

MY *Fine Art* STORY BOOK

VOLUME ONE

COMPILED BY MARLENE PETERSON

My *Fine Art* Story Book

Volume One



Stories of Artists and Fine Art
Pieces for the Young Reader

Compiled by Marlene Peterson

Libraries of Hope

My Fine Art Story Book
Volume One

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Knights of Art

Part One



About This Book

What would we do without our picture-books, I wonder? Before we knew how to read, before even we could speak, we had learned to love them. We shouted with pleasure when we turned the pages and saw the spotted cow standing in the daisy-sprinkled meadow, the foolish-looking old sheep with her gambolling lambs, the wise dog with his friendly eyes. They were all real friends to us.

Then a little later on, when we began to ask for stories about the pictures, how we loved them more and more. There was the little girl in the red cloak talking to the great grey wolf with the wicked eyes; the cottage with the bright pink roses climbing round the lattice-window, out of which jumped a little maid with golden hair, followed by the great big bear, the middle-sized bear, and the tiny bear. Truly those stories were a great joy to us, but we would never have loved them quite so much if we had not known their pictured faces as well.

Do you ever wonder how all these pictures came to be made? They had a beginning, just as everything else had, but the beginning goes so far back that we can scarcely trace it.

Children have not always had picture-books to look at. In the long-ago days such things were not known. Thousands of years ago, far away in Assyria, the Assyrian people learned to make pictures and to carve them out in stone. In Egypt, too, the Egyptians traced pictures upon the walls of their temples and upon the painted mummy cases of the dead. Then the Greeks made still more beautiful statues and pictures in marble, and called them gods and goddesses, for all this was at a time when the true God was forgotten.

Afterwards, when Christ had come and the people had learned that the pictured gods were not real, they began to think it wicked to make beautiful pictures or carve marble statues. The few pictures that were made were stiff and ugly, the figures were not like real men and women, the animals and trees were very strange-looking things. And

instead of making the sky blue as it really was, they made it a chequered pattern of gold. After a time it seemed as if the art of making pictures was going to die out altogether.

Then came the time which is called 'The Renaissance,' a word which means being born again, or a new awakening, when men began to draw real pictures of real things and fill the world with images of beauty.

Now it is the stories of the men of that time, who put new life into Art, that I am going to tell you—men who learned, step by step, to paint the most beautiful pictures that the world possesses.

ln telling these stories I have been helped by an old book called *The Lives of the Painters*, by Giorgio Vasari, who was himself a painter. He took great delight in gathering together all the stories about these artists and writing them down with loving care, so that he shows us real living men, and not merely great names by which the famous pictures are known.

It did not make much difference to us when we were little children whether our pictures were good or bad, as long as the colours were bright and we knew what they meant. But as we grow older and wiser our eyes grow wiser too, and we learn to know what is good and what is poor. Only, just as our tongues must be trained to speak, our hands to work, and our ears to love good music, so our eyes must be taught to see what is beautiful, or we may perhaps pass it carelessly by, and lose a great joy which might be ours.

So now if you learn something about these great artists and their wonderful pictures, it will help your eyes to grow wise. And some day should you visit sunny Italy, where these men lived and worked, you will feel that they are quite old friends. Their pictures will not only be a delight to your eyes, but will teach your heart something deeper and more wonderful than any words can explain.

--Amy Steedman

The Entombment of Mary GIOTTO



Giotto de Bondone

DIED 1337, ITALY

It was more than six hundred years ago that a little peasant baby was born in the small village of Vespignano, not far from the beautiful city of Florence, in Italy. The baby's father, an honest, hard-working countryman, was called Bondone, and the name he gave to his little son was Giotto.

Life was rough and hard in that country home, but the peasant baby grew into a strong, hardy boy, learning early what cold and hunger meant. The hills which surrounded the village were grey and bare, save where the silver of the olive-trees shone in the sunlight, or the tender green of the shooting corn made the valley beautiful in early spring. In summer there was little shade from the blazing sun as it rode high in the blue sky, and the grass which grew among the grey rocks was often burnt and brown. But, nevertheless, it was here that the sheep of the village would be turned out to find what food they could, tended and watched by one of the village boys.

So it happened that when Giotto was ten years old his father sent him to take care of the sheep upon the hillside. Country boys had then no schools to go to or lessons to learn, and Giotto spent long happy days, in sunshine and rain, as he followed the sheep from place to place, wherever they could find grass enough to feed on. But Giotto did something else besides watching his sheep. Indeed, he sometimes forgot all

about them, and many a search he had to gather them all together again. For there was one thing he loved doing better than all beside, and that was to try to draw pictures of all the things he saw around him.

It was no easy matter for the little shepherd lad. He had no pencils or paper, and he had never, perhaps, seen a picture in all his life. But all this mattered little to him. Out there, under the blue sky, his eyes made pictures for him out of the fleecy white clouds as they slowly changed from one form to another. He learned to know exactly the shape of every flower and how it grew; he noticed how the olive-trees laid their silver leaves against the blue background of the sky that peeped in between, and how his sheep looked as they stooped to eat, or lay down in the shadow of a rock.

Nothing escaped his keen, watchful eyes, and then with eager hands he would sharpen a piece of stone, choose out the smoothest rock, and try to draw on its flat surface all those wonderful shapes which had filled his eyes with their beauty. Olive-trees, flowers, birds and beasts were there, but especially his sheep, for they were his friends and companions who were always near him, and he could draw them in a different way each time they moved.

Now it fell out that one day a great master painter from Florence came riding through the valley and over the hills where Giotto was feeding his sheep. The name of the great master was Cimabue, and he was the most wonderful artist in the world, so men said. He had painted a picture which had made all Florence rejoice. The Florentines had never seen anything like it before, and yet it was but a strange looking portrait of the Madonna and Child, scarcely like a real woman or a real baby at all. Still, it seemed to them a perfect wonder, and Cimabue was honoured as one of the city's greatest men.

The road was lonely as it wound along. There was nothing to be seen but waves of grey hills on every side, so the stranger rode on, scarcely lifting his eyes as he went. Then suddenly he came upon a flock of sheep nibbling the scanty sunburnt grass, and a little brown-faced



Stigmatization of St. Francis by Giotto

Poliptico de Bolonia by Giotto



shepherd-boy gave him a cheerful 'Good-day, master.'

There was something so bright and merry in the boy's smile that the great man stopped and began to talk to him. Then his eye fell upon the smooth flat rock over which the boy had been bending, and he started with surprise.

'Who did that?' he asked quickly, and he pointed to the outline of a sheep scratched upon the stone.

'It is the picture of one of my sheep there,' answered the boy, hanging his head with a shame-faced look. 'I drew it with this,' and he held out towards the stranger the sharp stone he had been using.

'Who taught you to do this?' asked the master as he looked more carefully at the lines drawn on the rock.

The boy opened his eyes wide with astonishment. 'Nobody taught me, master,' he said. 'I only try to draw the things that my eyes see.'

'How would you like to come with me to Florence and learn to be a painter?' asked Cimabue, for he saw that the boy had a wonderful power in his little rough hands.

Giotto's cheeks flushed, and his eyes shone with joy.

'Indeed, master, I would come most willingly,' he cried, 'if only my father will allow it.'

So back they went together to the village, but not before Giotto had carefully put his sheep into the fold, for he was never one to leave his work half done.

Bondone was amazed to see his boy in company with such a grand stranger, but he was still more surprised when he heard of the stranger's offer. It seemed a golden chance, and he gladly gave his consent.

Why, of course, the boy should go to Florence if the gracious master would take him and teach him to become a painter. The home would be lonely without the boy who was so full of fun and as bright as a sunbeam. But such chances were not to be met with every day, and he was more than willing to let him go.

So the master set out, and the boy Giotto went with him to

Florence to begin his training.

The studio where Cimabue worked was not at all like those artists' rooms which we now call studios. It was much more like a workshop, and the boys who went there to learn how to draw and paint were taught first how to grind and prepare the colours and then to mix them. They were not allowed to touch a brush or pencil for a long time, but only to watch their master at work, and learn all that they could from what they saw him do.

So there the boy Giotto worked and watched, but when his turn came to use the brush, to the amazement of all, his pictures were quite unlike anything which had ever been painted before in the workshop. Instead of copying the stiff, unreal figures, he drew real people, real animals, and all the things which he had learned to know so well on the grey hillside, when he watched his father's sheep. Other artists had painted the Madonna and Infant Christ, but Giotto painted a mother and a baby.

And before long this worked such a wonderful change that it seemed indeed as if the art of making pictures had been born again. To us his work still looks stiff and strange, but in it was the beginning of all the beautiful pictures that belong to us now.

Giotto did not only paint pictures, he worked in marble as well. To-day, if you walk through Florence, the City of Flowers, you will still see its fairest flower of all, the tall white campanile or belltower, 'Giotto's tower' as it is called. There it stands in all its grace and loveliness like a tall white lily against the blue sky, pointing ever upward, in the grand old faith of the shepherd-boy. Day after day it calls to prayer and to good works, as it has done all these hundreds of years since Giotto designed and helped to build it.

Some people call his pictures stiff and ugly, for not every one has wise eyes to see their beauty, but the loveliness of this tower can easily be seen by all. There the white doves circle round and round, and rest in the sheltering niches of the delicately carved arches; there at the call



Giotto's Campanile



The Visit of the Magi by Giotto

of its bell the black-robed Brothers of Pity hurry past to their works of mercy. There too the little children play, and sometimes stop to stare at the marble pictures, set in the first story of the tower, low enough to be seen from the street. Their special favourite is perhaps the picture of the shepherd sitting under his tent, with the sheep in front, and with the funniest little dog keeping watch at the side.

Giotto always had a great love for animals, and whenever it was possible he would squeeze one into a corner of his pictures. He was sixty years old when he designed this wonderful tower and cut some of the marble pictures with his own hand, but you can see that the memory of those old days when he ran barefoot about the hills and tended his sheep was with him still. Just such another little puppy must have often played with him in those long-ago days before he became a great painter and was still only a merry, brown-faced boy, making pictures with a sharp stone upon the smooth rocks.

Up and down the narrow streets of Florence now, the great painter would walk and watch the faces of the people as they passed. And his eyes would still make pictures of them and their busy life, just as they used to do with the olive-trees, the sheep, and the clouds.

In those days nobody cared to have pictures in their houses, and only the walls of the churches were painted. So the pictures, or frescoes, as they were called, were of course all about sacred subjects, either stories out of the Bible or of the lives of the saints. And as there were few books, and the poor people did not know how to read, these frescoed walls were the only story-books they had.

What a joy those pictures of Giotto's must have been, then, to those poor folk! They looked at the little Baby Jesus sitting on His mother's knee, wrapped in swaddling bands, just like one of their own little ones, and it made Him seem a very real baby. The wise men who talked together and pointed to the shining star overhead looked just like any of the great nobles of Florence. And there at the back were the two horses looking on with wise interested eyes, just as any of their own

horses might have done.

It seemed to make the story of Christmas a thing which had really happened, instead of a far-away tale which had little meaning for them. Heaven and the Madonna were not so far off after all. And it comforted them to think that the Madonna had been a real woman like themselves, and that the Jesu Bambino would stoop to bless them still, just as He leaned forward to bless the wise men in the picture.

How real too would seem the old story of the meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate, when they could gaze upon the two homely figures under the narrow gateway. No visionary saints these, but just a simple husband and wife, meeting each other with joy after a sad separation, and yet with the touch of heavenly meaning shown by the angel who hovers above and places a hand upon each head.

It was not only in Florence that Giotto did his work. His fame spread far and wide, and he went from town to town eagerly welcomed by all. We can trace his footsteps as he went, by those wonderful old pictures which he spread with loving care over the bare walls of the churches, lifting, as it were, the curtain that hides Heaven from our view and bringing some of its joys to earth.

Then, at Assisi, he covered the walls and ceiling of the church with the wonderful frescoes of the life of St. Francis; and the little round common-place Arena Chapel of Padua is made exquisite inside by his pictures of the life of our Lord.

In the days when Giotto lived the towns of Italy were continually quarrelling with one another, and there was always fighting going on somewhere. The cities were built with a wall all round them, and the gates were shut each night to keep out their enemies. But often the fighting was between different families inside the city, and the grim old palaces in the narrow streets were built tall and strong that they might be the more easily defended.

In the midst of all this war and quarrelling Giotto lived his quiet, peaceful life, the friend of every one and the enemy of none. Rival



The Meeting of Anna and Joachim at the Golden Gate by Giotto

towns sent for him to paint their churches with his heavenly pictures, and the people who hated Florence forgot that he was a Florentine. He was just Giotto, and he belonged to them all. His brush was the white flag of truce which made men forget their strife and angry passions, and turned their thoughts to holier things.

Even the great poet Dante did not scorn to be a friend of the peasant painter, and we still have the portrait which Giotto painted of him in an old fresco at Florence. Later on, when the great poet was a poor unhappy exile, Giotto met him again at Padua and helped to cheer some of those sad grey days, made so bitter by strife and injustice.

Now when Giotto was beginning to grow famous, it happened that the Pope was anxious to have the walls of the great Cathedral of St. Peter at Rome decorated. So he sent messengers all over Italy to find out who were the best painters, that he might invite them to come and do the work.

The messengers went from town to town and asked every artist for a specimen of his painting. This was gladly given, for it was counted a great honour to help to make St. Peter's beautiful.

By and by the messengers came to Giotto and told him their errand. The Pope, they said, wished to see one of his drawings to judge if he was fit for the great work. Giotto, who was always most courteous, 'took a sheet of paper and a pencil dipped in a red colour, then, resting his elbow on his side, with one turn of the hand, he drew a circle so perfect and exact that it was a marvel to behold.' 'Here is your drawing,' he said to the messenger, with a smile, handing him the drawing.

'Am I to have nothing more than this?' asked the man, staring at the red circle in astonishment and disgust.

'That is enough and to spare,' answered Giotto. 'Send it with the rest.'

The messengers thought this must all be a joke.

'How foolish we shall look if we take only a round O to show his Holiness,' they said.

But they could get nothing else from Giotto, so they were obliged to be content and to send it with the other drawings, taking care to explain just how it was done.

The Pope and his advisers looked carefully over all the drawings, and, when they came to that round O, they knew that only a master-hand could have made such a perfect circle without the help of a compass. Without a moment's hesitation they decided that Giotto was the man they wanted, and they at once invited him to come to Rome to decorate the cathedral walls. So when the story was known the people became prouder than ever of their great painter, and the round O of Giotto has become a proverb to this day in Tuscany.

'Round as the O of Giotto, d' ye see;
Which means as well done as a thing can be.'

Later on, when Giotto was at Naples, he was painting in the palace chapel one very hot day, when the king came in to watch him at his work. It really was almost too hot to move, and yet Giotto painted away busily.

'Giotto,' said the king, 'if I were in thy place I would give up painting for a while and take my rest, now that it is so hot.'

'And, indeed, so I would most certainly do,' answered Giotto, 'if I were in your place, your Majesty.'

It was these quick answers and his merry smile that charmed every one, and made the painter a favourite with rich and poor alike.

There are a great many stories told of him, and they all show what a sunny-tempered, kindly man he was.

It is said that one day he was standing in one of the narrow streets of Florence talking very earnestly to a friend, when a pig came running down the road in a great hurry. It did not stop to look where it was going, but ran right between the painter's legs and knocked him flat on his back, putting an end to his learned talk.

Giotto scrambled to his feet with a rueful smile, and shook his finger at the pig which was fast disappearing in the distance.

'Ah, well!' he said, 'I suppose thou hadst as much right to the road as I had. Besides, how many gold pieces I have earned by the help of thy bristles, and never have I given any of thy family even a drop of soup in payment.'

Another time he went riding with a very learned lawyer into the country to look after his property. For when Bondone died, he left all his fields and his farm to his painter son. Very soon a storm came on, and the rain poured down as if it never meant to stop.

'Let us seek shelter in this farmhouse and borrow a cloak,' suggested Giotto.

So they went in and borrowed two old cloaks from the farmer, and wrapped themselves up from head to foot. Then they mounted their horses and rode back together to Florence.

Presently the lawyer turned to look at Giotto, and immediately burst into a loud laugh. The rain was running from the painter's cap, he was splashed with mud, and the old cloak made him look like a very forlorn beggar.

'Dost think if any one met thee now, they would believe that thou art the best painter in the world?' laughed the lawyer.

Giotto's eyes twinkled as he looked at the funny figure riding beside him, for the lawyer was very small, and had a crooked back, and rolled up in the old cloak he looked like a bundle of rags.

'Yes!' he answered quickly, 'any one would certainly believe I was a great painter, if he could but first persuade himself that thou dost know thy ABC.'

In all these stories we catch glimpses of the goodnatured kindly painter, with his love of jokes, and his own ready answers, and all the time we must remember that he was filling the world with beauty, which it still treasures to-day, helping to sow the seeds of that great tree of Art which was to blossom so gloriously in later years.

And when he had finished his earthly work it was in his own cathedral, 'St. Mary of the Flowers,' that they laid him to rest, while the people mourned him as a good friend as well as a great painter. There he lies in the shadow of his lily tower, whose slender grace and delicate-tinted marbles keep his memory ever fresh in his beautiful city of Florence.



No. 38 Scenes from the Life of Christ by Giotto



The Adoration of the Magi

Fra Angelico &
Fra Filippo Lippi

Fra Angelico

1395-1455, Italy

Nearly a hundred years had passed by since Giotto lived and worked in Florence, and in the same hilly country where he used to tend his sheep another great painter was born.

Many other artists had come and gone, and had added their golden links of beauty to the chain of Art which bound these years together. Some day you will learn to know all their names and what they did. But now we will only single out, here and there, a few of those names which are perhaps greater than the rest. Just as on a clear night, when we look up into the starlit sky, it would bewilder us to try and remember all the stars, so we learn first to know those that are most easily recognised—the Plough, or the Great Bear, as they shine with a clear steady light against the background of a thousand lesser stars.

The name by which this second great painter is known is Fra Angelico, but that was only the name he earned in later years. His baby name was Guido, and his home was in a village close to where Giotto was born.

He was not a poor boy, and did not need to work in the fields or tend the sheep on the hillside. Indeed, he might have soon become rich and famous, for his wonderful talent for painting would have quickly brought him honours and wealth if he had gone out into the world. But

instead of this, when he was a young man of twenty he made up his mind to enter the convent at Fiesole, and to become a monk of the Order of Saint Dominic.

Every brother, or frate, as he is called, who leaves the world and enters the life of the convent is given a new name, and his old name is never used again. So young Guido was called Fra Giovanni, or Brother John. But it is not by that name that he is known best, but that of Fra Angelico, or the angelic brother—a name which was given him afterwards because of his pure and beautiful life, and the heavenly pictures which he painted.

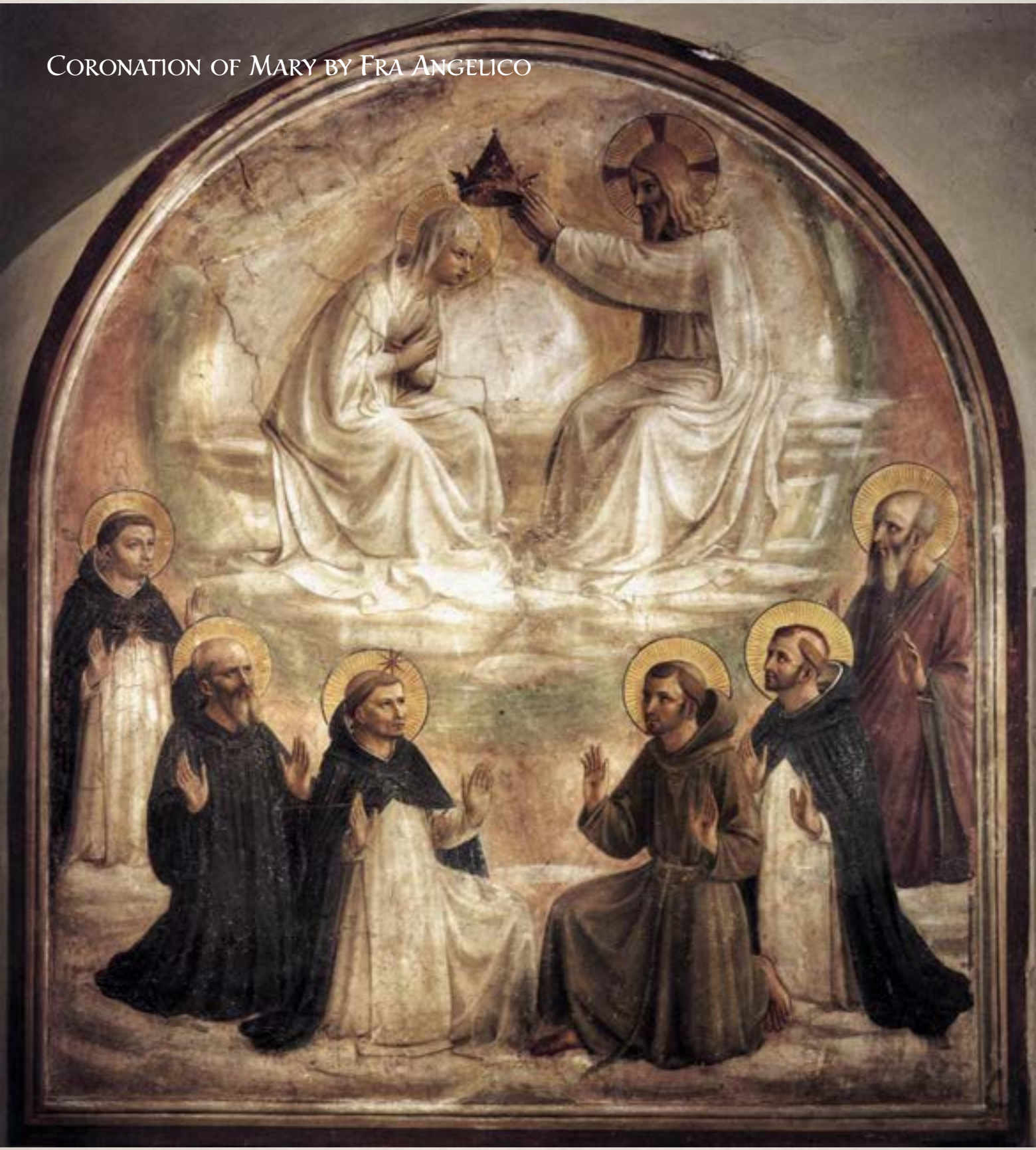
With all his great gifts in his hands, with all the years of youth and pleasure stretching out green and fair before him, he said good-bye to earthly joys, and chose rather to serve his Master Christ in the way he thought was right.

The monks of St. Dominic were the great preachers of those days—men who tried to make the world better by telling people what they ought to do, and teaching them how to live honest and good lives. But there are other ways of teaching people besides preaching, and the young monk who spent his time bending over the illuminated prayer-book, seeing with his dreamy eyes visions of saints and white-robed angels, was preparing to be a greater teacher than them all. The words of the preacher monks have passed away, and the world pays little heed to them now, but the teaching of Fra Angelico, the silent lessons of his wonderful pictures, are as fresh and clear to-day as they were in those far-off years.

Great trouble was in store for the monks of the little convent at Fiesole, which Fra Angelico and his brother Benedetto had entered. Fierce struggles were going on in Italy between different religious parties, and at one time the little band of preaching monks were obliged to leave their peaceful home at Fiesole to seek shelter in other towns. But, as it turned out, this was good fortune for the young painter-monk, for in those hill towns of Umbria where the brothers sought refuge there



Annunciation by Fra Angelico



Coronation of Mary by Fra Angelico

were pictures to be studied which delighted his eyes with their beauty, and taught him many a lesson which he could never have learned on the quiet slopes of Fiesole.

The hill towns of Italy are very much the same to-day as they were in those days. Long winding roads lead upwards from the plain below to the city gates, and there on the summit of the hill the little town is built. The tall white houses cluster close together, and the overhanging eaves seem almost to meet across the narrow paved streets, and always there is the great square, with the church the centre of all.

It would be almost a day's journey to follow the white road that leads down from Perugia across the plain to the little hill town of Assisi, and many a spring morning saw the painter-monk setting out on the convent donkey before sunrise and returning when the sun had set. He would thread his way up between the olive-trees until he reached the city gates, and pass into the little town without hindrance. For the followers of St. Francis in their brown robes would be glad to welcome a stranger monk, though his black robe showed that he belonged to a different order. Any one who came to see the glory of their city, the church where their saint lay, which Giotto had covered with his wonderful pictures, was never refused admittance.

How often then must Fra Angelico have knelt in the dim light of that lower church of Assisi, learning his lesson on his knees, as was ever his habit. Then home again he would wend his way, his eyes filled with visions of those beautiful pictures, and his hand longing for the pencil and brush, that he might add new beauty to his own work from what he had learned.

Several years passed by, and at last the brothers were allowed to return to their convent home of San Dominico at Fiesole, and there they lived peaceably for a long time. We cannot tell exactly what pictures our painter-monk painted during those peaceful years, but we know he must have been looking out with wise, seeing eyes, drinking in all the beauty that was spread around him.

At his feet lay Florence, with its towers and palaces, the Arno running through it like a silver thread, and beyond, the purple of the Tuscan hills. All around on the sheltered hillside were green vines and fruit-trees, olives and cypresses, fields flaming in spring with scarlet anemones or golden with great yellow tulips, and hedges of rose-bushes covered with clusters of pink blossoms. No wonder, then, such beauty sunk into his heart, and we see in his pictures the pure fresh colour of the spring flowers, with no shadow of dark or evil things.

Soon the fame of the painter began to be whispered outside the convent walls, and reached the ears of Cosimo da Medici, one of the powerful rulers of Florence. He offered the monks a new home, and, when they were settled in the convent of San Marco in Florence, he invited Fra Angelico to fresco the walls.

One by one the heavenly pictures were painted upon the walls of the cells and cloister of the new home. How the brothers must have crowded round to see each new fresco as it was finished, and how anxious they would be to see which picture was to be near their own particular bed. In all the frescoes, whether he painted the gentle Virgin bending before the angel messenger, or tried to show the glory of the ascended Lord, the artist-monk would always introduce one or more of the convent's special saints, which made the brothers feel that the pictures were their very own. Fra Angelico had a kind word and smile for all the brothers. He was never impatient, and no one ever saw him angry, for he was as humble and gentle as the saints whose pictures he loved to paint.

It is told of him, too, that he never took a brush or pencil in his hand without a prayer that his work might be to the glory of God. Often when he painted the sufferings of our Lord, the tears would be seen running down his cheeks and almost blinding his eyes.

There is an old legend which tells of a certain monk who, when he was busily illuminating a page of his missal, was called away to do some service for the poor. He went unwillingly, the legend says, for he

longed to put the last touches to the holy picture he was painting; but when he returned, lo! he found his work finished by angel hands.

Often when we look at some of Fra Angelico's pictures we are reminded of this legend, and feel that he too might have been helped by those same angel hands. Did they indeed touch his eyes that he might catch glimpses of a Heaven where saints were swinging their golden censers, and white-robed angels danced in the flowery meadows of Paradise? We cannot tell; but this we know, that no other painter has ever shown us such a glory of heavenly things.

Best of all, the angel-painter loved to paint pictures of the life of our Lord; and in the picture I have shown you, you will see the tender care with which he has drawn the head of the Infant Jesus with His little golden halo, the Madonna in her robe of purest blue, holding the Baby close in her arms, St. Joseph the guardian walking at the side, and all around the flowers and trees which he loved so well in the quiet home of Fiesole.

He did not care for fame or power, this dreamy painter of angels, and when the Pope invited him to Rome to paint the walls of a chapel there, he thought no more of the glory and honour than if he was but called upon to paint another cell at San Marco.

But when the Pope had seen what this quiet monk could do, he called the artist to him.

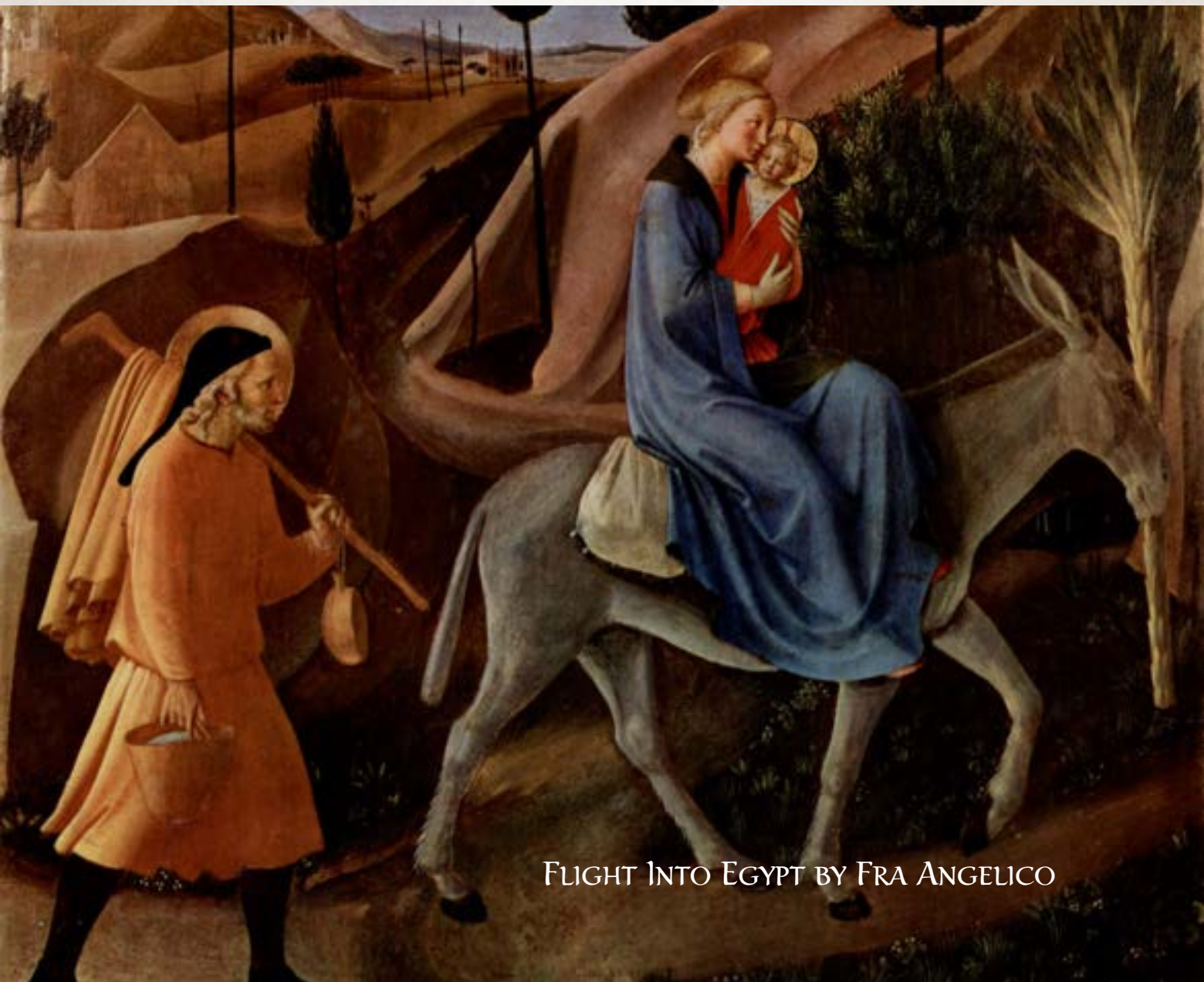
'A man who can paint such pictures,' he said, 'must be a good man, and one who will do well whatever he undertakes. Will you, then, do other work for me, and become my Archbishop at Florence?' But the painter was startled and dismayed.

'I cannot teach or preach or govern men,' he said. 'I can but use my gift of painting for the glory of God. Let me rather be as I am, for it is safer to obey than to rule.'

But though he would not take this honour himself, he told the Pope of a friend of his, a humble brother, Fra Antonino, at the convent of San Marco, who was well fitted to do the work. So the pope took the

painter's advice, and the choice was so wise and good, that to this day the Florentine people talk lovingly of their good bishop Antonino.

It was while he was at work in Rome that Fra Angelico died, so his body does not rest in his own beloved Florence. But if his body lies in Rome, his gentle spirit still seems to hover around the old convent of San Marco, and there we learn to know and love him best. Little wonder that in after ages they looked upon him almost as a saint, and gave him the title of 'Beato,' or the blessed angel-painter.



Flight Into Egypt by Fra Angelico



Conversion of Saint Augustin by Fra Angelico

The Adoration of the Magi

Masaccio



Masaccio

1401-1428, Italy

It must have been about the same time when Fra Angelico was covering the walls of San Marco with his angel pictures, that a very different kind of painter was working in the Carmine church in Florence. This was no gentle, refined monk, but just an ordinary man of the world—an awkward, good-natured person, who, as long as he had pictures to paint, cared for little else. Why, he would even forget to ask for payment when his work was done; and as to taking care of his clothes, or trying to keep himself tidy, that was a thing he never thought of!

What trouble his mother must have had with him when he was a boy! It was no use sending him on an errand, he would forget it before he had gone a hundred yards, and he was so careless and untidy that it was enough to make any one lose patience with him. But only let him have a pencil and a smooth surface on which to draw, and he was a different boy.

It is said that even now, in the little town of Castello San Giovanni, some eighteen miles from Florence, where Tommaso was born, there are still some wonderfully good figures to be seen, drawn by him when he was quite a little boy. Certainly there was no carelessness and nothing untidy about his work.

As the boy grew older all his longings would turn toward Florence,



The Tribute Money by Masaccio

the beautiful city where there was everything to learn and to see, and so he was sent to become a pupil in the studio of Masolino, a great Florentine painter. But though his drawings improved, his careless habits continued the same.

'There goes Tommaso the painter,' the people would say, watching the big awkward figure passing through the streets on his way to work. 'Truly he pays but little heed to his appearance. Look but at his untidy hair and the holes in his boots.'

'Ay, indeed!' another would answer; 'and yet it is said if only people paid him all they owed he would have gold enough and to spare. But what cares he so long as he has his paints and brushes? "Masaccio" would be a fitter name for him than Tommaso.'

So the name Masaccio, or Ugly Tom, came to be that by which the big awkward painter was known. But no one thinks of the unkind meaning of the nickname now, for Masaccio is honoured as one of the great names in the history of Art.

This painter, careless of many things, cared with all his heart and soul for the work he had chosen to do. It seemed to him that painters had always failed to make their pictures like living things. The pictures they painted were flat, not round as a figure should be, and very often the feet did not look as if they were standing on the ground at all, but pointed downwards as if they were hanging in the air.

So he worked with light and shadow and careful drawing until the figures he drew looked rounded instead of flat, and their feet were planted firmly on the ground. His models were taken from the ordinary Florentine youths whom he saw daily in the studio, but he drew them as no one had drawn figures before. The buildings, too, he made to look like real houses leading away into the distance, and not just like a flat picture.

He painted many frescoes both in Florence and Rome, this Ugly Tom, but at the time the people did not pay him much honour, for they thought him just a great awkward fellow with his head always in the

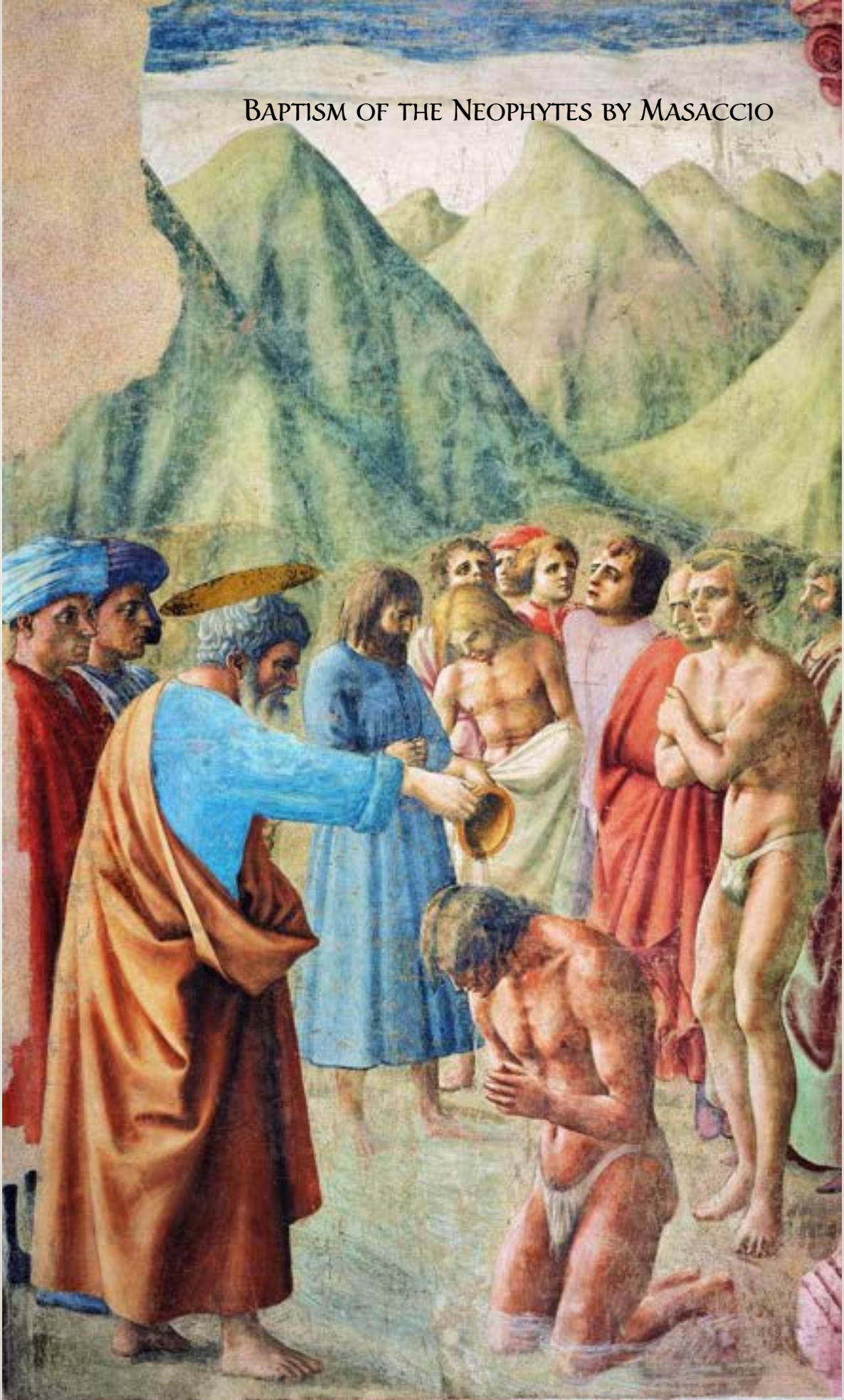
clouds. Perhaps if he had lived longer fame and wealth would have come to him, but he died when he was still a young man, and only a few realised how great he was.

But in after years, one by one, all the great artists would come to that little chapel of the Carmine there to learn their first lessons from those life-like figures. Especially they would stand before the fresco which shows St. Peter baptizing a crowd of people. And in that fresco they would study more than all the figure of a boy who has just come out of the water, shivering with cold, the most natural figure that had ever been painted up to that time.

All things must be learnt little by little, and each new thing we know is a step onwards. So this figure of the shivering boy marks a higher step on the golden ladder of Art than any that had been touched before. And this alone would have made the name of Masaccio worthy to be placed upon the list of the world's great painters.



Madonna Casini by Masaccio



Baptism of the Neophytes by Masaccio

Annunciation Fra Filippo Lippi



Fra Filippo Lippi

1406-1469, Italy

It was winter time in Florence. The *tramontana*, that keen wind which blows from over the snow mountains, was sweeping down the narrow streets, searching out every nook and corner with its icy breath. Men flung their cloaks closer round them, and pulled their hats down over their eyes, so that only the tips of their noses were left uncovered for the wind to freeze. Women held their *scaldinoes*, little pots of hot charcoal, closer under their shawls, and even the dogs had a sad, half-frozen look. One and all longed for the warm winds of spring and the summer heat they loved. It was bad enough for those who had warm clothes and plenty of polenta, but for the poor life was very hard those cold wintry days.

In a doorway of a great house, in one of the narrow streets, a little boy of eight was crouching behind one of the stone pillars as he tried to keep out of the grip of the tramontana. His little coat was folded closely round him, but it was full of rents and holes so that the thin body inside was scarcely covered, and the child's blue lips trembled with the cold, and his black eyes filled with tears.

It was not often that Filippo turned such a sad little face to meet the world. Usually those black eyes sparkled with fun and mischief, and the mouth spread itself into a merry grin. But to-day, truly things were

worse than he ever remembered them before, and he could remember fairly bad times, too, if he tried.

Other children had their fathers and mothers who gave them food and clothes, but he seemed to be quite different, and never had had any one to care for him. True, there was his aunt, old Mona Lapaccia, who said he had once had a father and mother like other boys, but she always added with a mournful shake of her head that she alone had endured all the trouble and worry of bringing him up since he was two years old. 'Ah,' she would say, turning her eyes upwards, 'the saints alone know what I have endured with a great hungry boy to feed and clothe.'

It seemed to Filippo that in that case the saints must also know how very little he had to eat, and how cold he was on these wintry days. But of course they would be too grand to care about a little boy.

In summer things were different. One could roll merrily about in the sunshine all day long, and at night sleep in some cool sheltering corner of the street. And then, too, there was always a better chance of picking up something to eat. Plenty of fig skins and melon parings were flung carelessly out into the street when fruit was plentiful, and people would often throw away the remains of a bunch of grapes. It was wonderful how quickly Filippo learned to know people's faces, and to guess who would finish to the last grape and who would throw the smaller ones away. Some would even smile as they caught his anxious, waiting eye fixed on the fruit, and would cry 'Catch' as they threw a goodly bunch into those small brown hands that never let anything slip through their fingers.

Oh, yes, summer was all right, but there was always winter to face. To-day he was so very hungry, and the lupin skins which he had collected for his breakfast were all eaten long ago. He had hung about the little open shops, sniffing up the delicious smell of fried polenta, but no one had given him a morsel. All he had got was a stern 'be off' when he ventured too close to the tempting food. If only this day had been a festa,



Herod's Banquet by Fra Filippo Lippi



Madonna and Child and Two Angels by Fra Filippo Lippi

he might have done well enough. For in the great processions when the priests and people carried their lighted candles round the church, he could always dart in and out with his little iron scraper, lift the melted wax of the marble floor and sell it over again to the candlemakers.

But there were no processions to-day, and there remained only one thing to be done. He must go home and see if Mona Lapaccia had anything to spare. Perhaps the saints took notice when he was hungry.

Down the street he ran, keeping close to the wall, just as the dogs do when it rains. For the great overhanging caves of the houses act as a sheltering umbrella. Then out into the broad street that runs beside the river, where, even in winter, the sun shines warmly if it shines anywhere.

Filippo paused at the corner of the Ponte alla Carraja to watch the struggles of a poor mule which was trying to pull a huge cartload of wood up the steep incline of the bridge. It was so exciting that for a moment he forgot how cold and hungry he was, as he shouted and screamed directions with the rest of the crowd, darted in and out in his eagerness to help, and only got into every one's way.

That excitement over, Filippo felt in better spirits and ran quickly across the bridge. He soon threaded his way to a poor street that led towards one of the city gates, where everything looked dirtier and more cheerless than ever. He had not expected a welcome, and he certainly did not get one, as, after climbing the steep stairs, he cautiously pushed open the door and peeped in.

His aunt's thin face looked dark and angry. Poor soul, she had had no breakfast either, and there would be no food that day unless her work was finished. And here was this troublesome boy back again, when she thought she had got rid of him for the day.

'Away!' she shouted crossly. 'What dost thou mean by coming back so soon? Away, and seek thy living in the streets.'

'It is too cold,' said the boy, creeping into the bare room, 'and I am hungry.'

'Hungry!' and poor Mona Lapaccia cast her eyes upwards, as if she would ask the saints if they too were not filled with surprise to hear this word. 'And when art thou anything else? It is ever the same story with thee: eat, eat, eat. Now, the saints help me, I have borne this burden long enough. I will see if I cannot shift it on to other shoulders.'

She rose as she spoke, tied her yellow handkerchief over her head and smoothed out her apron. Then she caught Filippo by his shoulder and gave him a good shake, just to teach him how wrong it was to talk of being hungry, and pushing him in front of her they went downstairs together.

'Where art thou going?' gasped the boy as she dragged him swiftly along the street.

'Wait and thou shalt see,' she answered shortly; 'and do thou mind thy manners, else will I mind them for thee.'

Filippo ran along a little quicker on hearing this advice. He had but a dim notion of what minding his manners might mean, but he guessed fairly well what would happen if his aunt minded them. Ah! here they were at the great square of the Carmine. He had often crept into the church to get warm and to see those wonderful pictures on the walls. Could they be going there now?

But it was towards the convent door that Mona Lapaccia bent her steps, and, when she had rung the bell, she gave Filippo's shoulder a final shake, and pulled his coat straight and smoothed his hair.

A fat, good-natured brother let them in, and led them through the many passages into a room where the prior sat finishing his midday meal.

Filippo's hungry eyes were immediately fixed on a piece of bread which lay upon the table, and the kindly prior smiled as he nodded his head towards it.

Not another invitation did Filippo need; like a bird he darted forward and snatched the piece of good white bread, and holding it in both hands he began to munch to his heart's content. How long it was

since he had tasted anything like this! It was so delicious that for a few blissful moments he forgot where he was, forgot his aunt and the great man who was looking at him with such kind eyes.

But presently he heard his own name spoken, and then he looked up and remembered. 'And so, Filippo, thou wouldst become a monk?' the prior was saying. 'Let me see—how old art thou?'

'Eight years old, your reverence,' said Mona Lapaccia before Filippo could answer. Which was just as well, as his mouth was still very full.

'And it is thy desire to leave the world, and enter our convent?' continued the prior. 'Art thou willing to give up all, that thou mayest become a servant of God?'

The little dirty brown hands clutched the bread in dismay. Did the kind man mean that he was to give up his bread when he had scarcely eaten half of it?

'No, no; eat thy bread, child,' said the prior, with an understanding nod. 'Thou art but a babe, but we will make a good monk of thee yet.'

Then, indeed, began happy days for Filippo. No more threadbare coats, but a warm little brown serge robe, tied round the waist with a rope whose ends grew daily shorter as the way round his waist grew longer. No more lupin skins and whiffs of fried polenta, but food enough and to spare; such food as he had not dreamt of before, and always as much as he could eat.

Filippo was as happy as the day was long. He had always been a merry little soul even when life had been hard and food scarce, and now he would not have changed his lot with the saints in Paradise.

But the good brothers began to think it was time Filippo should do something besides play and eat.

'Let us see what the child is fit for,' they said.

So Filippo was called in to sit on the bench with the boys and learn his ABC. That was dreadfully dull work. He could never remember the names of those queer signs. Their shapes he knew quite well,

Madonna and Child Enthroned with Two Angels by Fra Filippo Lippi



and he could draw them carefully in his copybook, but their names were too much for him. And as to the Latin which the good monks tried to teach him, they might as well have tried to teach a monkey.

All the brightness faded from Filippo's face the moment a book was put before him, and he looked so dull and stupid that the brothers were in despair. Then for a little things seemed to improve. Filippo suddenly lost his stupid look as he bent over the pages, and his eyes were bright with interest.

'Aha!' said one brother nudging the other, 'the boy has found his brains at last.'

But great indeed was their wrath and disappointment when they looked over his shoulder. Instead of learning his lessons, Filippo had been making all sorts of queer drawings round the margin of the page. The A's and B's had noses and eyes, and looked out with little grinning faces. The long music notes had legs and arms and were dancing about like little black imps. Everything was scribbled over with the naughty little figures.

This was really too much, and Filippo must be taken at once before the prior.

'What, in disgrace again?' asked the kindly old man. 'What has the child done now?'

'We can teach him nothing,' said the brother, shaking a severe finger at Filippo, who hung his head. 'He cannot even learn his ABC. And besides, he spoils his books, ay, and even the walls and benches, by drawing such things as these upon them.' And the indignant monk held out the book where all those naughty figures were dancing over the page.

The prior took the book and looked at it closely.

'What makes thee do these things?' he asked the boy, who stood first on one foot and then on the other, twisting his rope in his fingers.

At the sound of the kind voice, the boy looked up, and his face broke into a smile.

'Indeed, I cannot help it, Father,' he said. 'It is the fault of these,' and he spread out his ten little brown fingers.

The prior laughed.

'Well,' he said, 'we will not turn thee out, though they do say thou wilt never make a monk. Perhaps we may teach these ten little rascals to do good work, even if we cannot put learning into that round head of thine.'

So instead of books and Latin lessons, the good monks tried a different plan. Filippo was given as a pupil to good Brother Anselmo, whose work it was to draw the delicate pictures and letters for the convent prayer-books.

This was a different kind of lesson, indeed. Filippo's eyes shone with eagerness as he bent over his work and tried to copy the beautiful lines and curves which the master set for him.

There were other boys in the class as well, and Filippo looked at their work with great admiration. One boy especially, who was bigger than Filippo, and who had a kind merry face, made such beautiful copies that Filippo always tried to sit next him if possible. Very soon the boys became great friends.

Diamante, as the elder boy was called, was pleased to be admired so much by the little new pupil; but as time went on, his pride in his own work grew less as he saw with amazement how quickly Filippo's little brown fingers learned to draw straighter lines and more beautiful curves than any he could manage. Brother Anselmo, too, would watch the boy at work, and his saintly old face beamed with pleasure as he looked.

'He will pass us all, and leave us far behind, this child who is too stupid to learn his ABC,' he would say, and his face shone with unselfish joy.

Then when the boys grew older, they were allowed to go into the church and watch those wonderful frescoes, which grew under the hand of the great awkward painter, 'Ugly Tom,' as he was called.

Together Filippo and Diamante stood and watched with awe, learning lessons there which the good father had not been able to teach. Then they would begin to put into practice what they had learned, and try to copy in their own pictures the work of the great master.

'Thou hast the knack of it, Filippo,' Diamante would say as he looked with envy at the figures Filippo drew so easily.

'Thy pictures are also good,' Filippo would answer quickly, 'and thou thyself art better than any one else in the convent.'

There was no complaint now of Filippo's dullness. He soon learned all that the painter-monks could teach him, and as years passed on the prior would rub his hands in delight to think that here was an artist, one of themselves, who would soon be able to paint the walls of the church and convent, and make them as famous as the convent of San Marco had been made famous by its angelical painter.

Then one day he called Filippo to him.

'My son,' he said, 'you have learned well, and it is time now to turn your work to some account. Go into the cloister where the walls have been but newly whitewashed, and let us see what kind of pictures thou canst paint.'

With burning cheeks and shining eyes, Filippo began his work. Day after day he stood on the scaffolding, with his brown robe pinned back and his bare arm moving swiftly as he drew figure after figure on the smooth white wall.

He did not pause to think what he would draw, the figures seemed to grow like magic under his touch. There were the monks in their brown and white robes, fat and laughing, or lean and anxious-minded. There were the people who came to say their prayers in church, little children clinging to their mothers' skirts, beggars and rich folks, even the stray dog that sometimes wandered in. Yes, and the pretty girls who laughed and talked in whispers. He drew them all, just as he had often seen them. Then, when the last piece of wall was covered, he stopped his work.

The news soon spread through all the convent that Brother Filippo had finished his picture, and all the monks came hurrying to see. The scaffolding was taken down, and then they all stood round, gazing with round eyes and open mouths. They had never seen anything like it before, and at first there was silence except for one long drawn 'ah-h.'

Then one by one they began to laugh and talk, and point with eager, excited fingers. 'Look,' cried one, 'there is Brother Giovanni; I would know his smile among a hundred.'

'There is that beggar who comes each day to ask for soup,' cried another.

'And there is his dog,' shouted a third.

'Look at the maid who kneels in front,' said Fra Diamante in a hushed voice, 'is she not as fair as any saint?'

Then suddenly there was silence, and the brothers looked ashamed of the noise they had been making, as the prior himself looked down on them from the steps above.

'What is all this?' he asked. And his voice sounded grave and displeased as he looked from the wall to the crowd of eager monks. Then he turned to Filippo. 'Are these the pictures I ordered thee to paint?' he asked. 'Is this the kind of painting to do honour to God and to our Church? Will these mere human figures help men to remember the saints, teach them to look up to heaven, or help them with their prayers? Quick, rub them out, and paint your pictures for heaven and not for earth.'

Filippo hung his head, the crowd of admiring monks swiftly disappeared, and he was left to begin his work all over again.

It was so difficult for Filippo to keep his thoughts fixed on heaven, and not to think of earth. He did so love the merry world, and his fingers, those same ten brown rascals which had got him into trouble when he was a child, always longed to draw just the faces that he saw every day. The pretty face of the little maid kneeling at her prayers was so real and so delightful, and the Madonna and angels seemed so



Coronation of the Virgin by Fra Filippo Lippi

solemn and far off.

Still no one would have pictures which did not tell of saints and angels, so he must paint the best he could. After all, it was easy to put on wings and golden haloes until the earthly things took on a heavenly look.

But the convent life grew daily more and more wearisome now to Filippo. The world, which he had been so willing to give up for a piece of good white bread when he was eight years old, now seemed full of all the things he loved best.

The more he thought of it, the more he longed to see other places outside the convent walls, and other faces besides the monks and the people who came to church.

And so one dark night, when all the brothers were asleep and the bells had just rung the midnight hour, Fra Filippo stole out of his cell, unlocked the convent door, and ran swiftly out into the quiet street.

How good it felt to be free! The very street itself seemed like an old friend, welcoming him with open arms. On and on he ran until he came to the city gates of San Frediano, there to wait until he could slip through unnoticed when the gates were opened at the dawn of day. Then on again until Florence and the convent were left behind and the whole world lay before him.

There was no difficulty about living, for the people gave him food and money, and good-natured countrymen would stop their carts and offer him a lift along the straight white dusty roads. So by and by he reached Ancona and saw for the first time the sea.

Filippo gazed and gazed, forgetting everything else as he drank in the beauty of that great stretch of quivering blue, while in his ears sounded words which he had almost forgotten—words which had fallen on heedless ears at matins or vespers—and which never had held any meaning for him before: 'And before the throne was a sea of glass, like unto crystal.'

He stood still for a few minutes and then the heavenly vision faded,

and like any other boy he forgot all about beauty and colour, and only longed to be out in a boat enjoying the strange new delight.

Very lucky he thought himself when he reached the shore to find a boat just putting off, and to hear himself invited to jump in by the boys who were going for a sail.

Away they went, further and further from the shore, laughing and talking. The boys were so busy telling wonderful sea-tales to the young stranger that they did not notice how far they had gone. Then suddenly they looked ahead and sat speechless with fear.

A great Moorish galley was bearing down upon them, its rows of oars flashed in the sunlight, and its great painted sails towered above their heads. It was no use trying to escape. Those strong rowers easily overtook them, and in a few minutes Filippo and his companions were hoisted up on board the galley.

It was all so sudden that it seemed like a dream. But the chains were very real that were fastened round their wrists and ankles, and the dark cruel faces of the Moors as they looked on smiling at their misery were certainly no dream.

Then followed long days of misery when the new slaves toiled at the oars under the blazing sun, and nights of cold and weariness. Many a time did Filippo long for the quiet convent, the kindly brothers, and the long peaceful days. Many a time did he long to hear the bells calling him to prayer, which had once only filled him with restless impatience.

But at last the galley reached the coast of Barbary, and the slaves were unchained from the oars and taken ashore. In all his misery Filippo's keen eyes still watched with interest the people around him, and he was never tired of studying the swarthy faces and curious garments of the Moorish pirates.

Then one day when he happened to be near a smooth white wall, he took a charred stick from a fire which was built close by, and began to draw the figure of his master.

What a delight it was to draw those rapid strokes and feel the

Madonna with Child and Angels and Saints by Fra Filippo Lippi



likeness grow beneath his fingers! He was so much interested that he did not notice the crowd that gathered gradually round him, but he worked steadily on until the figure was finished.

Just as the band of monks had stood silent round his first picture in the cloister of the Carmine, so these dark Moors stood still in wonder and amazement gazing upon the bold black figure sketched upon the smooth white wall.

No one had ever seen such a thing in that land before, and it seemed to them that this man must be a dealer in magic. They whispered together, and one went off hurriedly to fetch the captain.

The master, when he came, was as astonished as the men. He could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw a second self drawn upon the wall, more like than his own shadow. This indeed must be no common man; and he ordered that Filippo's chains should be immediately struck off, and that he should be treated with respect and honour.

Nothing now was too good for this man of magic, and before long Filippo was put on board a ship and carried safely back to Italy. They put him ashore at Naples, and for some little time Filippo stayed there painting pictures for the king; but his heart was in his own beloved town, and very soon he returned to Florence.

Perhaps he did not deserve a welcome, but every one was only too delighted to think that the run-away had really returned. Even the prior, though he shook his head, was glad to welcome back the brother whose painting had already brought fame and honour to the convent.

But in spite of all the troubles Filippo had gone through, he still dearly loved the merry world and all its pleasures. For a long time he would paint his saints and angels with all due diligence, and then he would dash down brushes and pencils, leave his paints scattered around, and off he would go for a holiday. Then the work would come to a standstill, and people must just wait until Filippo should feel inclined to begin again.

The great Cosimo de Medici, who was always the friend of painters,

desired above all things that Fra Filippo should paint a picture for him. And what is more, having heard so many tales about the idle ways of this same brother, he was determined that the picture should be painted without any interruptions.

'Fra Filippo shall take no holidays while at work for me,' he said, as he talked the matter over with the prior.

'That may not be so easy as thou thinkest,' said the prior, for he knew Filippo better than did this great Cosimo.

But Cosimo did not see any difficulty in the matter whatever. High in his palace he prepared a room for the painter, and placed there everything he could need. No comfort was lacking, and when Filippo came he was treated as an honoured guest, except for one thing. Whenever the heavy door of his room swung to, there was a grating sound heard, and the key in the lock was turned from outside. So Filippo was really a captive in his handsome prison.

That was all very well for a few days. Filippo laughed as he painted away, and laid on the tender blue of the Virgin's robe, and painted into her eyes the solemn look which lie had so often seen on the face of some poor peasant woman as she knelt at prayer. But after a while he grew restless and weary of his work.

'Plague take this great man and his fine manners,' he cried. 'Does he think he can catch a lark and train it to sing in a cage at his bidding? I am weary of saints and angels. I must out to breathe the fresh sweet air of heaven.'

But the key was always turned in the lock and the door was strong. There was the window, but it was high above the street, and the grey walls, built of huge square stones, might well have been intended to enclose a prison rather than a palace.

It was a dark night, and the air felt hot as Filippo leaned out of the window. Scarce a breath stirred the still air, and every sound could be heard distinctly. Far below in the street he could hear the tread of the people's feet, and catch the words of a merry song as a company of boys

Vision of St. Augustine by Fra Filippo Lippi



and girls danced merrily along.

'Flower of the rose,
If I've been happy, what matter who knows,'

they sang.

It was all too tempting; out he must get. Filippo looked round his room, and his eye rested on the bed. With a shout of triumphant delight he ran towards it. First he seized the quilt and tore it into strips, then the blankets, then the sheets.

'Whoever saw a grander rope?' he chuckled to himself as he knotted the ends together.

Quick as thought he tied it to the iron bar that ran across his window, and, squeezing out, he began to climb down, hand over hand, dangling and swinging to and fro. The rope was stout and good, and now he could steady himself by catching his toes in the great iron rings fastened into the wall, until at last he dropped breathless into the street below.

Next day, when Cosimo came to see how the painting went on, he saw indeed the pictures and the brushes, but no painter was there. Quickly he stepped to the open window, and there he saw the dangling rope of sheets, and guessed at once how the bird had flown.

Through the streets they searched for the missing painter, and before long he was found and brought back. Filippo tried to look penitent, but his eyes were dancing with merriment, and Cosimo must needs laugh too.

'After all,' said Filippo, 'my talent is not like a beast of burden, to be driven and beaten into doing its work. It is rather like one of those heavenly visitors whom we willingly entertain when they deign to visit us, but whom we can never force either to come or go at will.'

'Thou art right, friend painter,' answered the great man. 'And when I think how thou and thy talent might have taken wings together,

had not the rope held good, I vow I will never seek to keep thee in against thy will again.'

'Then will I work all the more willingly,' answered Filippo.

So with doors open, and freedom to come and go, Filippo no longer wished to escape, but worked with all his heart. The beautiful Madonna and angel were soon finished, and besides he painted a wonderful picture of seven saints with St. John sitting in their midst.

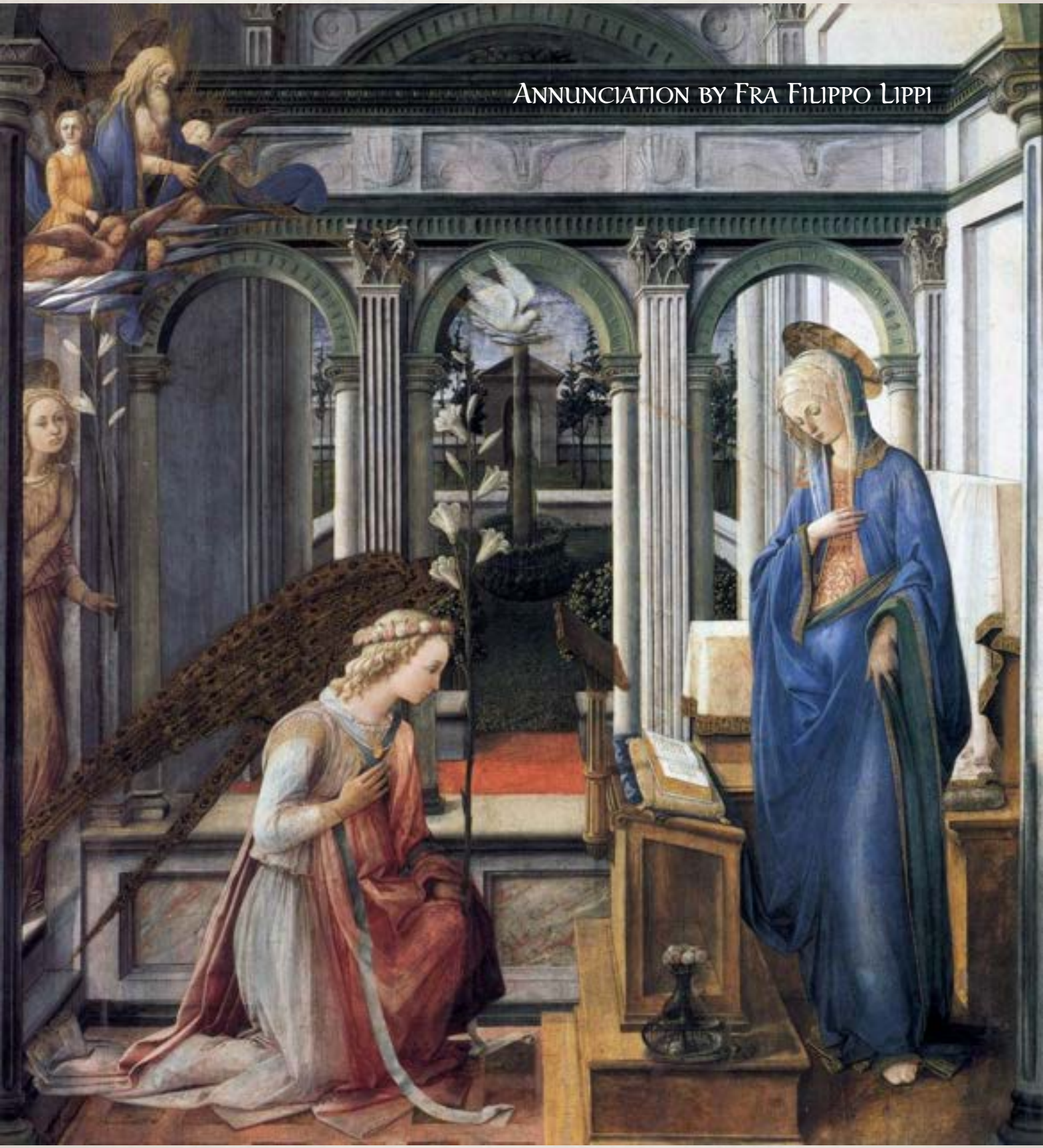
From far and near came requests that Fra Filippo Lippi should paint pictures for different churches and convents. He would much rather have painted the scenes and the people he saw every day, but he remembered the prior's lecture, and still painted only the stories of saints and holy people—the gentle Madonna with her scarlet book of prayers, the dove fluttering near, and the angel messenger with shining wings bearing the lily branch. True, the saints would sometimes look out of his pictures with the faces of some of his friends, but no one seemed to notice that. On the whole his was a happy life, and he was always ready to paint for any one that should ask him.

Many people now were proud to know the famous young painter, but his old companion Fra Diamante was still the friend he loved best. Whenever it was possible they still would work together; so, great was their delight when one day an order came from Prato that they should both go there to paint the walls of San Stefano.

'Good-bye to old Florence for a while,' cried Filippo as they set out merrily together. He looked back as he spoke at the spires and sun-baked roofs, the white marble façade of San Miniato, and the dark cypresses standing clear against the pure warm sky of early spring. 'I am weary of your great men and all your pomp and splendour. Something tells me we shall have a golden time among the good folk of Prato.'

Perhaps it was the springtime that made Filippo so joyous that morning as he rode along the dusty white road.

Spring had come with a glad rush, as she ever comes in Italy, scattering on every side her flowers and favours. From under the dead brown



Annunciation by Fra Filippo Lippi

leaves of autumn, violets pushed their heads and perfumed all the air. Under the grey olives the sprouting corn spread its tender green, and the scarlet and purple of the anemones waved spring's banner far and near. It was good to be alive on such a day.

Arrived at Prato, the two painters, with a favourite pupil called Botticelli, worked together diligently and covered wall after wall with their frescoes. It seemed as if they would never be done, for each church and convent had work awaiting them.

'Truly,' said Filippo one day when he was putting the last touches to a portrait of Fra Diamante, whom he had painted into his picture of the death of St. Stephen, 'I will undertake no more work for a while. It is full time we had a holiday together.'

But even as he spoke a message was brought to him from the good abbess of the convent of Santa Margherita, begging him to come and paint an altarpiece for the sisters' chapel.

'Ah, well, what must be, must be,' he said to Fra Diamante, who stood smiling by. 'I will do what I can to please these holy women, but after that—no more.'

The staid and sober abbess met him at the convent door, and silently led him through the sunny garden, bright with flowers, where the lizards darted to right and left as they walked past the fountain and entered the dim, cool chapel. In a low, sweet voice she told him what they would have him paint, and showed him the space above the high altar where the picture was to be placed.

'Our great desire is that thou shouldst paint for us the Holy Virgin with the Blessed Child on the night of the Nativity,' she said.

The painter seemed to listen, but his attention wandered, and all the time he wished himself back in the sunny garden, where he had seen a fair young face looking through the pink sprays of almond blossoms, while the music of the vesper hymn sounded sweet and clear in his ears.

'I will begin to-morrow,' he said with a start when the low voice

of the abbess stopped. 'I will paint the Madonna and Babe as thou desirest.'

So next day the work began. And each time the abbess noiselessly entered the room where the painter was at work and watched the picture grow beneath his hand, she felt more and more sure that she had done right in asking this painter to decorate their beloved chapel.

True, it was said by many that the young artist was but a worldly minded man, not like the blessed Fra Angelico, the heavenly painter of San Marco; but his work was truly wonderful, and his handsome face looked good, even if a somewhat merry smile was ever wont to lurk about his mouth and in his eyes.

Then came a morning when the abbess found Filippo standing idle, with a discontented look upon his face. He was gazing at the unfinished picture, and for a while he did not see that any one had entered the room.

'Is aught amiss?' asked the gentle voice at his side, and Filippo turned and saw the abbess.

'Something indeed seems amiss with my five fingers,' said Filippo, with his quick bright smile. 'Time after time have I tried to paint the face of the Madonna, and each time I must needs paint it out again.'

Then a happy thought came into his mind.

'I have seen a face sometimes as I passed through the convent garden which is exactly what I want,' he cried. 'If thou wouldst but let the maiden sit where I can see her for a few hours each day, I can promise thee that the Madonna will be finished as thou wouldst wish.'

The abbess stood in deep thought for a few minutes, for she was puzzled to know what she should do.

'It is the child Lucrezia,' she thought to herself. 'She who was sent here by her father, the noble Buti of Florence. She is but a novice still, and there can be no harm in allowing her to lend her fair face as a model for Our Lady.'

So she told Filippo it should be as he wished.

It was dull in the convent, and Lucrezia was only too pleased to spend some hours every morning, idly sitting in the great chair, while the young painter talked to her and told her stories while he painted. She counted the hours until it was time to go back, and grew happier each day as the Madonna's face grew more and more beautiful.

Surely there was no one so good or so handsome as this wonderful artist. Lucrezia could not bear to think how dull her life would be when he was gone. Then one day, when it happened that the abbess was called away and they were alone, Filippo told Lucrezia that he loved her and could not live without her; and although she was frightened at first, she soon grew happy, and told him that she was ready to go with him wherever he wished. But what would the good nuns think of it? Would they ever let her go? No; they must think of some other plan.

To-morrow was the great festa of Prato, when all the nuns walked in procession to see the holy centola, or girdle, which the Madonna had given to St. Thomas. Lucrezia must take care to walk on the outside of the procession, and to watch for a touch upon the arm as she passed.

The festa day dawned bright and clear, and all Prato was early astir. Procession after procession wound its way to the church where the relic was to be shown, and the crowd grew denser every moment. Presently came the nuns of Santa Margherita. A figure in the crowd pressed nearer. Lucrezia felt a touch upon her arm, and a strong hand clasped hers. The crowd swayed to and fro, and in an instant the two figures disappeared. No one noticed that the young novice was gone, and before the nuns thought of looking for their charge Lucrezia was on her way to Florence, her horse led by the painter whom she loved, while his good friend Fra Diamante rode beside her.

Then the storm burst. Lucrezia's father was furious, the good nuns were dismayed, and every one shook their heads over this last adventure of the Florentine painter.

But luckily for Filippo, the great Cosimo still stood by his friend and helped him through it all. He it was who begged the Pope to allow

Fra Filippo to marry Lucrezia (for monks, of course, were never allowed to marry), and the Pope, too, was kind and granted the request, so that all went well.

Now indeed was Lucrezia as happy as the day was long, and when the spring returned once more to Florence, a baby Filippo came with the violets and lilies.

'How wilt thou know us apart if thou callest him Filippo?' asked the proud father.

'Ah, he is such a little one, dear heart,' Lucrezia answered gaily. 'We will call him Filippino, and then there can be no mistake.'

There was no more need now to seek for pleasures out of doors. Filippo painted his pictures and lived his happy home life without seeking any more adventures. His Madonnas grew ever more beautiful, for they were all touched with the beauty that shone from Lucrezia's fair face, and the Infant Christ had ever the smile and the curly golden hair of the baby Filippino.

And by and by a little daughter came to gladden their hearts, and then indeed their cup of joy was full.

'What name shall we give the little maid?' said Filippo.

'Methought thou wouldst have it Lucrezia,' answered the mother.

'There is but one Lucrezia in all the world for me,' he said. 'None other but thee shall bear that name.'

As they talked a knock sounded at the door, and presently the favourite pupil, Sandro, looked in. There was a shout of joy from little Filippino, and the young man lifted the child in his arms and smiled with the look of one who loves children.

'Come, Sandro, and see the little new flower,' said Filippo. 'Is she not as fair as the roses which thou dost so love to paint?'

Then, as the young man looked with interest at the tiny face, Filippo clapped him on the shoulder.

'I have it!' he cried. 'She shall be called after thee, Alessandra. Some day she will be proud to think that she bears thy name.'



Adoration of the Child by Fra Filippo Lippi

For already Filippo knew that this pupil of his would ere long wake the world to new wonder.

The only clouds that hid the sunshine of Lucrezia's life was when Filippo was obliged to leave her for a while and paint his pictures in other towns. She always grew sad when his work in Florence drew to a close, for she never knew where his next work might lie.

'Well,' said Filippo one night as he returned home and caught up little Filippino in his arms, 'the picture for the nuns of San Ambrogio is finished at last! Truly they have saints and angels enough this time-rows upon rows of sweet faces and white lilies. And the sweetest face of all is thine, Saint Lucy, kneeling in front with thy hand beneath the chin of this young cherub.'

'Is it indeed finished so soon?' asked Lucrezia, a wistful note creeping into her voice.

'Ay, and to-morrow I must away to Spoleto to begin my work at the Chapel of Our Lady. But look not so sad, dear heart; before three months are past, by the time the grapes are gathered, I will return.'

But it was sad work parting, though it might only be for three months, and even her little son could not make his mother smile, though he drew wonderful pictures for her of birds and beasts, and told her he meant to be a great painter like his father when he grew up.

Next day Filippo started, and with him went his good friend Fra Diamante.

'Fare thee well, Filippo. Take good care of him, friend Diamante,' cried Lucrezia; and she stood watching until their figures disappeared at the end of the long white road, and then went inside to wait patiently for their return.

The summer days passed slowly by. The cheeks of the peaches grew soft and pink under the kiss of the sun, the figs showed ripe and purple beneath the green leaves, and the grapes hung in great transparent clusters of purple and gold from the vines that swung between the poplar-trees. Then came the merry days of vintage, and the juice was

pressed out of the ripe grapes.

'Now he will come back,' said Lucrezia, 'for he said "by the time the grapes are gathered I will return."'

The days went slowly by, and every evening she stood in the loggia and gazed across the hills. Then she would point out the long white road to little Filippino.

'Thy father will come along that road ere long,' she said, and joy sang in her voice.

Then one evening as she watched as usual her heart beat quickly. Surely that figure riding so slowly along was Fra Diamante? But where was Filippo, and why did his friend ride so slowly?

When he came near and entered the house she looked into his face, and all the joy faded from her eyes.

'You need not tell me,' she cried; 'I know that Filippo is dead.'

It was but too true. The faithful friend had brought the sad news himself. No one could tell how Filippo had died. A few short hours of pain and then all was over. Some talked of poison. But who could tell?

There had just been time to send his farewell to Lucrezia, and to pray his friend to take charge of little Filippino.

So, as she listened, joy died out of Lucrezia's life. Spring might come again, and summer sunshine make others glad, but for her it would be ever cold, bleak winter. For never more should her heart grow warm in the sunshine of Filippo's smile—that sunshine which had made every one love him, in spite of his faults, ever since he ran about the streets, a little ragged boy, in the old city of Florence.

Adoration of the Magi

SANDRO BOTTICELLI



Sandro Botticelli

1445-1510, Italy

We must now go back to the days when Fra Filippo Lippi painted his pictures and so brought fame to the Carmine Convent.

There was at that time in Florence a good citizen called Mariano Filipepi, an honest, well-to-do man, who had several sons. These sons were all taught carefully and well trained to do each the work he chose. But the fourth son, Alessandro, or Sandro as he was called, was a great trial to his father. He would settle to no trade or calling. Restless and uncertain, he turned from one thing to another. At one time he would work with all his might, and then again become as idle and fitful as the summer breeze. He could learn well and quickly when he chose, but then there were so few things that he did choose to learn. Music he loved, and he knew every song of the birds, and anything connected with flowers was a special joy to him. No one knew better than he how the different kinds of roses grew, and how the lilies hung upon their stalks.

'And what, I should like to know, is going to be the use of all this,' the good father would say impatiently, 'as long as thou takest no pains to read and write and do thy sums? What am I to do with such a boy, I wonder?'

Then in despair the poor man decided to send Sandro to a neigh-

bour's workshop, to see if perhaps his hands would work better than his head.

The name of this neighbour was Botticelli, and he was a goldsmith, and a very excellent master of his art. He agreed to receive Sandro as his pupil, so it happened that the boy was called by his master's name, and was known ever after as Sandro Botticelli.

Sandro worked for some time with his master, and quickly learned to draw designs for the goldsmith's work.

In those days painters and goldsmiths worked a great deal together, and Sandro often saw designs for pictures and listened to the talk of the artists who came to his master's shop. Gradually, as he looked and listened, his mind was made up. He would become a painter. All his restless longings and day dreams turned to this. All the music that floated in the air as he listened to the birds' song, the gentle dancing motion of the wind among the trees, all the colours of the flowers, and the graceful twinings of the rose-stems—all these he would catch and weave into his pictures. Yes, he would learn to paint music and motion, and then he would be happy.

'So now thou wilt become a painter,' said his father, with a hopeless sigh.

Truly this boy was more trouble than all the rest put together. Here he had just settled down to learn how to become a good goldsmith, and now he wished to try his hand at something else. Well, it was no use saying 'no.' The boy could never be made to do anything but what he wished. There was the Carmelite monk Fra Filippo Lippi, of whom all men were talking. It was said he was the greatest painter in Florence. The boy should have the best teaching it was possible to give him, and perhaps this time he would stick to his work.

So Sandro was sent as a pupil to Fra Filippo, and he soon became a great favourite with the happy, sunny-tempered master. The quick eye of the painter soon saw that this was no ordinary pupil. There was something about Sandro's drawing that was different to anything that



Scene from the Life of Moses by Sandro Botticelli



The Mystical Nativity by Sandro Botticelli

Filippo had ever seen before. His figures seemed to move, and one almost heard the wind rustling in their flowing drapery. Instead of walking, they seemed to be dancing lightly along with a swaying motion as if to the rhythm of music. The very rose-leaves the boy loved to paint, seemed to flutter down to the sound of a fairy song. Filippo was proud of his pupil.

'The world will one day hear more of my Sandro Botticelli,' he said; and, young though the boy was, he often took him to different places to help him in his work.

So it happened that, in that wonderful spring of Filippo's life, Sandro too was at Prato, and worked there with Fra Diamante. And in after years when the master's little daughter was born, she was named Alessandra, after the favourite pupil, to whom was also left the training of little Filippino.

Now, indeed, Sandro's good old father had no further cause to complain. The boy had found the work he was most fitted for, and his name soon became famous in Florence.

It was the reign of gaiety and pleasure in the city of Florence at that time. Lorenzo the Magnificent, the son of Cosimo de Medici, was ruler now, and his court was the centre of all that was most splendid and beautiful. Rich dresses, dainty food, music, gay revels, everything that could give pleasure, whether good or bad, was there.

Lorenzo, like his father, was always glad to discover a new painter, and Botticelli soon became a great favourite at court.

But pictures of saints and angels were somewhat out of fashion at that time, for people did not care to be reminded of anything but earthly pleasures. So Botticelli chose his subjects to please the court, and for a while ceased to paint his sad-eyed Madonnas.

What mattered to him what his subject was? Let him but paint his dancing figures, tripping along in their light flowing garments, keeping time to the music of his thoughts, and the subject might be one of the old Greek tales or any other story that served his purpose.

All the gay court dresses, the rich quaint robes of the fair ladies, helped to train the young painter's fancy for flowing draperies and wonderful veils of filmy transparent gauze.

There was one fair lady especially whom Sandro loved to paint—the beautiful Simonetta, as she is still called.

First he painted her as Venus, who was born of the sea foam. In his picture she floats to the shore standing in a shell, her golden hair wrapped round her. The winds behind blow her onward and scatter pink and red roses through the air. On the shore stands Spring, who holds out a mantle, flowers nestling in its folds, ready to enwrap the goddess when the winds shall have wafted her to land.

Then again we see her in his wonderful picture of 'Spring,' and in another called 'Mars and Venus.' She was too great a lady to stoop to the humble painter, and he perhaps only looked up to her as a star shining in heaven, far out of the reach of his love. But he never ceased to worship her from afar. He never married or cared for any other fair face, just as the great poet Dante, whom Botticelli admired so much, dreamed only of his one love, Beatrice.

But Sandro did not go sadly through life sighing for what could never be his. He was kindly and good-natured, full of jokes, and ready to make merry with his pupils in the workshop.

It once happened that one of these pupils, Biagio by name, had made a copy of one of Sandro's pictures, a beautiful Madonna surrounded by eight angels. This he was very anxious to sell, and the master kindly promised to help him, and in the end arranged the matter with a citizen of Florence, who offered to buy it for six gold pieces.

'Well, Biagio,' said Sandro, when his pupil came into the studio next morning, 'I have sold thy picture. Let us now hang it up in a good light that the man who wishes to buy it may see it at its best. Then will he pay thee the money.'

Biagio was overjoyed.

'Oh, master,' he cried, 'how well thou hast done.'

Then with hands which trembled with excitement the pupil arranged the picture in the best light, and went to fetch the purchaser.

Now meanwhile Botticelli and his other pupils had made eight caps of scarlet pasteboard such as the citizens of Florence then wore, and these they fastened with wax on to the heads of the eight angels in the picture.

Presently Biagio came back panting with joyful excitement, and brought with him the citizen, who knew already of the joke. The poor boy looked at his picture and then rubbed his eyes. What had happened? Where were his angels? The picture must be bewitched, for instead of his angels he saw only eight citizens in scarlet caps.

He looked wildly around, and then at the face of the man who had promised to buy the picture. Of course he would refuse to take such a thing.

But, to his surprise, the citizen looked well pleased, and even praised the work.

'It is well worth the money,' he said; 'and if thou wilt return with me to my house, I will pay thee the six gold pieces.'

Biagio scarcely knew what to do. He was so puzzled and bewildered he felt as if this must be a bad dream.

As soon as he could, he rushed back to the studio to look again at that picture, and then he found that the red-capped citizens had disappeared, and his eight angels were there instead. This of course was not surprising, as Sandro and his pupils had quickly removed the wax and taken off the scarlet caps.

'Master, master,' cried the astonished pupil, 'tell me if I am dreaming, or if I have lost my wits? When I came in just now, these angels were Florentine citizens with red caps on their heads, and now they are angels once more. What may this mean?'

'I think, Biagio, that this money must have turned thy brain round,' said Botticelli gravely. 'If the angels had looked as thou sayest, dost thou think the citizen would have bought the picture?'

'That is true,' said Biagio, shaking his head solemnly; 'and yet I swear I never saw anything more clearly.'

And the poor boy, for many a long day, was afraid to trust his own eyes, since they had so basely deceived him.

But the next thing that happened at the studio did not seem like a joke to the master, for a weaver of cloth came to live close by, and his looms made such a noise and such a shaking that Sandro was deafened, and the house shook so greatly that it was impossible to paint.

But though Botticelli went to the weaver and explained all this most courteously, the man answered roughly, 'Can I not do what I like with my own house?' So Sandro was angry, and went away and immediately ordered a great square of stone to be brought, so big that it tilled a waggon. This he had placed on the top of his wall nearest to the weaver's house, in such a way that the least shake would bring it crashing down into the enemy's workshop.

When the weaver saw this he was terrified, and came round at once to the studio.

'Take down that great stone at once,' he shouted. 'Do you not see that it would crush me and my workshop if it fell?'

'Not at all,' said Botticelli. 'Why should I take it down? Can I not do as I like with my own house?'

And this taught the weaver a lesson, so that he made less noise and shaking, and Sandro had the best of the joke after all.

There were no idle days of dreaming now for Sandro. As soon as one picture was finished another was wanted. Money flowed in, and his purse was always full of gold, though he emptied it almost as fast as it was filled. His work for the Pope at Rome alone was so well paid that the money should have lasted him for many a long day, but in his usual careless way he spent it all before he returned to Florence.

Perhaps it was the gay life at Lorenzo's splendid court that had taught him to spend money so carelessly, and to have no thought but to eat, drink, and be merry. But very soon a change began to steal over his



Temptations of Christ by Sandro Botticelli



From Calumny of Apelles by Sandro Botticelli

life.

There was one man in Florence who looked with sad condemning eyes on all the pleasure-loving crowd that thronged the court of Lorenzo the Magnificent. In the peaceful convent of San Marco, whose walls the angel-painter had covered with pictures 'like windows into heaven,' the stern monk Savonarola was grieving over the sin and vanity that went on around him. He loved Florence with all his heart, and he could not bear the thought that she was forgetting, in the whirl of pleasure, all that was good and pure and worth the winning.

Then, like a battle-cry, his voice sounded through the city, and roused the people from their foolish dreams of ease and pleasure. Every one flocked to the great cathedral to hear Savonarola preach, and Sandro Botticelli left for a while his studio and his painting and became a follower of the great preacher. Never again did he paint those pictures of earthly subjects which had so delighted Lorenzo. When he once more returned to his work, it was to paint his sad-eyed Madonnas; and the music which still floated through his visions was now like the song of angels.

The boys of Florence especially had grown wild and rough during the reign of pleasure, and they were the terror of the city during carnival time. They would carry long poles, or 'stili,' and bar the streets across, demanding money before they would let the people pass. This money they spent on drinking and feasting, and at night they set up great trees in the squares or wider streets and lighted huge bonfires around them. Then would begin a terrible fight with stones, and many of the boys were hurt, and some even killed.

No one had been able to put a stop to this until Savonarola made up his mind that it should cease. Then, as if by magic, all was changed.

Instead of the rough game of 'stili,' there were altars put up at the corners of the streets, and the boys begged money of the passers-by, not for their feasts, but for the poor.

'You shall not miss your bonfire,' said Savonarola; 'but instead of

a tree you shall burn up vain and useless things, and so purify the city.'

So the children went round and collected all the 'vanities,' as they were called—wigs and masks and carnival dresses, foolish songs, bad books, and evil pictures; all were heaped high and then lighted to make one great bonfire.

Some people think that perhaps Sandro threw into the Bonfire of Vanities some of his own beautiful pictures, but that we cannot tell.

Then came the sad time when the people, who at one time would have made Savonarola their king, turned against him, in the same fickle way that crowds will ever turn. And then the great preacher, who had spent his life trying to help and teach them, and to do them good, was burned in the great square of that city which he had loved so dearly.

After this it was long before Botticelli cared to paint again. He was old and weary now, poor and sad, sick of that world which had treated with such cruelty the master whom he loved.

One last picture he painted to show the triumph of good over evil. Not with the sword or the might of great power is the triumph won, says Sandro to us by this picture, but by the little hand of the Christ Child, conquering by love and drawing all men to Him. This Adoration of the Magi is in our own National Gallery in London, and is the only painting which Botticelli ever signed.

'I, Alessandro, painted this picture during the troubles of Italy… when the devil was let loose for the space of three and a half years. Afterwards shall he be chained, and we shall see him trodden down as in this picture.'

It is evident that Botticelli meant by this those sad years of struggle against evil which ended in the martyrdom of the great preacher, and he has placed Savonarola among the crowd of worshippers drawn to His feet by the Infant Christ.

It is sad to think of those last days when Sandro was too old and too weary to paint. He who had loved to make his figures move with dancing feet, was now obliged to walk with crutches. The roses and lilies

of spring were faded now, and instead of the music of his youth he heard only the sound of harsh, ungrateful voices, in the flowerless days of poverty and old age.

There is always something sad too about his pictures, but through the sadness, if we listen, we may hear the angel-song, and understand it better if we have in our minds the prayer which Botticelli left for us.

'Oh, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who alone rulest always in eternity, and who correctest all our wanderings, giver of melody to the choir of angels, listen Thou a little to our bitter grief, and come and rule us, oh Thou highest King, with Thy love which is so sweet.'



Madonna of the Magnificat by Sandro Botticelli

Scandinavia





Leaving Home by Bengt Nordenberg

Bengt Nordenberg

1822-1902, Sweden



Kyrkrodd, Dalarna by Bengt Nordenberg



The Sea Rescue by Bengt Nordenberg



The Veterans (From Days Gone By) by Bengt Nordenberg



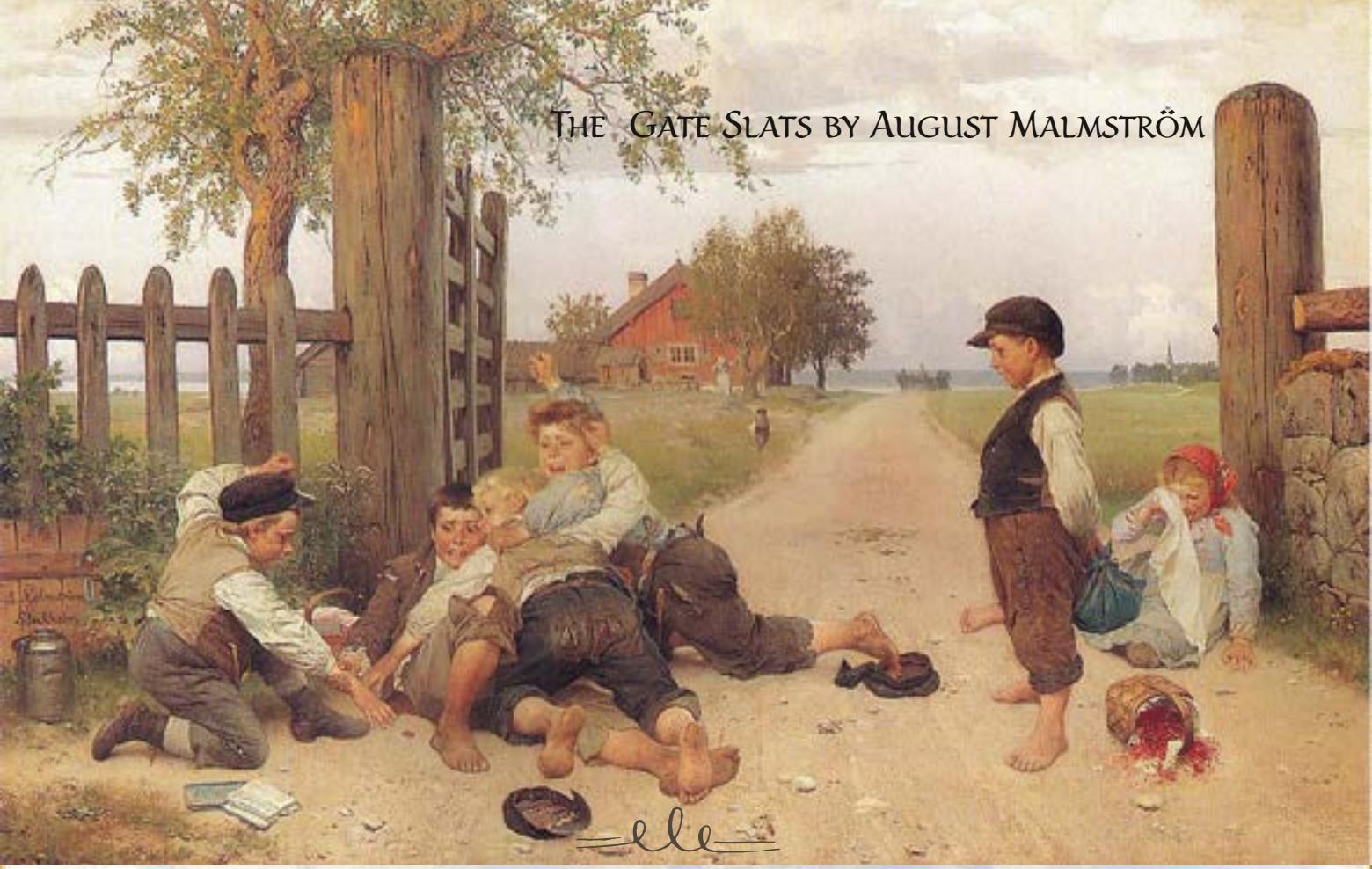
The Old and the Young Sweden by August Malmström

August Malmström

1829-1901, Sweden



Väva Vadmal by August Malmström



The Gate Slats by August Malmström



The Tell-Tale by August Malmström



Children Playing at the Stream by August Malmström



Two Wives by Carl Bloch

Carl Bloch

1834-1890, Denmark

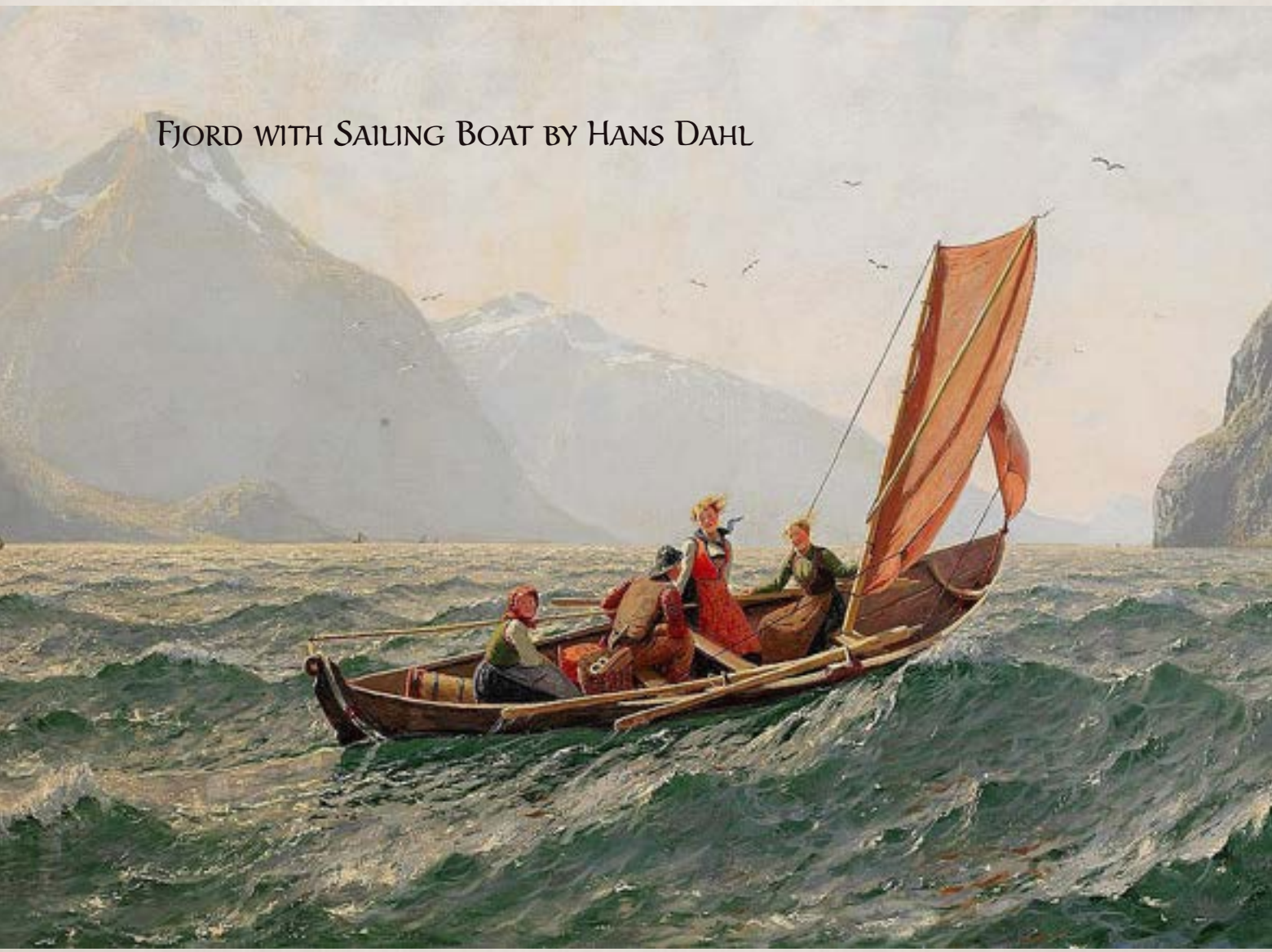


Still Life with Fish by Carl Bloch


By the Fjord by Hans Dahl

Hans Dahl

1849-1937, Norway



Fjord with Sailing Boat by Hans Dahl



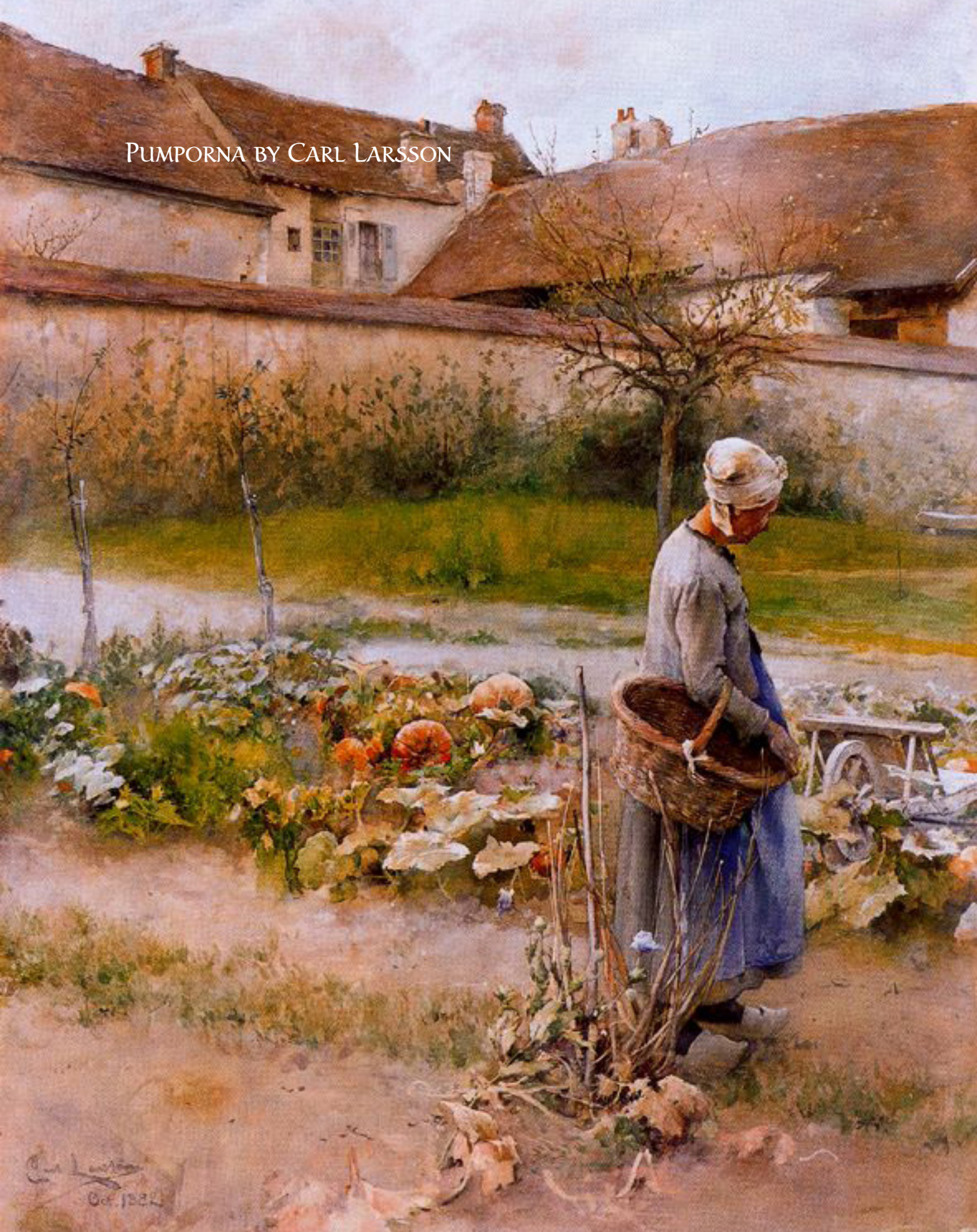
Playing Scales by Carl Larsson

Carl Larsson

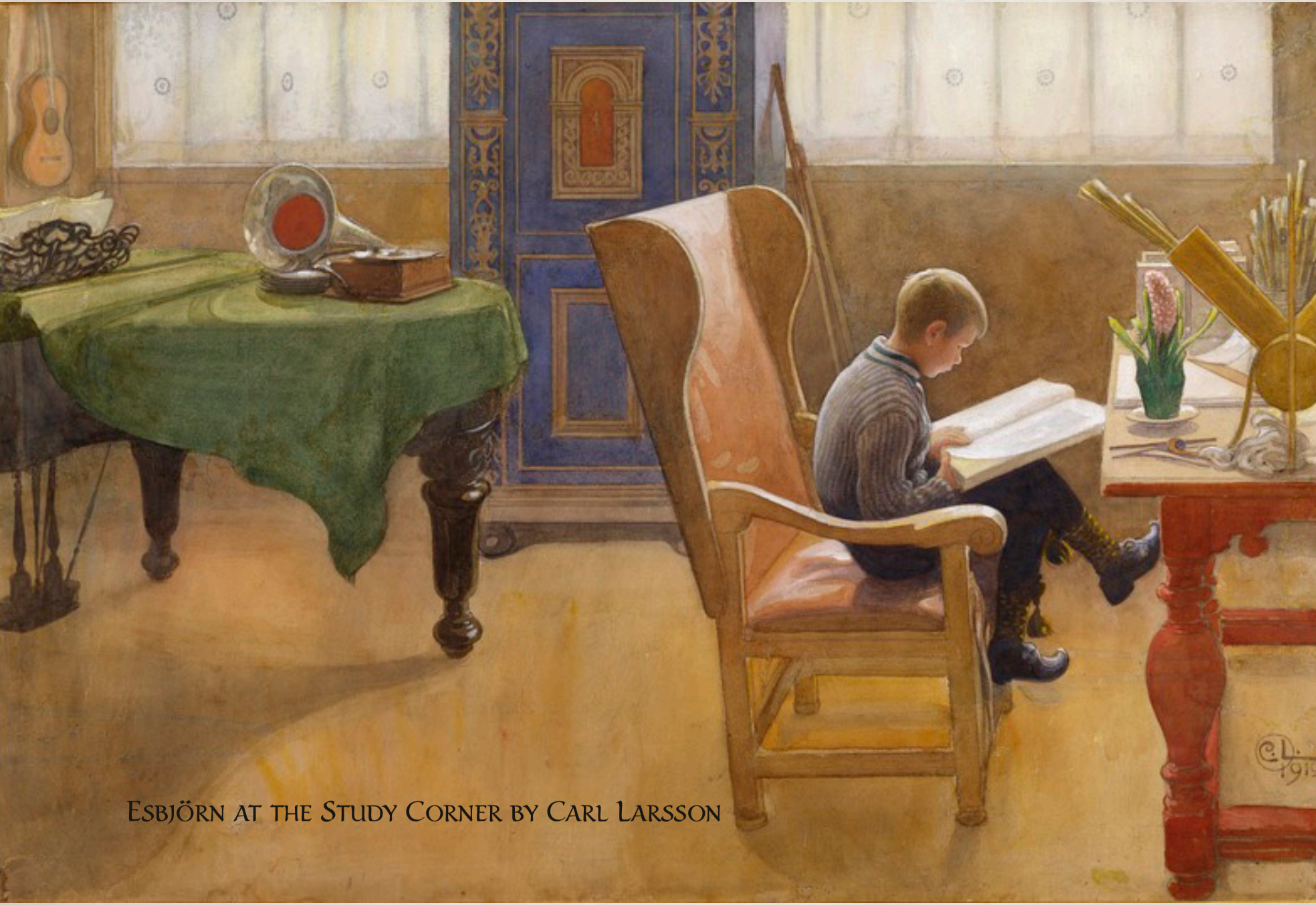
1853-1919, Sweden



Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf by Carl Larsson



Pumporna by Carl Larsson



Esbjörn at the Study Corner by Carl Larsson



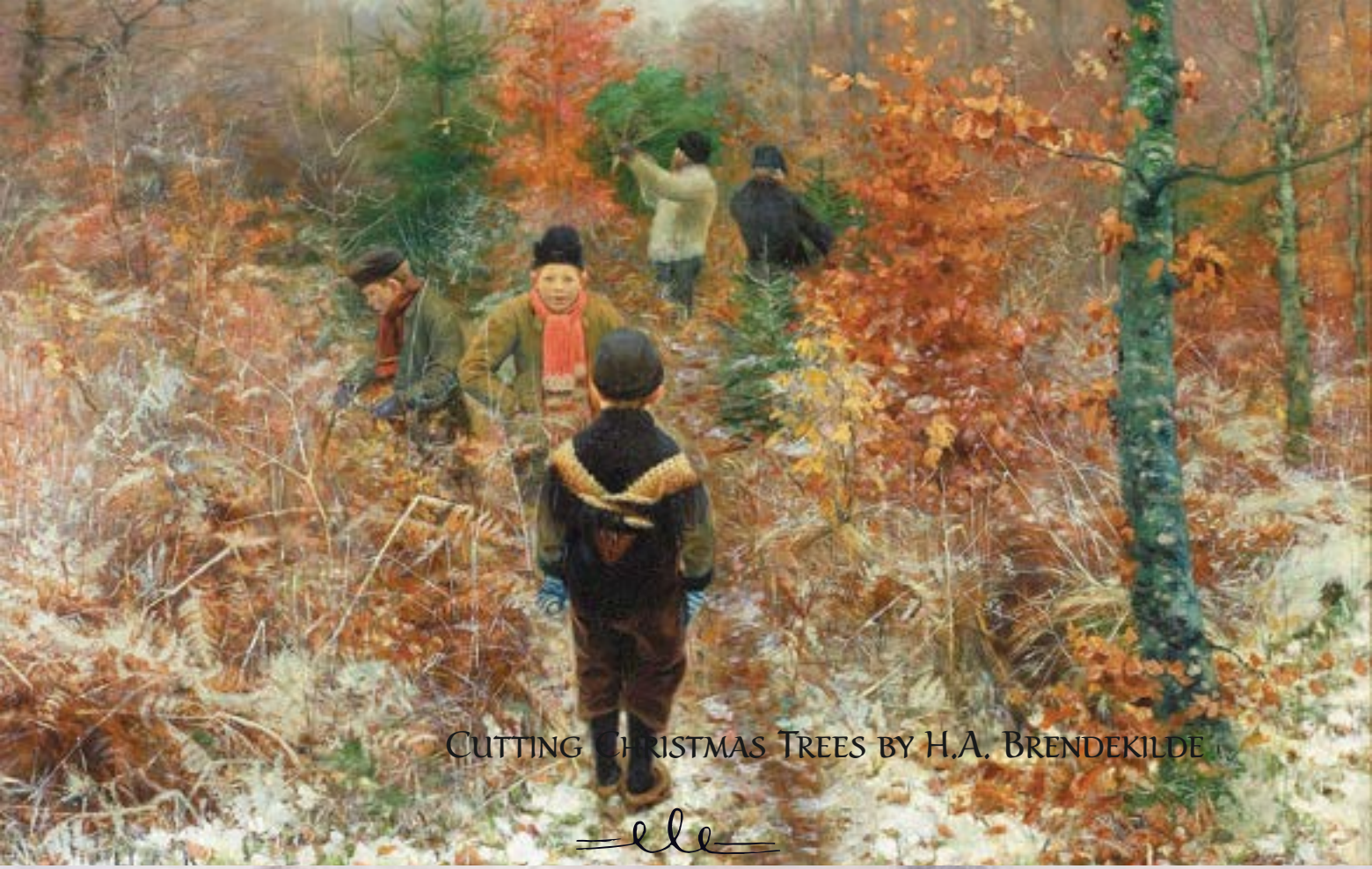
Two Children Feeding Birds by H.A. Brendekilde

H.A. Brendekilde

1857-1942, Denmark



The Gardener's Flowers by H.A. Brendekilde



Cutting Christmas Trees by H.A. Brendekilde



From a Road in Hjembaek by H.A. Brendekilde



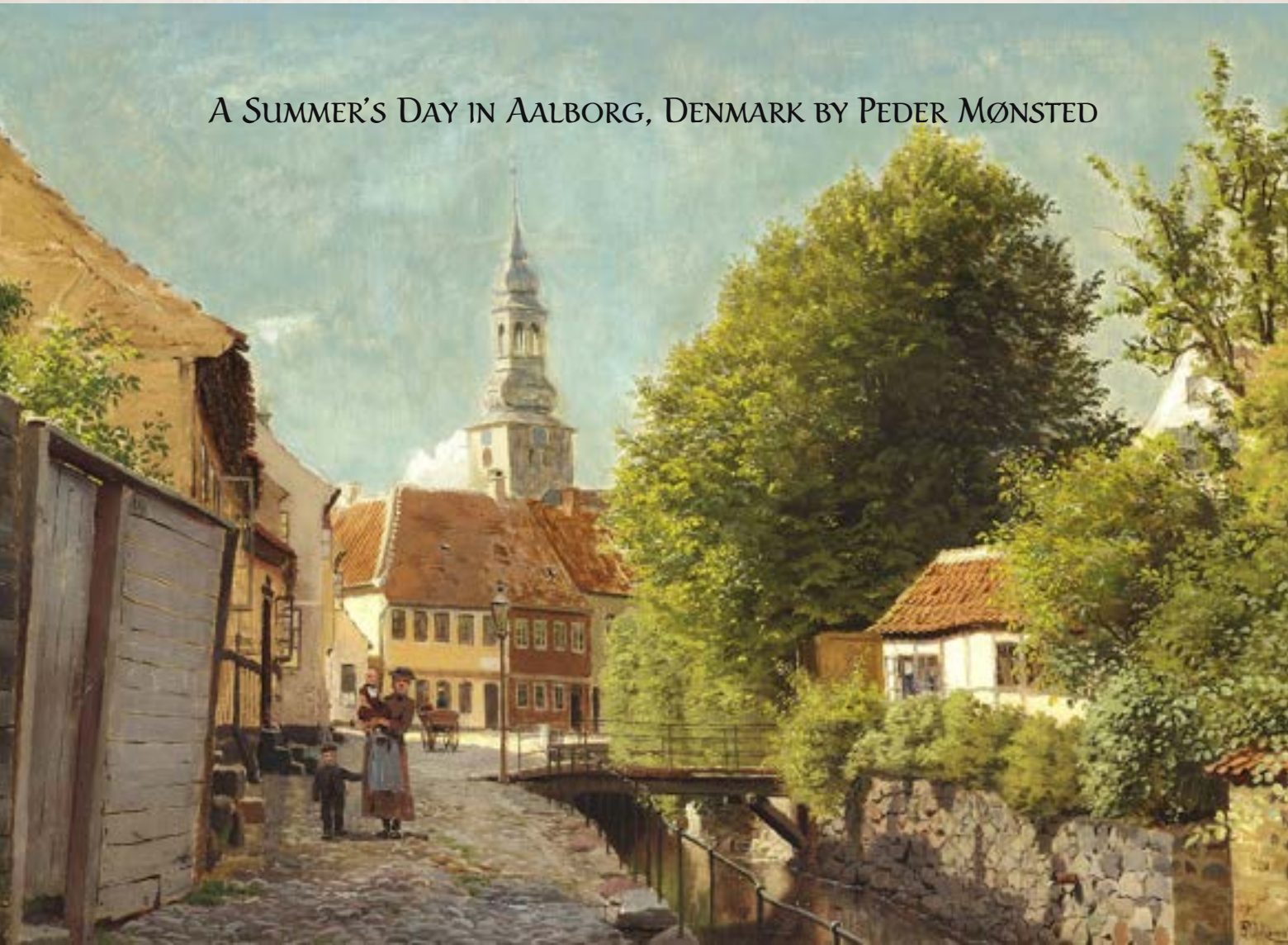
Farmhouse with Meadow Flowers by H.A. Brendekilde



Waschtag by Peder Mønsted

Peder Mønsted

1859-1941. Denmark



A Summer's Day in Aalborg, Denmark by Peder Mønsted


Crows by Bruno Liljefors

Bruno Liljefors

1860-1939, Sweden



Cat on Flowerbed by Bruno Liljefors

Upon the Stairs Anders Zorn



Anders Zorn

1860-1920, Sweden

Upon the Stairs

A passing moment! An instantaneous impression! The sunlight falls full upon this angular stairway and the girl in rich, vibrant color descending.

No laborious painting this! No days and days of striving for effect. Here the artist, inspired by the beauty of the passing moment, records his impression easily and quickly.

The old stairway angles and turns. Up and up it goes. The angular composition and the strong diagonal lines give movement to the whole canvas.

How different the effect had the staircase been drawn in strong vertical and horizontal lines! Such a composition would have given repose. It would have lacked spontaneity. It would have lacked vigor. It would have lacked movement.

To the artist this scene was filled with vigorous movement of light, and his choice of line in the angular staircase suggests this movement.

See the golden sunlight! It turns the staircase to brilliant yellow and tints of orange. It is reflected in a golden patch upon the side of the house. Its glowing light to right and left of the figure emphasizes and

enriches the vibrant colors of the peasant dress. The brilliant red apron, the green jacket with patches of white, the great fur coat turned yellow-green, and the face, touched with sunlight, is a glowing center where the sun has concentrated its essence!

Notice the broad simple surface of the apron, jacket, and coat. Notice the simple planes of color in the staircase. This bold, direct way of painting gives vitality and spirit to the whole canvas. It is a distinguishing characteristic of this artist's style.

Above stands a second figure, subordinate, yet adding interest to the upper part of the picture. Notice how this figure bends, repeating the diagonal line of the staircase which forms the background. Notice how the arm falls in with the line of the balustrade upon which he leans. By posing his figure in this way the artist makes all the movement of the picture swing together. In this way he secures a rhythmic quality in his painting.

Notice again, he repeats the color also. The color of the girls' great coat is seen again, toned off, in the coat of the figure above. This carries the eye easily to the upper part of the canvas without detracting from the central figure. Thus, unconsciously, one sees all over the picture, as he should, and then quite as easily comes back to the sparkling light and color of the "center of interest."

"Vigorous," "vital," "bold," "spontaneous," are words invariably applied to the works of this distinguished artist. In this painting—"Upon the Stairs"—these characteristic qualities give to the picture spirit and charm.



Bread Baking by Anders Zorn



Brudboken by Anders Zorn

About the Artist

Anders Zorn is Sweden's greatest painter. It was in 1860, in the little village of Mora, that Zorn was born. This section of Sweden is a lonely region of timber land dotted with lakes and rivers. Though far removed from the large centers, it made its impression on the young lad, for in after years when fame had come to him, he found his greatest joy in living and painting among his own people in the little village of Mora.

When a lad of fifteen Anders Zorn began to show remarkable talent. His great enthusiasm for carving led his parents to believe that he was destined to be a sculptor. A number of his father's friends collected a small sum of money, sufficient to send him to the Art Academy of Stockholm.

Finding later that the possibility of further study depended on his own efforts, he set to work making pencil portraits. These he sold for a modest sum. He kept at this for some time, but at the end of two years was forced to return home penniless.

Years after, he laughingly told how his mother reproached him, saying: "If you had done as I wished and gone to learn to be a tailor, you would be getting four kronen a week now."

By and by, in 1882, after sufficient money had been earned and saved, he started for England. Arriving there, he boldly set up a studio. Fortunately attention turned his way. Soon he was engaged to paint the portraits of the various members of the Swedish legation. From this time on his star was in the ascendent. He became famous not only for his paintings, but for his etchings as well.

Zorn was always eager to learn. After success came to him, he studied in the great museums of France, Italy, and Spain. He traveled constantly for a number of years, frequently visiting America. During these visits, many of them prolonged, he painted the portraits of several

distinguished Americans.

Though he won international fame, he chose as his home the little village of Mora, his birthplace. He preferred to dwell there among his own people, delighting in the picturesque country and the colorful costumes of the peasantry. Here Zorn lived—"the uncrowned king"—bestowing his kindnesses upon the peasants of Mora. They in turn loved and honored their kinsman.

It is said that on public occasions or holidays of any kind, the festivities never began until the beloved figure of Zorn appeared. Further, it is due to his influence that the peasants still retain their picturesque dress.

Though many paintings of this famous artist hang in America, it is the art collections of his native land that claim the greater number of his works.



Our Daily Bread by Anders Zorn