do you believe that the days of inspiration were confined to past ages? God is the same as then, and close at hand as then; man is the same and with the same needs.

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"The passive master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned,

wrote our Emerson, showing he believed, as I firmly do, that we ourselves now work God's will, as men did ages ago; that God inspires us even as he did the old Prophets."

"I love to believe so," said Barbara, simply.

"And," continued Mr. Sumner, "this does not lessen any man, but rather makes him greater. Surely God's working through him makes him truly grander than the mere work itself ever could."

As Malcom, Barbara, and Bettina drove homeward, their talk took a serious turn. Malcom was deeply impressed by his uncle's last words, which he had overheard, when taken into connection with all the preceding thoughts about Michael Angelo. Finally he asked:—

"And then what can a man do? What did Michael Angelo, himself, do if, as uncle suggested, God wrought through him?"

"Oh, I know!" exclaimed Bettina, eagerly. "I have heard papa and mamma talk about the same thing more than once, only of course Michael Angelo was not their subject. In the first place, he must have realized that God sent him into the world to do something, and also that He had not left him alone, but was with him. Papa always says that to realize this begins everything that is good."

"Yes," interrupted Barbara. "He did feel this. Don't you remember that he wrote in one of his letters that we were reading in that library book the other day, 'Make no intimacies with any one but the Almighty alone'? I was particularly struck by it, because just before I read it, I was thinking what a lonely man he was."

"Yes, dear, I remember. And in the next place," continued Bettina, "papa says we must get ourselves ready to do as *great* work as is possible, so that may be given us. If we do not prepare ourselves, this cannot be. You know how Michael Angelo studied and studied there in Florence when he was a young man; how he never spared himself, but 'toiled tremendously,' as some one has said. And, next, we must do in the very best way possible even the smallest thing God sees fit to give us to do, so that we may be found worthy to do greater ones. But, Malcom, you know all this as well or better than I do, and I know you are trying to do these things too!" and Bettina blushed at the thought that she had been preaching.

But Malcom laughed, and looked as if he could listen to so sweet a preacher forever. Never were there two better comrades than he and Bettina had been all their lives.



Barbara said little. There was a far-away look in her eyes that told of unexpressed thought. She was pondering that which the morning had brought; and underneath and through all was the happy knowledge that her hero had not failed her. As usual he had committed new gifts into her keeping. And the gentle, almost intimate, tones of his voice when he was talking to her,—she felt it was to herself alone, though others heard—dwelt like music in her ears.

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Mr. Sumner had been calmed by the lesson of Michael Angelo's frescoes, as he had often been before. In the presence of eternal verities,—however they may be embodied to us,—our own private concerns must ever grow trivial. What matters a little unrest or disappointment, or even unhappiness, when our thought is engaged with untold ages of God's dealing with mankind? With the wondrous fact that God is with man,—Immanuel,—forever and forevermore?

That evening he spent with the family in their pretty sitting room, and in answer to some questions about the *Last Judgment*, talked for a few minutes about this large fresco, which occupied seven years of Michael Angelo's life. He told them that although it is not perhaps so great as a work of art as the ceiling frescoes, yet because of its conception, of the number of figures introduced, the boldness of their treatment, and the magnificence of their drawing, it stands unrivalled. He said they ought to study it, bit by bit, group by group, after having once learned to understand its design.

They talked of the grim humor of the artist in giving his Belial—the master of Hades—the face of the master of ceremonies of the chapel, who found so much fault with his painting of nude figures.

"That was the chief feature of interest in the picture to that group of young people who stood so long before it this morning," said Mr. Sumner. "I often notice that the portrait of grouty old Biagio attracts more attention than any other of the nearly three hundred figures in the picture."

"I don't wonder, for I want to see it too," said Malcom, laughing.

They talked also of Vittoria Colonna, at whose home and in whose companionship the lonely master found all his happiness, especially during these years of toil. The girls were much interested in her, and Mr. Sumner said he would take them to visit the Colonna Palace, where, among other pictures, they would find a portrait of this noble woman, who was so famous in the literary life of her time.

* * * * *

One morning, not long after, Malcom brought a handful of letters from the banker's, among which several fell to Barbara and Bettina.

After opening two or three of his own, Mr. Sumner looked up and said:—

"I have here a letter dictated by Howard's grandmother. It contains only a few words, which were written evidently by some friend, who adds that the poor old lady is greatly prostrated, and it is feared will never recover from the shock of his death."

"Poor woman! I wish it might have come less suddenly to her," replied Mrs. Douglas, in a sympathetic voice.

After a little silence, during which all were busy with their letters, a low cry burst from Barbara's lips.

Startled, all looked up to find her, pale as death, staring at a sheet clutched in her hand, while Bettina had sunk on her knees with her arms about her sister's waist.

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"What is it? oh! what is it?" cried they.

Barbara found just voice enough to say: "No bad news from home," and then appealingly held her letter toward Mr. Sumner.

"Shall I read it?" and as she bowed assent, he hastily scanned the contents.

"Howard left a large portion of his money to Barbara," he said briefly, in response to the inquiring eyes, and handed the letter back to the agitated girl, who, with Bettina, sought their own room.

Then he added, striving to keep his voice calm and natural: "It seems that the very day before he was taken ill, Howard went to a lawyer in Florence and made a codicil to his will, in which he grouped several bequests heretofore given, into one large one, which he gave to Barbara. This he at once sent to his lawyer in Boston, who has now written to Barbara."

"This is what poor Howard tried so hard to tell me at the last," said Mrs. Douglas. "He began two or three times, but did not have the strength to continue. I suspected it was something like this, but thought it best not to mention it. How much is it?" she asked after a pause, during which Malcom and Margery had talked in earnest tones.

"Nearly half a million," answered Mr. Sumner.

Barbara the owner of nearly half a million dollars! No wonder she was overcome! It seemed like an Arabian Nights' tale.

"How perfectly lovely!" cried Margery; and her mother echoed her words.

Mr. Sumner looked rather grave. It was not that Barbara should have the money, but that another should have the right to give it her. Some one else to bless the life of the girl who was becoming so dear to him! To whom he was beginning to long to bring all good things! It was as if the dead Howard came in some way between himself and her; and he went out alone beneath the trees of the Pincian Gardens to think it all over.

Meanwhile, the two girls were in their chamber. Barbara threw herself on a couch beneath the window, and gazed with unseeing eyes up into the depths of the Italian sky. She was stunned by the news the letter had brought, and, as yet, thought was completely passive.

Bettina read several times the lawyer's letter, trying to understand its contents. At last she said gently:—

“Can it be possible, Bab? I can hardly comprehend how much it is. We have never thought of so much money in all our lives. Why! you are rich, dear. You have more money than you ever can spend!”

Barbara sprang from the couch, and threw out her arms with an exultant gesture.

“Spend! I hadn’t once thought of that! Betty! Betty! Papa and mamma shall have everything they wish! They shall never work so hard any more! Mamma shall have a seamstress every day, and her poor pricked fingers shall grow smooth! She shall have the loveliest clothes, and never again give the prettiest of everything to you and me! Papa shall have vacations, and books,

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and the study in hospitals he has so longed for! Richard shall have college *certain* to look forward to; Lois shall have the best teachers in the world for her music; Margaret shall be an artist; and dear little Bertie!—oh! he shall have what he needs for everything he wishes to do and be! And they shall all come abroad to this dear lovely Italy, and enjoy all that we are enjoying! And you and I, Betty!—why!—you and I can have some new spring dresses!” And the excited girl burst into a flood of tears, mingled with laughter at the absurdity of her anti-climax.

Bettina did not know what to do. She had never seen Barbara so overwrought with excitement. Presently, however, she began to speak of Howard, and before long they were talking tenderly of the young man who so short a time ago was a stranger to them, but whose life had been destined to touch so closely their own.

Barbara was profoundly moved as she realized this proof of his affection for her, and a depression was fast following her moment of exultation, when a tap at the door ushered in Mrs. Douglas, who took her into her arms as her mother would have done. Her sweet sympathy and bright practical talk did a world of good in restoring to both the girls their natural calmness.

Barbara, however, was in a feverish haste to do something that would repay her parents for the money she and Betty were using, and, to soothe her, Mrs. Douglas told her what to write to the lawyer, so that he would at once transfer a few thousands of dollars to Dr. Burnett. Then she said:—

“I would not write your father and mother about it until to-morrow. You can do it more easily then; and I will write, too, if you would like. Margery and Malcom are longing to see you. So is Robert, I am sure. And will it not be best for you to go right out somewhere with us?”

Chapter XV.

A Morning in the Vatican.

Oh! their Rafael of the dear Madonnas.

—BROWNING.

[Illustration: LOGGIA OF RAPHAEL, VATICAN, ROME.]

It was, of course, somewhat difficult for Barbara to adjust herself to the new conditions. After the first, however, she said nothing to any one save Bettina about the money

Howard had left her, only, as in her ignorance of business methods, she had need to consult Mrs. Douglas.

But she and Bettina had many things to talk over and much consultation to hold regarding the future. One evening, after they had been thus busy, Bettina said, nestling closer to her sister, as they sat together on the couch, brave in its Roman draperies:—

“You must not always say ‘*our* money,’ Bab, dear.”

“Why not?” with a startled look.

“Because it is *your* money,—your very own;—the money Howard gave you to spend for him, and yourself enjoy.”

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"But, Betty, we have shared everything all our lives. I do not know how to have or use anything that is not yours as well as mine. If Howard had known my heart, he would have had it just as I would. I shall give you half, Betty. Do not, oh! do not refuse it. I shall not be happy with it unless you are willing. Then you and I will work with it and enjoy it together. It is the only way. Say yes, dear," and Barbara looked at her sister with an almost piteous entreaty.

Bettina could say nothing for a time. Then, as if impelled by the force of Barbara's desire, said:—

"Wait until we get home. Then, if you wish it as you do now, I will do as papa and mamma think best; for, darling," in a somewhat quavering voice, "I know if the money were all mine, I should feel just as you do." And a loving kiss sealed the compact.

Meanwhile the days in Rome were passing,—lovely in nature as only spring days in Italy can be; days filled to overflowing with delightful and unique interest. For cities, as well as people, possess their own characteristic individualities, and Rome is distinctively an individual city.

From her foundation by the shepherd-kings far beyond the outermost threshold of history, down through the six or seven centuries during which she was engaged in conquering the nations; through the five hundred years of her undisputed reign as proud mistress of the world; in her sad decay and fall; and to-day in her resurrection, she is only herself—unlike all other cities.

The fragmentary ruins of her great heathen temples arise close beside her Christian churches,—some are even foundations for them,—while the trappings of many have furnished the rich adornments of Christian altars. Her mediaeval castles and palaces, crowded to overflowing with heart-breaking traditions, look out over smiling gardens in the midst of which stand the quiet, orderly, innocent homes of the present race of commonplace men and women. Her vast Colosseum is only an immense quarry. Her proud mausoleum of the Julian Caesars is an unimportant circus.

We drive or walk on the Corso, along which the Caesars triumphantly led processions of captives; through which, centuries later, numberless papal pageants made proud entries of the city; where the maddest jollities of carnival seasons have raged: and we see nothing more important than modern carriages filled with gayly dressed women, and shops brilliant with modern jewellery and pretty colored fabrics; and we purchase gloves, handkerchiefs, and photographs close to some spot over which, perchance, Queen Zenobia passed laden with the golden chains that fettered her as she graced the triumph of Emperor Aurelian; or Cleopatra, when she came conqueror of the proud heart of Julius Caesar.

We linger on the Pincio, listening to the sweet music of the Roman band, while our eyes wander out over the myriad roofs and domes to where great St. Peter's meets the western horizon; and we forget utterly those dark centuries during which this lovely hill was given over to Nero's fearful ghost, until a Pope, with his own hands, cut down the grand trees that crowned its summit, thus exorcising the demon birds which the people believed to linger in them and still to work the wicked emperor's will.

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We take afternoon tea at the English Mrs. Watson's, beside the foot of the *Scala di Spagna*, close to whose top tradition tells us that shameless Messalina, Claudius's empress, was mercilessly slain.

And so it is throughout the city. Tradition, legend, and romance have peopled every place we visit. Wars, massacres, and horrible suffering have left a stain at every step. Love and faith and glorious self-sacrifice have consecrated the ways over which we pass. And though we do not give definite thought to these things always, yet all the time the city is weaving her spell about our minds and hearts, and we suddenly arouse to find that, traditional or historic, civilized or barbarous, conqueror or conquered, ancient or modern, she has become *Cara Roma* to us, and so will be forevermore.

Thus it had been with Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Sumner, and so it now was with the young people of their household who had come hither for the first time.

The days flew fast. It was almost difficult to find time when all could get together for their art study. Mr. Sumner had told them at first that here they would study under totally different conditions from those in Florence, so separated are the works of any particular artist save Michael Angelo.

They had already visited individually, as they chose, those historic palaces in which are most important family picture-galleries, such as the Colonna, Farnese, Doria, Corsini, Villa Borghese, etc., but they wished to go all together to the Vatican to hear Mr. Sumner talk of Raphael's works, and right glad were they when finally a convenient time came.

They walked quickly through many pictured rooms and corridors until they reached the third room of the famous picture-gallery, where they took seats, and Mr. Sumner said, in a low voice:—

"I did not wish to come here immediately after we had studied Michael Angelo's frescoes. It was better to wait for a time, so utterly unlike are these two great masters of painting. I confess that I never like to compare them, one with the other, although their lives were so closely related that it is always natural to do so. Their characters were opposite; so, also, their work. One sways us by his all-compelling strength; the other draws us by his alluring charm. Michael Angelo is in painting what Dante and Shakespeare are in poetry, and Beethoven in music; Raphael is like the gentle Spenser and the tender Mozart. Michael Angelo is thoroughly original; Raphael possessed a peculiarly receptive nature, that caught something from all with whom he came into close contact. Michael Angelo strove continually to grow; Raphael struggled for nothing. Michael Angelo's life was sternly lonely and sorrowful; Raphael's bright, happy, and placid. Michael Angelo lived long; Raphael died in early manhood.

"Still," he continued, after a moment, as he noted the sympathetic faces about him, "although I have mentioned them, I beg of you not to allow any of these personal

characteristics or distinctions to influence you in your judgment of the work of these two. Forget the one to-day as we study the other.

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"You have read much of Raphael's life, so I will not talk about that. You remember that, when young, he studied in Perugia, in Perugino's studio, and perhaps you will recollect that, when we were there, I told you that his early work was exceedingly like that of this master.

"Now, look! Here right before us is Raphael's *Coronation of the Virgin*,—his first important painting. See how like Perugino's are the figures. Notice the exquisite angels on either side of the Virgin, which are so often reproduced! See their pure, childlike faces and the queer little stiffness that is almost a grace! See the sweet solemnity of Christ and the Madonna, the staid grouping of the figures below,—the winged cherubim, —the soft color!

"I have here two photographs," and he unfolded and passed one to Margery, who was close beside him, "which I wish you to look at carefully. They are of works painted very soon after the *Coronation*; one, the *Marriage of the Virgin*, or *Lo Sposalizio*, is in the Brera Gallery at Milan. It is as like Perugino's work as is the *Coronation*."

After a time spent in looking at and talking about the picture, during which Bettina told the story of the blossomed rod which Joseph bears over his shoulder, and the rod without blossoms which the disappointed suitor is breaking over his knee, Mr. Sumner gave them the other photograph.

"This," he resumed, "you will readily recognize, as you have so often looked at the picture in the Pitti Gallery in Florence—the *Madonna del Gran Duca*. This is the only Madonna that belongs to this period of Raphael's painting, and the last important picture in the style. It was painted during the early part of his visit to Florence."

"I never see this, uncle," said Margery, as she passed the photograph on to the others, "without thinking how the Grand Duke carried it about in its rich casket wherever he went, and said his prayers before it night and morning. I am glad the people named it after him. Don't you think it very beautiful, uncle?"

"Yes; and it is one of the purest Madonnas ever painted—so impersonal is the face," replied Mr. Sumner.

"I wish," he continued, "I could go on like this through a list of Raphael's works with you, but it is utterly impossible, so many are there. When he went to Florence, where you know he spent some years, he fell under the influence of the Florentine artists, and his work gradually lost its resemblance to Perugino's. It gained more freedom, action, grace, and strength of color. Some examples of this second style of his painting are the *Madonna del Cardellino*, or Madonna of the Goldfinch, which you will remember in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, and *La Belle Jardiniere* in the Louvre, Paris. But I have brought photographs of these pictures so that you may see the striking difference between them and those previously painted."

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Murmured exclamations attested the interest with which the comparison was made. After all seemed satisfied, Mr. Sumner continued:—

“After Raphael came to Rome, summoned by the same Pope Julius II. who sent for Michael Angelo, and was thus brought under the influence of that great painter, his method again changed. It grew firmer and stronger. Then he painted his best pictures, —and so many of them! So, you can see, it is somewhat difficult to characterize Raphael’s work as a whole, for into it came so many influences. One thing, however, is true. From all those whom he followed, he gathered only the best qualities. His work deservedly holds its prominent place in the world’s estimation;—so high and sweet and pure are its *motifs*, while their rendering is in the very best manner of the High Renaissance. No other artist ever painted so many noble pictures in so few years of time.”

“Did not his pupils assist him in many works, uncle?” asked Malcom, as his uncle paused for a moment.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Sumner, rising, “especially in the frescoes that we shall see by and by. It would have been utterly impossible for him to have executed all these with his own hand. Let us now go out into this next gallery through which we entered, and look at the *Transfiguration*.”

So they went into the small room which is dedicated wholly to three large pictures:—the *Transfiguration* and *Madonna di Foligno* by Raphael, and the *Communion of St. Jerome* by Domenichino.

“Raphael’s last picture, which he left unfinished!” murmured Bettina, and she took an almost reverential attitude before it.

“How very, very different from the *Coronation*!” exclaimed Barbara, after some moments of earnest study. “That is so utterly simple, so quiet! This is more than dramatic!”

“Raphael’s whole lifetime of painting lies between the two,” replied Mr. Sumner, who had been intently watching her face as he stood beside her.

“Do you like this, Mr. Sumner? I do not think I do, really,” said Miss Sherman, as she dropped into a chair, her eyes denoting a veiled displeasure, which was also apparent in the tones of her voice.

“It is a difficult picture to judge,” replied Mr. Sumner, slowly. “I wish you all could have studied many others before studying this one. But, indeed, you are so familiar with Raphael’s pictures that you need only to recall them to mind. This was painted under peculiar circumstances,—in competition, you remember, with Sebastian del Piombo’s *Resurrection of Lazarus*; and Sebastian was a pupil of Michael Angelo. Some writers

have affirmed that that master aided his pupil in the drawing of the chief figures in his picture. Raphael tried harder than he ever had done before to put some of the dramatic vigor and action of Michael Angelo into the figures here in the lower part of the *Transfiguration*. The result is that he overdid it. It is not Raphaelesque; it is an unfortunate composite. The composition is fine; the quiet glory of heaven in the upper part,—the turbulence of earth in the lower, are well expressed; but the perfection of artistic effect is wanting. It is full of beauties, yet it is not beautiful. It has many defects, yet only a great master could have designed and painted it.”

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By and by they turned their attention to the *Madonna di Foligno*, and were especially interested in it as being a votive picture. Margery, who was very fond of this Madonna, with the exquisite background of angels' heads, had a photograph of it in her own room at home, and knew the whole story of the origin of the picture. So she told it at Malcom's request, her delicate fingers clasping and unclasping each other, according to her habit, as she talked.

"How true it is that one ought to know the reason why a picture is painted, all about its painter, and a thousand other things, in order to appreciate it properly," said Malcom, as they turned to leave the room.

"That is so," replied his uncle. "I really feel," with an apologetic smile, "that I can do nothing with Raphael. There is so much of him scattered about everywhere. We will regard this morning's study as only preliminary, and you must study his pictures by yourselves, wherever you find them. By the way," and he turned to look back through the doorway, "you must not forget to come here again to see Domenichino's great picture. How striking it is! But we must not mix his work with Raphael's."

They passed through the first room of the gallery, stopping but a moment to see two or three comparatively unimportant pictures painted by Raphael, and went out into the Loggia.

"I brought you through this without a word, when we first came," said Mr. Sumner. "But now I wish you to look up at the roof-paintings. They were designed by Raphael, but painted by his pupils. You see they all have Bible subjects. For this reason this Loggia is sometimes called 'Raphael's Bible.' The composition of every picture is simple, and in the master's happiest style."

As they left the Loggia and entered "Raphael's Stanze," a series of rooms whose walls are covered with his frescoes, Mr. Sumner said:—

"We will to-day only give a glance at the paintings in this first room. They are, as you see, illustrative of great events in the history of Rome. They were executed wholly by Raphael's pupils, after his designs."

"I shall come here again," said Malcom, in a positive tone. "This is more in my line than Madonnas," and he made a bit of a wry face.

"And better still is to come for you," returned his uncle with a smile, as they passed on. "Here in this next room are scenes in the religious history of the city, and here," as they entered the third room, "is the famous Camera della Segnatura."

"Room of the Signatures! Why so called?" asked Barbara.

“Because the Papal indulgences used to be signed here; and here,” continued Mr. Sumner, turning for a moment toward Malcom, “are the greatest of all Raphael’s frescoes. We will now stop here for a few minutes, and you must come again for real study. The subjects are the representations of the most lofty occupations that engage the minds of men—Philosophy, Justice, Theology, and Poetry. This is the first painting done by Raphael in the Vatican, and it is all his own work, both design and execution.

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"Here on this side," pointing at a large fresco which covered the entire wall, "is *La Disputa*, or *Theology*. Above, on the ceiling, you see a symbolic figure representing Religion, with the Bible in one hand and pointing down at the great picture with the other. Opposite is the *School of Athens*. Above this is a figure emblematic of Philosophy, wearing a diadem and holding two books. On the two end walls, broken, as you see, by the windows, are *Parnassus*, peopled with Apollo and the Muses, together with figures of celebrated poets,—above which is the crowned figure with a lyre which represents Poetry,—and," turning, "the *Administration of Law*, with ceiling-figure with crown, sword, and balance, symbolizing Justice. In this room the painter had much to contend against. These opposite windows at the ends, which fill the space with cross-lights, and around which he must place two of his pictures, must have been discouraging. But the compositions are consummately fine, and the whole is so admirably managed that one does not even think of that which, if the work were less magnificent, would be harassing.

"I advise you to come here early some morning and bring with you some full description of the pictures, which tells whom the figures are intended to represent. Study first each painting as a whole; see the fine distribution of masses; the general arrangement; the symmetry of groups which balance each other; the harmony of line and color. Then study individual figures for form, attitude, and expression. I think you will wish to give several mornings to this one room.

"What do you think of this, Malcom? Do you not wish to get acquainted with Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Virgil?" added Mr. Sumner, putting his hand suddenly on the young man's shoulder, and looking into his face to surprise his thought.

"I think it is fine, Uncle Rob. It's all right;" and Malcom's steady blue eyes emphasized his satisfaction.

"What do you call Raphael's greatest picture?" asked Barbara, as they turned from the frescoed walls.

"These are his most important frescoes," replied Mr. Sumner; "and all critics agree that his most famous easel picture is the *Madonna di San Sisto* in the Dresden Gallery. This is so very familiar to you that it needs no explanation. It was, you know, his last Madonna, and it contains a hint of Divinity in both mother and child never attained by any painter before or since."

"When shall we see Raphael's tapestries?" asked Margery, as they finally passed on through halls and corridors.

"I hardly think I will go with you to see those, Madge dear," answered her uncle. "There is no further need that I explain any of Raphael's work to you. Your books and your own critical tastes, which are pretty well formed by this time, will be quite sufficient. Indeed,"

looking around until he caught Barbara's eyes, "I really think you can study all the remaining paintings in Rome by yourselves," and he was made happy by seeing the swift regret which clouded them.

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"When we return to Florence," he added, "you will be more interested than when we were there before in looking at Raphael's Madonnas and portraits in those galleries; and on our way from Florence to Venice, we will stop at Bologna to see his *St. Cecilia*".

"How perfectly delightful!" cried Bettina. "I have been wishing to see that ever since we went to the church of St. Cecilia the other day. I was greatly interested to know that it had once been her own home, and in everything there connected with her. She was so brave, and true, and good! It seems as if Raphael could have painted a worthy picture of her!"

As Bettina suddenly checked her pretty enthusiasm, her face flushed painfully, and Barbara, seeking the cause, caught the supercilious smile with which Miss Sherman was regarding her sister. She at once divined that poor Bettina feared that, in some way, she had made herself ridiculous to the older lady.

Going swiftly to her sister she threw her arm closely about her waist, and with a charming air of defiance,—with erect head and flashing eyes, said:—

"Mr. Sumner, St. Cecilia is a real, historical character, is she not? As much so as St. Francis, Nero, or Marcus Aurelius?" The slight emphasis on the last name recalled to all the party the effusive eulogiums Miss Sherman had lavished upon that famous imperial philosopher a few days before, while they were looking at his bust in the museum of Palazzo Laterano; when, unfortunately, she had imputed to him certain utterances that rightfully belong to another literary man who lived in quite a different age and country.

Mr. Sumner could not avoid a merry twinkle of his eyes as he strove to answer with becoming gravity, and Malcom hastily pushed on far in advance.

Once at home, Malcom and Margery gave their version of the affair to their mother.

"It isn't the first time she has looked like that at both Barbara and Betty," averred Malcom, emphatically, "and they have known and felt it, too."

"I am very sorry," said Mrs. Douglas, with a troubled look.

"Oh! you need not fear anything further, mother *mia*" said Malcom, sympathizingly. "Barbara will never show any more feeling. She would not have done it for herself, only for Betty. Under the circumstances she just had to fire her independence-gun, that is all. Now there will be perfect peace on her side. You know her.

"And," he added in an aside to Margery, as his mother was leaving the room, "Miss Sherman will not dare to be cross openly for fear of mother and Uncle Rob. I didn't dare to look at her. But wasn't it rich?" And he went off into a peal of laughter.

“It was only what she deserved, anyway,” said Margery, who was usually most gentle in all her judgments.

It was quite a commentary on Mrs. Douglas’s judgment of Lucile Sherman’s character at this time, that she now deemed it best to tell her of Howard’s bequest to Barbara, about which she had heretofore held silence.

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Chapter XVI.

Poor Barbara's Trouble.

O, how this spring of love resembleth The uncertain glory of an April day; Which now shows all the beauty of the sun, And by and by a cloud takes all away.

—SHAKESPEARE.

[Illustration: A BIT OF AMALFI.]

Barbara and Bettina, sometimes accompanied by Mrs. Douglas, sometimes by Malcom, usually by Margery, saw all the remaining and important art treasures of Rome.

They studied long the Vatican and Capitol sculptures; went to the Barberini Palace to see Raphael's *La Fornarina*, so rich in color; and, close beside it, the pale, tearful face of Beatrice Cenci, so long attributed to Guido Reni, but whose authorship is now doubtful; to the doleful old church Santa Maria dei Capuccini, to see *St. Michael and the Dragon* by Guido Reni, in which they were especially interested, because Hawthorne made it a rendezvous of the four friends in his "Marble Faun," where so diverse judgments of the picture were pronounced, each having its foundation in the heart and experience of the speaker. They had been reading this book in the same way in which they had read "Romola" in Florence, and each girl was now the happy possessor of a much-prized copy, interleaved by herself with photographs of the Roman scenes and works of art mentioned in the book.

They went to the garden-house of the Rospigliosi Palace to see on its ceiling Guido Reni's *Aurora*, one of the finest decorative pictures ever painted. And to the Accademia di San Luca to find the drawing by Canevari after Van Dyck's portrait of the infant son of Charles I. in the Turin Gallery, which is so often reproduced under the name of the *Stuart Baby*. Not many pictures, great or small, escaped their eager young eyes. They grew familiar with the works of Domenichino, Guercino, Garofalo, Carlo Dolci, Sassoferrato, etc., and the days of their stay in Rome rapidly passed by.

Mrs. Douglas was very desirous to take them for a few days to Naples, or rather to the environments of Naples. To herself it would be a pilgrimage of affection; and in those drives, loveliest in the world, she would recall many precious memories of the past.

"I hesitated to speak of doing this before," said she, when she suggested it to her brother, "because I have tried to make the whole trip comparatively inexpensive, remembering the shortness of the dear doctor's purse. Now, of course, this needs no consideration."

So they planned to go there for a short visit; and on their return it would be time to pack their trunks for Florence, where they were to stop two or three days before going northward toward Venice.

A morning ride from Rome to Naples during the early days of May is idyllic. In the smiling sunshine they rushed on through wide meadows covered with luxuriant verdure and vineyards flushed with delicate greens. After they had passed Capua, which is magnificently situated on a wide plain,—amphitheatre-like within its half-circle of lovely hills, flanked behind by the Apennines,—Malcom said, as he finally drew in his head from the open window and, with a very contented look, settled back into a corner of the compartment, with one arm thrown about his mother's shoulders:—

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"It is no wonder that old Hannibal's army grew effeminate after the soldiers had lived here for some months, and so was easily conquered. Life could not have had many hardships in such a place as this.

"I declare!" he added with a laugh as he shook back the wind-blown hair from his forehead; "it is difficult to realize these days in what century one is living. My mind has been so full of ancient history lately that I feel quite like an antique myself."

"I know," answered his uncle with a smile, "how life widens and lengthens as thought expands under the influence of travel through historic scenes. One may study history from books for a lifetime and never realize it as he would could he, even for an hour, be placed upon the very spot where some important event took place. What a fact Hannibal's army of two thousand years ago becomes to us when we know that these very mountain tops which are before us looked down upon it,—that its soldiers idled, ate, and slept on this very plain."

Thus talking, almost before they knew, they came out upon the beautiful Bay of Naples. They saw the little island of Capri, the larger Ischia crowned with its volcanic mountains, and, between it and the point of Posilipo, where once stood Virgil's villa, the tiny island Nisida (old "Nesis"), whither Brutus fled after the assassination of Julius Caesar; where Cicero visited him, and where he bade adieu to his wife, Portia, when he set sail for Greece.

"Looking out over this same bay, these same islands, Virgil sang of flocks, of fields, and of heroes," said Mr. Sumner, following the former line of thought, as he began to take from the racks above the valises of the party.

Arrived at their hotel, which was situated in the higher quarters of the city, they were ensconced in rooms whose balconied windows commanded magnificent views of the softly radiant city, the bay, and, close at hand, Mount Vesuvius, over which was hovering the usual cloud of smoke.

At the close of the afternoon Barbara and Bettina stood long on their own window-balcony. The scene was fascinating—even more so than they had dreamed.

"There is but one Naples, as there is but one Rome and one Florence," said Barbara softly. "Each city is grandly beautiful in its own individual way, but for none has nature done so much as for Naples."

In silence they watched the sunset glow and the oncoming twilight, until the call for dinner sounded through the halls.

"I fear to leave it all," said Bettina, turning reluctantly away, "lest we can never find it again."

The next three days were crowded to the brim. One was spent in going to the top of Vesuvius; another in the great Museum, so interesting with its remains of antique sculptures, so destitute of important paintings; the third in driving about the city, to San Martino, and around the point of Posilipo, ending with a visit to Virgil's tomb.

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Then came the Sabbath, and they attended morning service in the Cathedral,—in the very chapel of San Januarius which is decorated with pictures by Domenichino, Guido Reni, and Lanfranco, the completion of which was prevented by the jealousy of the Neapolitan painters.

The next morning they went to Pompeii, where in the late afternoon carriages were to meet them for beginning the drive through Castellammare, Sorrento, and Amalfi to La Cava.

The absorbing charm of Pompeii, whose resurrection began after nearly seventeen centuries of burial and is yet only partial, at once seized them,—all of them,—for, visit the ruined city often as one may, yet the sight of its worn streets with their high stepping-stones, its broken pavements, its decorated walls, its shops,—all possess such an atmosphere of departed life that its fascination is complete, and does not yield to familiarity.

After hours of wandering about with their guide, seeing the points of most interest,—the beautiful houses recently excavated, the homes of Glaucus, of Pansa, of Sallust, of Orpheus, of Diomedes and very many others; the forum, temples, and amphitheatre—they sat long amid the ruins, looking at the fatal mountain, so close at hand, and the desolation at its foot, and meditated upon the terrors of that fearful night.

Malcom read aloud the story as related by Pliny, a volume of whose letters he had put into his pocket, and Margery recited some lines of a beautiful sonnet on Pompeii which she had once learned, whose author she did not remember:—

“No chariot wheels invade her stony roads;
Priestless her temples, lone her vast abodes,
Deserted,—forum, palace, everywhere!
Yet are her chambers for the master fit,
Her shops are ready for the oil and wine,
Ploughed are her streets with many a chariot line,
And on her walls to-morrow’s play is writ,—
Of that to-morrow which might never be!”

The spell was not broken until Mr. Sumner, looking at his watch, declared it was quite time they should return to the little hotel, take an afternoon lunch, and so be ready when the carriages should await them.

The beauty of the drive from Naples to the Bay of Salerno has been set forth, by many writers, in prose and song and poem, and remembering this, Barbara’s and Bettina’s faces were radiant with expectation as they started upon it. Malcom and Margery were in the carriage with them; the atmosphere was perfection; the sun shone with just the right degree of heat; the waters of the beautiful Bay of Naples were just rippling beneath

the soft breeze, and seventeen miles of incomparable loveliness lay between them and Sorrento, where they were to spend the night. What wonder they were happy!

Just as they were entering the town of Castellammare (the ancient Stabiae, where the elder Pliny perished) the carriage containing Mrs. Douglas, Miss Sherman, and Mr. Sumner, which had thus far followed them, dashed past, and its occupants were greeted with a merry peal of laughter from the four young voices.

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"How joyous they are!" exclaimed Mrs. Douglas, her own face reflecting their happiness. "You look envious, Robert."

Then, turning to Miss Sherman, she added: "I never tire of watching Barbara and Bettina these days. I believe they are two of the rarest girls in the world. Nothing has yet spoiled them, and I think nothing ever will. It has been one of the sweetest things possible to see their little everyday charities since they have had money in abundance. Before, they felt that every dollar their parents spared them was a sacred trust to be used just for their positive needs. Now, their evident delight in giving to the flower-girls, to the street-gamins, to the beggars, to everything miserable that offers, is delightful."

"Do you think Barbara will know how to be wise in the spending of her money?" asked Miss Sherman, with a constrained smile.

"As to the wise ways of spending money," answered Mrs. Douglas, stealing a glance at her brother's imperturbable face opposite, "everybody has his own individual opinion. I, myself, feel sure of Barbara. Before her money came, she had received the greater and far more important heritage of a noble-minded ancestry and a childhood devoted to unselfish living and the seeking of the highest things. During these eighteen years her character has been formed, and it is so grounded that the mere possession of money will not alter it. To my mind it is a happy thing that Howard's money will be used in such a personal way as I think it will be."

"Personal a way?" queried Miss Sherman.

"I mean personal as distinguished from institutional—you know his first intention was to endow institutions. For instance, within a week after Barbara received the lawyer's announcement, she consulted me as to how she could best make provision for an old lady who has been for years more or less of a pensioner of her father's family. The dear old woman with a little aid has supported herself for many years, but lately it has seemed as if she would have to give up the wee bit of a home she loves so much and become an inmate of some great Institution, and this would almost break her heart. Barbara was in haste to put enough money at her disposal so that a good woman may be hired to come and care for her so long as she shall live, and to provide for all her wants. Also she remembered a poor young girl, once her and Betty's schoolmate, who has always longed for further study, whose one ambition has been to go to college. This was simply impossible, not even the strictest economy, even the going without necessities, has gathered together sufficient money for the expenses of a single year. Before we left Rome, Barbara arranged for the deposit in the bank at home of enough money to permit this struggling girl to look forward with certainty to a college course, and wrote the letter which will bring her so much joy.

“Dear child!” she continued tenderly, after a pause; “the only bit of money she has yet spent for herself was to get the spring outfits that she and Betty have really needed for some time, but for which they did not like to use their father’s money.

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“And I do believe,” after another pause, “that the two girls’ lives will be passed as unostentatiously as if the money had not come to them.”

“Why do you speak as if the money had come to both?” asked Miss Sherman, with a curious inflection of the voice.

“Did I? I did not realize it. But I will not change my words; for, unless I mistake much, the money will be Bettina’s as much as Barbara’s, and this, because Barbara will have it so.”

The words were hardly spoken by Mrs. Douglas when Mr. Sumner, who was riding backward and so facing the following carriage, sprang up, crying in a low, smothered tone of alarm, “Barbara!”

But Mrs. Douglas had not time to turn before he sank back saying: “Excuse me. I must have been mistaken. I thought that something was the matter; that Barbara had been taken ill.”

Then he added, in explanation to his sister: “The carriage was so far back, as it rounded a curve, permitting me to look into it, that I could not see very distinctly.”

Miss Sherman bit her lip and rode on in silence. Mr. Sumner’s concern for Barbara seemed painfully evident to her. She had much that was disagreeable to think of, for it was impossible to avoid contrasting herself with the picture of Barbara which Mrs. Douglas had drawn. She thought of the sister at home who so patiently, year after year, had given up her own cherished desires that she might be gratified; who had needed, far more than she herself had, the change and rest of this year abroad, but whom she had forced to return with the father, even though she knew well it was her own duty to go,—how many such instances of selfishness had filled her life!

She felt that she could almost hate this fortunate Barbara, who so easily was gaining all the things she herself coveted,—admiration,—wealth,—love? no, not if she could help it! and she forced herself to smile, to praise the same qualities of heart that Mrs. Douglas had admired; to talk pityingly of the miserable ones of earth; adoringly of self-sacrificing, heroic deeds, and sympathizingly of noble endeavor.

* * * * *

What had been the matter in the other carriage? After the burst of gayety with which the three girls and Malcom had greeted the swifter equipage as it rolled past theirs, nothing was said for some time, until Malcom suddenly burst out with the expression of what had evidently been the subject of his thought:—

“Girls, do you think that Uncle Robert is falling in love with Miss Sherman?”

The question fell like a bombshell into the little group. Margery first found a voice, but it was a most awed, repressed one:—

“Why, Malcom! *could* he ever love anybody again? You know—oh! what could make you think of such a thing? It is not like you to make light of Uncle Robert’s feelings.”

“I am not doing so, Madge dear. Men can love twice. It would not hurt Margaret should he learn to love some one else. And it would be ever so much better for him. Uncle’s life seems very lonely to me. Now he is busy with us; but just think of the long years when he is living and working over here all alone. Still, I am sure I would not choose Miss Sherman for him. Yet I am not certain but it looks some like it. What do you think, Betty?”

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"I—don't—know—what—I—do—think,—Malcom. You know how much I love and admire your uncle. I do not think there are many women good enough to be his wife."

Bettina thought, but did not say, that she could not love and admire Miss Sherman, who had made it quite evident to Barbara and herself that she cared nothing for them, save as they were under the care of Mrs. Douglas; who had never given them any companionship, or, at least, never had until during the past week or two, after she had learned that Barbara was Howard's heiress.

Barbara drew her breath quickly and sharply. Could such a thing as this be? was this to come? In her mind, Mr. Sumner was consecrated to the dead Margaret, about whom she had thought so much,—the picture of whose lovely face she had so often studied, —whose character she had adorned with all possible graces! She listened, as in a dream, to Bettina and Malcom. He *should* not love any one else; or, if he could—poor Barbara's heart was ruthlessly torn open and revealed unto her consciousness. She felt that the others must read the tale in her confused face.

Confused? No, Barbara, it was pale and still, as if a mortal wound had been given.

Her head reeled, the world grew dark, and it was silence until she heard Bettina saying frantically:—

"Bab, dear! are you faint? Oh! what is it?"

With an almost superhuman effort Barbara drew herself up and smiled bravely, with white lips:—

"It is nothing—only a moment's dizziness. It is all over now."

This was what Mr. Sumner saw when he sprang up in alarm, and then in a moment said: "Everything seems all right now."

But poor Barbara thought nothing could ever be right again. And when their carriage drew up in the spacious courtyard of their hotel at Sorrento, and Mr. Sumner, with an unusually bright and eager face, stood waiting to help her alight, it was a frozen little hand that was put into his, and he could not win a single glance from the eyes he loved to watch, and from which he was impatient to learn if it were indeed well with the owner.

To this day Barbara shudders at the thought or mention of the next four or five days. And they were such rare days for enjoyment, could she have forgotten her own heart: —across the blue waters to Capri, with a visit by the way to the famous Blue Grotto; a whole day in that lovely town, walking about its winding, climbing streets; the long drive from Sorrento to quaint Prajano, with, on one hand, towering, rugged limestone cliffs, to whose rough sides, every here and there, clings an Italian village, and, on the other, the smiling, wide-spreading Mediterranean; the little rowboat ride to Amalfi; the day full of

interest spent there; and then the drive close beside the sea toward Palermo, terminated by a sharp turn toward the blue mountains among which nestles La Cava; the railway ride back to Naples.

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She struggled bravely to be her old self,—to hide everything from all eyes. But she felt so wofully humiliated, for she now knew for the first time that she loved Robert Sumner; loved him so that it was positive agony to think that he might love another,—so that it was almost a pain to remember that he had ever loved. What would he think should he suspect the truth! And she was so fearful that her eyes might give a hint of it that, try in as many ways as he could, Mr. Sumner could never get a good look into them during these days. The kinder he was, and the more zealously he endeavored to add to her comfort and happiness, the more wretched she grew. She longed to get away from everybody, even from Betty, lest her secret might become apparent to the keen sisterly affection that knew her so intimately. She began to feel a fierce longing for home and for father and mother; and the months which must necessarily elapse before she could be there stretched drearily before her.

Robert Sumner was perplexed and distressed. He had just begun to enjoy a certain happiness. The struggle within himself was over, and he was beginning to give himself up to the delight of thinking freely of Barbara; of loving her; of feeling a sort of possession of her, though he did not yet dream of such a thing as ever being to her more than he now was,—a valued friend. There were so many years, and an experience of life that counted far more than years, between them!

He had listened to his sister's conversation with Miss Sherman on the way from Pompeii to Sorrento with an exultation which it would have been difficult for him to account for. He gloried in the sweet unselfishness, the simple goodness of the young girl. "My little Barbara," his heart sang; and full of this emotion when they reached Sorrento, he allowed the two ladies to go alone into the hotel, while he waited impatiently to look into Barbara's face and to feel the touch of her hand.

But what a change! What could have wrought it? Before this, she had always met his look with such frank sympathy! As the days passed on without change, and his eyes, more than any others, noticed the struggle to conceal her unhappiness, the mystery deepened.

Chapter XVII.

Robert Sumner is Imprudent.

Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well— When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us, There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will.

—SHAKESPEARE.

[Illustration: CAMPO SANTO, BOLOGNA.]



Early one morning very soon after the return to Rome, Bettina, with a troubled face, knocked at Mrs. Douglas's door.

"Barbara is ill," said she. "I knew in the night that she was very restless, but not until just now did I see that she is really ill."

"What seems to be the matter?"

"I think she must be very feverish."

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"Feverish?" repeated Mrs. Douglas, with a startled look, as she hastily prepared to accompany Betty back to her room. In a few minutes she sought her brother, her face full of anxiety.

"Robert, I fear Barbara has the fever. Her temperature must be high; her face is greatly flushed, and her eyes dull, and she says her whole body is full of pain."

"We must take her away at once out of the atmosphere of Rome," exclaimed Mr. Sumner, with decision.

"But she feels so wretchedly ill."

"Never mind that. If she can only endure the fatigue for a few hours, we may save her weeks of suffering and possible danger," and his voice faltered.

"Remember, sister," he continued, "that I am at home here in this climate, and trust me. Or, better still, I will at once consult Dr. Yonge, and I know you will trust him. And, sister, get everything ready so that we—Barbara, you, and I—may take the very first train for Orvieto. That will take her in two hours into a high and pure atmosphere. The others can follow as soon as possible."

Quickly the plans were made. Malcom, Margery, and Bettina were to be left to complete the packing of trunks. Dr. Yonge agreed fully with Mr. Sumner, and on the nine o'clock train northward Mrs. Douglas, Barbara, and Mr. Sumner left Rome.

Miss Sherman, quite upset by the rapid movement of affairs, decided to remain a little longer in Rome with friends whom she had met there, and join the others later in Venice.

It was a severe trial to poor Bettina to see her darling sister thus almost literally borne away from her. But she tried to put faith in Mr. Sumner's assurances, and bravely resisted the anxious longing to go with her. She immediately gave herself up to the work of finishing the packing of their own trunks and of helping Margery all she could.

Mr. Sumner had commissioned Malcom to go up to his studio and gather into boxes all his canvases and painting materials; and soon all three were working as fast as they could, with the design of following the others the next morning.

Presently Malcom appeared at Bettina's door with the request that she should go up to the studio when she could leave her work for a minute.

"Come alone—by yourself," he added in a low voice.

Wondering a little at the singular request and the peculiar expression of Malcom's face, Bettina soon followed him.

Entering the studio, she found him attentively regarding a small canvas which he had placed on an easel, and took her place beside him that she might look at it also.

“How lovely!” she cried, and then a puzzled look came into her eyes.

“Why, it is Barbara! It is *like* Barbara,” she added.

“And what do you think of this—and this—and this?” asked Malcom, rapidly turning from the wall study after study.

After a few moments of silence, she said solemnly: “They’re all Barbara. Here she is thinking earnestly; here she is throwing her head proudly back, as she so often does; and here she is merry and smiling in her own adorable way. O you darling Barbara!” with a pathetic little catch of the breath; “how are you feeling just this minute?” and Bettina sank upon the floor beside the pictures, looking as if she longed to hug them all.

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"But what does it mean?" persisted Malcom.

"What do *you* mean?" springing up with a quick look into his eyes. "You—foolish—boy!" as an inkling of Malcom's meaning crept into her mind.

"What does it mean, Betty Burnett, that my uncle has had nothing better to do when he has so zealously labored up here, than to paint your sister's face in every conceivable way?" slowly and impressively asked Malcom, as he put still another tell-tale sketch over that on the easel.

"You do not really mean!—it can't be!—Oh!" uttered Bettina in diverse tones and inflections as she rapidly recalled, one after another, certain incidents.

Then there was silence in Robert Sumner's studio between these two discoverers of his long-cherished secret.

"Malcom," at length whispered Bettina, "we must never breathe one word about what we have found here. You must not tell Margery or your mother. Promise me that it shall be a solemn secret between you and me."

"I promise, Lady Betty. Your behest shall be sacredly regarded," replied Malcom with mock gravity. "But," after a little, "shall you tell Barbara?"

"Tell Barbara? No! no! How could I tell her! Malcom, don't you know that it is only by a chance that we have found these pictures? That, whatever they may mean is absolutely sacred to your uncle? Perhaps they mean nothing—nothing save that he, from an artist's stand-point, admires my sister's face. Indeed, the more I think of it, the more I am inclined to believe that is all," she persisted, as she saw Malcom's expressive shrug and the comical look in his eyes as he moved them slowly along the half-dozen sketches that were now standing in a row.

"And I shall think no more about it," she added, "and advise you to do the same."

Bettina, who was usually so gentle, could be prettily imperious when she chose. And now, wrought up by Malcom's reference to Barbara and her own fast crowding thoughts, her voice took on this tone, and she turned with high head to leave the studio.

"Betty! Betty!" pleaded Malcom, running after her. "Why, Betty!" and the surprised, pained tone of his voice instantly stopped her on the staircase.

"I do not mean anything disagreeable, Malcom," she conceded, "only I could not bear to have anything said about Barbara or to Barbara, that might in any way disturb her. That is all,—forgive me, Malcom." And the two friends clasped hands.

Malcom went back into the studio, his pursed lips emitting a low, meditative whistle, while Bettina hurried downstairs, her mind beset with conjectures.

It was not Mr. Sumner of whom she was thinking, but her sister. A veil seemed to withdraw before her consciousness, and to reveal the possible meaning of much that had perplexed her during the past months. For if Mr. Sumner had really been learning to love Barbara, might it not also be that Barbara cared more for him than Bettina had been wont to think?

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Her thoughts went back to many of their first conversations after coming to Florence; to Barbara's intense absorption in Mr. Sumner's talks about the old painters; to her unwearied study of them; to her evident sympathy with him on all occasions.

Then, in a flash she remembered her faintness in the carriage on the drive to Sorrento and connected it, as she had never before dreamed of doing, with the conversation then going on; and recalled all those days since when she had been so different from the old-time Barbara.

And poor Bettina sat, a disconsolate little figure, before her half-filled trunk, just ready to cry with sheer vexation at her blindness. Then, the thought came that if Mr. Sumner did really love Barbara all would be well. But, alas! the doubt followed whether, after all, the pictures meant anything more than the artist's love for a beautiful face, and his desire to render it on his canvas. She grew more and more miserable in her sympathy for her sister, and at her enforced separation from her, and the hours of that day, though of necessity busy ones, seemed almost interminable.

The following noon found them together again.

Bettina entered her sister's room, which opened full upon the rose-garden they had enjoyed before,—now filled with blossoms and fragrance,—to find Barbara sitting in a big easy-chair, with a tray before her, on which were spread toast and tea, flanked by a dainty flask of Orvieto wine, while the same wrinkled old chambermaid who had served them two and a half months ago stood, with beaming face, watching her efforts to eat.

Barbara's eyes were brighter, the flush gone from her face, and she said she did not feel like the same girl who had been half carried away from the hotel in Rome the morning before. So much improved did she seem that the present plan was to take a late afternoon train for Florence, for Mr. Sumner said the sooner they could get farther north, the better it would be. This was carried out, and night found them back in the dear Florence home, there to spend a few days.

The city was very lovely in its May foliage and blossoms,—too lovely to leave so soon, they all averred. But it must be, and after having taken again their favorite drives, and having given another look at their favorite pictures, with an especial interest in those by the Venetian masters whom they would study more fully in Venice, they turned their faces northward.

The journey at first took them through rich Tuscan plains, and later through wild, picturesque ravines of the Apennines. Higher and higher the railway climbed, threading numberless tunnels, and affording magnificent views as it emerged into opening after opening, until finally it passed under the height that divides the watershed of the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seas, and entered the narrow and romantic valley of the Reno. Not long after they were in the ancient city of Bologna. After a few minutes in their several

rooms, all gathered in the loggia of their hotel, which commanded a grand survey of the city.

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"How fine this air is after our long, dusty ride!" exclaimed Margery, tossing back her curls to catch the breeze.

"I did not expect to find Bologna so curiously beautiful," said Bettina, after she had seen that Barbara was comfortable in the big chair Malcom had wheeled out for her—for she was still languid from her recent illness, and tired easily.

"Please tell us something about it, uncle," said Malcom. "I am afraid I have not looked it up very thoroughly."

So Mr. Sumner told them many interesting things about the old city,—and how it had figured largely in Italian history from the Punic wars soon after Christ, down to the middle of the present century, when it finally became a part of United Italy.

"What about the university?" queried Malcom again.

"It has had a grand reputation for about fourteen centuries, and thus is among the most ancient existing seats of learning in Christendom. During the Middle Ages students came to it from all parts of northern Europe."

Bettina laughed. "I read a curious thing about it in my guide-book," said she. "That it has had several women professors; and one who was very beautiful always sat behind a curtain while she delivered her lectures. This was in the fourteenth century, I believe."

"A wise precaution," exclaimed Malcom, with a quizzical look. "Even I sometimes forget what a pretty woman is saying, because my thoughts are wandering from the subject to her face. And the men of those times could not have had the constant experience we of this century in America have."

"Don't be silly," smiled Bettina; and Mrs. Douglas, slipping her hand through Malcom's arm, asked: "Do you see those towers?"

"Yes; and uncle, I remember you spoke of the leaning towers of Bologna when we were at Pisa; what about them?"

"I think I simply said that since I had seen these towers, I have believed that the one at Pisa had been intentionally built in the way it now stands. My reason is that in all probability one of these was purposely so built."

"Which was erected first?"

"This, about two hundred and fifty years."

"Let us go and see them at once!" exclaimed Malcom. "There is time to give a good long look at the city before dinner."

"That is a good plan," said his mother, "and we will not go to the picture-gallery until tomorrow morning. Then Barbara will be fresh, and can enjoy it with the rest of us."

Mr. Sumner turned solicitously toward Barbara, with a movement as if to go to her, but her hastily averted eyes checked him, and with an inward sigh, he went to order carriages for the proposed drive. He had grown to believe during the past week or two that Barbara had divined his love for her, and that the knowledge was very painful.

"I must have thoughtlessly disclosed it," said he to himself. "It has become so much a part of my every thought. The best thing I can do now is to convince her that it shall never cause her the slightest annoyance; that it shall not change the frankly affectionate relations that have heretofore existed between us. She is so young she will forget it as she grows stronger, or perhaps I can make her feel that she has mistaken me. Then she will be my little friend again."

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The drive was thoroughly delightful. Bologna possesses many individual characteristics. The very narrow streets, the lofty arcades that stretch along on either side of them, the many venerable churches and palaces, the quaintly picturesque towers, kept them exclaiming with pleasure.

"Can we not walk to the Academy?" asked Margery, the next morning. "I do so wish to walk through some of these dear arcades."

So Barbara drove with Mrs. Douglas, and the others walked right through the heart of the old city, whose streets have echoed to the footfalls of countless and diverse people through a number of centuries that sounds appalling to American ears.

Arrived at the picture-gallery, Mr. Sumner told them that though not of very great importance when compared with many which they had visited, it yet is very interesting on account of its collection of the works of the most noted seventeenth-century Italian painters; especially those belonging to the Bolognese-eclectic school, which was founded by the Carracci.

"Nowhere else can these men, the Carracci, be studied as here in Bologna, where they founded their art-school just at the close of the sixteenth century. There are also some very good examples of the work of Domenichino, Guido Reni, Albani, and other famous pupils of the Carracci. You saw fine frescoes by Domenichino and Guido Reni in Rome and Naples, and I am sure you remember perfectly Domenichino's *Communion of St. Jerome* in the Vatican Gallery.

"Perhaps," he continued, with an inquiring look, "you know the principle on which this school of painting was founded, and which gave it its name."

Bettina answered: "I think they tried to select the best pictures from all other schools and embody them in their own pictures. I do not think," she added, with something of a deprecatory look, "that it can be called a very original style."

"Few styles of painting after the earliest masters can be called original, can they?" replied Mr. Sumner, with a smile. "One great lack of the human race is a spirit of originality. We all go to those who have thought and wrought before us, and hash and rehash their material. But few tell what they are doing so plainly as did the Carracci. The one great want in their painting is that of any definite end or aim."

"Whom do you call the greatest painters of the school, uncle?" asked Malcom, as they entered a large hall opening from the corridor in which they had been standing.

"Guido Reni and Domenichino merit that honor, I think. Domenichino died young, but painted some excellent pictures, notably the *St. Jerome*. Guido Reni lived long enough to outlive his good painting, but among his early works are some that may really be

called the masterpieces of this school; such as the *Aurora* and the *St. Michael* which you saw in Rome."

"What do you mean by his outliving his good painting?" asked Margery.

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"He grew most careless in his ways of living,—was dissipated we should call it,—squandered his money, and finally, in order to gain the wherewithal for daily life, used to paint by order of those who stood waiting to take his pictures with paint still wet, lest the artist should cheat them. To this we owe the great number of his worthless Madonna and Magdalen heads that have found their way into the galleries."

"How perfectly dreadful," chorused all.

"I am afraid we shall never see one of his pictures without thinking of this," said Bettina; "shall we, Barbara?" and she turned to her sister, who had been silent hitherto, as if longing to hear her talk.

"Try to forget it now as you look at these paintings, for this room contains many of his," continued Mr. Sumner, after waiting a moment as if to hear Barbara's answer, "and they are examples of his early work, and so stronger than many others. Notice the powerful action of this *Samson* and the St. John in that *Crucifixion*."

"Here are good examples of the work of the three Carracci," continued he, as after a time they entered the adjoining hall.

"But what does this mean?" cried Malcom, in an astonished voice, pausing before a large picture, the *Communion of St. Jerome*, which bore the name, Agostino Carracci. "How like it is to Domenichino's great picture in the Vatican! Do you suppose Domenichino borrowed so much from his master?"

"I fear so. Yet his picture is infinitely superior to this. And, look, here is Domenichino's *Death of St. Peter, Martyr*, which was borrowed largely from Titian's famous picture of the same subject, which has unfortunately been destroyed."

"But don't you call that a species of plagiarism?" queried Malcom.

"Undoubtedly it is. I must confess I am always sorry for Domenichino when I come into this hall. But we will pass on to better things. I wish you to study particularly these pictures by Francia," said he, as they entered a third hall.—"Yes, Betty, you are excusable. You all may look first at Raphael's *St. Cecilia*, for here it is."

All gathered about the beautiful, famous picture.

"How much larger than I have ever thought!" said Margery. "For what was it painted, uncle?"

"As an altar-piece for one of the oldest churches in Bologna. Do you recollect the story about Raphael's writing to Francia to oversee its proper and safe placing?"

“Oh, I do!” exclaimed Barbara, as Margery shook her head. “It was said that Francia never painted again, so overcome was he by the surpassing loveliness of Raphael’s picture, and that he died from the effect of this feeling,—but,” she went on impetuously, “I do not believe it; for see there!” pointing to Francia’s *Madonna with Sts. John and Jerome*, “do you think that the artist who painted this picture is so very far behind even Raphael as to die of vexation at the difference between them?”

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Barbara was so carried away by the picture that she had forgotten herself entirely, and spoke with her old-time frank eagerness, thereby thoroughly delighting Bettina and Mr. Sumner.

"I am glad you feel so," said the latter, very quietly, and with a strictly impersonal manner. "Francia, who belonged to the old Bolognese masters of the sixteenth century, was one of the most devout of painters, and everybody who studies his work must love it. See how pure and sweet are his expressions! How simple his composition! What harmony is in his coloring! How beyond those who painted after him!"

[Illustration: RAPHAEL. ACADEMY, BOLOGNA.

SAINT CECILIA.]

They tarried long before Francia's paintings and the *St. Cecilia*. Mr. Sumner told them to note the more subtle *motif* of Raphael's picture; the superior grace of the figures, their careful distribution, and the fine scheme of color; the sympathetic look in St. John's face; the grandly meditative St. Paul.

"I have a theory of my own about the meaning of this picture," said Bettina. "I thought it out one day when I was studying the photograph. I know it is always said, in descriptions of it, that all are listening to the music of the angels, but I do not think any of them save St. Cecilia hear the music of the angelic choir. She hears it, because she has so longed for it,—so striven to produce the highest music on earth. But the others are only moved by their sympathy with her. See the wistful look on St. John's face, and St. Augustine's also. And St. Paul is lost in wondering thought at St. Cecilia's emotion. And Mary Magdalene is asking us to look at her and try to understand her rapt upward look."

"I do not know," said Mr. Sumner, with a soft look in his eyes, "why you should not have your own private interpretation of the picture, dear 'Lady Betty';" and he smiled at Malcom as he used the latter's favorite appellation for Bettina.

Chapter XVIII.

In Venice.

*From the land we went
As to a floating city—steering in,
And gliding up her streets as in a dream
By many a pile in more than eastern pride,
Of old the residence of merchant-kings:
The fronts of some, tho' time had shattered them,*



*Still gleaming with the richest hues of art,
As though the wealth within them had run o'er.*

—ROGERS.

[Illustration: SAN MARCO, VENICE.]

Just after sunset the following evening they approached Venice. The long black train glided along above a sea flushed with purple and crimson and gold. Like a mirage the fair city—Longfellow's "white water-lily, cradled and caressed"—arose, lifting her spires—those "filaments of gold"—above the waters.

"Can it be real?" murmured Bettina. "It seems as if all must fade away before we reach it."

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But in a few minutes the *facchini* seized their hand-luggage, and they alighted as at any commonplace railway-station. But oh! the revelation when they went out upon the platform, up to which, not carriages, but gondolas were drawn, and from which stretched, not a dusty pavement, but the same gold and crimson and purple of sky reflected in the waters at their feet.

"Is it true that we are mortal beings still on the earth, and that we are seeking merely a hotel?" exclaimed Malcom, as they floated on between two skies to the music of lapping oars. "Madge, you ought to have some poetry to fit this."

"I know enough verses about Venice," replied Margery, whose eyes were dancing with joyous excitement, and who was trailing her little hot hand through the cool water, "but nothing fits. Nothing can fit; for who could ever put into words the beauty of all this?"

By and by they left the Grand Canal, passed through narrower ones, with such high walls on either side that twilight rapidly succeeded the sunset glow; floated beneath the Bridge of Sighs, and were at the steps of their hotel.

The next few days were devoted wholly to drinking in the spirit of Venice. Mr. Sumner hired gondolas which should be at the service of his party during the month they were to spend there, and morning, noon, and night found them revelling in this delight. They went to San Marco in early morning and late afternoon; fed the pigeons in the Piazza; ate ice-cream under its Colonnade; went to the Lido, and floated along the Grand Canal beside the music and beneath the moonlight for hours at night, and longed to be there until the morning.

Barbara grew stronger, the color returned to her cheeks, and though she often felt unhappy, she was better able to conceal it. She began to hope that her secret was safe; that it would never be discovered by any one; that Mr. Sumner would never dream of it. If only that dreadful suggestion of Malcom's might be wholly without foundation; and perhaps, after all, it was. She thought she would surely know when Lucile Sherman should come to Venice, as she would do soon.

At length Mr. Sumner suggested that they begin to study Venetian painting, and that, for it, they should first visit the Accademia delle Belle Arti. He advised them to read what they could about early Venetian painting.

"You will find," he said, "that the one strongest characteristic of all the painting that has emanated from Venice is beauty and strength of color, the keynote of which seems to have been struck in the first mosaic decorations of San Marco, more than eight centuries ago. And how could it be otherwise in a city so flooded with radiance of color and light!"

"I have brought you here," said he one morning, as they left their gondolas at the steps of the Academy, "for the special study of Carpaccio's and the Bellinis' works.

"But," he added, as they entered the building and stepped into the first room, "I would like you to stop for a few minutes and look at these quaint pictures by the Vivarini, Basaiti, Bissolo, and others of the early Venetian painters. Here you will notice the first characteristics of the school. This academy is particularly interesting to students of Venetian art, because it contains few other than Venetian paintings."

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Passing on, they soon reached a hall whose walls were lined with large pictures. Here Mr. Sumner paused, saying:—

“We find in this room quite a number of paintings by Vittore Carpaccio. Here is his most noted series, illustrating scenes in the legendary life of St. Ursula, the maiden princess of Brittany, who, with her eleven thousand companions, visited the holy shrines of the old world; and on their return all were martyred just outside the city of Cologne. You have read the story, I know. Look first at the general scheme of composition and color before going near enough to study details. Carpaccio had felt the flood of Venetian color, and here we see the beginnings of that wonderful richness found in works by the later Venetian masters. He was a born story-teller, and delighted especially in tales of a legendary, poetic character. His works possess a peculiar fascinating quaintness. The formal composition, by means of which we see several scenes crowded into one picture; the singular perspective effects; the figures with earnest faces beneath such heavy blond tresses, and with their too short bodies, enable us easily to recognize his pictures.”

“I think I shall choose St. Ursula to be my patron saint,” said Margery, thoughtfully, after they had turned from the purely artistic study of the pictures to their sentiment. “I have read somewhere that she is the especial patroness of young girls, as well as of those who teach young girls,—so she can rightfully belong to me, you see.”

“What do you think she will do for you?” asked Malcom, with a quizzical smile.

“Oh! I don’t know. Perhaps if I think enough about her life I shall be a better girl,” and the blue eyes grew very earnest.

“That is wholly unnecessary, Madge *mia*,” tenderly replied her brother.

“I will tell you a singular thing that I read not long ago,” said Bettina, going over to Margery, who was standing close in front of that sweet sleeping face of St. Ursula in one of the pictures. “It was in the life of Mr. Ruskin. His biographer says that Mr. Ruskin is wonderfully fond of the legend of St. Ursula; that he has often come from England to Venice just to look again on these pictures by old Carpaccio; that he has thought so much about her character that he really is influenced greatly by it. And he goes on to say that some person who has perhaps received a calm, kind letter from Mr. Ruskin instead of the curt, brusque, or impatient one that he had looked for, on account of the irascible nature of the writer, would be altogether surprised could he know that the reason of the unexpected quietness was that Mr. Ruskin had stopped to ask himself, ‘What would St. Ursula say? What would St. Ursula do?’”

“I think that is a pretty story about Mr. Ruskin, don’t you?” she added, turning to Malcom and the others.

“It is a pretty enough story,” replied Malcom. “But I confess I do not wish Madge always to stop and ask the mind of this leader of the ‘eleven thousand virgins.’ Only consult your own dear self, my sister. You are good enough as you are.”

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"I think it is the feminine quality in St. Ursula's ways of thought and action that appeals so strongly to Mr. Ruskin's rugged nature," replied Mr. Sumner, in answer to a rather appealing glance from Margery's eyes. "The tale of a gentle life influences for good a somewhat embittered, but grandly noble man. As to our little Madge," with a smile that drew her at once close to him, "the best influence she can gain from the old legend will grow out of the unwavering purpose of the saint, and her inflexibility of action when once the motive was felt to be a noble one. Her needs are not the same as are Mr. Ruskin's."

Margery slipped her hand into that of the uncle who so well understood her, and gave it a tender little squeeze. As Mr. Sumner turned quickly to call attention to one or two other pictures, with different subjects, by Carpaccio, he caught for an instant the old-time sympathetic look in Barbara's eyes, which gladdened his heart, and gave a new ring to his voice.

"Here are two or three historical pictures by Carpaccio and Gentile Bellini that put ancient Venice before our eyes, and, on this account, are most interesting. Their color is fine, but in all other art qualities they are weak."

"I must tell you," he went on, "about the Bellini brothers, Gentile and Giovanni. Their father, who was also an artist, came from Padua to Venice in the early part of the fifteenth century, bringing his two young sons, both of whom grew to be greater painters than the father. They opened a school, and Giorgione and Titian, who, you well know, are two supreme names in Venetian painting, were among their pupils. The Bellini paintings are the natural precursors of the glory of Venetian art. Even in these historical paintings by Gentile Bellini we feel the palpitating sunshine which floods and vivifies the rich colors of palaces and costumes. You can readily see the difference between his work and that of Carpaccio. While Carpaccio has treated the historic scene in a poetic way, with quaint formality, Bellini's picture is full of truth and detail.

"But," he continued, "Gentile Bellini's work, as art, fades in importance before that of his brother, Giovanni, who gave himself almost wholly to religious painting. If you will try to shut your eyes for a few minutes to the other pictures about you, I would like to take you immediately to one of this artist's Madonna pictures.

"And, by the way," he interpolated, as they walked straight on through several rooms, "I am delighted to see that you have learned to go into a gallery for the express study of a few pictures, and can refuse to allow your attention to be distracted by any others, however alluring. I am sure this is the only way in which really to study. Go as often or as seldom as you choose or can, but always go with a definite purpose, and do not be distracted by the effort to see the works of many artists at a single visit; least of all, by the endeavor to look at all there are about you. For him who does this, I predict an inevitable and incurable art-dyspepsia. The reason of my express caution now is that I

am taking you into the most attractive room of the gallery, and wish you to see nothing but one picture.

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"Here it is!" and they paused before a large altar-piece. "You at once feel the unique character of the Madonna; the stateliness of the composition, the exquisite harmony and strength of the color.—What is it, Betty?"

"I was only whispering to Barbara that these lovely angels, with musical instruments, who are sitting on the steps of the throne are those that we have seen so often in Boston art-shops."

"And they are indeed lovely!" replied Mr. Sumner. "I will allow you to look at another picture in this room which I had forgotten as we came hither—for it is by Carpaccio—turn, and look! this *Presentation in the Temple*! See those musical angels also, sitting on the steps of the Madonna's throne! I am sure the middle one is familiar to you all, for it is continually reproduced, and a great favorite. Of what other painter do these angels remind you?"

"Of Fra Bartolommeo," quickly replied two or three voices.

"And I am sure," continued Mr. Sumner, "that Fra Bartolommeo never painted them until after he had visited Venice, and had learned from the study of these Venetian masters how great an aid to composition and what beautiful features in a picture they are. And Raphael never painted them until he had seen Fra Bartolommeo's work.

"But now look at Bellini's *Madonna*" as he turned again to the picture, "for she is as individual as Botticelli's, and is as easily recognizable. Note her stately pride of beauty, produced chiefly by the way in which her neck rises from her shoulders, and in which her head is poised upon it. Everything else, however, is in perfect keeping—from the general attitude and lifted hand to the half-drooping eyelids. Of what is she so proud? She is holding her Child that the world may worship Him. Of herself she has no thought. Botticelli's Madonna is brooding over the sorrows of herself and Son: Bellini's is lost in the noble pride that He has come to save man. The color of the picture is wondrously beautiful.

"Please note in your little books this artist's *Madonnas* in San Zaccaria and Church of the Frari, and go to see them to-morrow morning if you can; they are his masterpieces. I will not talk any more now. If you wish to stay here longer, it will be well to go back and look at the very earliest pictures again, or others that you will find by Carpaccio and the Bellini brothers."

Not long after, they got together one evening to talk about Titian and Giorgione. They had seen, of course, their pictures in the Florentine galleries, and Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* in the Borghese Gallery, Rome; and were familiar with the rich color and superb Venetian figures and faces.

"What a pity that Giorgione died so young!" exclaimed Margery.

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"Yes," replied her uncle. "He would doubtless have given to the world many pictures fully equal to Titian's. Indeed, to me, he seems to have been gifted with even a superior quality of refinement. We may see it in the contrast between his *Venus* in the Dresden Gallery, whose photograph you know, and Titian's two *Venuses* in the Uffizi, which you studied so carefully when in Florence. But there are very few examples of Giorgione's paintings in existence, and critics are still quarrelling over almost all that are attributed to him. Probably the most popular are the Dresden *Venus*, which has only recently been rescued from Titian and given to its rightful author, and the *Concert*, which you remember in the Pitti Gallery, Florence, about which there is considerable dispute, some critics thinking it an early work by Titian."

"Why did the artists not sign their pictures?" rather impatiently interrupted Malcom.

"Even a signature does not always settle questions," replied his uncle, "for it is by no means an unknown occurrence for a gallery itself to christen some doubtful picture. But to go on:—

"In Venice there is but one painting by Giorgione which is undoubtedly authentic. I will take you to the Giovanelli Palace, where it is. It is called *Family of Giorgione*. He was fond of introducing three figures into his compositions,—you remember the Pitti *Concert*,—there are also three in this Giovanelli picture—a gypsy woman, a child, and a warrior. The landscape setting is exceedingly beautiful, and the whole glows with Giorgione's own color.

"About Titian," continued he, "you have read, and can easily read so much that I shall not talk long. His whole story is like a romance; his success and fame boundless; his pictures scattered among all important galleries."

"Has Venice a great many?" queried Malcom.

"No, Venice possesses comparatively few; and, strangely enough, these are not most characteristic of the painter. His name, you know, is almost indissolubly connected with noble portraits, magnificent mythological representations, and those ideal pictures of beautiful women of which he painted so many, and which wrought such a revolution in the character of succeeding art. Hardly any of these, though so entirely in keeping with the brilliant city, are in Venice to-day; we must go elsewhere, to Madrid, to Paris, Florence, Rome, Dresden, and Berlin to find them. One mythological picture only, *Venus and Adonis*, is in the Academy, and one portrait of a Doge, doubtfully ascribed to Titian, is in the Ducal Palace."

"Then what pictures are here?" asked Bettina, as Mr. Sumner paused.

"His greatest religious paintings, those gorgeous church pictures, most of which were painted in his youth, are here."

“May I interrupt a moment,” queried Barbara, “to ask what you meant when you said that some of Titian’s pictures wrought a revolution in art?”

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"This is a good time in which to explain my meaning. Titian's nature was not devout. You will see it in every one of these religious paintings you are about to study. The subjects seem only pretexts, or foundations, for the gorgeous display of a rare artistic ability. To paint beauty for beauty's sake only, in form, features, costumes, and accessories was Titian's native sphere, and gloriously did he fill it. In these church pictures, the Madonna and Child are almost always entirely secondary in interest. In many, the family of the donor, with their aristocratic faces and magnificent costumes, and the saints with waving banners, are far more important. A fine example of this is the *Madonna of the Pesaro family* in the Church of the Frari. With such a *motif* underlying his work, the great painter fell easily into the habit of portraying ideal figures, especially of women,—'fancy female figures,' one writer has termed them,—whose sole merit lies in the superb rendering of rosy flesh, heavy tresses of auburn hair, lovely eyes, and rich garments. Such are his *Flora*, *Venuses*, *Titian's Daughter*—of which there are several examples—*Magdalens*, etc.; together with many so called portraits, such as his *La Donna Bella* in the Pitti, Florence.

"Titian could paint such pictures so free from coarseness, so magnificent in all art qualities, that the world was delighted with them. After him, however, the lowered aim had its influence; poorer artists tried to follow in his footsteps, and the world of art soon became flooded with mediocre examples of these meaningless pictures. All this hastened rapidly the decay of Italian art.

"But you must remember," Mr. Sumner hastened to say, as he watched the faces about him, "that I am giving you my own personal thoughts. To me, the purity of sentiment and the lofty *motif* of a picture mean so much that they always influence my judgment of it. With many other people it is not so. They revel in the color, the line, the tone, the grouping, the purely art qualities. In these Titian, as I have said, is perfect, and worthy of the high place he holds in the art-world.

"I hope you will take great pains to study him here by yourselves,—in the Academy and in the various churches,—wherever there are examples of his work. Let each form his own judgment, founded on that which he finds in the pictures. The work of any artist of the High Renaissance, whose aim is purely artistic, is not difficult to understand. His means of expression were so ample that it is easy indeed to read that which he says, compared with the earlier masters. You will find two of Titian's most notable pictures in the Academy,—the *Assumption of the Virgin*, one of the few in which the Madonna has due prominence, and which shows the artist's best qualities, and *Presentation of the Virgin*."

"What other Venetian Masters ought we particularly to study?" asked Barbara.

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“Look out for Crivelli’s *Madonnas*, and all of Paul Veronese’s work. He was really the most utterly Venetian painter who ever lived. He painted Venice into everything: its motion, its color, its intoxicating fulness are all found in his mythological and banquet scenes. You will find his pictures in the Ducal Palace, in the Academy, and a fine series in San Sebastiano, which represents legendary scenes in the life of St. Sebastian. Go to Santa Maria Formosa and look at Palma Vecchio’s *St. Barbara*, his masterpiece. You will also find several of this artist’s pictures in the Academy worth looking at. His style at its best is grand, as in the *St. Barbara*, but he did not always paint up to it, by any means.

“As to the rest, study them as a whole. The Venice Academy is an epitome of Venetian painting, from its earliest work down through the High Renaissance into the Decadence. It was full of pure and devotional sentiment, rendered with good, oftentimes rich, color, until after the Bellini. Then the portrayal of purely physical beauty, with refinement of line and gorgeousness of color, became preeminent. The works of several artists of note, Palma Vecchio, Palma Giovine, Bonifazio Veronese, and Bordone, so resemble each other and Titian’s less important works, that there has been much uncertainty as to the true authorship of many of them.”

“And Tintoretto?” questioned Barbara.

“I will take you to see Tintoretto’s pictures—or many of them at least,” added Mr. Sumner. “He stands alone by himself.”

Chapter XIX.

In a Gondola.

*And on her lover’s arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new land which is the old.*

—TENNYSON.

[Illustration: GRAND CANAL AND RIALTO, VENICE.]

Lucile Sherman, accompanied by her friends, had arrived in Venice, and though not at the same hotel, yet she spent all the time she could with Mrs. Douglas, and wished to join her in many excursions. She had found it very wearisome to tarry so long in Rome, but there had been no sufficient reason for following the party to Florence and on to Venice; therefore it had seemed the only thing to do.

Now that she was again with them she watched Mr. Sumner and Barbara most zealously. Her quick eyes had noted the altered condition of affairs during the latter days of the Naples journey, and she was feverishly anxious to understand the cause. Her intuition told her that there was some peculiar underlying interest for each in the other, and when this exists between a man and woman, some sequel may always be expected. One thing was certain; Mr. Sumner covertly watched Barbara, and Barbara avoided meeting his eye. She could only wait, while putting forth every effort to gain the interest in herself she so coveted.



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And Barbara, of course, was trying to determine whether there was any ground for the suspicions, or rather suggestions, that Malcom gave voice to on that dreadful ride to Sorrento.

And Bettina watched all three; and so did Malcom, after a fashion, but he was less keenly interested than the others. He sometimes tried to talk with Bettina about the studio incident, but never could he begin to discuss Barbara in the slightest way without encountering her sister's indignation.

Mrs. Douglas, who had outlived her former wish concerning her brother and Lucile Sherman, and Margery were the only ones who had nothing to hide, and so gave themselves simply to the enjoyment of the occurrences of each hour.

"We must begin to see Tintoretto's paintings," said Mr. Sumner at breakfast one fine morning; "and, since the sun shines brightly, I suggest that we go at once to the Scuola di San Rocco, for the only time to see the pictures there is the early morning of a bright day."

"We must not forget Lucile," said Mrs. Douglas, with an inquiring look at her brother, "for she asked particularly to go there with us."

"Then we must call for her of course," quietly answered he, as all rose from the table. "We will start at once."

"I do not believe," said Bettina, as she and Barbara were in their room putting on their hats a moment afterward, "that Mr. Sumner cares one bit more for Lucile Sherman than for anybody else."

"Why don't you think so?" asked Barbara, as she turned aside to find her gloves, which search kept her busy for a minute or two.

"Because he never seems to take any pains to be where she is—he does not watch for the expression of her eyes—his voice never changes when he speaks to her," answered Bettina, slowly, enumerating some of the signs she had observed in Mr. Sumner with respect to Barbara.

Neither of the girls stopped to think how singular it was that Bettina should have watched Mr. Sumner closely enough to make such a positive assertion as this, which, perhaps, is a sufficient commentary on the state of their minds at this time.

After a delightful half hour of gliding through broad and narrow canals, they landed in front of the Church of San Rocco, and passed into the alleyway from which is the entrance of the famous Scuola. As they stepped into its sumptuous hall, Miss Sherman remarked:—

“I see that Mr. Ruskin says whatever the traveller may miss in Venice, he should give much time and thought to this building.”

“Mr. Ruskin has championed Tintoretto with the same fervor that he has expended upon Turner,” replied Mr. Sumner, smiling. “I think we should season his judgments concerning both artists with the ‘grain of salt’.

“But,” continued he, as he saw all were waiting for something further, “there can be no doubt that Tintoretto was a great painter and a notable man. To read the story of his life,—his struggles to learn the art,—his assurance of the worth of his own work, and his colossal ambitions, is as interesting as any romance.”

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"I was delighted," interpolated Malcom, "with the story of his first painting for this building, and the audacity that gained for him the commission to paint one picture for it every year of his remaining life.

"And here are about fifty of them," resumed Mr. Sumner, "in which we may study both his strength and his weakness. No painter was ever more uneven than he. No painter ever produced works that present such wide contrasts as do his. He could use color as consummately as Titian himself, as we see in his masterpiece, *The Miracle of St. Mark*, in the Academy; yet many of his pictures are almost destitute of it. He could vie with the greatest masters in composition; yet there are many instances where he seems to have thrown the elements of his pictures wildly together without a single thought of artistic proportions and relations. In some works he has shown himself a thorough master of technique; in others his rendering is so careless that we are ashamed for him. But all this cannot alter the fact that he is surpassingly great in originality, in nobility of conception, and in a certain poetic feeling,—and these are qualities that set the royal insignia upon any artist."

"I cannot help feeling the motion, the action, of all these wild figures," exclaimed Bettina, as she stood looking about in a helpless way. "I seem to be buffeted on all sides, and the pictures mix themselves with each other."

"It is no wonder. No painter was ever so extravagant as he could be. There is a headlong dash, an impetuous action in his figures when he wills, that remind us of Michael Angelo; but Tintoretto's imagination far outran that of the great Florentine master. Yet there is a singular sense of reality in his most imaginative works, and it is this, I think, that is sometimes so confusing and overwhelming. His paintings here are so many that I cannot talk long about any particular one. I will only try to tell you what qualities to look for—then you must, for yourselves, endeavor to understand and come under the spell of the personality of the artist.

"In the first place," he continued, "look for power—power of conception, of invention, and of execution. For instance, give your entire attention for a few minutes to this *Massacre of the Innocents*. See the perfect delirium of feeling and action—the frenzy of men, women, and children. Look also for originality of invention. Combinations and situations unthought of by other painters are here. There is never even a hint of plagiarism in Tintoretto's work. In his own native strength he seizes our imagination and, at will, plays upon it. We shudder, yet are fascinated."

"Oh, uncle! I don't like it!" cried Margery, almost tearfully. "I don't wish to see any more of his pictures, if all are like these."

"Madge—puss," said Malcom, "this is a horrible subject. Not all will be like this."

“No, dear,” said her mother, sympathizingly, “I don’t like it either. You and I will choose the pictures we are to look at long. There are many of Tintoretto’s that you will enjoy, I know,—many from which you can learn about the artist, as well as from such as these.”

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"We cannot doubt the dramatic power of Tintoretto, can we?" asked Mr. Sumner, with a suppressed twinkle of the eye. "What shall we look for next? Let us ascend this beautiful staircase. Now look at this *Visitation*. Is it not truly fine, charming in composition, graceful in action, agreeable in color, and true and noble in expression?"

All agreed most eagerly with Mr. Sumner's opinion of the picture. Then, turning, Bettina caught sight of an *Annunciation*, and cried:—

"How thoroughly exquisite! See those lovely angels tumbling over each other in their haste to tell the news to Mary! How brilliant! Surely Tintoretto did not paint this!"

"No. This is by Titian; and it is one of his most happy religious pictures too. I thought of it as we were coming, and am glad to have you see it. The whole expression is admirable; and the fulness of life and joy—the jubilation—is perfect. You can in no way more vividly feel the difference between fourteenth-century painting in Florence, and the sixteenth-century or High Renaissance work in Venice, than by recalling Fra Angelico's sweet, calm, staid Annunciations, and contrasting them with this one."

"But why do I feel that, after all, I love Fra Angelico's better, and should care to look at them oftener?" rather timidly asked Barbara.

"I think," replied Mr. Sumner, after a little pause, "that it is because, in them, the spiritual expression dominates the physical. We recognize the fact that the artist has not the power to picture all that he desires to express. His art language is weak; therefore there is something left unsaid, and this compels our attention. We wish to understand his full meaning, so come to his pictures again and again."

"It is this quality of the fourteenth-century painting that impelled the Pre-Raphaelites, German and English, to discard the chief *motif* of the High Renaissance, which was to picture everything in its outward perfection. They thought that this very perfection of artistic expression led to the elimination of spiritual feeling."

"But how can artists go back now and paint as those did five centuries ago?" queried Malcom. "Of course, if they study methods of the present day, they must know all the principles underlying a true and artistic representation—and it would be wrong not to practise them."

"You have at once found the weak point in the Pre-Raphaelites' principle of work, Malcom. It is forced and artificial to do that in the nineteenth century which was natural and charming in the fourteenth. That which our artists of to-day must do if they desire any reform is to so fill themselves with the comprehension of spiritual things—so strive to understand the hidden beauty and harmony and truth of nature—that their works may be revelations to those who do not see so clearly as do they. To do this perfectly they must ever, in my opinion, give more thought to the thing to be expressed than to the

manner of its expression; yet they must render this expression as perfectly as the present conditions allow. But I think I have talked before of just this thing. And we must turn again to Tintoretto."

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Not only this forenoon, but many others, were spent in the Scuola di San Rocco in the study of Tintoretto's paintings. At first they shuddered at his most vivid representations of poor, sick, wretched beings that cover these immense canvases dedicated to the memory of St. Roch, whose life was devoted to hospital work; then were fascinated by the power that had so ruthlessly portrayed reality. They studied his great *Crucifixion*,—as a whole, in detailed groups, and then its separate figures,—until they began to realize the magnitude of its conception and rendering. Mr. Sumner had said that nowhere save in Venice can Tintoretto be studied, and all were anxious to understand his work.

At the Academy, close by Titian's great *Assumption of the Virgin*, they found Tintoretto's *Miracle of St. Mark*, and saw how noble could be, at their best, his composition and drawing, and how marvellous his coloring of sky, architecture, costume, and flesh. They went to the various churches, notably, Santa Maria del Orto, to see good examples of his religious painting; and to the Ducal Palace for his many mythological pictures, and his immense *Paradiso*. Finally they were happy in feeling that they could comprehend, in some little degree, the spirit of this strange, powerful artist and his work.

One rainy evening, toward the close of their stay in Venice, all sat in the parlor, discussing a most popular novel recently published. It was written in an exceedingly clever manner; indeed, possessed an unusual degree of literary merit. But like many other books then being sent forth, the tale was very sad.

The hero, Richard,—poor, proud, and painfully morbid,—would not believe it possible that the woman whom he passionately loved,—a woman whose life was filled with luxury, and who was surrounded by admirers,—could ever love him; and so he went out from her and all the possibilities of happiness, never to know that her heart was his and might have been had for the asking. The happiness of both lives was wrecked.

"I think no author ought to write such a story," said Mrs. Douglas, emphatically. "Life holds too much that is sad for us all to justify the expenditure of so much unavailing sympathy. The emotion that cannot work itself out in action takes from moral strength instead of adding to it. It is a pity to use so great literary talent in this way."

"But do not such things sometimes happen, and is it not a literary virtue to describe real life?" queried Barbara, from her corner amidst the shadows.

"Is it an especially artistic virtue to picture deformity and suffering just because they exist? I acknowledge that a picture or a book may be fine, even great, with such subjects; but is it either as helpful or wholesome as it might have been?" argued Mrs. Douglas.

"Yet in this book the characters of both hero and heroine grow stronger because of their suffering," suggested Bettina.

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"But such an unnecessary suffering!" rather impatiently asserted Malcom. "If either had died, then the other might have borne it patiently and been just as noble. But such a blunder! I threw the book aside in disgust, for the author had absorbed me with interest, and I was so utterly disappointed."

Mr. Sumner had been reading, and had not joined in the conversation, but Bettina thought she saw some evidence that he had heard it; and when, throwing aside his paper, he stepped outside on the balcony, she obeyed an impulse she could never afterward explain to herself, and followed him. Quickly putting her hand on his, she said, with a fluttering heart, but with a steady voice:—

"Dear Mr. Sumner, do not do as Richard did."

Then drawing back in consternation as she realized what she had done, she gasped:—

"Oh, forgive me! Forget what I have said!"

She tried to escape, but her hand was in a grip of iron. "What do you mean? Tell me, Betty. Barbara—" His voice failed, but the passion of love that blazed in his eyes reassured her.

"I will not say another word. Please let me go and never, *never* tell Barbara what I said;" and as she wrenched her hand from him, and vanished from the balcony, her smiling face, white amidst the darkness, looked to Robert Sumner like an angel of hope. Could it be that she intended to give him hope of Barbara's love—that sweet young girl—when he was so much older? When she knew that he had once before loved? But what else could Betty have meant? Had he been blind all this time, and had Betty seen it? A hundred circumstances sprang into his remembrance, that, looked at in the light of her message, took on possible meanings.

Robert Sumner was a man of action. As soon as his sister retired to her own room, he followed, and then and there fully opened his heart to her. He told her all, from the first moment when Barbara began to monopolize his thoughts, and confessed his struggles against her usurpation of the place Margaret had so long held.

To say that Mrs. Douglas was astonished does not begin to express the truth. She listened in helpless wonder. As he went on, and it became evident to her what a strong hold on his affections Barbara had gained, the fear arose lest he might be on the brink of a direful disappointment. At last, when he ended, saying, "I shall tell her all to-morrow," she could only falter:—

"Is it best so soon, Robert?"

"Soon!" he cried. "It seems as if I have waited years! Say not one word against it, sister. My mind is made up!"

But he could not tell her the hope Bettina had given, which was singing joyfully in his heart all the time. And so Mrs. Douglas was tortured all through the night with miserable forebodings.

The next morning Bettina was troubled at the look of resolve she understood in Mr. Sumner's face, and almost trembled at the thought of what she had done. "But I am sure—I am sure," she kept repeating, to reassure herself.

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A last visit to the Academy had been planned for the afternoon. They walked thither, as they often loved to do, through the narrow, still streets and across the little foot-bridges. Mrs. Douglas, with Margery and Miss Sherman, arrived first, and, after a few minutes' delay, Bettina and Malcom appeared.

"Uncle Robert has taken a gondola to the banker's to get our letters, mother," said Malcom, in such a peculiar voice that his mother gave him a quick look of interrogation.

"Where is your sister?" asked Miss Sherman, sharply, turning to Bettina as Mrs. Douglas passed into an adjoining room.

"Mr. Sumner asked her to help him get the letters," replied she, demurely.

Miss Sherman reddened, and Malcom's eyes danced.

"How strange!" said Margery, innocently.

The pictures were, unfortunately, of secondary interest to all the group save Margery; and, as Mr. Sumner and Barbara did not return, they, before very long, declared themselves tired, and returned home. The truth was, each one was longing for private thought.

Meanwhile Barbara and Mr. Sumner were on the Grand Canal. The sun shone brightly, and Mr. Sumner drew the curtains a little closer together to shield Barbara's face and, perhaps, his own. The gondolier rowed slowly. "Where to?" he had asked, and was answered only by a gesture to go on. So on they floated.

Barbara had obeyed without thought Mr. Sumner's sudden request to accompany him. But no sooner had they stepped into the gondola than she wished, oh, so earnestly! that she had made some excuse.

As Mr. Sumner did not speak, she tried to make some commonplace remark, but her voice would not reach her lips; so she sat, flushed and wondering, timid and silent.

At last he spoke, gravely and tenderly, of his early life, when she, a little girl, had known him; of his love and hope; of his sorrow and the years of lonely work in foreign lands; of his sister's coming; of his meeting with them all, and of how much they had brought into his life. But, as he looked up, he could not wait to finish the story as he had planned. He saw the sweet, flushed face so near him, the downcast eyes, the little hand that tried to keep from trembling but could not, and his voice grew sharp with longing:—

"Barbara! oh, little Barbara! you have made me love you as I never have dreamed of love. Can you love me a little, Barbara? Will you be my wife?" And he held out his hands, but dared not touch her.

Would she never answer? Would she never lift the eyelids that seemed to droop more and more closely upon the crimson cheeks? Had he frightened her? Was she only so sorry for him? Was Betty mistaken, after all?

But when, with a voice already quivering with apprehension, he again spoke her name, what a revelation!

With head thrown back and with smiling, though quivering, lips, Barbara looked at him, her eyes glowing with the unutterable tenderness he had sometimes dreamed of. She did not utter a word, but there was no need. The whole flood of her love, so long repressed, spoke straight to his heart.

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The gondola curtains flapped closer in the breeze. The gondolier hummed a musical love-ditty, while his oars moved in slow rhythm. It was Venice and June.

Chapter XX.

Return from Italy.

*To come back from the sweet South, to the North
Where I was born, bred, look to die;
Come back to do my day's work in its day,
Play out my play—
Amen, amen say I.*

—ROSSETTI.

[Illustration: MILAN CATHEDRAL.]

When Robert Sumner and Barbara returned, they found Mrs. Douglas alone. At the first glance she knew that all was well, and received them with smiles, and tears, and warm expressions of delight.

In a moment, however, Barbara—her eyes still shining with the wonder of it all—gently disengaged herself from Mrs. Douglas's embrace and went in search of her sister.

"Aren't you thoroughly astonished, Betty dear?" she asked, after she had told the wonderful news.

"Yes, Bab; more than astonished."

And Bettina's quibble can surely be forgiven. Not yet has she told her sister of the important part played by herself in bringing the love-affair to so happy a consummation; nor has Robert Sumner forgotten her prayer, "never, never tell Barbara!"

When evening came and Barbara was out on the balcony with Mr. Sumner, while the others were talking gayly of the happy event, Bettina suddenly felt an unaccountable choking in the throat. She hurried to her room, and there, in spite of every effort, had to give up to a good cry. She could not have told the cause, but we, the only ones beside herself who know this pitiful ending of all her bravery, understand and sympathize with her.

An hour later, when she had conquered herself and was coming slowly down the staircase, she found Malcom waiting to waylay her. Drawing her arm within his, and merrily assuming something of a paternal air, he said:—

“Now that this little family affair has reached a thoroughly satisfactory culmination, I trust that things will again assume their normal appearance. For the past month or so Barbara has been most *distracte*; uncle has so evidently tried to be cheerful that the effort has been distressing; and you, little Lady Betty, have been racking your precious brains for a scheme to make things better.”

“And you, Malcom,” she retorted, “have had so much sympathy with us all that wrinkles have really begun to appear on your manly brow.” And she put up her hand lightly as if to smooth them away.

“Look out, Betty!” with a curious flash of the eyes, as he seized her hand and held it tightly. “The atmosphere is rather highly charged these days.”

Bettina’s face slowly flushed as she tried to make some laughing rejoinder, and a strange painful shyness threatened to overtake her when Malcom, with a smile and a steady look into her eyes, set her free.

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Meanwhile Margery was saying to her mother:—

“How pleasant it is to have everybody so happy!”

“Yes, dear. Do you know why I am so very happy?” and as Margery shook her head, her mother told her that her Uncle Robert had decided to go home to America, and that never again would he live abroad.

“It is more like a story than truth. Uncle to go home, and Barbara to be his wife! You did not think, did you, mamma, what would come from our year in Italy? Just think! Suppose you had not asked Barbara and Betty to come with us! What then?”

“That is too bewildering a question for you to trouble yourself with, my child. There is no end to that kind of reasoning.

“And,” she added gently, “it is not a question that Faith would ask. The only truth is that God was leading me in a way I did not know, and for ends I could not foresee. That which I did from a feeling of pure love for my dear neighbors and friends was destined to bring me the one great blessing I had longed for during many years. Oh! it does seem too good to be true that Robert is so happy, and that he is coming home.”

And for the seventieth-times-seven time Mrs. Douglas breathed a silent thanksgiving as she heard the approaching footsteps of her brother.

For Barbara and Robert Sumner the last days spent in Venice were filled with a peculiar joy. The revulsion of feeling, the unexpected, despaired-of happiness, the untrammelled intercourse, the full sympathy of those dear to them,—all this could be experienced but once.

Only one person was out of tune with the general feeling. This was Lucile Sherman. She returned a polite note in reply to that which Mrs. Douglas had at once sent her containing information of her brother’s engagement to Barbara. In it she wrote that her friends had very suddenly decided to leave Venice for the Tyrol, and she must be content to go with them without even coming to say good-by and to offer, in person, her congratulations. Mrs. Douglas at first thought of going to her, if but for a moment; then decided that perhaps it would be best to let it be as she had so evidently chosen.

In a few days they also left Venice,—for Milan, stopping on the way for a day or two at Padua. They were to visit this city chiefly for the purpose of seeing Giotto’s frescoes in the Arena Chapel, and Mantegna’s in the Eremitani, although, as Mr. Sumner said, the gray old city is well worth a visit for many other reasons. The antiquity of its origin, which its citizens are proud to refer to Antenor, the mythical King of Troy, accounts for the thoroughly venerable appearance of some quarters. It is difficult, however, to believe that it was ever the wealthiest city in upper Italy, as it is reported to have been

under the reign of Augustus. During the Middle Ages it was one of the most famous of European seats of learning. Dante spent several years in Padua after his banishment from Florence, and Petrarch once lived here. All these things had been talked over before they alighted at the station, and, driving through one of the gates of the city, went to their hotel.

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All were eager to see whatever there was of interest. As it would be best to wait until morning for looking at the pictures, they at once set forth and walked along the narrow streets lined with arcades, and through grassy Il Prato, with its fourscore and more statues of Padua's famous men ranged between the trees. They saw the traditional house of Petrarch, and that of Dante, in front of which stands a large mediaeval sarcophagus reported to contain the bones of King Antenor, who, according to the poet Virgil, founded the city. They admired the churches, from several of which clusters of Byzantine domes rise grandly against the sky, noted the order, the quiet, that now reigns throughout the streets, and talked of the fierce, horrible warfare that had centuries ago raged there.

The next morning they spent among Giotto's frescoes, over thirty of which literally cover the walls of the Arena Chapel. The return to the work of the early fourteenth century, after months spent in study of the High Renaissance, was like an exchange of blazing noon sunshine for the first soft, sweet light that heralds the coming dawn. They were surprised at the freshness and purity of color and at the truth and force of expression. They had forgotten that old Giotto could paint so well. They found it easy now to understand in the artist that which at first had been difficult.

"Do you not think that Dante sometimes came here and sat while Giotto was painting?" by and by asked Margery, in an almost reverent voice.

"I do not doubt it," replied Mrs. Douglas. "Tradition tells us that they were great friends, and that when here together in Padua they lived in the same house. I always think of Giotto as possessing a jovial temperament, and as being full of bright thoughts. He must have been a great comfort to the poor unhappy poet. Without doubt they often walked together to this chapel; and while Giotto was upon the scaffolding, busy with his Bible stories, Dante would sit here, brooding over his misfortunes; or, perhaps, weaving some of his great thoughts into sublime poetry."

Afterward they went to the Eremitani to see Mantegna's frescoes, and thought they could see in the noble work of this old Paduan master what Giotto might have done had he lived a century or more later.

Mr. Sumner, however, said that he was sure that Giotto, with his temperament, could never have wrought detail with such exactness and refinement as did Mantegna—but also, that Giotto's color would always have been far better than Mantegna's. The likeness between the two artists is the intense desire of each to render expression of thought and feeling.

The following day, on their way from Padua to Milan, they were so fortunate as to be all in the same compartment, and as their train rushed on, their conversation turned upon Leonardo da Vinci, whose works in Milan they were longing to see.

During their stay in Florence they had read much about this great artist, and Mr. Sumner now suggested that each tell something he had learned concerning him.

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Margery began, and told how he used always to wear a sketch-book attached to his girdle as he walked through the streets of Florence, so that he might make a sketch of any face whose expression especially attracted him; how he would invite peasants to his studio and talk with them and tell laughable stories, that he might study the changes of emotion in their faces; and how he would even follow to their death criminals doomed to execution, in order to watch their suffering and horror.

“He did not care much for the form or coloring or beauty of faces;—only for the expression of feeling,” she added.

“But,” said Malcom, after waiting a moment for the others to speak if they chose, “he studied a host of other things, also. For in the letter he sent to Duke Ludovico of Milan asking that he might be taken into his service, he wrote that he could make portable bridges wonderfully adapted for use in warfare, also bombshells, cannon, and many other engines of war; that he could engineer underground ways, aqueducts, etc.; that he could build great houses, besides carrying on works of sculpture and painting. And there were many other things that I do not now remember. It seems as if he felt himself able to do all things. I believe he did make a magnificent equestrian statue of the duke’s father. And he studied botany and astronomy, anatomy and mathematics, and all sorts of things besides. I really do not see how he could have got much painting in.”

“He has left only a very few pictures to the world,” said Barbara. “We saw two or three at Florence, but I think only one—that unfinished *Adoration of the Magi*—is surely his. We shall see the *Last Supper* and *Head of Christ* at Milan. Then there are two or three in Paris and one in London I think these are all,” and she looked inquiringly at Mr. Sumner, who smilingly nodded confirmation of her words.

“But,” she went on, with an answering smile, “I do not think this was due to lack of time, for on these few pictures he probably spent as much time as ordinary artists do in painting a great many. He was never satisfied with the result of his work. His aims were so high and he saw and felt so much in his subjects that he would paint his pictures over and over again, and then often destroy them because he could not produce what he wished. I think he was one of the most untiring of artists.”

“I have been especially interested,” said Bettina, after a minute or two, “in the story of the *Last Supper* which we shall soon see.”

She then went on to tell the sad tale of Beatrice d’Este,—the good and beautiful wife of harsh, wicked Duke Ludovico. How she used to go daily to the church Santa Maria delle Grazie to be alone,—to think and to pray; and how, after her early death, the duke, probably influenced by remorse because of his cruelty to her, desired Leonardo to decorate this church and its adjoining

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monastery with pictures in memory of his dead young wife. The only remaining one of these is the *Last Supper* in the refectory of the old monastery. And the famous *Head of Christ* in the Brera Gallery, Milan, is only one of perhaps hundreds of studies that he made for the expression which he should give to his Christ in the *Last Supper*,—so dissatisfied was he with his renderings of the face of our Saviour. And even with his last effort he was not content, but said the head must ever go unfinished.

“I am glad to hear you say that this *Head of Christ* was produced simply as a study of expression,” remarked Mr. Sumner. “I am sure this fact is not understood by many who look upon it. I know of no other artistic representation in the world that is so utterly just an expression and nothing more;—a fleeting expression of some inner feeling of which the face is simply an index. And this feeling is the blended grief and love and resignation that filled the heart of our Saviour when He said to His disciples, ‘One of you shall betray me.’ It is a simply wrought study, made on paper with charcoal and water-color. The paper is worn, its edges are almost tattered; yet were it given me to become the possessor of one of the world’s art-treasures—whichever one I should choose—I think I should select this. You will know why when you see it.”

“What a pity that the great picture, the *Last Supper*, is so injured,” said Malcom, after a pause. “Is it as bad as it is said to be, uncle?”

“It is in a pretty bad condition, yet, after all, I enjoy it better than any copy that has ever been made. The handiwork of Leonardo, though so much of it has been lost, is yet the expression of a master; any lesser artist fails to render the highest that is in the picture. Both the Duke and Leonardo were in fault for its present condition. The monastery is very low, and on extremely wet ground. Water has often risen and inundated a portion of the building. It is not a fit place for any painting, as the Duke ought to have known. And, then, Leonardo, instead of painting in fresco, used oils, and of course the colors could not adhere to the damp plaster; so they have dropped off, bit by bit, until the surface is sadly disfigured.”

“Why did Leonardo do this?” inquired Margery.

“He was particularly fond of oil-painting, because this method allowed him to paint over and over again on the same picture, as he could not do in fresco.”

Mr. Sumner looked out of the window, and then hastened to say:—

“I think you all have learned that the chief quality of Leonardo da Vinci’s work is his rendering of facial expression—complex, subtle expression: yet he excelled in all artistic representation;—in drawing, in composition, in color, and in the treatment of light

and shade. He easily stands in the foremost rank of world painters. But, see! we are drawing near to Milan,—bright, gay little Milan,—the Italian Paris.”

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One day, soon after their arrival, as they were in the Brera Gallery, looking for the third or fourth time at Leonardo's *Head of Christ*, Barbara remarked that she was disappointed because she could not find any particular characteristic of this great artist's work, as she had so often been able to do with others. "I feel that I cannot yet recognize even his style," she lamented.

"You have as yet seen none of the pictures which contain his characteristic ideal face," replied Mr. Sumner. "But there is work here in Milan by Bernardino Luini, who studied Leonardo so intimately that he caught his spirit in a greater degree than did any other of his followers. Indeed, several of Luini's pictures have been attributed to Leonardo until very recently. This is a picture by Luini—right here—the *Madonna of the Rose-Trellis*. The Madonna is strikingly like Leonardo's ideal in the long, slender nose, the rather pointed chin, the dark, flowing hair,—and, above all, in the evidence of some deep thought. If it were Leonardo's, there would be, with all this, a faint, subtle smile. See the treatment of light and shade,—so delicate, and yet so strong. This is also like Leonardo."

After a few minutes spent in study of the picture, Mr. Sumner continued: "There is a singular mannerism in the backgrounds of Leonardo's pictures. It is the representation of running water between rocks,—a strange fancy. We see the suggestion of it through the window behind Christ in the *Last Supper*, and it forms the entire background of the famous *Mona Lisa*, in the Louvre. There is a beautiful picture by Luini, *The Marriage of St. Catherine*, in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum here in Milan, to which we will go at once. The faces are thoroughly Leonardesque, and through an open window in the background we clearly see the streamlet flowing between rocky shores.

"But first," he added, as they turned to go out, "let us go into this corridor where we shall find quite a large number of Luini's frescoes, which have been collected from the churches in which he painted them. I think you will grow familiar with Leonardo's faces through study of Luini."

During the stay in Milan they went down to Parma for a day, just to look at the fine examples of Correggio's works in the gallery and churches. In this city they could get the association of this artist with his works as nowhere else.

[Illustration: LUINI. POLDI-PEZZOLI MUSEUM, MILAN.

MARRIAGE OF SAINT CATHERINE.]

Mr. Sumner told them that it was a good thing to give especial attention to Correggio while studying Leonardo, because there is a certain similarity, and yet a very wide difference, between their works. Both painters were consummate masters of the art. Their beautiful figures, perfect in drawing and full of grace and life, melt into soft, rich shadows. Both loved especially to paint women, and smiling women; but the difference

between the smiles is as great as between light and darkness. Leonardo's are inexplicable; are wrought from within by depths of feeling we cannot understand. Correggio's only play about the lips, and are as simple as childhood. Leonardo's whole life was given to the study of mankind's innermost emotions. Correggio was no deep student of human nature.

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"When you go to Paris and see *Mona Lisa*, you will understand me better," he said in conclusion.

Delightful weeks among the Italian lakes and the mountains of Switzerland followed. Then came September, and it was time to turn their faces homeward. A week or two was spent in Paris, whose brilliance, fascinating gayety, and beauty almost bewildered them, and in whose great picture-gallery, the Louvre, they reviewed the art-study of the year.

Then they were off to Havre to take a French steamship home. Mr. Sumner had decided to return with them, and a little later in the fall to go back to Florence to settle all things there,—to give up his Italian home and studio. So there was nothing but joy in the setting forth.

* * * * *

"How can we wait a whole week!" exclaimed Bettina, as the two sisters were again unpacking the steamer trunks in their stateroom. "How long one little week seems when it comes at the end of a year, and lies between us and home!"

Barbara's thought flew back to the like scene on the *Kaiser Wilhelm* a year ago, when her mind had been busy with her father's parting words, and her eyes were very dark with feeling as she spoke:—

"Have you thought, Betty, how much we are taking back?—how much more than papa thought or we expected even in our wildest dreams? All this intimate knowledge of Florence, Rome, and Venice! All these memories of Italy,—and her art and history!"

Then after a moment she continued with changed voice: "And our friendship with Howard!—and the great gift he gave by which we have been able to get all these beautiful things we are taking home to the dear ones, and by which life is so changed for them and us!—and—"

"Barbara!" softly called Mr. Sumner's voice from the corridor.

"And," repeated Bettina, archly, with a most mischievous look as her sister hastened from the room to answer the summons.

At last the morning came when the steamship entered New York harbor; and the evening followed which saw the travellers again in their homes,—which restored Barbara and Bettina to father, mother, brothers, and sisters. There was no end of joy and smiles and happy talk.

After a little time Robert Sumner came, and Dr. Burnett, taking him by both hands, looked through moist eyes into the face he loved, and had so long missed, saying:—



“And so you have come home to stay,—Robert,—my boy!”

“Yes,” in a glad, ringing voice,—withdrawing one hand from the doctor’s and putting it into Mrs. Burnett’s eager clasp—“yes, Barbara and Malcom have brought me home. Malcom showed me it was my duty to come, and Barbara has made it a delight.”

Epilogue.

Three Years After.

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In one of New England's fairest villas, only a little way from the spot where we first found her, lives Barbara to-day. For more than two years she has been the wife of Robert Sumner. The faces of both tell of happy years, which have been bounteous in blessing. A new expression glows in Robert Sumner's eyes; the hint of a life whose energy is life-giving. All his powers are on the alert. His name bids fair to become known far and wide in his native land as a force for good in art, literature, philanthropy, and public service. And in everything Barbara holds equal pace with him. Whatever he undertakes, he goes to her young, fresh enthusiasm to be strengthened for the endeavor; he measures his own judgment against her wise, individual ways of thinking, and gains new trust in himself from her abiding confidence.

In the library of their home, surrounded by countless rare souvenirs of Italy, hangs a portrait of Howard Sinclair given to Barbara by his aged grandmother, who now rests beside her darling boy in beautiful Mount Auburn.

Dr. Burnett's low, rambling house has given place to a more stately one; but it stands behind the same tall trees, amidst the same wide, green spaces. And here is Bettina, —the same Betty,—broadened and enriched by the intervening years of gracious living; still almost hand in hand with her sister Barbara. Together they study and enjoy and sympathize; and together they are striving to bless as many lives as possible by a wise use of Howard's gift to Barbara.

They are not letting slip that which they learned of the art of the Old World, but are adding to it continually in anticipation of the time when they will again be in its midst. They believe that study of the old masters' pictures is a peculiar source of culture, and they delight in procuring photographs and rare reproductions for themselves and their friends. Their faces are familiar in the art-stores and picture galleries of Boston.

Good Dr. and Mrs. Burnett have grown more than three years younger by dropping so many burdens of life. They no longer count any ways and means save those of enlarging their own and their children's lives, and of making their home a happy, healthful centre from which all shall go forth daily to help in the world's growth and to minister to its needs.

Richard, Lois, Margaret, and Bertie, endowed with all the best available helps, are hard at work getting furnished for coming years.

Margery, entering into a lovely young womanhood, still lives with her mother and Malcom in the grand old colonial house in which many generations of her ancestors have dwelt.

Mrs. Douglas is quite as happy in the close vicinity of her brother as she thought she would be. Every day she rejoices in his home, in his work and growing fame. Barbara grows dearer to her continually as she realizes what a blessing she is to his life.



Indeed, so wholly natural and just-the-thing-to-be-expected does it now seem that her brother should fall in love with Barbara, that she grows ever more amazed that she did not think of it before it happened; and, when she recalls her surmises and little sisterly schemes concerning him and Lucile Sherman, she wonders at her own stupidity.

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For Malcom the three years have been crowded with earnest work. He fully justified the confidence his mother had reposed in him when she gave him the year abroad, by entering, on his return, the second year of the University course.

A few months ago he graduated with high honors, and is now just beginning the study of law. When admitted to the bar he will enter, as youngest partner, the law firm of which for over thirty years his grandfather was the head.

And through all he is the same frank, wholesome-hearted, strong-willed, but gentle Malcom that we knew in Italy.

The other day he entrusted to his mother and sister a precious secret that must not yet be divulged. They were delighted, but did not seem greatly surprised.

Bettina knows the secret.