

“Art manifests whatever is most exalted, and it manifests it to all.”—Taine

GREAT ARTISTS

RAPHAELRUBENS
MURILLODURER

BY

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A WORD TO THE TEACHER.

The following brief sketches are presented in fear and in hope—in fear lest they prove in no wise adequate for so glorious a subject; in the hope that they may encourage not only the pupil, but the teacher, to study the lives and the works of the great artists and to make every possible effort to have copies of masterpieces ever before them to study and to love.

The field of art study is a wonderful one from which to draw for language work. A double purpose is thus served. Interesting subjects are secured and pupils are given a start in acquiring a knowledge of the beautiful that fortifies them for the sorrows and cares of life; and, what is even better, prevents their own life from being commonplace.

Would the teacher wish to study further, a list of valuable reference books is appended to each sketch, any one of which will greatly assist in acquiring a more extended knowledge of the subject.

In the study of an artist, take care to have a liberal supply of reproductions of his pictures at hand. These may be photographs, half-tones, like the illustrations in this book, or engravings. Good work cannot be done without such pictures.

Above all, work to cultivate a love for good pictures, not to fill young minds with
uninspiring facts.
J. E. K.

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[4]

Raphael.

SISTINE MADONNA.

[5] **RAPHAEL SANTI**

“THE PERFECT ARTIST, THE PERFECT MAN.”

We are about to study Raphael, the most generally praised, the most beautiful, and certainly the most loved of all the painters of the world. When all these delightful things can be truthfully said of one man, surely we may look forward with pleasure to a detailed study of his life and works.

Often in examining the lives of great men we are compelled to pass over some events which, to say the least, are not creditable. Of Raphael this was not true. He was gifted with all admirable qualities, and so many-sided was his genius that, while we think of him first as a painter, we must not forget that he also carved statues, wrote poems, played musical instruments, and planned great buildings.

So much was he endeared to his pupils that, after he grew to be famous, he never went on the streets unless [6] he was followed by an admiring throng of these students, ever ready to do his bidding or to defend his art from any possible attack by malicious critics. He lived at a time when artists were fiercely jealous of each other, and yet wherever he went harmony, like a good angel, walked unseen beside him, making whatever assembly he entered the abode of peace and good-will. It is a beautiful thing that such a strong, lovable man should have had for his name that of the chief of the archangels, Raphael, a name beautiful of sound and ever suggestive of beauty and loveliness.

There seemed to have been special preparation for the birth of this unique character. Not only were his parents of the ideal sort, loving the best things of life and thinking ever of how best to rear the little son that God had given them, but the very country into which he was born was fitted to still further develop his natural tenderness and sweetness of disposition.

Webmo, the birthplace of Raphael, is a secluded mountain town on a cliff on the east slope of the Apennines directly east of Florence. It is in the division known as Umbria, a section noted for its gently broken landscape, such as in later years the artist loved to paint as background for his most beautiful Madonnas. Here the people were shut off from much of the excitement known to commercial towns. [7] They were slower to take up new things than the people in the coast cities where men live by the exchange of goods and, incidentally, of customs. The inhabitants led simple, religious lives. We must remember, too, that hardly fifty miles away was the village of Assisi, where Saint Francis, the purest of men, had lived and labored and where, after his death, a double church had been built to his memory.

To this day there is a spirit of reverence that inspires the visitor to this region. No wonder that, in Raphael's time when this spirit was fresh and strong, it gave a character of piety and sweetness to the works of all the painters of Umbria. From these two causes, the secluded position of the region and the influence of Saint Francis, arose what is called the Umbrian school of painting. All painters belonging to this school made pictures very beautiful and full of fine religious feeling.

One April morning in 1483, to the home of Giovanni Santi, the painter, and his wife Magia, a dear little boy came, as millions of boys and girls have since come, to cheer and to bless. The father and mother were very proud of their little son, and feeling perhaps that a more than ordinary child had been given them, they gave him the name of Raphael, as one of good omen.

If we were to visit, in Urbino, the house where Raphael was born, we would be shown a faded fresco of ^[8]a Madonna and Child painted by Giovanni and said to be Magia and the child Raphael.

From the earliest years the child was carefully tended. When he was only eight, the fond mother died and left the father to care for his boy alone. In due time a step-mother was brought home. She was a kind woman and loved and cared for the beautiful lad as if he were really her own child. Later when the father died, leaving the boy Raphael and his little half-sister, no one could have been more solicitous for the boy's rights than his step-mother. She and his uncle together managed his affairs most wisely.

We have no record that, like Titian, the boy Raphael used the juice of flowers with which to paint pictures of his childish fancies, but we do know that very early he became greatly interested in his father's studio and went in regularly to assist. Now, it must be remembered that, at this time, when a boy, wishing to learn to paint, went to the studio of a master he did not at once begin to use colors, brushes, and canvas. Instead, he usually served a long apprenticeship, sweeping out the studio, cleaning the brushes, grinding colors, and performing other common duties. Raphael's assistance to his father must have been largely of this humble sort. We can imagine, however, that his fond father did not make his hours long, and that there were pleasant ramblings in the woods nearby, and that many a bunch of flowers was gathered for the mother at home. There were happy hours, too, when the father and his son read together great books of poetry in which tales of love and knightly encounters were interesting parts. And then, I am sure, there were other happy hours when, tuning their instruments together, they filled the time with music's sweetest discourse.^[9]



[10]

RAPHAEL.

[11] This was indeed a happy childhood, a fit beginning for an ideal life. Meanwhile the boy grew strong, and his beauty, too, increased. The dark hair lay lightly upon his shoulders, and a certain dreaminess in his eyes deepened,—he was about to feel a great sorrow, for the father, so devoted, so exemplary, died when his boy was but eleven years old. We cannot help wishing that he might have lived to see at least one great picture painted by his son. We can easily imagine his smile of joy “at the first stroke that surpassed what he could do.”

Just what to do with the boy on the death of his father was an important matter for the step-mother and uncle to decide. They showed wisdom by their decision. Now, the greatest of all the Umbrian painters, before Raphael, was a queer little miserly man named Perugino, who at that time had a studio in Perugia, an Umbrian town not far distant from Urbino. Although he was of mean appearance and ignoble character, he had an [12] unmistakable power in painting mild-eyed Madonnas and spotless saints against delicate landscape backgrounds. People disliked the man, but they could not help seeing the beauty of his art, and so his studio was crowded. Hither was sent the

boy Raphael and when Perugino noted the lad and some of his work, he said, “Let him be my pupil: he will soon become my master.” As nearly as we can learn, he remained in this studio nine years, from 1495 to 1504.

Perugino’s style of painting greatly pleased Raphael. He was naturally teachable and this, with his admiration for Perugino’s pictures, made his first work in the studio very much like his master’s. Indeed it is almost impossible to tell some of his earliest pictures from those of his teacher. Let me tell you about one. It is called “*The Marriage of the Virgin*” and you would have to go to the Brera gallery in Milan to see it.

The legend runs thus: The beautiful Mary had many lovers all wishing to marry her. Now here was a difficulty indeed, and so the suitors were required to put by their rough staves for a night. The promise was that in the morning one would be in blossom, and its owner should have Mary for his wife. We can imagine that these lovers were anxious for day to dawn, and that all but one was sad indeed at the result. In the morning there were the rods, all save one, brown and rough and [13]bare, but that one lay there alive with delicate buds and flowers, and all the air was full of fragrance. This was Joseph’s, and he went away glad and brought his young bride. This first great picture of Raphael’s represented this marriage taking place at the foot of the Temple steps. The disappointed lovers are present and, I am sorry to say, one of them is showing his anger by breaking his barren rod even while the marriage is taking place.

The first and the last work of a great man are always interesting, and that is why I have told you so much about this picture. You will be still more interested in Raphael’s last picture, “*The Transfiguration*.”

While in the studio he made many friends. With one he went to Siena to assist him in some fresco painting he had to do there. Of course you know that fresco is painting on wet plaster so that the colors dry in with the mortar.

The conversation of the studio was often of art and artists, and so the beautiful city of Florence must often have been an engaging subject. Think of what Florence was at this time, and how an artist must have thrilled at its very name! Beautiful as a flower, with her marble palaces, her fine churches, her lily-like bell-tower! What a charm was added when within her walls Leonardo da Vinci was painting, Michael Angelo carved [14]ing, Savonarola preaching. In the early years of Raphael’s apprenticeship, the voice of the preacher had been silenced, but still, “with the ineffable left hand,” Da Vinci painted, and still the marble chips dropped from Angelo’s chisel as a *David* grew to majesty beneath his touch.

To Raphael, with his love of the beautiful, with his zeal to learn, Florence was the city of all others that he longed to see. At last his dream was to be realized. A noble woman of Urbino gave him a letter to the Governor of Florence, expressing the wish that the young artist might be allowed to see all the art treasures of the city. The first

day of the year 1505 greeted Raphael in Florence, the art center of Italy. We can only guess at his joy in seeing the works here and in greeting his fellow artists.

Angelo and Da Vinci had just finished their cartoons for the town hall, “*The Bathing Soldiers*,” and “*The Battle of the Standard*,” and they were on exhibition. All Florence was studying them, and of this throng we may be sure Raphael was an enthusiastic member. While here he painted several pictures. Among them was the “*Granduca Madonna*,” the simplest of all his Madonnas—just a lovely young mother holding her babe. It is still in Florence, and to this day people look at it and say the Grand Duke, who would go ^[15]nowhere without this gem of pictures, knew what was beautiful.



R

APHAEL IN HIS STUDIO.

Raphael did not stay long in Florence at this time, but soon returned to Perugia. His next visit to Florence was of greater length. During these years, 1506 to 1508, he painted many of his best known pictures. In studying the works of Raphael you must never tire of the beautiful Madonna, for it is said that he painted a hundred of these, so much did he love the subject and so successful was he in representing the child Jesus and the lovely mother. Some of his finest Madonnas belong to this time. Let us look at a few of them.

^[16]One, called “*The Madonna of the Goldfinch*,” shows Mary seated with the Child Jesus at her knee and the young John presenting him with a finch, which he [caresses](#) gently. The Madonna has the drooping eyes, the exquisitely rounded face

that always charm us, and the boys are real live children ready for a frolic. Another, called "*The Madonna of the Meadow*," represents the Virgin in the foreground of a gently broken landscape with the two children playing beside her. We must not forget, either, as belonging to this time, the very beautiful "*La Belle Jardiniere*," or the "*Madonna of the Garden*" which now hangs in the Louvre, the art gallery of Paris.

Like all his great Madonnas, the Virgin and Children are of surpassing loveliness. It is finished in such a soft, melting style that to see it in its exquisite coloring, one could easily imagine it vanishing imperceptibly into the blaze of some splendid sunset. While we are talking of Raphael's color it may be interesting to call your attention to a very remarkable fact about his paintings. He lays the color on the canvas so thin that sometimes one can trace through it the lines of the drawing, and yet his color is so pure and beautiful that he is considered one of the greatest colorists of the world. The next time you see an oil painting, notice how thick or how thin the paint is laid on, and then think of what I have told you of Raphael's method of using color.^[17]



[18]

LA BELLE JARDINIÈRE.

Raphael.

[19] Now while Raphael was painting these drooping-eyed, mild-faced Madonnas and learning great lessons from the masters of Florence, a wonderful honor came to him. He was called to Rome by the Pope and given some of the apartments of the Vatican to decorate in any way he wished.

The Pope at this time was Julius II. and he was a very interesting man. He was a warrior and had spent many years fighting to gain lands and cities for the Church. When peace returned he was still anxious to do honor to the Church and so, wherever he heard of a great architect, painter, or sculptor, he at once invited him to Rome to do beautiful work for the Church. Already he had set Michael Angelo to work on a grand tomb for him. Bramante, a relative of Raphael's, was working hard to make St. Peter's the most

wonderful Church in all the world. Now the young Raphael was to beautify still further the buildings belonging to the church.

Julius did not pretend to be an artist or a scholar, and yet by his patronage he greatly encouraged art and literature. The story is told that when Angelo was making a statue of the Pope for the town of Bologna, the artist asked Julius if he should place a book in the statue's extended left hand, and the Pope retorted, almost in anger, "What book? Rather a sword—I am no reader!"

^[20]In earlier years Florence had been a glorious sight to our artist and now in 1508, standing in the "Eternal City," he was more awed than when first he beheld the city of the Arno. Here the court of Julius, gorgeous and powerful, together with the works of art, like St. Peter's, in process of construction, were but a part of the wonders to be seen. In addition, the remains of ancient Rome were scattered all about—here a row of columns, the only remains of a grand temple, there a broken statue of some god or goddess, long lost to sight, and all the earth about so filled with these treasures that one had only to dig to find some hidden work of art. The Roman people, too, were awake to the fact that they were not only living out a marvelous present, but that they were likewise, in their every day life, walking ever in the presence of a still more wonderful past. I wish, while you are thinking about this, that you would get a picture of the Roman Forum and notice its groups of columns, its triumphal arches, its ruined walls. You will then certainly appreciate more fully what Raphael felt as he went about this city of historic ruins.^[21]



[22]

MADONNA OF THE FISH.

Raphael.

The Pope received the young artist cordially and at once gave him the vast commission of painting in fresco three large rooms, or *stanze*, of the Vatican. In addition, he was to decorate the gallery, or corridor, called the ^[23]*loggia*, leading to these apartments from the stairway. With the painting of these walls Raphael and his pupils were more or less busy during the remainder of the artist's short life. A great many religious and historic subjects were used, besides some invented by Raphael himself, as when he represented *Poetry* by Mount Parnassus inhabited by all the great poets past and present. In these rooms some of his best work is done. Every year thousands of people go to see these pictures and come away more than ever enraptured with Raphael and his work.

In the loggia are the paintings known collectively as Raphael's Bible. Of the fifty-two pictures in the thirteen arcades of this corridor all but four represent Old Testament scenes. The others are taken from the New Testament. Although Raphael's pupils assisted largely in these frescoes they are very beautiful and will always rank high among the art works of the time.

Raphael's works seem almost perfect even from the beginning, yet he was always studying to get the great points in the work of others and to perfect his own. Perhaps this is the best lesson we may learn from his intellectual life—the lesson of unending study and assimilation. He was greatly interested in the ruins of Rome and we know that he studied them deeply and carefully. This is very evident in the Madonnas of his [24] Roman period. They have a strength and a power to make one think great thoughts that is not so marked in the pictures of his Florentine period. [25]



THE ARCHANGEL.

Detail from *Madonna of the Fish*. Raphael.

The “*Madonna of the Fish*” is one of the most beautiful of this time. It was painted originally for a chapel in Naples where the blind prayed for sight, and where, legend relates, they were often miraculously answered. The divine Mother, a little older than Raphael’s virgins of earlier years, is seated on a throne with the ever beautiful child in her arms. The babe gives his attention to the surpassingly lovely angel, Raphael, who brings the young Tobias with his fish into the presence of the Virgin, of whom he would beg the healing of his father who is blind. On the other side he points to a passage in the book held by the venerable St. Jerome. This is doubtless the book of Tobit wherein the story of Tobias is related, and which Tobias translated. Whatever the real purpose of the artist was in introducing St. Jerome, a very beautiful result was attained in contrasting youth and age. Like a human being of note, this picture has had an eventful history. It was stolen from Naples and carried to Madrid and then, in the French wars, it was taken to Paris. It has since been restored to the Prado of Madrid, and there to-day we may feast our eyes on its almost unearthly loveliness. In it the divine painter ^[27]showed that he knew the heart of a mother and the love of a son; that he appreciated the majesty of age and the heavenly beauty of the angels.

Hardly less beautiful is the “*Madonna Foligno*,” so named from the distant view of the town of Foligno seen under a rainbow in the central part of the picture. In the upper portion, surrounded by angel heads, is the Madonna holding out her child to us. Below is the scene already referred to, the portrait of the donor of the picture, some saints, and a beautiful boy angel. The latter is holding a tablet which is to be inscribed, for this is one of that large class of pictures in Italian Art called *votive*—that is, given to the church by an individual in return for some great deliverance. In this case the donor had escaped, as by a miracle, from a stroke of lightning.

In this short sketch there is time to mention only a few of Raphael’s great pictures, but I trust you will be so interested that you will look up about others that are passed over here. There are many very interesting books about Raphael in which you can find descriptions of all of his pictures.

Among other paintings, Raphael made many fine portraits. An excellent likeness of Julius was so well done that, skillfully placed and lighted, it deceived some of the Pope’s friends into thinking it the living Julius.

^[28]The painting of portraits was not the only departure of our artist from his favorite Madonna or historic subjects. We find him also interested in mythology. Out of this interest grew his “*Galatea*,” which he painted for a wealthy nobleman of his acquaintance. In this picture Galatea sails over the sea in her shell-boat drawn by dolphins. She gazes into heaven and seems unconscious of the nymphs sporting about her.



GALATEA.

Raphael.

Speaking of Raphael's use of mythological subjects, ^[29]though not quite in the order of time, we may here mention his frescos illustrating the story of Cupid and Psyche, painted on the walls and ceiling of the same nobleman's palace, the Chigi palace. The drawings for these pictures were made by Raphael, but most of the painting was done by his pupils. As we study these pictures of the joys and sorrows of this beautiful pair, we are interested, but we regret that our angel-painter was willing, even for a short time, to leave his own proper subjects, the religious. We feel like saying, "Let men who know not the depth of religious feeling, as did Raphael, paint for us the myth and the secular story, but let us save from any earthly touch our painter of sacred things."

In 1513 the great Julius died, and Leo X., a member of the famous Medici family of Florence, succeeded to his place. Raphael was in the midst of his paintings in the Vatican, and for a time it was uncertain what the new Pope would think of continuing these expensive decorations. Though lacking the energy of Julius, Leo continued the warrior-pope's policy regarding art works. So Raphael went on unmolested in his work, with now and then a great commission added.

During the life of Leo the power of the Church sunk to a low level, and yet the angel-painter of the Vatican pursued in peace the composition and painting of his lovely works.

^[30]The “*St. Cecilia*” was a very important work painted about the time of Julius’ death. It was painted for a wealthy woman of Bologna to adorn a chapel which she had built to St. Cecilia, the patroness of music. She had built this chapel because she thought she heard angels telling her to do it; in other words she had obeyed a vision.

In the picture the saint stands in the centre of a group made up of St. John, St. Paul, St. Augustine, and Mary Magdalene. She holds carelessly in her hands an organ from which the reeds are slipping. What charms can even her favorite instrument have for her when streams of heaven’s own music are reaching her from the angel choir above? Every line of face and figure shows her rapt attention to the celestial singers. The instruments of earthly music lie scattered carelessly about.

While our attention is held most of all by the figure of St. Cecilia, the other persons represented interest us too, especially St. Paul, leaning on his naked sword. (See illustration.) His massive head and furrowed brow show man at his noblest occupation—*thinking*. In delightful contrast is the ever beautiful St. John, the embodiment of youth and love.^[31]



[32]

ST. CECILIA.

Raphael.

When the picture was completed Raphael sent it to his old friend Francia, the artist of Bologna. It is related [33] that Francia, on seeing the wonderful perfection of the picture, died of despair, feeling how poorly he could paint as compared with Raphael. Whether this story be true or not, it is certain that the people of Bologna were much excited over the arrival of the picture and gloried in possessing the vision of St. Cecilia. The picture is still to be seen in Bologna, where it retains its brilliant coloring, slightly mellowed by the passing years.

The Sistine Chapel was the most beautiful apartment in the Vatican. Its walls were covered with choicest frescos. Its ceiling, done by the wonder-working hand of Michael

Angelo, was a marvel. To add still more to the beauty of this Chapel, Leo ordered Raphael to draw cartoons for ten tapestries to be hung below the lowest tier of paintings. Now you know that cartoons are the large paper drawings made previous to frescos and tapestries to serve as patterns.

Raphael selected ten subjects from the Acts of the Apostles. His designs were accepted and sent to Arras in Flanders where the most beautiful tapestries were manufactured. The cartoons were cut into strips that they might be more conveniently used. In 1518 the tapestries, woven of silk, wool, and gold, were finished and brought to Rome, where they were greatly admired.



M

IRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

Raphael.

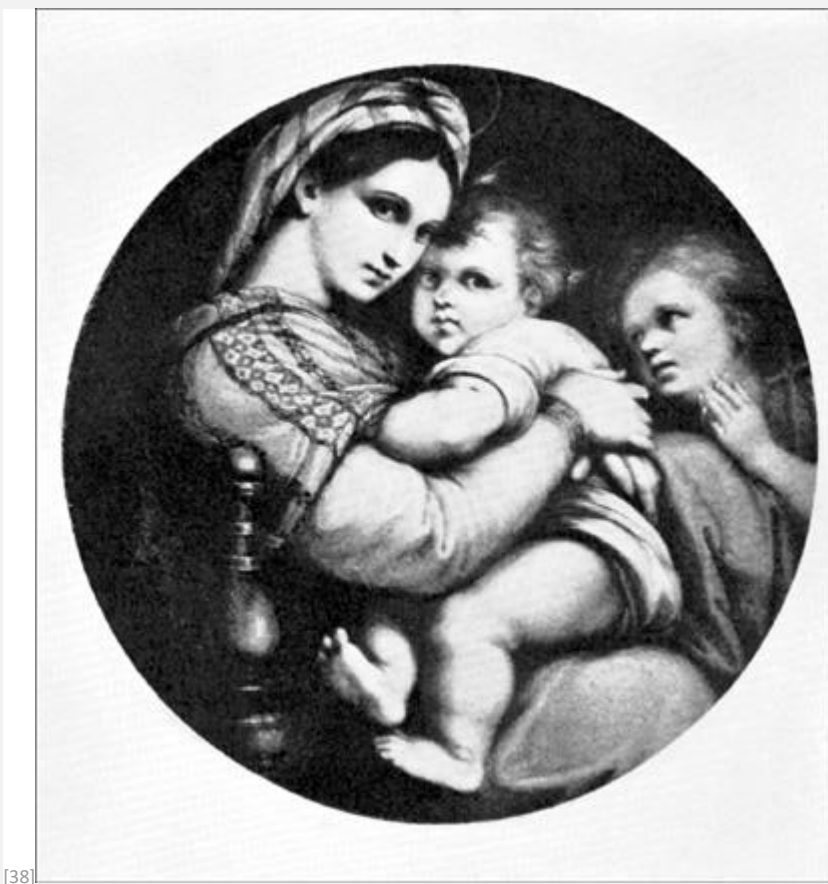
In 1527, Rome was sacked by savage soldiers and many of her choicest things carried away. Among [35] them were these tapestries. They were sold and then restolen by Jews, who thought to separate the gold by burning them. They tried this with one and found that the quantity of gold was so small that it was not worth the trouble, and so the others were spared and sold to a merchant of Genoa. They were finally recovered in a faded condition and are now in the Vatican.

Meanwhile the cartoons were forgotten and three of them lost. The Flemish artist, Rubens, came across those remaining, however, and recommended Charles I. of England to purchase them for his palace at Whitehall. Later Cromwell bought them for the nation, and today we may see them pasted together and carefully mounted in South Kensington Museum, London. "*The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*," (see opposite page,) is one of the best known of the series. All are bold and strong in drawing, and several are very beautiful, as "*Paul and John at the Beautiful Gate*." One critic, in speaking of the cartoons, says they mark the climax of Raphael's art.

We must not forget that all these years, while Raphael was making these wonderful cartoons and pictures, the work on the rooms of the Vatican was going steadily forward. He certainly was a busy man!

Probably the best known of Raphael's Madonnas is "*The Madonna della Sedia*," so called because the ^[36]mother sits in a chair. A delightful story is told of the painting of this picture. It runs something like this: Many years ago there lived in a quiet valley in Italy a hermit who was greatly loved by all the people round about, for he taught them and he helped them in sickness and in trouble. His hut was near a giant oak tree that sheltered him from the sun of summer and the biting winds of winter. In the constant waving of its branches, too, it seemed to converse with him, and so he said he had two intimate friends, one that could talk, and one that was mute. By the one that could talk he meant the vine-dresser's daughter who lived near by and who was very kind to him. By the mute one he meant this sheltering oak.

Now, one winter a great storm arose, and when the hermit saw that his hut was unsafe, his mute friend seemed to beckon him to come up among the branches. Gathering a few crusts, he went up into the tree where, with hundreds of bird companions, his life was saved, though his hut was destroyed. Just as he thought he should die of hunger, Mary, the vine-dresser's daughter, came to see her old friend and took him to her home. Then the pious hermit, Benardo, prayed that his two friends might be glorified together in some way.^[37]



[38]

MADONNA DELLA SEDIA.

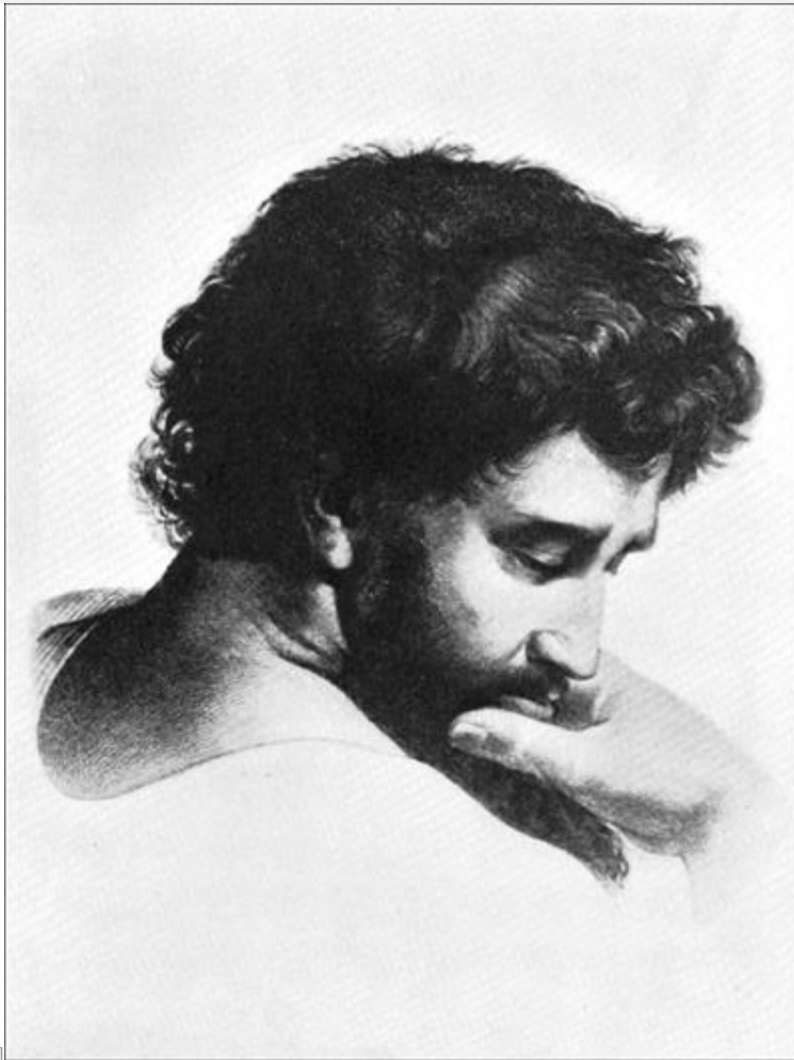
Raphael.

Time wore on. The hermit died, the oak tree was cut down and converted into wine casks, and the lovely [39] Mary married and was the mother of two boys. One day as she sat with her children, a young man passed by. His eyes were restless, and one might have known him for a poet or a painter in whose mind a celestial vision was floating. Suddenly he saw the young mother and her two children. The painter, for it was Raphael, now beheld his vision made flesh and blood. But he had only a pencil. On what could he draw the beautiful group? He seized the clean cover of a wine cask near by and drew upon it the lines to guide him in his painting. He went home and filled out his sketch in loveliest color, and ever since the world has been his debtor for giving it his heavenly vision. So the hermit's prayer was answered. His two friends were glorified together.

Other honors, besides those coming from his paintings, were showered upon Raphael at this time. He was now rich, and the Cardinal Bibbiena offered him his niece Maria in marriage. It was considered a great thing in those times to be allied by marriage to a church dignitary, but Raphael had higher honors, and so, while he accepted the offer rather than offend the cardinal, he put off the wedding until Maria died. His heart was not in this contract because for years he had loved a humble but beautiful girl, Margherita, who was probably the model of some of his sweetest Madonnas.

[40] Speaking of the honors thrust upon Raphael, we must not forget that the Pope made him architect-in-chief of St. Peter's on the death of Bramante. He was also appointed to make drawings of the ancient city of Rome, in order that the digging for buried remains might be carried on more intelligently.

In every Madonna we have described, we have had to use freely the words *lovely*, *great*, *beautiful*, but one there remains which, more than any other, merits all these titles and others in addition. It is the "*Sistine Madonna*" in the Dresden Gallery. It was the last picture painted wholly by Raphael's hand. It was painted originally as a banner for the monks of St. Sixtus at Piacenza, but it was used as an altar-piece. In 1754, the Elector of Saxony bought it for \$40,000 and it was brought to Dresden with great pomp. People who know about pictures generally agree that this is the greatest picture in the world.[41]



[42]

ST. PAUL.

Detail from *St. Cecilia*. Raphael.

Let us see some of the things which it contains—no one can ever tell you all, for as the years increase and your lives are enlarged by joy and by sorrow, you will ever see more and more in this divine picture and feel more than you see. Two green curtains are drawn aside and there, floating on the clouds, is the Virgin full length, presenting the Holy Child to the world. It is far more than a mother and child, for one sees in the ^[43]Madonna a look suggesting that she sees vaguely the darkness of Calvary and the glory of the resurrection. This is no ordinary child, either, that she holds, for He sees beyond this world into eternity and that His is no common destiny;—at least, one feels these things as we gaze at the lovely apparition on its background of clouds and innumerable angel heads. St. Sixtus on one side would know more of this mystery, while St. Barbara on the other is dazzled by the vision and turns aside her lovely face. Below are the two cherubs, the final touch of love, as it were, to this marvellous picture.

It is said that the picture was completed at first without these cherubs and that they were afterwards added when Raphael found two little boys resting their arms on a balustrade, gazing intently up at his picture.

This painting has a room to itself in the Dresden Gallery, where the most frivolous forget to chat and the thoughtful sit for hours in quiet meditation under its magic spell. One man says, “I could spend an hour every day for years looking at this picture and on the last day of the last year discover some new beauty and a new joy.”

There was now great division of opinion in Rome as to whether Angelo or Raphael were the greater painter. Cardinal de Medici ordered two pictures for the Cathedral of Narbonne, in France, one by Raphael and one ^[44]by Sebastian Piombo, a favorite pupil of Angelo's. People knew that Angelo would never openly compete with Raphael, but they also felt sure that he would assist his pupil. The subject chosen by Raphael was “*The Transfiguration*.” But suddenly, even before this latest commission was completed, that magic hand had been stopped by death. The picture, though finished by Raphael's pupils, is a great work. The ascending Lord is the point of greatest interest in the upper, or celestial part, while the father with his demoniac child, holds our attention in the lower, or terrestrial portion. At his funeral this unfinished picture hung above the dead painter, and his sorrowing friends must have felt, as Longfellow wrote of Hawthorne when he lay dead with an unfinished story on his bier,—

“Ah, who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain.” ^[45]



[46]

TRANSFIGURATION.

Raphael.

Raphael died suddenly on his birthday in 1520, from a fever contracted while searching for remains among the ruins of Rome. He realized from the first that his sickness was fatal, and he immediately set about disposing of his property. His works of art he gave to his pupils, his palace to Cardinal Bibbiena, and his other property was distributed among his relatives, and to his sweet^[47] heart, Margherita. He was buried with honors in the Pantheon at Rome, beside Maria Bibbiena.

For many years there was exhibited at St. Luke's Academy, in Rome, a so-called skull of Raphael. In 1833 some scholars declared that they did not believe this to be the skull of the artist. They urged the authorities to open the grave to prove their position.

After five days of careful digging the coffin was reached and there lay the artist's skeleton complete. For many days it was exposed to view in a glass case. A cast was taken of the right hand and of the skull, and then, with splendid ceremonies, they buried the artist a second time.

Mention has often been made of Raphael's personal beauty. Only thirty-seven when he died, his seraphic beauty was never marred by age.

In his palace he lived the life of a prince, and when he walked abroad, he had a retinue of devoted followers. He had for friends princes and prelates, artists and poets, while the common people loved him for the fine spirit they knew him to be.

Judged by the moral standard of his time, he was absolutely spotless. Seldom, in any man, have all good qualities joined with a versatile genius to the extent that they did in Raphael. No wonder that his friends caused to be inscribed on his tomb these words—“*This is that Raphael by whom Nature feared to be conquered while he lived, and to die when he died.*”

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-

SUBJECTS FOR LANGUAGE WORK.

1. The Boy Raphael at Home.
2. My Favorite Madonna.
3. Stories of St. Francis of Assisi.
4. What I know of Fresco Painting.
5. Looking for Buried Treasures in Rome.
6. A Day in the Roman Forum.
7. A Day with the Boy Raphael.
8. The Legend of the *Madonna della Sedia*.
9. Raphael and His Friends.
10. Raphael the Student.

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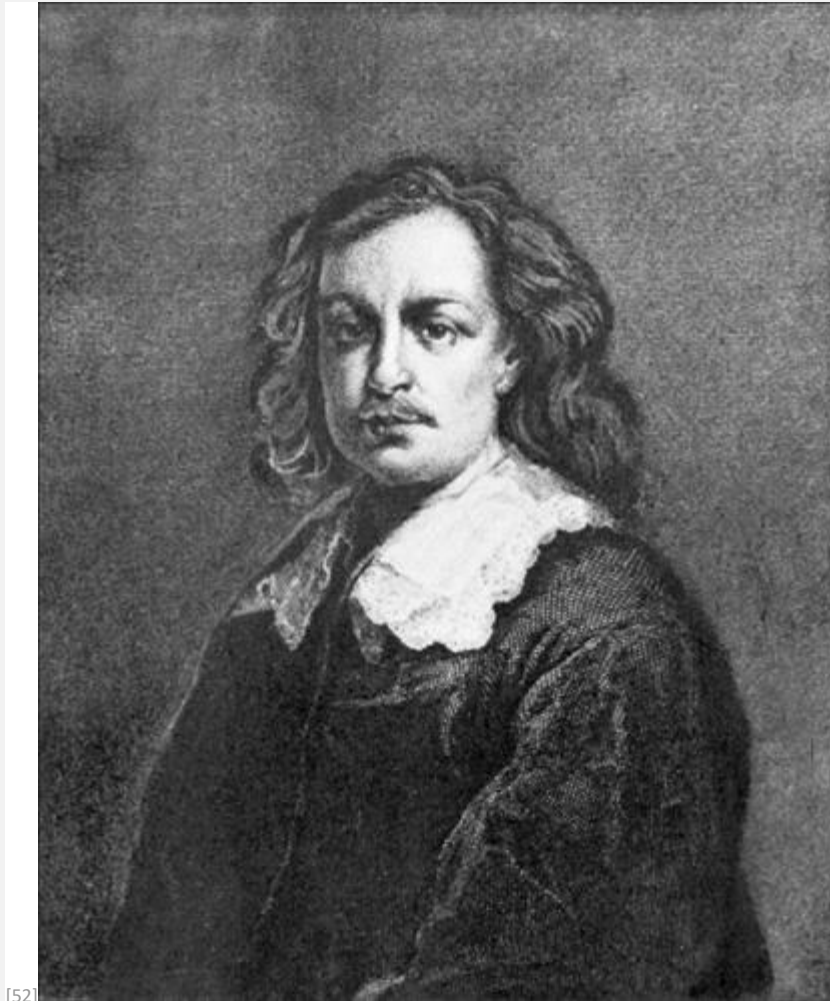
[49]

COURT IN THE ALCAZAR.

MURILLO AND SPANISH ART

[50] “Velazquez is in art an eagle; Murillo is an angel. One admires Velazquez and adores Murillo. By his canvasses we know him as if he had lived among us. He was handsome, good and virtuous. Envy knew not where to attack him; around his crown of glory he bore a halo of love. He was born to paint the sky.”—DE AMICIS.

“Murillo could paint the sacred fervor of the devotee, or the ecstasy of the religious enthusiast, as well as the raggedness of the mendicant, or the abject suffering of Job.”—CHARLES BLANC.[51]



[52]

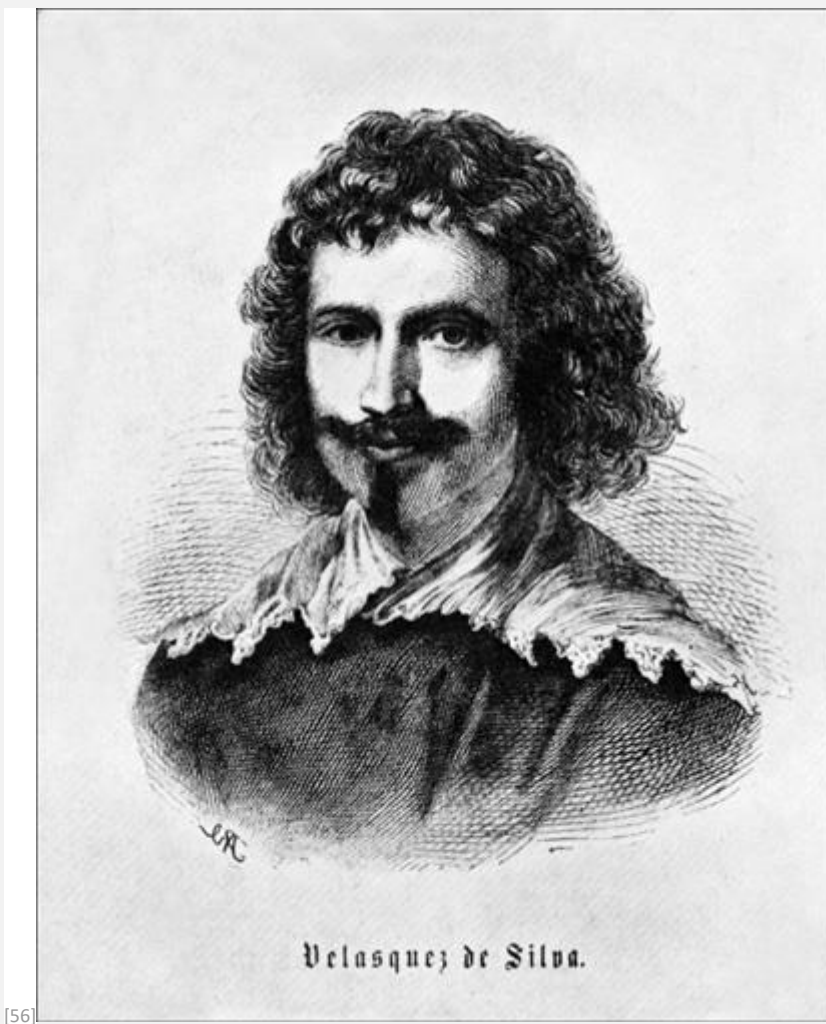
MURILLO.

[53] **MURILLO**
AND
SPANISH ART.

Spain was not blessed as Italy was with one generation after another of artists so great that all the world knows them even at this distant day. Spain has only two unquestionably great painters that stand out as world-artists. They are Velazquez and Murillo. The former painted with unrivalled skill the world of noblemen among whom he lived. The other, not surrounded by courtiers, looked into his own pure, religious soul, and into the sky above, and gave us visions of heaven—its saints and its angels.

It is impossible to study either of these men apart from the other, or apart from the art records of Spain. To understand either, we must know the land, teeming with rich and unique cities, we must have glimpses of its history, and we must know something of the rules laid down by the church to guide the painter in his work.

[54] The climate of Spain, except in the south, is rigorous. Elevated plains, rounded by snow-capped mountains, and swept during a large part of the year by chilling winds, are not adapted to inspire men to produce great works of art. On such a plain Madrid is situated, and chilly indeed are its nature pictures, even though they are over-arched by the bluest of skies and the most transparent of atmospheres! In Andalusia, however, things were different. Here were the olive, the orange, and the cypress, and here a sunny climate encouraged the houseless beggar no less than the aspiring artist.[55]



Velasquez de Silva.

In speaking of Spain as a home of painting, we must not forget, either, how very devoted the people were to their religion, for this, perhaps more than anything else, gave a peculiar character to the art of Spain. The doctrines of Luther, found no willing listeners in Spain. Indeed, the Spaniards clung all the closer to the Church when they

knew that there were those who wished to change it, and so their paintings are full of sad-faced, suffering saints, and rejoicing, holy men and women who gave their lives to religion. In connection with this extreme religious zeal, the Church found it necessary to impose rules on the artists who would paint these holy personages. The Virgin, whom all profoundly revered, should, according to tradition, have fair hair and blue eyes. Her robes must be of ^[57]pure white and azure blue, and under no circumstances should her feet be exposed. She should stand on the crescent moon with its horns pointing downward. Many other similar rules were at that time thought necessary, and they greatly limited the artists in their work, for however good a churchman a man may be, it is impossible for him to properly prescribe colors and forms for the artist, who, if he is any thing at all, is the *see-er* of his age. We want such things as the artist sees them. We shall see how nearly Murillo got into trouble by breaking some of these prescribed rules.

If we study the kings of Spain, Charles V. and the Philips, we shall see two things that greatly influenced the art of Spain. First, they were fond of art and spent great sums of money in buying fine paintings by Italian and Flemish masters. Both Titian and Rubens were favorites in Spain, and many of their pictures were painted expressly for Spanish monarchs. Then, these rulers were vain and had a great liking for having their portraits painted. This vanity extended to the Courtiers and even to the dwarfs, several of whom were usually connected with the court as a source of amusement. There are portraits of some of these diminutive creatures so skillfully painted that we cannot help wishing that more worthy subjects had been used. Thus the vanity of monarchs and their courtiers gave a ^[58]direction to Spanish art which can be accounted for in no other way—their greatest artists are always great portrait painters. So we see that, while genius in artists is indispensable, yet is this same genius largely influenced by climate, by religious enthusiasm, and even by the whims of kings and queens.^[59]



[60]

ÆSOP.

Velazquez.

Although Murillo stands out a superlatively great and beautiful artist, yet we must not forget that Velazquez, only eighteen years his senior, and like himself a native of Seville, lived during the greater part of Murillo's lifetime and divided honors with him. As has already been indicated, Velazquez's art was of a very different sort from Murillo's. He was born into a home of plenty, and very soon went to Madrid as court painter. We know how he gained renown for all time by the accuracy of the portraits he painted of various members of the court of Philip IV.—the king, the minister, Count Olivarez, the princes, the dwarfs, and the buffoons. We remember, too, how he thought that very ordinary personage, "*The Water-Carrier of Seville*," with his wrinkles, his joy, and his beggarly customers, a subject worth painting. Then we recall a goodly list of

other commonplace subjects which he treated so truthfully that they will always stand among the great pictures of the world,—“*The Spinners*,” where women labor in a dingy room, “*The Topers*,”^[61] “*The Lances*,” representing the great surrender of Breda, and the “*The Maids of Honor*.” Nor can we forget his ideal portrait of “*Æsop*,” with his book under his arm. How well we know that book of fables! The rugged, good-natured face, homely as can be, holds us, as by a spell, and if we have not already done so, we read his book because we *must*, after looking into that dear old face.

One of the loveliest things we remember of Velazquez was his kindness to Murillo when he came to Madrid, a poor art student. Although Velazquez was rich and his pictures in demand, he took a keen interest in the young Murillo, who should one day stand beside him—they two the greatest artists of Spain. By the duties of his office, he was obliged to take an active part in the festivities attending the marriage of Louis XIV. and the Infanta, Maria Theresa, in 1660. The fatigue and exposure caused his death. We are reasonable in presuming that thus was Spain robbed of ten years of a strong artist’s life and work. Incomparable loss when we think of what his countrymen gained in watching a passing pageant.



[62]

CATHEDRAL, SEVILLE,

SHOWING THE GIRALDA TOWER.

Spain is a land of unique cities. Perhaps this is because in so many of them the works of Christianity were grafted on to works originally built or begun by the Moors. As we study the wonderful buildings of [63] Spain, we cannot forget, however much we may abhor the religion of the Arabs, that they were marvellous builders and profound scholars. When the Spaniards sent them from their country, after they had lived there for seven hundred years, they lost their best citizens, and the most beautiful and highly cultivated part of Spain was henceforth to be comparatively desolate. On all the great section of Andalusia, the most southern part of Spain, the Moors left marks in buildings and in cultivation, that it will take centuries yet to sweep away.

Of all the cities of this division, and it includes a goodly number of Spain's most important towns, Seville, "the pearl of cities," the birthplace of both Velazquez and

Murillo, appeals most strongly to everyone. Many superlative adjectives rise to our lips as we think of its whiteness, of its sunny vineyard slopes, its orange and olive groves, its salubrious climate, and its ancient associations. We think of its wondrous cathedral, next in size to St. Peter's, of its storied bell-tower, the Giralda, of that fairy palace, the home of generations of Moorish kings, the Alcazar, of the Golden Tower by the river's edge, where Christian rulers stored their treasure. And then to our vision of Seville the beautiful, we add the silver Guadalquivir which divides, and yet encloses this dream city of Andalusia. If we are not interested in ^[64]art, still must we be enthusiastic over Seville, for its bewitching little women with their lustrous eyes, their glossy dark hair, held by the ever present single rose. If it be entertainment we seek, then Seville will furnish us the national bull-fight in all its perfection. If the more refined delights of music attract us, still more is this our chosen city, for here is the scene of, Mozart's "*Don Juan*" and "*Figaro*," of Bizet's "*Carmen*," and many are the shops that claim to have belonged to the "*Barber of Seville*."

It is most pleasing to our sense of appropriateness that out of this beautiful white city of Andalusia, should have come, at about the same time, the two greatest Spanish painters, the one to give us real scenes and people, the other to give us ideals of loftiest type.

Here in the closing days of 1617, Murillo was born. His father and mother were poor people. The house they lived in had formerly belonged to a convent, and it was rented to them for a very small sum, on condition that they would keep up the repairs. Even this Murillo's father found to be a heavy burden. He was a mechanic and his income very small.^[65]



[66]

THE GRAPE EATERS.

Murillo.

Our artist's full name was Bartolome Esteban Murillo. His last name seems to have come from his father's family, though it was even more common in those days to take the mother's name for a surname, as in the case [67] of Velazquez. We know almost nothing of his early years except that he was left an orphan before he was eleven, under the guardianship of an uncle. Perhaps we should mention that Murillo early showed his inclination to make pictures by scribbling the margin of his school books with designs that in no wise illustrated the text therein. With this as a guide his guardian early apprenticed him to Juan del Castillo, another uncle, and an artist of some repute. Here he learned to mix colors, to clean brushes, and to draw with great accuracy.

When Murillo was about twenty-two, Castillo removed to Cadiz, down the river from Seville, and the young artist was thrown wholly on his own resources. Life with him in those days was merely a struggle for existence. He took the method very generally taken by young artists. He painted for the *Feria* or weekly market. Here all

sorts of producers and hucksters gathered with their wares. We can imagine that men of this sort were not very particular about the art objects they purchased. They demanded two things—bright colors and striking figures. Murillo, in common with other struggling artists, turned out great numbers of these little bits of painted canvas. Some of them have been discovered in Spanish America, whither they were undoubtedly taken to assist in religious teaching.

If there was hardship in this *painting for the feria*, ^[68]as people slightly spoke of such work, there were also immense advantages. As he painted he could observe the people who came to buy and the people who came to sell, and, mayhap, that other numerous class in Seville who neither buy nor sell, but beg instead. From this very observation of character must have come largely that skill which is so marked in his pictures of beggar boys, who, with a few coppers, or a melon, or some grapes, are kings of their surroundings. Then the demand for striking figures cultivated a broad style in the artist which added greatly to his later work.

A fellow pupil of Murillo's had joined the army in Flanders. When he returned he told such wonderful stories of the country and its art works, that Murillo was more than ever inspired to go abroad to Rome or to Flanders. He at once set about earning a little money to assist him in the journey. Again he painted a great number of saints and bright landscapes on small squares of linen, and sold them to eager customers. Thus he provided himself with scant means for the journey. He placed his sister in the care of a relative, and then started off afoot across the Sierras to Madrid, without having told anyone of his intentions. His little stock of money was soon exhausted, and he arrived in Madrid exhausted and desperately lonesome. He at once searched out Velazquez, his townsman, who ^[69]was then rich, and honored in the position of court painter to Philip IV. Velazquez received him kindly, and after some inquiry about mutual acquaintances, he talked of the young painter's plans for himself. Murillo spoke freely of his ambition to be a great painter, and of his desire to visit Rome and Flanders.

Velazquez took the young painter to his own house, and procured for him the privilege of copying in the great galleries of the capitol and in the Escorial. He advised him to copy carefully the masterpieces in his own country. There were pictures by Titian, Van Dyck, and Rubens, and Murillo began the work of copying them at once. When Velazquez returned after long absence, he was surprised at the improvement in Murillo's work. He now advised the young painter to go to Rome, but he had been away from Seville for three years, and he longed to be again at home in his beautiful native city. During his absence he had learned much in art and in the ways of the world. He had met many distinguished artists and statesmen in Velazquez's home.



[70]

FRUIT VENDERS.

Murillo.

The first three years after his return to Seville, he busied himself with a series of pictures for a small Franciscan convent near by. Although he did the work without pay, the monks were loath to give him the commission because he was an unknown artist. There were [71] eleven in the series, scenes from the life of St. Francis. They were admirably done, and though the artist received no pay for them, they did him a greater service than money could have bought—they established his reputation, so that he no longer wanted for such work as he desired.

Among his earliest and best known pictures are those charming studies of the beggar boys and flower girls of Seville. Several of the best of these are in the gallery at Munich where they are justly prized. Here are some of the names he gives these pictures, "*The Melon Eaters*," "*The Gamesters*," "*The Grape Eaters*," "*The Fruit Venders*," "*The Flower Girl*." They are true to life—the happiest, most interesting, and self-sufficient set of young beggars one could well imagine. Notice, too, the beauty of

the faces, especially in “*The Fruit Venders*,” reproduced in this sketch. There are other interesting things in this picture. With what eagerness the day’s earnings are counted! There is a motherliness in the girl’s face that makes us sure that she is at once mother and sister to the boy. What luscious grapes—what a back-ground, unkempt like themselves, but thoroughly in keeping with the rest of the picture! In his works of this sort what broad sympathy he shows! so broad, indeed, that they prove him as belonging to no particular nation, but to the world.

^[72]From the painting of these scenes from real life, he passed gradually to the painting of things purely imaginary—to those visible only to his own mind.

A dainty picture which belongs half and half to each of these classes of pictures, represents the Virgin a little girl, sweet and quaint as she must have been, standing by St. Anne’s knee, apparently learning a lesson from the open book. Both figures are beautiful in themselves and, besides, they present the always interesting contrast of age and youth. This was one of the pictures that well-nigh brought trouble on Murillo from some zealous churchmen before referred to. They thought that the Virgin was gifted with learning from her birth and never had to be taught. They merely criticized the treatment of the subject, however. It was an innovation in church painting.^[73]



[74]

THE MELON EATERS.

Murillo.

By this time Murillo was wealthy. He had numerous commissions and, in society, he mingled with the best in the land. He was now in a position to marry, which he did in 1648. There is a story told of Murillo's marriage which one likes to repeat. He was painting an altar-piece for the church in Pilas, a town near by; while he was working, wrapt in thoughts of his subject, a lovely woman came into the church to pray. From his canvas, the artist's eyes wandered to the worshipper. He was deeply impressed with her beauty and her devo^[75]tion. Wanting just then an angel to complete his picture, he sketched the face and the form of the unsuspecting lady. By a pleasant coincidence he afterwards made her the angel of his home—his good wife. The painter doubtless proved the truth of Wordsworth's beautiful lines—

“I saw her upon nearer view
A spirit yet a Woman too!

...

“A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright and good
For human nature’s daily food.

. . .

“A perfect woman nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.”

However this may be, we know that she is often painted as the Virgin in Murillo’s great pictures. Her liquid eyes and dark hair inspired him to forget the rigid rules laid down regarding the Virgin’s having blue eyes and fair hair or, at all events, to disregard them. We shall see the Mary in some of his [loveliest](#) pictures with the dark hair and eyes of his countrymen. Three children were born into Murillo’s home, two boys and one girl. One boy for a time practised the art of his ^[76]father, but he later became a clergyman. The other son came to America, while the daughter devoted herself to religion and entered a convent.

After Murillo’s marriage, his house was the gathering place for the most distinguished people of Seville. What a change was this from Murillo’s early condition, when he toiled at the weekly markets for bread and shelter! His power in his work increased, so that every new picture was an additional pledge of his greatness.^[77]



[78]

THE IMMACULATE

CONCEPTION.

Murillo.

It was in middle life that Murillo began painting the subject that more than any other distinguished him. It was to glorify a beautiful idea, that Mary was as pure and spotless as her divine son. It is called the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and so much did it appeal to Murillo that he painted it over and over again. He has left us at least twenty different pictures embodying this doctrine. The one most familiar is perhaps the greatest. It is the one that now graces the gem-room of the Louvre. I so name this room, for in it, within a few feet of one another, are pictures by Raphael, Da Vinci, Correggio, Rembrandt, Veronese, in short, by the foremost masters of the world. Among all these the vision of Murillo takes an equal rank. To many, the idea which the picture represents is of secondary importance, save perhaps as giving a reason for the

name it bears. But all can see the exquisite loveliness of this ^[79]young woman in her blue mantle and her white robe, with her feet concealed by the voluminous folds of her drapery, and with the crescent moon, the symbol of all things earthly, in the midst of a throng of child-angels “hovering in the sunny air, reposing on clouds, or sporting among their silvery folds”—“the apotheosis of womanhood.” It is as if an unseen hand had suddenly drawn aside an invisible curtain and we, the children of earth, were for a moment permitted to view the interior of heaven itself. In this vision of a poet, so masterfully painted, the lover of pictures rejoices.

How did the Louvre come by this magnificent monument of Spanish art when so much that is glorious has been kept within the boundaries of Spain? We have but to turn to the wars of Napoleon and the campaigns in the Spanish peninsula, when the marshals of the mighty warrior swept everything before them. One of these, Marshal Soult, brought back, after his victorious invasion, pictures enough to enrich a Czar. One of these stolen treasures was the picture we are studying. In 1852, the French government bought it of him for more than \$120,000. There is but one mitigating thought regarding this rapine of the French, and that is that many art treasures, heretofore virtually locked to the public, were opened to the world—were made easily accessible.

^[80]From this fair vision of womanhood let us turn to another, fairer still, where a little child is the central figure, “*St. Anthony of Padua*.” Although he did not repeat this subject so often as he did the Conception, yet he has left us several representations of this beautiful and much adored saint.^[81]



[82]

**HEAD OF VIRGIN, FROM
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.**

Murillo.

In the life of Raphael we saw how great an influence was exerted on art by St. Francis of Assisi. His most devoted follower was St. Anthony of Padua, from whose lips sweet words fell like drops of honey, and whose ready hands ever dispensed deeds of love. Any man whose life abounds in such acts must be devout. Such was the character of St. Anthony, and he added to this a vivid imagination. Many were the beautiful visions that rewarded and encouraged his deeds of mercy and kindness. One of the loveliest is the one Murillo caught from the depths of his own pure soul, and held long enough to transfer it to canvas to delight the people of his own day, and us of this later time who no longer see visions. It is still in the cathedral of Seville for which it was painted. It is merely called "*St. Anthony of Padua.*" Never was a more soul-thrilling vision sent to man to illumine his earthly pathway. There is the kneeling saint with outstretched arms reaching forward to embrace the Christ child, who comes sliding down through the nebulous light from among a host of joyous [83] angels. From the

ecstatic look on St. Anthony's face we know that the Child of God has been drawn to earth by the prayerful love in the saint's heart. We feel certain that the open book on the table near by is none other than the best of all good books. The vision has come to Saint Anthony on the earth, for that is common daylight that streams in through the open door, and those are perishable lilies in the vase there by the open book. By the painting of this picture Murillo gained for himself the title of "The Painter of Heaven." The picture has always been highly prized, and even the hardships of war did not tempt the men of the Cathedral to accept the Duke of Wellington's offer to literally cover the canvas with gold to be given in exchange for the precious picture. The English general was obliged to keep his money, and in the cathedral still we may view Murillo's masterpiece. Treasures tempt thieves even when they are in the form of pictures. In 1874, the figure of the Christ Child was cut from this painting. It was brought to New York, where the thief, in trying to dispose of it, was caught. The figure was returned to Seville, and carefully inserted in the injured painting.

It may not be out of place to stop here and notice the wonderful variety of holy children that Murillo has given us. His Madonnas invariably hold very beautiful children, not so heavenly, perhaps, as Raphael's in the ^[84]Sistine Madonna, but nevertheless, children that charm us into loving them. From the holy babe, with all his lovely qualities, let us turn to that dear little boy of older growth, that Joseph and Mary hold so tenderly by either hand in the picture of the "*Holy Family*" in the National Gallery in London, or to those other boys, "*The Divine Shepherd*" and "*St John*." Better than all, however, are those beautiful children known as "*The Children of the Shell*," where the little Christ offers to his playfellow, John, the cooling draught from a conch shell they have picked up in their play. They are children drawn from the sky quite as much as the Jesus in the famous St. Anthony picture.

Among his children there are little girls, too. We have already noticed the Virgin as a child, and there is that other, led by the guardian angel sure and safe along life's uncertain way. Even in our practical time we all have more or less faith in the guardian spirit that watches over every little child. If by some miracle these children could all come to life, what a joyous yet thoughtful assembly it would be! Difficult indeed would it be to select the one beyond all others precious. No more certain proof exists of Murillo's high appreciation of spiritual things, of the simplicity and purity of his own life and thought than this selfsame throng of little children that he has given us.^[85]



[86]

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA.

Murillo.

[87] Murillo had always thought that a public academy of painting was very much needed in Seville. In his youth he had greatly felt the need of such an institution. Finally, in 1660, the year of Velazquez's death, several of the artists united with Murillo in starting an academy. It lived only as long as its founder and never produced a great artist.

In 1671 our artist seemed in the very prime of his power. In that year he began the wonderful series of pictures for the Charity Hospital of Seville. It was an old institution of the city, but it had been neglected until it was almost in ruins. In Murillo's time a wealthy and pious citizen set about restoring it. For the beautifying of the restored hospital Murillo was commissioned to paint eleven works. They are among his very best. Two of them we must notice in particular, "*Moses Striking the Rock*" and "*Elizabeth of Hungary Tending the Sick*."

In the first of these the artist shows himself in a new capacity, that of illustrator. Nothing could better express the thirst of that vast assembly in the wilderness than this picture. From a mighty, towering rock the coveted water gushes forth in a generous, crystal stream, by its very abundance making a pool beneath. All degrees of thirst are represented in man and beast, from that which is not pressing to that which, in its ^[88]intensity, makes a mother seize the cup from the babe in her arms.

In the “*St. Elizabeth*” we admire the composition of the work, but the subject rather repels than holds us. With the diadem of a queen upon her head, with the delicate hands of a gentlewoman, and from a costly basin St. Elizabeth bathes the scrofulous head of a beggar. Her ladies-in-waiting turn from the loathsome object of her care, while other patients await their turn. In the distance is the court feast that goes on joyously in the palace while Elizabeth, the mistress of the feast, serves the diseased beggars at the portal.

I have said that we could not stop to notice more than two of this notable series. Yet, as I run my photographs over, I cannot refrain from the mention of one other, the noble and wonderfully beautiful “*Liberation of St. Peter*.” It is simply a magnificent angel awakening Peter who languishes in prison. The suddenly aroused prisoner, the broken fetters, and above all, that glorious angel, extending a helping hand—his presence making a light in that dark cell—tell in no uncertain accents of the power of our beloved painter.^[89]



[90]

MADONNA.

Murillo.

Thus might we go on from picture to picture, and from year to year, for the list ever strengthens as it lengthens. Two more, at least, should claim our attention before this sketch is closed. They are “*St. Thomas* ^[91] *giving Alms*” and “*The Madonna of the Napkin*.” The St. Thomas is rightly the companion of that other great charity picture, “*St. Elizabeth*.” The one represents the abnegation of self in woman’s way—she gives service. The other represents man’s way—he gives money. At the portal of the church stands the pale-faced, spiritual St. Thomas, dispensing his alms to beggars and cripples. In composition and drawing this is one of Murillo’s greatest works. We are interested to know that it was his own favorite among his pictures.

“*The Madonna of the Napkin*” is both beautiful and curious. While Murillo was painting a series of pictures for a Capuchin convent of Seville, the cook became very much attached to him. When his work was done and he was about to leave the convent, the cook begged a memento. But how could he paint even a small picture with no canvas at hand? The cook, bent on obtaining his wish, presented him with a table napkin and begged him to use that instead of canvas. With his usual good nature, the artist complied, and before evening he produced a beautiful Virgin holding the infant Christ. Though done thus hastily, this Madonna is one of his best in design and coloring. His other Madonnas we know well, the one holding a rosary, and the other marked by nothing but its own surpassing ^[92]grace and beauty, and known simply as Murillo’s Madonna.

According to the subject he was painting, Murillo used three distinct styles of work, known as the *cold*, the *warm*, and the *aerial*. The first, in which the line or drawing is marked by strength, he used in his studies of peasant life. The second he used in his visions, while the third he reserved for his Conceptions—his heavenly effects. So fine a colorist was he, however, and so indispensable a part of his art did he consider the coloring that even the pictures classed as *cold* are radiant with his lovely, mellow colors.^[93]



[94]

VIRGIN OF THE MIRROR.

Murillo.

Through the greater part of Murillo's life he painted for his beautiful Seville. In 1680, however, he went to Cadiz to paint pictures for the Capuchins at that place. He began on the largest one of the number. It was to represent the marriage of St. Catherine, a favorite subject of the time. Events proved that this was to be his last picture, for, while trying to reach the upper part of it, he fell from the scaffolding, receiving injuries from which he died two years later. Gradually his physical power deserted him until he did not attempt to paint at all. Then he spent much of his time in religious thought. In the church of Santa Cruz near by his home, was a picture of the "*Descent from the Cross*" by Campana. Before this picture he spent [95] many hours, so much did he admire it. One evening he remained later than usual. The Angelus had sounded, and the Sacristan wished to close the church. He asked the painter why he lingered so long. He responded, "I am waiting until those men have brought the body of our blessed Lord

down the ladder.” When Murillo died he was buried, according to his wish, immediately under this picture.

He died in April, 1682. His funeral was of the sort that draws all classes—a beloved man and a profound genius had passed away. His grave was covered with a stone slab on which were carved but few words beside his name. The church was destroyed during the French wars, and the Plaza of Santa Cruz occupies its place. In later years a statue of bronze was erected in one of the squares of the city in honor of Murillo; there it stands, through all changes, the very master spirit of the city.

If this sketch has implied anything, it has emphasized over and over again the sweet and lovable character of Murillo. His religious zeal was great, yet no one could ever justly write fanatic beside his name. There was too much love in his soul for that. His pictures are indisputable proof of the never-dying love that permeated his life.

He left a great number of pictures, and his habit of ^[96]not signing them made it easy to impose on unwary seekers after his paintings. Passing by all the work the authorship of which is uncertain, yet is there enough left to make us marvel at his productiveness.

SUBJECTS FOR LANGUAGE WORK.

1. Seville, the City of Music.
 2. A Day in Seville.
 3. Some Stories of the Alcazar.
 4. The Giralda—Its History and Its Architecture.
 5. The Children of Murillo’s Paintings.
 6. Murillo and Velazquez.
 7. Some Spanish Portraits.
 8. My Favorite Picture by Murillo.
 9. Some Visions Seen by Murillo.
 10. The Escorial—Its History.
-

REFERENCES FOR THE STUDY OF "MURILLO AND SPANISH ART."

- De AmicisSpain.
 - HoppinMurillo.
 - MinorMurillo.
 - StirlingSpanish Art.
 - StoweVelazquez.
 - WashburnMasters.
-

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RUBENS^[98]

[99]



[100]

PETER PAUL RUBENS

^[101]PETER PAUL RUBENS. 1577–1640.

In our study of Raphael, we had a glimpse of the golden age of art in Italy. In our work on Murillo, we saw what Spain was able to produce in pictures when the whole of Europe seemed to be trying its hand at painting. Moving north, we are to see in this sketch what the little country now known as Belgium produced in the same lines. For this we need hardly take more than the one name, Peter Paul Rubens, for he represented very completely the art of Flanders or Belgium, as we call it to-day.

If we love to read of happy, fortunate people, as I am sure we do, we shall be more than pleased in learning about Rubens. You know there is an old story, that by the side of every cradle stand a good and an evil fairy, who by their gifts make up the life of the little babe within. The good fairy gives him a wonderful blessing, perhaps it is the power to write ^[102]poems or paint pictures. Then the bad fairy, ugly little sprite that he is, adds a portion of evil, perhaps it is envy that eats the soul like a canker. And so they alternate, the good and evil, until the sum of a human life is made up, and the child grows up to live out his years, marked by joy and sorrow as every life must be.

As we look at the men and women about us we feel, often, that one or the other of these fairies must have slept while distributing their gifts and so lost a turn or two in casting in the good or ill upon the babe, so happy are some lives, so sorrowful are others. At Rubens' cradle the evil fairy must well nigh have forgotten his task, for the babe grew up one of the most fortunate of men.

In order to understand as we should any great man, we must always study his country and his time. No man can be great enough not to be like the nation that produced him, or the time when he came into the world. For these reasons we love to study a man's time and country, and, indeed, find it quite necessary if we would understand him aright.

It is impossible to think of Rubens without associating him with Flanders and with Antwerp, his home city. Here, then, is just a little about the history of this most interesting country: One of the richest possessions of Spain in the sixteenth century was known ^[103]as the Netherlands. When the doctrines of Luther began to spread many of the Netherlands accepted them. Philip II., the terrible and gloomy king of Spain, seized this opportunity to persecute them cruelly. Many of them resisted, and then Philip sent his unscrupulous agent, the Duke of Alva, to make the people submit. This he partially accomplished by the greatest cruelty. The northern provinces, which we know as Holland, declared their independence. The southern, of which Flanders was the most flourishing province, longed so for peace and the prosperity that accompanies it, that they submitted to Spain. The people then grew rich as weavers, merchants and traders. Splendid cities like Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp became the seats of commerce and their artists and workmen of all sorts were known throughout Europe for their thrift and the excellence of their workmanship. We recall how Raphael's cartoons were sent to Flanders to be copied in tapestry the finest in the world.



[104]

RUBENS' MOTHER

Rubens

Of all the cities dear to Flemish hearts Antwerp was, perhaps, the most beautiful and the most prosperous. It was situated on the river Scheldt about twenty miles from the sea. In the time of its greatness one might count almost at any time twenty-five hundred ships and boats riding at anchor in front of the city, and within her walls, two hundred thousand people lived in plenty. [105] There were marble palaces, beautiful churches, a magnificent town hall (Hotel de Ville); and the houses of the humble showed by their [cleanlines](#) and comfortable surroundings that enjoyment of life was restricted to no one class.

This matter of religious faith, however, was bound to come up again and bring, as it proved, ruin upon the city. A body of people who thought it wrong to have pictures and statues of saints, and of Mary and her Son, gathered together and for four days went from one Flemish town to another and destroyed everything of the sort to be found in the churches. Four hundred places of worship were desecrated, many of them within the city of Antwerp. Because of their zeal against the use of so-called *images* they were called *Iconoclasts*.

If formerly they had been punished for *thinking* things against the established religion of the State, what now could be expected when they had *done* such sacrilegious things?

“Again the whiskered Spaniard all the land with terror smote;
And again the wild alarum sounded from the tocsin’s throat.”



[106]

RUBENS AND HIS FIRST

WIFE

Rubens

Our imagination cannot picture things so terrible as were perpetrated upon the inhabitants of Antwerp for their part in the [destruction](#) of the “images.” This [107] terrible event is known in history as *The Spanish Fury*. Thousands of her people were killed, most of her palaces were burned, and the treasure of her wealthy citizens was stolen. Property was confiscated to the Spanish Government. Death and terror, theft and rapine reigned in the beautiful city of the Scheldt. When the dead were buried, the charred ruins of buildings removed, and the Spanish soldiery withdrawn, the mist-beclouded Netherland sun shone out on a dead city which even to-day bears marks of the Spaniard’s fury. Grass grew in what had been its busiest streets, trade almost ceased, and thousands of weavers and other artisans went to England where they could pursue their vocations unmolested.

Philip was apparently satisfied with the chastisement he had inflicted. He began to restore the confiscated property to its rightful owners, and to encourage the industry he had so cruelly destroyed. He even made Flanders an independent province under the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella. Although peace had returned and a degree of prosperity again prevailed, yet many other things were irretrievably gone, and the people lived every day in the sight of painful reminders of their former greatness.

In art, too, these low country provinces had made much progress. There had been Hubert and Jan ^[108]Van Eyck who had painted with minute skill devout pictures. They had, moreover, given to the world the process of painting in oils. This discovery, worked out with the extreme care natural to the Netherlanders, changed the whole character of painting, and made it possible to have such colorists as Titian, Raphael and Rubens. We must remember that the colors used in fresco painting were mixed with a sort of “size” and that they had none of the richness of oil colors. There had been other artists of note besides the Van Eycks. Hans Memling, with the spirit of a real poet, had painted his sweet visions, and to-day it is not for the opulent merchants who added fame and wealth to their city in their time, but for this poet-painter, Memling, that we venerate the ancient and stately city of Bruges. Quentin Matsys, the brawny blacksmith, who, for love of an artist’s daughter, became a painter, comes to our minds as a name of no mean fame in the early records of Flemish painting.^[109]



[110]

HELEN FOURMONT,

RUBENS' SECOND WIFE, AND YOUNGEST SON

Rubens

The guild system, where every class of artisans was organized for protection and for the production of good work, touched even the fine arts. No man could set up for a good painter who had not served his apprenticeship, and whose work was not satisfactory to experts. When Rubens was born he came as the heir of all that had been accomplished before him. He only [111]carried on what his predecessors had begun, but he carried it on in a matchless way so that he was able to leave to succeeding painters not only all he had inherited, but a goodly legacy besides—the legacy of a pure life, a glowing, natural, vigorous art. It seems to me that right here is a lesson for us. May we not add our mite, tiny though it be, to the ever-growing volume of truth? I like this quotation in this connection, and I hope you may see its beauty too—“The vases of truth

are passed on from hand to hand, and the golden dust must be gathered into them, grain by grain, from the infinite shore.”

Rubens’ birth took place in 1577, the year following the Spanish Fury. When he was only seven, William the Silent, the saviour and protector of the northern provinces, was assassinated at the instance of Philip II. When he was eleven, the Spanish *Armada*, the proudest fleet that ever sailed the seas, sent to invade England and punish Queen Elizabeth, was scattered by wind and wave and dashed to pieces on alien rocks. The Reformation was well established in England and Holland, while France, led by Henry IV., was yet uncertain whether or not to accept the new doctrines. Such were some of the portentous events that marked the advent and early years of the greatest of Flemish painters.

[112] The family of Rubens’ father had lived for years in Antwerp, but when Luther’s doctrines were put forward Jan Rubens, the father of our artist, believed in them. For this reason he was compelled to flee from the city, and his property was confiscated. He went to the little village of Siegen, in western Germany, where his illustrious son was born on June 29th, 1577. His birth was on the day dedicated to the saints, Peter and Paul, and so his parents gave the child their names. After the residence of a year in this little town, the family removed to Cologne, where they lived for ten years, until the death of the father.

Jan Rubens was a lawyer and a learned man, and he took pains that his sons should be thoroughly educated. In addition to his heretical views regarding religion he had grievously offended William the Silent and so was doubly exiled. His wife remained with him, and by her efforts kept him from prison, and added cheer to his life of exile. This was the admirable Marie Pypeling, the mother so revered by Rubens, and so deserving the respect of all who know of her. A portrait of her by her son is given in this sketch. To her he owed his handsome face, his strong physique, his shrewdness and his love of order.[113]



[114]

RUBENS' DAUGHTER

Rubens

Immediately after the death of her husband, Marie Pypeling and her family, now consisting of two sons [115] and a daughter, returned to Antwerp. Her property, which had been confiscated in those wild days at Antwerp, was restored to her in the general restitution with which Philip tried to compensate the citizens for their losses in the Spanish Fury. From this time Rubens was an adherent of the Catholic Church.

The education of Peter Paul, which was so carefully begun by his father, was continued by his mother, in a Jesuit College at Antwerp. He was an apt student and soon attained the elements from which he became a very learned man. He knew seven languages, was interested and learned in science and politics. All through his life he

devoted some part of each day, however busy he was with his painting, to general reading. This, perhaps more than his early studies, accounts for his elegant scholarship.

His mother was quite determined that this son should be, like his father, a lawyer. His own tastes, however, and a power to use the brush early displayed, decided otherwise. It very soon became evident that he was to be a painter—good or bad—who could tell in those early days?

In accordance with a custom of the time, he was placed as a page in the house of a nobleman of Antwerp. To the talented and restless boy this life was intolerable, and he soon induced his mother to ^[116]allow him to enter the studio of Van der Haeght, a resident artist of some repute and a close follower of Italian Art. He was only thirteen at this time. Here he learned to draw skillfully and, through the influence of his teacher, he acquired a love of landscape art which never left him.

From Van der Haeght and his mild but correct art, Rubens, feeling his weakness in figure work, went to the studio of the irascible and forcible painter Van Noort, about whom critics have delighted to tell stories of brutality. However true these may be, Rubens stayed with him four years and never ceased to speak in praise of his master's work. Here he became acquainted with Jordaens, who used often to paint the animals in Rubens' landscapes.

From Van Noort's studio the restless Rubens went to study with Van Veen, who afterwards became court-painter. When the Archduke Albert and Isabella entered Antwerp in 1594, it was Van Veen who decorated the triumphal arches used on the occasion. We may judge that he did the work well, for he was shortly selected to serve the new rulers as court painter. Rubens' experience with Van Veen closed a ten years' apprenticeship in the studios of Antwerp, and now he determined to go to Italy, where he could study the masters at first hand.^[117]



[118]

RUBENS' TWO SONS

Rubens

[119] As a sort of parting work and, perhaps, because he wished to impress more vividly on his mind those dear, strong features of his mother, he painted that portrait of her which we so much admire both for its subject and its art. This image of his mother was an effectual charm to carry with him in his travels—a charm to save him perhaps, from some of the stumbling places into which a handsome young man away from home might wander.

In May of 1600, after making all needful preparation, our artist set out on his journey. It was natural that he should direct his steps first to Venice. Titian had but recently completed his productive life of nearly a century. His misty atmosphere, his intense interest in human life and, above all, his glowing color touched a kindred cord

in Rubens' nature. Then there were Tintoretto and Veronese, almost as interesting to our painter.

The Duke of Mantua, a most liberal and discerning patron of art, was in Venice when Rubens reached that city. One of the Duke's suite happened to be in the house with Rubens. He took notice of the painter's courtly bearing, his fine physique, and his ability to paint, and introduced him to the Duke. Never did our painter's handsome face and fine presence so quickly win a patron. He was at once attached to the Duke's ^[120]court and began copying for him the masterpieces of Italy—the pictures of Titian, Correggio, Veronese, leading all others. He also studied carefully the work of Julio Romano, Raphael's famous pupil. He accompanied the Duke to Milan, where he copied Leonardo's great picture, "*The Last Supper*," besides doing some original work.

The Duke had observed Rubens' courtly manner and his keen mind. He decided that the painter was just the person to send in charge of some presents to the King of Spain, whose favor he was anxious to gain. The gifts were made up of fine horses, beautiful pictures, rare jewels and vases. Early in 1603, the painter set out with his cavalcade, and after a stormy journey of about three months they reached the Court of Spain. He was cordially received and the gifts were delivered, although the pictures had been somewhat damaged by the rains which marked the last days of their trip. He was asked to paint several portraits of eminent personages of the court and he complied graciously.

He returned to Italy after somewhat more than a year's absence. For some time he remained at Mantua to paint an altar-piece for the chapel where the Duke's mother was buried.^[121]



[122]

HOLY FAMILY

(Pette Gallery, Florence)*Rubens*

Later he went to Rome where he studied carefully the works of Michael Angelo. In turn he visited all [123]the great art cities of Italy except Naples. He stopped for some time at Florence, Bologna, and Genoa. At the last place he received so many orders for his work that he could not attend to them all. Everywhere he went the fame of “the Fleming,” as he was called in Italy, had gone before him. In many of the cities he made lengthy sojourns, copying the masterpieces that pleased him, and painting originals highly prized to-day in the galleries of Italy.

He had been in Italy eight years, when one day from over the Alps came a courier in hot haste bearing to Rubens the sad news that his mother lay at home very ill. Not even waiting for permission from his patron, the Duke, Rubens started north with a heavy heart, for he felt sure that he should never see his mother again. Although he rode with all haste, as he neared his home city of Antwerp, he received the sad tidings he had so much dreaded. Marie Pypeling had died nine days before he left Italy. As was the

custom in his country, he secluded himself for four months in a convent attached to the church where his mother was buried.

The profound sorrow for his mother, and the sudden change from the life he had so recently led made him melancholy. He longed for the skies, the pictures, and the society of Italy. When he came forth from his retirement, his countrymen could not bear the thought ^[124]of their now illustrious artist returning to Italy. They wanted him among them to glorify with his splendid brush the now reviving city of the Scheldt.

The rulers of the city, Albert and Isabella, made him court painter and gave him a good salary. He accepted the office on condition that he should not have to live at the court. It was with some regret that he gave up returning to Italy, but the natural ties that bound him to Antwerp were stronger. He hoped that he might yet one day visit Italy. This part of his life-plan, however, he never carried out.^[125]



INFANT CHRIST, ST. JOHN AND ANGELS

Rubens

He was now thirty-two years old, respected of all men not only for his power as a painter, but for his sterling worth as a man. He had studied carefully the best art that the

world could show, and he had absorbed into his own characteristic style what was best for him—his style of painting was now definitely formed. His fame as a painter was established from the Mediterranean to the Zuyder Zee. He was overwhelmed with orders for his pictures, so that he had plenty of money at his command. He had the confidence of princes, and was attached to one of the richest courts of Europe. A crowd of anxious art students awaited the choice privilege of entering his studio when he should open one. It would seem that there was little left for this man to desire in earthly things. The two he lacked he ^[127]speedily procured, a good wife and a happy home, both destined to live always on the canvasses of this most fortunate of painters.

In 1610, he married the lovely and beautiful Isabella Brandt, the daughter of the Secretary of Antwerp. Happy indeed were the fifteen years of their life together, and often do we find the wife and their two boys painted by the gifted husband and father. We reproduce a picture of the two boys.

He bought a house on Meir Square, one of the noted locations in Antwerp. He remodelled it at great expense in the style of the Italians. In changing the house he took care that there should be a choice place to keep and display his already fine collection of pictures, statues, cameos, agates and jewels. For this purpose he made a circular room, lighted from above, covered by a dome somewhat similar to that of the Pantheon at Rome. This room connected the two main parts of the house and was, with its precious contents, a constant joy to Rubens and his friends. The master of this palace, for such it certainly was, lived a frugal and abstemious life, a most remarkable thing in an age of great extravagance in eating and drinking. Here is the record of one of his days in summer: At four o'clock he arose, and for a short time gave himself up to religious exercises. After a simple breakfast he began painting. ^[128]While he painted he had some one read to him from some classical writer, and if his work was not too laborious, he received visitors and talked to them while he painted. He stopped work an hour before dinner and devoted himself to conversation or to examining some newly acquired treasure in his collection. At dinner he ate sparingly of the simplest things and drank little wine. In the afternoon he again began his work at his easel, which he continued until evening. After an hour or so on a spirited Andalusian horse, of which he was always passionately fond, and of which he always had one or more fine specimens in his stables, he spent the remainder of the evening conversing with friends. A varied assembly of visitors loitered in this hospitable home. There were scholars, politicians, old friends—perhaps former fellow-pupils in Antwerp studios. Occasionally the princess Isabella came among the others, and Albert himself felt honored to stand as god-father to Rubens' son. Surely the wicked fairy *did* forget some of the evil he was to have mixed with this life! ^[129]



[130]

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG

WOMAN

(Hermitage, St. Petersburg) *Rubens*

It was in connection with the building of this house that the best known and perhaps the greatest work of Rubens was painted: “*The Descent from the Cross*,” now in Antwerp Cathedral. It is said that in excavating for the foundation to some of the new parts of Rubens’ house, the workmen unintentionally trespassed on some [131] adjoining ground belonging to the gunsmiths’ guild. In settlement for this Rubens was requested to paint a picture of St. Christopher, the Christ-Bearer, as they called him. Rubens complied with the request and painted what to us to-day would seem a very strange picture—a “triptych,” that is a middle panel over which two narrow side panels, hinged to the middle one, could be closed. He interpreted the request of the guild rather strangely too—he thought it would please them to represent in the several spaces of the triptych all who had ever carried Christ in their arms. In the middle panel we have the men removing the dead Christ from the cross, with the three Marys below, one of whom, the Magdalen, is, perhaps, the most beautiful woman Rubens ever painted. The light is

wonderful, coming, as it does, from the great white cloth in which they would wrap our Lord. The form of the dead Christ in its difficult position is a piece of masterly drawing. This panel is, of course, the principal part of the altar-piece. On one side of this was painted the Virgin visiting St. Anne, and on the other we have the aged St. Simeon presenting the Christ-Child in the temple. If we close these side panels over the middle one we find a space as large as the center panel. On this Rubens painted St. Christopher with the child and accompanied by a hermit carrying his lantern. Surely ^[132]it was a good-natured artist and a glowing and generous soul who painted so much in response to a request for a St. Christopher!

There were, however, trials for this fortunate man. There were those who were jealous of his fame and who said unkind things of him. In answer to their jealousies he only said, "Do well and you will make others envious; do better and you will master them."

He was called away from the home he loved so well. In 1619, when the truce, under which Antwerp had regained somewhat of her former greatness, was about to expire, Rubens was sent to Spain to renew it. He had hardly returned to Antwerp before Marie de Medicis, the wife of Henry IV. of France—the Henry of Navarre, of historic fame—sent for the artist to adorn her palace of the Luxemburg in Paris. He was to paint twenty-one pictures for this purpose. They were to describe the life of the queen. We give one of the series. He accomplished this entire work in glowing allegorical fashion in which mythological and historical personages are sadly confused at times. If there was occasionally this confusion, there were also present the artist's strongest characteristics as a painter—rich color and vigorous human action.^[133]



[134]

ELEVATION OF THE CROSS

Rubens

While in Paris he became intimately acquainted with the Duke of Buckingham, the favorite of Charles I. of [135]England. This nobleman visited Rubens at his home in Antwerp and he was so pleased with the artist's collection that he offered him ten thousand pounds sterling for it complete. Rubens hesitated, for in the collection there were nineteen pictures by Titian, thirteen by Veronese, three by Leonardo, and three by Raphael, besides many of his own best works. The artist, however, was always thrifty, and he felt sure he could soon gather another collection, so he accepted the offer.

In 1626, his lovely wife died. He mourned her deeply, saying "she had none of the faults of her sex." To beguile his time he accepted another diplomatic mission to Spain. This time he was to secure a strong ally for Spain against the powerful Richelieu who

then held France in his hand as it were. Incidentally he painted much while at Madrid. Among other work he copied the Titians which were likely to be taken out of the country at the marriage of the Infanta. At this time, too, he undoubtedly met Velazquez, the able and high-souled court painter of Philip IV. This was certainly one of the most notable meetings in the history of artists.



[136]

DESCENT FROM THE

CROSS

Rubens

It was while at the court of Madrid at this time that Jean of Braganza, afterward King of Portugal, invited the artist to visit him at his hunting-lodge, and Rubens set out with several of his followers, as was usual with [137]travellers of note in those days. Before he reached the lodge Jean, hearing of so many attendants, and dismayed at the expense of entertaining them, departed suddenly for Lisbon. He wrote Rubens a courteous letter telling him that *state business* detained him and begged him to accept some money to defray the expenses so far incurred on the journey. Rubens replied in

like courteous manner and returned the money, saying that they had brought twenty times the amount with which to pay their expenses.



[138]

MARIE DE MEDICIS

(Museum, Madrid) *Rubens*

An interesting story is related of their return. Overtaken by dark night in the open country they took shelter in a monastery. The next morning Rubens, with an eye always quick to see rare and interesting things, scanned the place carefully looking for something which might interest him. He was about to give up the search as hopeless, when he discovered in a dark corner a grand picture. It represented in more than mortal fashion the beautiful things that a dead young man, painted in the foreground, had renounced. Rubens called the prior to him and begged to know the name of the artist of so masterly a work. The prior, an old, bowed man, refused saying, "He died to the world long ago. I cannot disclose his name." Then the artist said, "It is Peter Paul Rubens who begs to know." The prior started, for even in the remote^[139]ness of the isolated monastery the fame of that name had gone, and fell in a dead faint at the artist's feet. The attendants lifted the prior gently but he had ceased to live. Through the ashy pallor they saw the

features of the young man in the picture yonder. They instinctively turned to look that they might more carefully compare the faces, and lo! like some cloud-vision, the picture had disappeared. Then they knew that the dead monk there had painted the canvas from the depth of his own experience.

From Madrid, Rubens was sent to England in the interest of Spain. Here he was most kindly received by Charles I., who made him a knight and presented him with his own jeweled sword and a diamond ring. He also gave him a hat-band set with precious stones which was valued at two thousand pounds sterling. From London he went to Cambridge where the ancient university conferred on him its highest degree. In London he painted almost constantly. Among other commissions he was given that of decorating the dining room in Whitehall palace with nine pictures representing the life of James I. To make the person or events of this king's life attractive must have been an immense task even for so supreme a genius as Rubens.

As he sat painting one day a courtier entered and exclaimed, "Ah, his Majesty's Ambassador occasionally ^[140]amuses himself with painting." "On the contrary," responded Rubens who was always proud of his art, "the painter occasionally amuses himself by trying to be a courtier."

The influence of Rubens' visit to London must be counted rather as artistic than political. It really was the beginning of that desire for collecting pictures and other things of the sort which has ever since distinguished the English nobility. On the Continent the price of pictures rose on account of England's demand. For Charles I., Rubens bought the entire collection of the Duke of Mantua which he knew so well.^[141]



[142]

MADONNA AND CHILD

WITH ST. FRANCIS

Rubens

Rubens was tired of the almost fruitless mission at various courts and was glad to give up the business of an ambassador and return to Antwerp and to the life of a private gentleman. We must not forget that all these years Rubens was painting a great number of pictures in his ripest style. There was hardly a class of subjects or size of canvas which he could not skillfully use, although he always maintained that he could do his best work on large surfaces. There were religious pictures of Madonnas and saints all crowded with numerous figures and filled with vigorous human action. There were portraits such as those of his wives, of Elizabeth of France, or "*The Girl with a Straw Hat*," which rank among the best of the world. There were [143] wonderful animal pictures—hunting scenes, the excitement of which even to-day makes the cheek glow. There were historical scenes mingled with allegory. There were most beautiful children whose fat and agile bodies and whose laughing faces make us want to hug them. There were enchanting angels, and there were huge fauns and satyrs. There were placid

landscapes where, it may be, the artist's soul, teeming with the life of all time, took its rest and recreation sporting with the nymphs of the woodland streams or with the frisky dryads of the trees.

In 1630, at the age of fifty-three, he married his second wife, Helen Fourmont, only sixteen years old. Like his first wife she was very beautiful, as his numerous portraits indicate. Five children came to them and the felicity of his early years with Isabella Brandt continued with his second wife.

The health of our painter gradually gave way. For many years he had suffered intensely from repeated attacks of gout. As he aged, these became more and more frequent and severe. Often the disease, working in his fingers, kept him from painting. "*The Death of St. Peter*" was painted for Cologne Cathedral in 1635. It seems as if in his last years his heart turned affectionately to the city of his boyhood home and he would thus commemorate it. Another picture belongs to these last years. It was a family picture which he ^[144]called "*St. George*." It represented four generations of the painter's family and included both his first and his second wife. He himself figured as the Saint, clad in shining armor and triumphant over his late enemy, the deadly dragon. Rubens was too great to be conceited, but he stood at the end of a most successful life. If ever a man had conquered the dragon of [disappointment](#), that lies crouching at the door of every life, Rubens had. He did well to represent himself as St. George. In both of these last pictures the painter shows at his very strongest.

He died May 30th, 1640, and was buried in the church beside his mother and his first wife. All the city attended his funeral, for in three capacities they mourned their illustrious citizen—as an artist, as a diplomat and scholar, and as a man of noble character. Two years after his death the picture "*St. George*" was hung above his tomb where it is found to-day.

He left great wealth which was largely represented by his collection of pictures and jewels. There were three hundred and nineteen paintings, all masterpieces. The collection sold for what would be in our money about half a million dollars. This is a large sum at any time but in Rubens' day it was well nigh fabulous.^[145]



[146]

SATYRS

Rubens

Rubens has left us more than fifteen hundred pictures bearing his name. That any man could leave so many [147] can be accounted for only by reckoning many of them as largely executed by his pupils. He used to make small sketches in color and hand them over to his pupils for enlargement. He was always at hand to make corrections and, at the end, to give the finishing touches. He used to charge for his pictures according to the time he used in painting them, and he valued his time at fifty dollars a day.

He shows none of the mystical visionary feeling of the Spaniards even in his religious pictures. He was too much in love with life for that, and so, sometimes, we are offended by stout Flemish Saints and Madonnas too healthy to accord with our notions of their abstemious lives. In his pictures there is spirited action, almost excess of life, and rich unfading color in which the reds largely prevail. His lights are fine but the deep, expressive shadows that made Rembrandt famous are entirely lacking. The softly flowing way in which the color leaves his brush is, perhaps, the most inimitable part of his art. On this account someone has said, who evidently has great reverence for both Velazquez and Rubens, that we will see another Velazquez before another Rubens.

Considering the qualities of his art, the number of his pictures, his scholarship, his eminence as a diplomat and his pure and honorable life, we must place Rubens among the very greatest men who ever wielded a brush.

[148] QUOTATIONS ABOUT RUBENS.

Rubens was *par excellence* the painter of the group that included the heroes of the Dutch Republic; and, like many of his contemporaries, whilst excelling in his own line, he was, in other respects also, a great man, in a time of and among great men.—CHAS. W. KETT.

I cannot sufficiently admire his personal appearance nor praise his uprightness, his virtue, his erudition and wonderful knowledge of antiquities, his skill and celerity of pencil, and the charm of his manner.—A CONTEMPORARY.

His eye is the most marvellous prism that has ever been given us of the light and color of objects, of true and magnificent ideas.—EUGENE FROMENTIN.

SUBJECTS FOR LANGUAGE WORK.

1. 1. A Day in Rubens' Studio.
2. 2. An Evening with Rubens.
3. 3. Rubens at the Monastery.
4. 4. A Day with Rubens in London.
5. 5. Rubens as a Diplomat.
6. 6. Antwerp, the Home City of Rubens.

7.7. Rubens and His Friends.

8.8. The Women Rubens Loved.

9.9. My Favorite Picture by Rubens.

10. 10. The Masters of Rubens.

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[149]



D

URER'S HOUSE, NUREMBERG

ALBRECHT DURER AND HIS CITY

^[150]“Of a truth this man would have surpassed us all if he had had the master-pieces of art constantly before him.”—RAPHAEL.

“Hardly any master has scattered with so lavish a hand all that the soul has conceived of fervid feeling or pathos, all that thought has grasped of what is strong or sublime, all that the imagination has conceived of poetic wealth; in no one has the depth and power of the German genius been so gloriously revealed as in him.”—LUBKE.

“He was content to be a precious corner-stone in the edifice of German Art, the future grandeur of which he could only foresee.”^[151]—RICHARD FORD HEATH.



[152]

DURER

[153] **ALBRECHT DURER.**
1471–1528.

In our study of the great artists so far, we have found that each glorified some particular city and that, whatever other treasures that city may have had in the past, it is the recollections of its great artist that hallow it most deeply today. Thus, to think of Antwerp is to think instantly of Rubens. Leyden and Amsterdam as quickly recall to our minds the name of Rembrandt. Seville without Murillo would lose its chief charm, while Urbino *is* Raphael and, without the revered name of the painter, would seldom draw the visitor to its secluded precincts.

To the quaintest of European cities the name of Albrecht Durer instinctively carries us—to Nuremberg.

“That ancient, free, imperial town,
Forever fair and young.”

Were we to study Durer without first viewing his venerable city which he so deeply loved all his life that ^[154]no promise of gain from gorgeous Venetian court or from wealthy Antwerp burgers could detain him long from home, we should leave untouched a delightful subject and one deeply inwoven in the life and thought of the artist. Were we to omit a brief consideration of his time and the way the German mind looked at things and naturally represented them in words and in pictures, we should come away from Durer impressed only with his great homely figures and faces and wondering why, in every list of the great artists of the world, Durer's name should stand so high.

Having these things in mind, it will not then seem so far away to speak of Nuremberg and Luther before we rehearse the things which make up the life of Albrecht Durer.

Nuremberg does not boast a very early date, for she began her existence just after the year one thousand when men, finding out surely that the end of the world was not come, took as it were a new lease of life. The thing she does boast is that her character as a mediæval town has been almost perfectly preserved up to the present day.

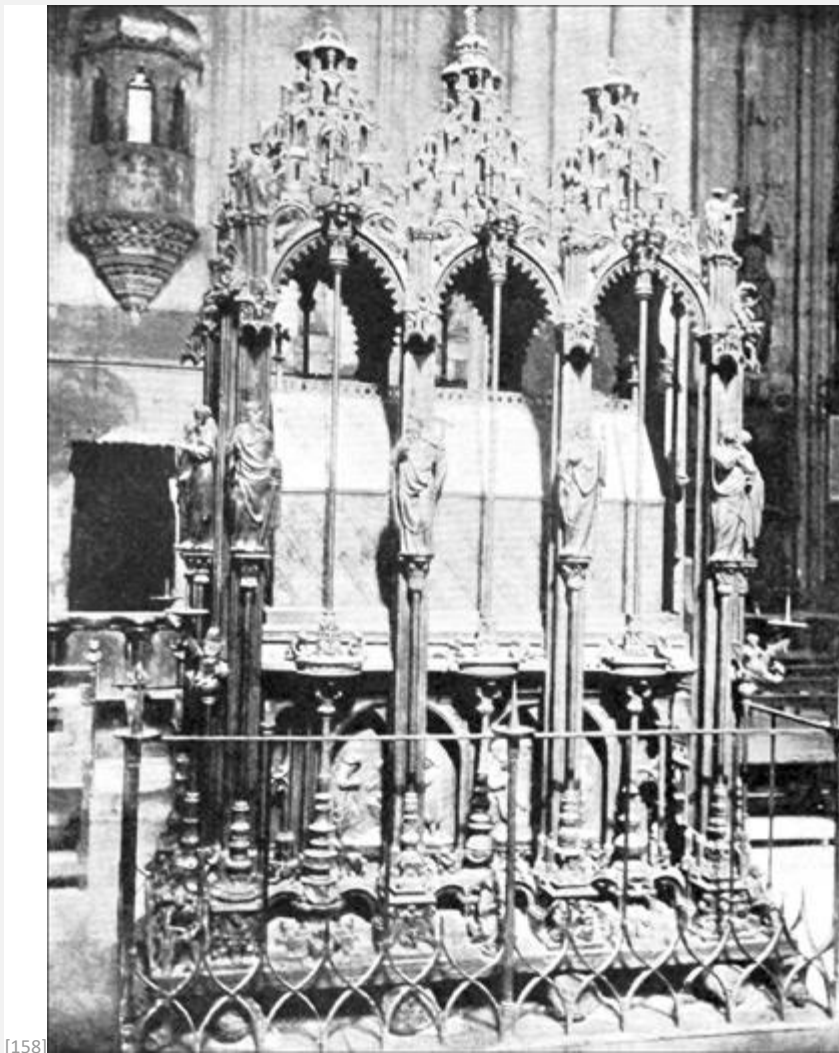
There were many things which made Nuremberg an important city in early times. She was conveniently located for traders who shipped vast amounts of merchandise from Venice to the great trade centers in ^[155]the Netherlands. For many years she was a favorite city of the Emperor and here were kept the crown jewels which were displayed with great pomp once a year.

The country immediately about Nuremberg was sandy but carefully cultivated. There were also large banks of clay very useful to the citizens in the manufacture of pottery. Like the salt of Venice, it was a natural source of wealth to the citizens. Very early we find a paper mill here, and here, too, were set up some of the earliest printing presses. Perhaps the most interesting of the early wares of this enterprising city were the watches. The first made in the world were manufactured here and from their shape they were called “Nuremberg Eggs.” We have a story that Charles V. had a watchmaker brought in a sedan chair all the way from Nuremberg that he might have his watch repaired. Here was manufactured the first gun-lock, and here was invented the valued metallic compound known as brass.

From all these sources the citizens grew rich, but their wealth did not make them forget their city. A little more than fifty years before Durer's birth, the Emperor being very much in need of money, they bought their freedom. For this they paid what would be, in our money, about a million of dollars. It was a goodly price, but they gave it

freely. Then they destroyed the house where their governor or Burgrave ^[156] had lived and they were henceforth ruled by a council selected from their own number.

The city lies on both sides of the river Pegnitz which divides it into two almost equal parts. The northern side is named from its great church, St. Sebald's, and the southern for that of St. Lawrence. Originally the city was enclosed by splendid ramparts. Three hundred and sixty-five towers broke the monotony of the extensive walls. Of these one hundred are still standing today. In days gone by, a moat thirty-five feet wide encircled the wall, but since peace has taken the place of war and security has come instead of hourly danger, the moat has been drained and thrifty kitchen gardens fill the space.^[157]



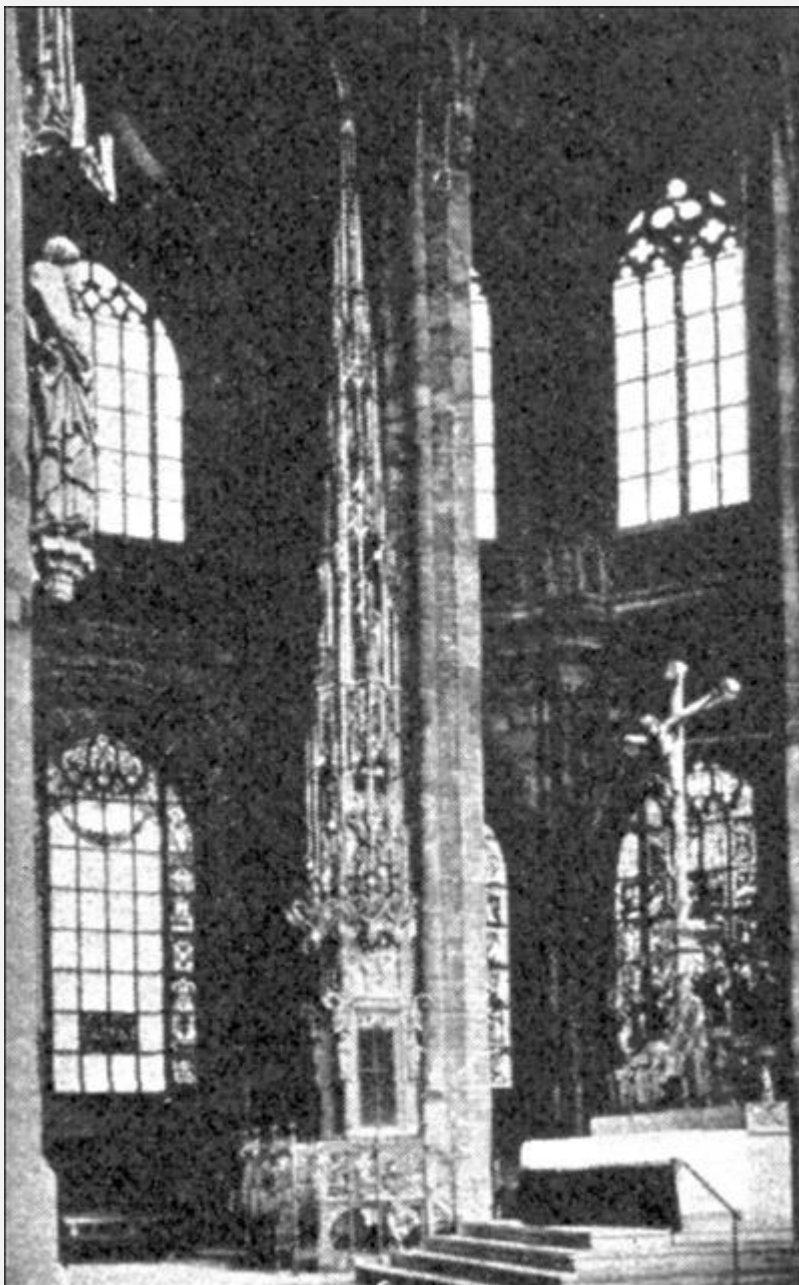
[158]

SHRINE OF ST. SEBALD,

NUREMBERG

In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps enshrined his holy dust,
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from age to age their trust.—*Longfellow*

Within the city are some of the most beautiful buildings both private and public. Here, too, sculpture, which the Germans cultivated before they did painting, has left rare monuments. Among these last we must notice the wonderful shrine of St. Sebald in the church of the same name. For thirteen years Peter Vischer and his five sons labored on this work. Long it was to toil and vexing were the questions which arose in the progress of the work; but the result was a master-piece which stands alone among the art works of the world. Nor can we forget the foamy ciborium of the Church of St. Lawrence. For sixty-five feet this miracle of snowy marble rises in the air, growing more lacey at every step until, ^[159]in its terminal portions, so delicate does it become that it seems like the very clouds in fleeciness.



THE CIBORIUM (PYX)

CHURCH OF ST. LAWRENCE

Church doorways are carved with beautiful and fantastic forms by men whose names were long ago forgotten. Common dwellings are adorned with picturesque dormer windows. Even the narrow crooked streets hold their share of beauty, for here are fountains so exquisite in their workmanship that their like is not to be found elsewhere. Here it is the Beautiful Fountain, gay with sculptures of heroes and saints, and there it is the Little Gooseman's Fountain where humor is added to beauty. ^[160]Through all the years stands the little man with a goose under either arm,

patiently receiving his daily drenching. Still two other fountains known to fame send up their crystal waters to greet the light.



If we seek for more modern things we are also rewarded, for here in Durer Square stands Rauch's great statue of the artist, copied from Durer's portrait of himself in Vienna. We note the custom house, one of the oldest buildings, the town hall and the burg or castle, which for many years was the favorite residence of the Emperor.^[161]



[162]

THE BEAUTIFUL FOUNTAIN

IN NUREMBERG

Everywhere I see around me rise the wondrous world of art;
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture standing in the common mart.—*Longfellow*

Here, too, are many fine old houses which used to belong to noblemen of the city. It is not these resi^[163]dences that we seek, however, if we are visiting Nuremberg. We ask rather for the house of Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet, of John Palm, the fearless patriot, who gave his life for the privilege of beating Napoleon, and above all we seek that quaint house where Durer lived and worked. In choosing these as objects of our special attention we feel like Charles I., who said, when he compelled a reluctant courtier to hold Durer's ladder, "Man can make a nobleman, but only God can make an artist."

In our search for interesting things in old Nuremberg, we come suddenly upon a house bearing a tablet on which are these words, "Pilate's House." At first we are

mystified, for was not Pilate's house in Jerusalem? But at once we recall that this is the house of the pious Jacob Ketzet who twice visited the Holy Land that he might measure exactly the distance from Pilate's house to Calvary. When he was satisfied with his measurements he returned to Nuremberg and commissioned the great sculptor, Adam Kraft, to carve "stations," as he called them, between his home and St. John's Cemetery to the northwest of the city. These "stations," which are merely stone pillars on which are carved in relief scenes from the sufferings of our Lord just before his death, are still standing, and if we go to Durer's grave, as I am sure we should wish to do, we shall pass them on our way.



1526 VIVENTIS POTVIT DVRERIVS

ORA PHILIPPI MENTEM NON POTVIT PINGERE DOCTA

MANVS

AD

MELANCTHON

The Nurembergers have long taken pride in the ^[164]quaint appearance of their city, so that many of the newer houses are built in the old style with their gables to the street. As we note the patriotic spirit of the people and recount the beauties of the old city, we feel that Durer was warranted “in the deep love and affection that I have borne that venerable city, my fatherland,” as he expressed it.

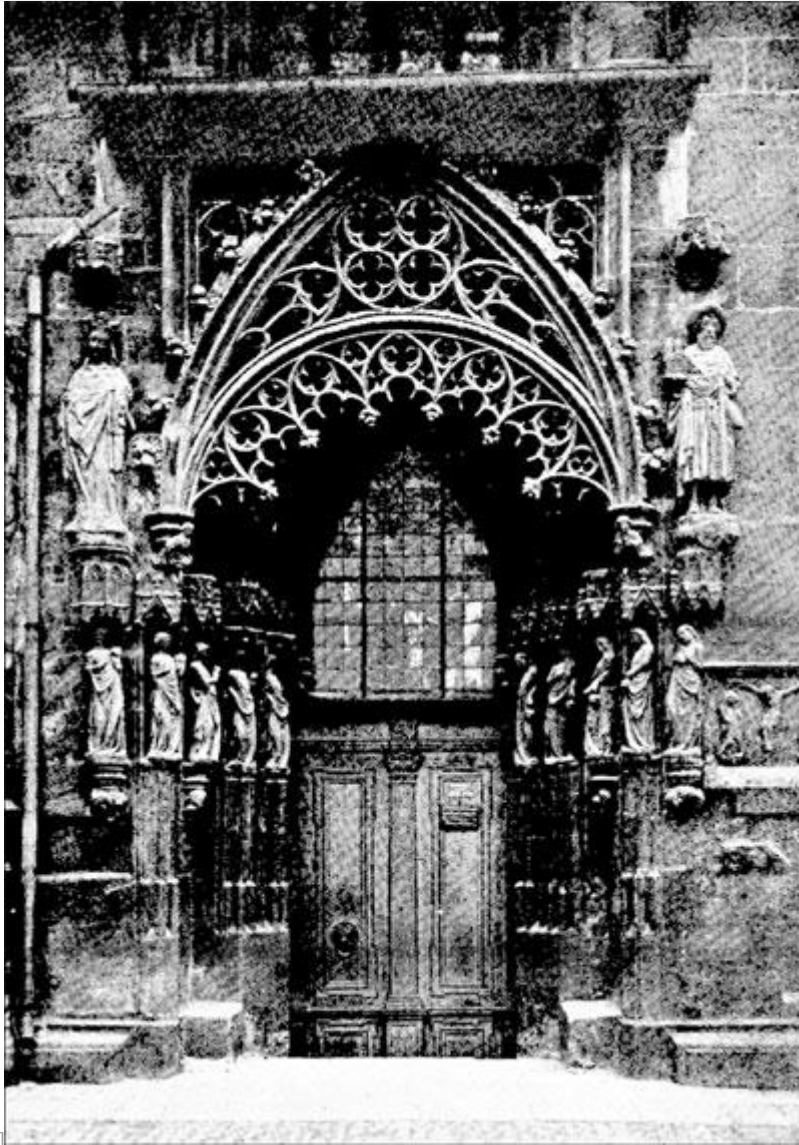


ERASMUS

As to the time when Durer came into the world, it was truly a wonderful age in which to live! Less than twenty-five years after his birth, Columbus found a vast new world. People were already much agitated over the ^[165]evil practices in the old established church. Durer knew and loved Luther and Melancthon but he was quite as much attached to the scholarly Erasmus, who wished not to break away from the old church, but merely to correct its abuses. In short Durer belonged to the Conservative class which found it possible to accept the food in the new doctrines and retain the pure from the old without revolution. Such were the citizens of Nuremberg and thus did the ancient city as easily accept the new doctrines as she did the morning sunshine pouring

in at her storied windows. Thus, too, were preserved the ^[166]ancient buildings and institutions, which, through the wisdom of her citizens, were not called upon to withstand sieges and other military attacks.

Durer was above everything a true representative of the German people, and so we ought to take note of some of the qualities of the German mind. As Goethe, their greatest poet, says, one of their strongest characteristics is that of wishing to learn and to do rather than to enjoy. The Germans love truth and they do not stop short in their imaginings when they wish to drive it home. So in German art, the toiling man or woman is often accompanied by angels and demons, the equal of which were never pictured by any other people. The greatest extremes of beauty and ugliness have these people given in their art. In either extreme, however, thoughts on the deepest questions of human life are at the foundation.^[167]



[168]

DOORWAY IN ST.

SEBALD'S CHURCH, NUREMBERG

And above cathedral doorways saints and bishops carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned as apostles to our own.—*Longfellow*

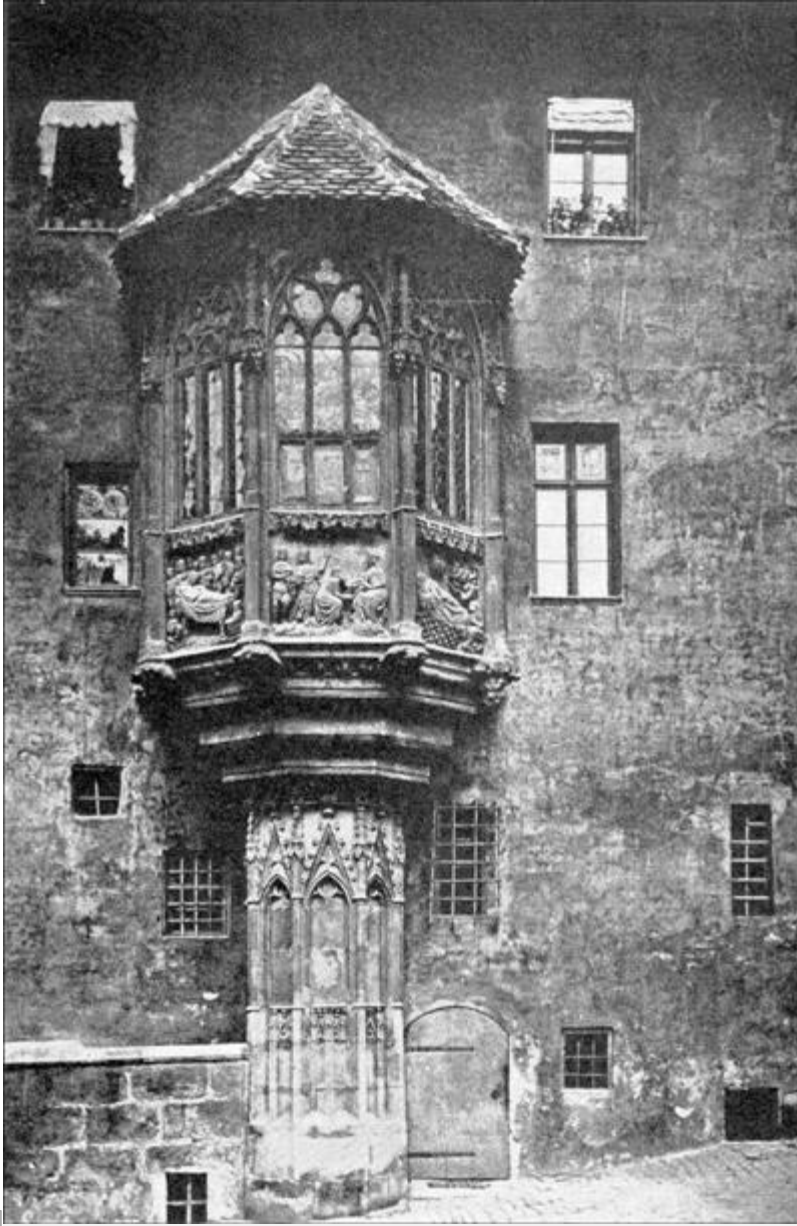
On a summer's day in 1455, there wandered into the far-famed city of Nuremberg a young goldsmith from Hungary. The ramparts of the city with their towers and gateways, the splendid buildings enclosed, were like miracles to the youth. It was a fête day in celebration of the marriage of the son of a prominent citizen, Pirkheimer by name. Albrecht Durer, for that was the youth's name, long studied the gay throng, little thinking how in the future the name of his son and that of [169] the bridegroom there would together be known to fame, the one as the greatest artist, the other as the most learned man of Nuremberg. The wandering youth was the father of our artist and the bridegroom was the father of Wilibald Pirkheimer, Durer's life long friend and companion.

The young goldsmith loved the city at once and, encouraged by the business activity of the place, he made it his permanent abode. He found employment with Hieronymus Holper, and soon married his master's comely daughter, Barbara. They resided in a little house which was a sort of appendage to the great house of Pirkheimer. A few months after a much longed for son came to bless the Pirkheimers, a little boy was born in the goldsmith's house whom they named, for his father, Albrecht Durer. As the years went by, seventeen other children came to the Durer home. Three only of all these children grew to maturity.

With such a family to support we can easily imagine that the father's life was a hard one. He was a pious and industrious man whom his illustrious son never tires of praising. In one place he says of him, "He had a great reputation with many who knew him, for he led an honorable Christian life, was a patient man, gentle, in peace with everyone and always thankful to God. He had no desire for worldly pleasures, was of few ^[170] words, did not go into society and was a God-fearing man. Thus my dear father was most anxious to bring up his children to honor God. His highest wish was that his children should be pleasing to God and man; therefore he used to tell us every day that we should love God and be true to our neighbors."

Durer sorrowed deeply when his father died in 1502. On his death-bed he commended the mother to her son. Durer was faithful to his trust and cared tenderly for his mother until her death, several years later. Never did boy or man more faithfully keep the command, "Honor thy father and mother," than did our artist.

For many reasons Albrecht seemed to be his father's favorite child. We find him, in spite of numerous other cares, taking great pains with the boy's education. He taught him to read and write well and must have given him instruction in Latin. These were years when thirst for learning was abroad in the land. Free Latin schools were established to meet the needs. Durer's father was filled with this spirit and he communicated it to his son.^[171]



[172]

DORMER WINDOW IN

THE BISHOP'S HOUSE, NUREMBERG

**On the square the oriel window, where in old heroic days,
Sat the poet Melchoir singing Kaiser Maximilian's praise.—*Longfellow***

As was customary at the time, the son was trained to follow his father's trade and so he learned the goldsmith's art in his father's shop. It is said that in his tender years he engraved, on silver, events from Christ's passage to Calvary. Albrecht's drawing was superior to [173] that usually done in a goldsmith's shop. In his free hours he drew to entertain his companions. After a while he began to feel that he might paint pictures instead of merely drawing designs for metal work. He loved the work and so had the courage to tell his father of his wish to become a painter. The elder Durer was patient with the boy, regretting only that he had lost so much time learning the goldsmith's

trade. Albrecht, then only sixteen, was surely young enough to begin his life work! His father put him to study with Wolgemut, the foremost painter of the city, which is not high praise, for the art of painting was then new in the prosperous city of the Pegnitz. Wolgemut was, however, a good engraver on wood and so perhaps was able to direct the young apprentice in quite as valuable a line as painting.

Here Durer remained for three years, until 1490. He was now but nineteen, full of hope and perhaps conscious, to a certain extent, that his was no ordinary skill of hand. He was now ready, according to the custom of his countrymen, for his “wanderschaft” or journeyman period, when he should complete his art education by going abroad to other towns to see their ways and thus improve his own method. For four years he traveled among neighboring towns. The evidence is strong that the last year was spent in Venice. We have little certain knowledge of where he spent ^[174]these years but we feel quite sure that one of the places he visited was Colmar, where he became acquainted with the artist, Martin Schougaer.

He was called home rather suddenly in 1494 by his father, who had arranged what he thought was an acceptable marriage for his son. A short time before Durer had sent his father a portrait of himself in which he figured as a remarkably handsome and well-dressed young man. It is supposed that the father sent for this portrait to help him along in his arrangements for the marriage of his son. However Albrecht may have felt about the matter of making his marriage merely a business affair, he never expressed himself, but was married shortly after his return to Nuremberg.^[175]



[176]

ST. JOHN AND ST. PETER

Durer



ST. MARK AND ST. PAUL

Dürer^[178]

Agnes Frey, the woman selected by Durer's father, was a handsome woman of good family with a small fortune of her own. She has come down to us with a most unenviable record as a scold who made life almost unendurable for her husband. It is now quite certain, however, that for all these years she has been grossly misrepresented, simply because her husband's friend Pirkheimer, for small reason, became offended with her. It seems that in his lifetime Durer, who had collected many curious and valuable things, had gathered together some remarkably fine stag-horns. One pair of these especially pleased Pirkheimer. ^[179] The widow, without knowing Pirkheimer's desire for these, sold them for a small sum and thus brought upon herself the anger of her husband's choleric friend, who wrote a most unkind letter concerning her which has

been quoted from that day to this to show how Albrecht Durer suffered in his home. The truth seems really to be that Agnes Durer was as sweet-tempered as the average woman, fond of her husband and a good housekeeper.

The earlier works of Durer are largely wood-cuts, the art which more than any other was the artist's very own. The discussions of the times regarding religious matters made a demand for books even at great cost. It was a time when written and spoken words held people's attention, but when, in addition, the text was illustrated by strong pictures the power and reach of the books were increased ten-fold. A place thus seemed waiting for Albrecht Durer, the master wood-engraver.

His first great series was the *Apocalypse*—pictures to illustrate the book of Revelations. Such a subject gave Durer ample scope for the use of his imagination. Then came the story of Christ's agony twice engraved in small and large size. These were followed by still another series illustrating the life of Mary. This series was especially popular, for it glorified family life—the family life of the Germans, so worthy, so respected. ^[180]To be sure, Mary is represented as a German woman tending a dear German child. The kings who come to adore could be found any day on the streets of Nuremberg. The castles and churches that figure in the backgrounds are those of mediæval and renaissance Germany. But this was Durer's method of truth speaking and it appealed strongly to the people of his time as it must to us of to-day.

In 1506, when the last series was not quite completed, Durer went to Venice, perhaps to look after the sale of some of his prints, but more likely because the artist wished to work in the sunshine and art atmosphere of the island city. While away he wrote regularly to his friend Pirkheimer. His letters are exceedingly interesting, as we learn from them much about the art society of the time. Durer was looked upon with favor by the Venetian government but most of the native artists were jealous of the foreigner and not friendly. They complained that his art was like nothing set down as “correct” or “classical” but still they admired it and copied it, too, on the sly.^[181]



D

DÜRER IN VENICE

Theobald von Oer

Gentile Bellini, the founder of the Venetian School, was then a very old man. He was fond of Durer and showed him many kindnesses, not the least of which was praising him to the Venetian nobles. There is a charming story told of Bellini's admiration of Durer's [183]skill in painting hair: One day, after examining carefully the beard of one of the saints in a picture by Durer, he begged him to allow him to use the brush that had done such wonderful work. Durer gladly laid his brushes before Bellini and indicated the one he had used. The Venetian picked it up, made the attempt to use it but failed to produce anything unusual, whereupon Durer took the brush wet with Bellini's own color and painted a lock of woman's hair in so marvelous a way that the old artist declared he would not believe it had he not seen it done.

The most important picture Durer painted while in Venice was the "*Madonna of the Rose Garlands*." It was painted for the artist's countrymen and is now in a monastery near Prague. Durer evidently valued it highly himself for he writes of it to Pirkheimer, "My panel would give a ducat for you to see it; it is good and beautiful in color. I have got much praise and little profit by it. I have silenced all the painters who said that I was good at engraving but could not manage color. Now everyone says that they have never seen better coloring."

After little more than a year's sojourn in Venice, he returned to Nuremberg. He had been sorely tempted by an offer from the Venetian Council of a permanent pension if he would but remain in their city. But the ^[184]ties of affection which bound him to his home city drew him back to Nuremberg, even though he had written while in Venice, "How cold I shall be after this sun! Here I am a gentleman," referring indirectly to the smaller place he would occupy at home.

Although Durer studied and enjoyed the works of the Italian masters, there is hardly a trace of the influence of this study in his own works. His mind was too strongly bent in its own direction to be easily turned even by so powerful an influence as Venetian painting. We are grateful indeed for the steadfast purpose of Durer that kept his art pure German instead of diluting it with Italian style so little adapted to harmonize with German thought and method.^[185]



[186]

PRAYING HANDS

Durer

On Durer's return to Nuremberg he did some of his best work. He painted one of his greatest pictures at this time, "*All Saints*." It is crowded with richly dressed figures, while the air above is filled with an angelic host which no one can count. In the center is the Cross on which hangs our suffering Lord. Below, in one corner, is Durer's unmistakable signature, which in this case consists of a full length miniature of himself holding up a tablet on which is this inscription, "Albertus Durer of Nuremberg did it in 1511." After this follows the renowned monogram used by the artist in signing his works after 1496, the "D" enclosed in a [187]large "A" something after this style. He then designed a very beautiful and elaborate frame for this picture to be carved from wood. It was adorned with figures in relief, beautiful vine tracteries and architectural ornaments which showed our artist master of still another national art—wood-carving.



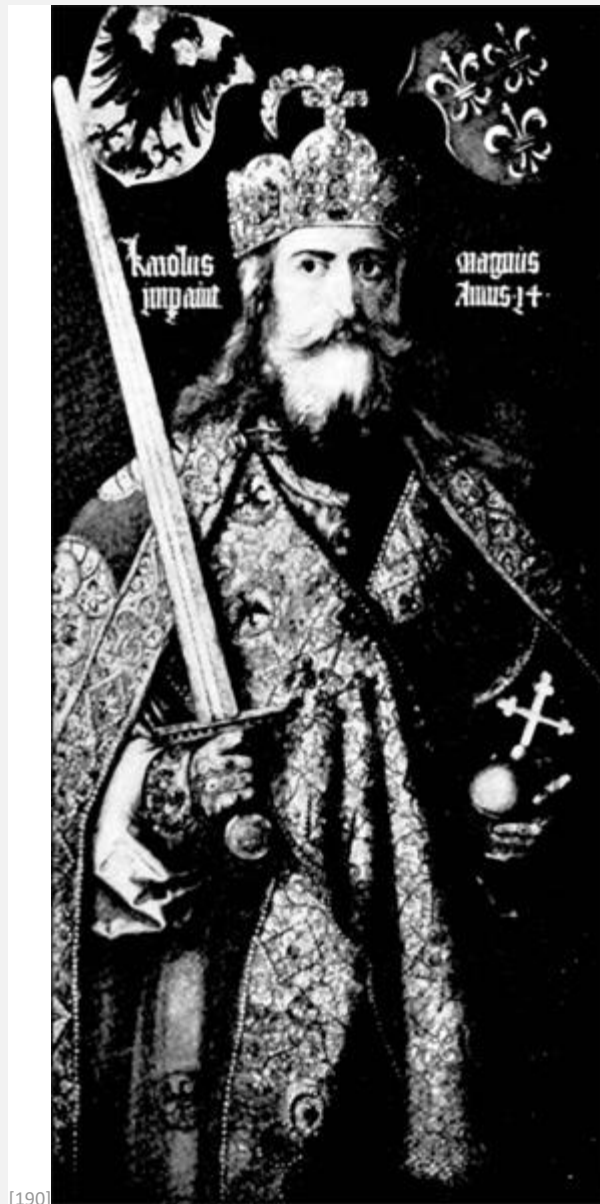
It is interesting, too, to know that about this time Durer, finding painting not so lucrative as he had hoped, turned his attention to engraving on all sorts of hard materials, such as ivory and hone-stone. To this period belongs that tiny triumph of his art, the “*Degenroph*,” or gold plate, which contains in a circle of little more than an inch in diameter the whole scene of the [Crucifixion](#) carefully represented.

Through his indefatigable labors Durer’s circumstances were now greatly improved and so he planned to publish his works, a matter of large expense. Instead of going to some large publishing house, as we to-day do, Durer had a press set up in his own house. We delight in illustrated books to-day, indeed we will hardly have a book without pictures. Imagine then the joy that must have been felt in this time of the scarcity of even printed books to have those that were illustrated. There was ready sale for all the books Durer could print.

^[188] Some prints came into Raphael’s hands. He wrote a friendly letter to the artist and sent him several of his own drawings. In return Durer sent his own portrait, life size, which Raphael greatly prized and at his death bequeathed to his favorite pupil, Julio Romano.

Durer’s prosperity continuing, he purchased the house now known to fame as “Albrecht Durer’s House.” It is still very much as it was in the artist’s lifetime. Here one may study at his leisure the kitchen and living-room which seem as if Durer had just left them.

The artist’s reputation was now fully established. In 1509, he was made a member of the Council that governed the city and he was granted the important commission of painting two pictures for the relic chamber in Nuremberg. In this room, which was in a citizen’s house, the crown jewels were kept on Easter night, the time of their annual exhibition to the public. *Sigismund* and *Charlemagne* were the subjects selected, the former probably because it was he who first gave to Nuremberg the custody of the precious jewels, and the latter because Charlemagne was a favorite hero with the Germans. The *Charlemagne* is here reproduced. In wonderful jeweled coronation robes, with the coat of arms of France on one side and that of Germany on the other, he is a fine figure well suited to make us feel Durer’s power as a painter.^[189]



[190]

CHARLEMAGNE

Durer

[191] In 1512, there came to Nuremberg a royal visitor, no less a personage than the Emperor Maximilian. This was of greatest importance to Durer to whom two important commissions came as the result of this visit. The Emperor had no settled abode, so his travels were important, at least to himself. He was fond of dictating poems and descriptions of these travels. Durer was asked to make wood-cuts for a book of the Emperor's travels to consist of two parts, the one called *The Triumphal Arch* and the other *The Triumphal Car*.

The wood-cuts for the first were made on ninety-two separate blocks which, when put together, formed one immense cut ten and a half feet high by nine feet wide. For this Durer made all the designs which were cut by a skilled workman of the city,

Hieronymus Andræ. It was while this work was going forward that the well-known saying, “A cat may look at a king,” arose. The Emperor was often at the workshop watching the progress of the work and he was frequently entertained by the pet cats of the wood-cutter who would come in to be with their master.

The designs for *The Triumphal Car* were of the same general style. In these Durer was assisted by other engravers of the city. One expression of Durer’s regarding the ornamentation of the car shows him [192]skilled in the language of the courtier as well as in that of the citizen. He says, “It is adorned, not with gold and precious stones, which are the property of the good and bad alike, but with the virtues which only the really noble possess.”

The noted *Prayer Book of Maximilian* was the other work done for the Emperor. Only three of these are in existence and of course they are almost priceless in value. The text was illustrated by Durer on the margin in pen and ink drawings in different colored inks. Sometimes the artist’s fancy is expressed in twining vines and flying birds and butterflies, again it is the kneeling Psalmist listening in rapt attention to some heavenly harpist, or it may be that the crafty fox beguiles the unsuspecting fowls with music from a stolen flute. Thus through almost endless variety of subjects stray the artist’s thought and hand.

We have also a fine likeness of Maximilian drawn in strong free lines by Durer at this same time. Seeing how deft the artist was with his crayons, Maximilian took up some pieces which broke in his hand. When asked why it did not do so in the fingers of the artist, Durer made the well known reply, “Gracious Emperor, I would not have your majesty draw as well as myself. I have practised the art and it is my kingdom. Your majesty has other and more difficult work to do.” [193]



[194]

HEAD OF AN OLD MAN

Durer

[195] For all this wonderful work Durer's compensation was little more than the remission of certain taxes by the Nuremberg Council and the promise of a small annual pension. Maximilian's death made it doubtful whether the pension would be paid. Durer in common with others sought out the new Emperor, Charles V., to have the favors granted by his predecessor confirmed.

With this in view, in 1520, the artist with his wife and maid set out for the Netherlands. They were gone something more than a year and a half, during which time Durer kept a strict account of his expenses and of his experiences and impressions throughout the journey. Everywhere he was received with the most marked attention.

He was invited to splendid feasts, and was the recipient of all sorts of gifts. In return he gave freely of his own precious works.

He made his headquarters at Antwerp and here he witnessed the entry of the new monarch. The [magnificence](#) of the four hundred two-storied arches erected for the occasion impressed Durer deeply. Of the many and varied experiences of the Nuremberger, not the least interesting was his attempt to see a whale that had been cast ashore in Zeeland. He made all haste to see this unusual sight and was nearly shipwrecked in the attempt. The exposure, too, to which he was subjected gave rise to ills which eventually caused his death.

^[196]After all his trouble he was disappointed at his journey's end for the whale had been washed away before he arrived. He finally accomplished the object for which he went to the Netherlands. His pension was confirmed and in addition he was named court painter. Laden with all sorts of curious things which he had collected and with a generous supply of presents for his friends and their wives, he started home where he arrived in due time.

There were but seven years of life left to our painter and these were burdened with broken health. To this period, however, belong some of his most wonderful and characteristic works. The very year of his return he engraved that marvellous "*Head of an Old Man*," now in Vienna. Never were the striking qualities of age more beautifully put together than in this head.^[197]



[198]

MELANCHOLY

Durer

With about the same time we associate “*The Praying Hands*,” now also in Vienna. How an artist can make hands express the inmost wish of the soul as these do will always remain a mystery even to the most acute. We have the story that they were the clasped hands of Durer’s boyhood friend who toiled for years to equal or rival his friend in their chosen work. When, in a test agreed upon, to Durer was given the prize, then Hans, for that was the friend’s name, prayed fervently to be resigned to a second place. Durer caught sight [199] of the clasped hands and drew them so well that wherever the name and fame of Albrecht goes there also must go the praying hands of his friend. Whether the story be true we cannot say, but in the hands we have a master work to love.

At this time the new religious doctrine formed the subject of thought everywhere. There was the most minute searching for truth that the world has ever known. Durer, deeply moved by the thought of the time, put its very essence into his works. He was a

philosopher and a student of men. He saw how the varied temperaments of men led them to think differently on the great questions of the time. Feeling this keenly, he set to work to represent these various temperaments in pictured forms, a most difficult thing to do as we can easily imagine. Perhaps his own diseased condition led him to select as the first of these "*Melancholy*," that great brooding shadow that hovers constantly above man, waiting only for the moment when discouragement comes to fall upon and destroy its victim.

How does Durer represent this insidious and fatal enemy? A powerful winged woman sits in despair in the midst of the useless implements of the art of Science. The compass in her nerveless fingers can no longer measure, nor even time in his ceaseless flow explain, the mysteries which crowd upon this well-nigh distraught [200] woman, who it seems must stand for human reason. The sun itself is darkened by the uncanny bat which possibly may stand for doubt and unbelief. Perhaps no one can explain accurately the meaning of this great engraving and therein lies the greatness, which allows each person to interpret it to please himself.

In painting he attempted the same difficult subject of the temperaments, in his four apostles, St. Paul and Mark, St. John and Peter. He painted these without charge as a sort of memorial of himself in his native town. Two saints are painted on each panel. No figures in art are more beautiful than the leading one on each panel, the St. Paul on the one and the St. John on the other. If we interpret these as regards temperament, John is the type of the melancholy, Peter of the phlegmatic, Paul of the choleric and Mark of the sanguine.

In 1526, Durer sent these pictures as a gift to the Council of Nuremberg. It was the artist's wish that they should always remain in the Council hall. Notwithstanding this, only copies are now to be seen in Nuremberg, while the originals are in Munich, carried there by the Elector of Bavaria, who paid a good price for them.[201]



[202]

THE KNIGHT, DEATH AND

THE DEVIL

Durer

One other of Durer's pictures should be spoken of, though it hardly belongs last in order of time. It is [203] really the summing up of much that he had done from time to time all through his busy life time. This picture, called "*The Knight, Death and the Devil*," is an engraving on copper. The stern, intelligent men of the time, who were ready to face any danger in order to bear themselves according to their notions of right, are well represented in this splendid mounted knight. What though Death reminds him by the uplifted hourglass that his life is nearly ended? or that Satan himself stands ready to claim the Knight's soul? There is that in this grand horseman's face that tells of unflinching purpose and indomitable courage to carry it out against the odds of earth and the dark regions besides. One of our greatest art critics says of this work, "I believe I do not exaggerate when I particularize this point as the most important work which the fantastic spirit of German Art has produced." A reading of Fouqué's "*Sintram*" inspires us anew with the true spirit of Durer's great work.



[204]

ST. GEORGE AND THE

DRAGON

Durer

The gift to his natal city was Durer's last work of note. The sickness that had been growing upon him, which was none other than consumption, gradually absorbed his energies and in April, 1528, he died. He was buried in St. John's Cemetery in the lot belonging to the Frey family. On the flat gravestone was let in a little bronze tablet on which was a simple inscription [205] written by his friend Pirkheimer. A century and a half later Sandrart, the historian of German painters, visited the tomb, then in ruins. He caused it to be repaired and added another inscription which has been translated into English:—

“Rest here, thou Prince of Painters! thou who wast better than great,
In many arts unequalled in the old time or the late.
Earth thou didst paint and garnish, and now in thy new abode

Thou paintest the holy things overhead in the city of God.
And we, as our patron saint, look up to thee, ever will,
And crown with laurel the dust here left with us still.”

Durer’s character was one of the purest to be found on the honor-list of the world. He bore heavy burdens with patience and was true to his country and to himself in the most distracting of times. He was the father of popular illustration and the originator of illustrated books. He was as many-sided in his genius as Da Vinci and as prolific as Raphael, though along a different line. That he was architect, sculptor, painter, engraver, author and civil engineer proves the former point, while the fact that he left a great number of signed works ^[206]satisfies us regarding the latter comparison. One who knew him wrote of him in these words,—“If there were in this man anything approaching to a fault it was simply the endless industry and self-criticism which he indulged in, often even to injustice.”



STATUE OF ALBRECHT

DURER, NUREMBERG

In closing this sketch, nothing can so delightfully summarize the beauty of the old town of Nuremberg and the character of its great artist as a part of Longfellow's poem, *Nuremberg*:[\[4\]](#)

In the valley of the Pegnitz, where across broad meadow-lands,
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nuremberg the ancient stands.

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old town of art and song,
[\[207\]](#) Memories haunt thy pointed gables like the rooks that round them throng:

Memories of the Middle Ages, when the Emperors, rough and bold,
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time defying, centuries old;

And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted, in their uncouth rhyme,
That their great imperial city stretched its hand thro' every clime.

In the court-yard of the castle, bound with many an iron band,
Stands the mighty linden planted by Queen Cunigunde's hand;

On the square the oriel window, where in old heroic days,
Sat the poet Melchoir singing Kaiser Maximilian's praise.

Everywhere I see around me rise the wondrous world of art;
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture standing in the common mart;

And above cathedral doorways saints and bishops carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned as apostles to our own.

In the church of sainted Sebald sleeps enshrined his holy dust,
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from age to age their trust;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a pix of sculpture rare,
Like the foamy sheaf of fountains rising through the painted air.

Here, when Art was still religion, with a simple, reverent heart
Lived and labored Albrecht Durer, the Evangelist of Art;

Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with busy hand,
Like an emigrant he wandered seeking for the Better Land.

Emigravit is the inscription on the tomb-stone where he lies;
Dead he is not, but departed—for the artist never dies.

Fairer seems the ancient city and the sunshine seems more fair,
That he once has trod its pavement, that he once has breathed its air!

^[*] These stanzas are here reproduced by the courtesy of Houghton, Mifflin & Co., the regular publishers of Longfellow's works.

[208] SUBJECTS FOR LANGUAGE WORK.

1. A Day in Ancient Nuremberg.
 2. The Churches of Nuremberg.
 3. With Durer at Antwerp.
 4. Durer and His Friends.
 5. Durer and His Wife.
 6. Durer's Stay in Venice.
 7. Maximilian and the Artist.
 8. Stories about Durer.
 9. The Art of Wood Engraving.
 10. The Fountains of Nuremberg.
 11. Some Stories about St. Sebald.
-

SPECIAL REFERENCES FOR ALBRECHT DURER.

- "Life of Durer" by Heath.
 - "Life of Durer" by Heaton.
 - "Life of Durer" by Thansing.
 - "Life of Durer" by Sweetser.
 - "Art and Artists" by Clement.
 - "Durer" by Gurnsey in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 40.
-

Transcriber's Note:

1. [“cleanlines”](#) might be a typographical error for “clean lines” or “cleanliness”.
2. Inconsistencies in the use of the words background(s) / back-ground(s); masterpiece(s) / master-piece(s); and today / to-day have been retained as in the original book.
3. The following changes have been made to the original:
 - which he [carresses](#) gently *changed to* “caresses”
 - Mary in some of his [lovliest](#) pictures *changed to* “loveliest”
 - for their part in the [distruction](#) *changed to* “destruction”
 - [dissapointment](#), that lies crouching *changed to* “disappointment”
 - whole scene of the [Crucifiixon](#) *changed to* “Crucifixion”
 - [magnifience](#) of the four hundred *changed to* “magnificence”

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GREAT ARTISTS, VOL 1.: RAPHAEL, RUBENS, MURILLO,
AND DURER ***

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