Paul (caressing her). Poor lass! Poor lass!

Olive. Why wear I this bridal gear, and my father over yonder on his dreadful death-bed? Why could you not have gone your own way and let me gone mine all the rest of my life in black apparel, a-mourning for my father? That would have beseemed me. This needed not have been so; it needed never have been so.

Paul. Never? I tell thee, sweet, as well say to these apple blossoms that they need never be apples, and to that rose-bush against the wall that its buds need not be roses. In faith, we be far set in that course of nature, dear, with the apple blossoms and the rose-buds, where the beginning cannot be without the end. Our own motion be lost, and we be swept along with a current that is mightier than death, whether we would have it so or not.

Olive. I know not. I only know I would be faithful to my poor father. But 'twas his last wish that I should wed thee thus.

Paul. Yes, dear.

Olive. He said so that morning before his trial. Oh, Paul, I can see it now, the trial! I have been to the trial every day since. Shall I go every day of my life? Perchance thou may often come home and find thy wife gone to the trial, and no supper. I will go on my wedding-day; my father shall have no slights put upon him. I can see him stand there, mute. They cry out upon him and mock him and lay false charges upon him, and he stands mute. The judge declares the dreadful penalty, and he stands mute. Oh, my father, my poor father! I tell ye my father will not mind anything. The Governor and the justices may command him as they will, the afflicted may clamor and jibe as they will, and I may pray to him, but he will not mind, he will stand mute. I tell ye there be not power enough in the colony to make him speak. Ye know not my father. He will have the best of it.

Paul. Thou speakest like his daughter now. Keep thyself up to this, sweet. The daughter of a hero should have some brave stuff in her. Thy father does a greater deed than thou knowest. His dumbness will save the colonies from more than thou dreamest of. 'Twill put an end to this dreadful madness; he himself hath foretold it. [*A clamor is heard.*

Olive. Paul, Paul, what is that?

Paul. Naught but some boys shouting, sweet.

Olive. 'Twas not. Oh, my father, my father!

Paul. Olive, thou must not stay here.

Olive. I must stay. Who is coming?

[Paul *and* Olive *step aside.*

Enter second Messenger. Hathorne, Corwin, *and* Parris *advance to meet him.*

Hathorne. How goes it now with Giles Corey?

Messenger. Your worship, Giles Corey hath not spoken.

Hathorne. What! Have they not increased the weights?

Messenger. They have doubled the weights, your worship.

Parris. I trow Satan himself hath put his shoulder under the stones to take off the strain.

[*Exit* Messenger.

Hathorne. 'Tis a marvel the old tavern-brawler endures so long, but he'll soon speak now.

Corwin. Hush, good master, his daughter can hear.

Hathorne. Let her then withdraw if it please her not. I'll warrant he cannot bear much more; he will soon speak.

Parris. Yea, he cannot withstand the double weight unless his master help him.

[Corwin *speaks aside to* Paul *and motions him to take* Olive *away.* Paul *takes her by the arm. She shakes her head and will not go.*

Hathorne. I trow 'twill take other than an unlettered clown like Giles Corey to stand firm under this stress. He'll speak soon.

Parris. Yea, that he will. He can never hold out. He hath not the mind for it.

Hathorne. It takes a man of finer wit than he to undergo it. He will speak. Oh yes, fear ye not, he will speak.

Olive (breaking away from Paul). My father will *not* speak!

Hathorne. Girl!

Olive. My father will *not* speak. I tell ye there be not stones enough in the provinces to make him speak. Ye know not my father. My father will have the best of ye all.

Enter third Messenger, *running.*

Hathorne. How goes it now with Giles Corey?

Messenger. Giles Corey is dead, and he has not spoken.

Olive *clings to* Paul *as curtain falls.*

A CHRISTMAS PARTY.

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

IN 188– the American Consul at Venice was occupying the second story of an old palace on the Grand Canal. It was the story which is called by Italians the *piano nobile*, or noble floor. Beneath this *piano nobile* there is a large low ground, or rather water, floor, whose stone pavement, only slightly above the level of the canal outside, is always damp and often wet. At the time of the Consul's residence this water-floor was held by another tenant, a dealer in antiquities, who had partitioned off a shallow space across its broad front for a show-room. As this dealer had the ground-floor, he possessed, of course, the principal entrance of the palace, with its broad marble steps descending into the rippling wavelets of the splendid azure street outside, and with the tall slender poles, irregularly placed in the water, which bore testimony to the aristocracy of the venerable pile they

guarded. One could say that these blue wands, ornamented with heraldic devices, were like the spears of knights; this is what Miss Senter said. Or one could notice their strong resemblance to barbers' poles; and this was what Peter Senter always mentioned.

Peter Senter was the American Consul, and his sister Barbara was the Consuless; for she kept house for her brother, who was a bachelor. And she not only kept house for him, but she assisted him in other ways, owing to her knowledge of Italian. The Consul, a man of fifty-seven, spoke only the language of his native place, Rochester, New York. That he could not understand the speech (gibberish, he called it) of the people with whom he was supposed to hold official relations did not disturb him; he thought it patriotic not to understand. There was a vice-consul, an Italian, who could attend to the business matters, and as for the rest, wasn't Barbara there, Barbara, who could chatter not only in Italian, but in French and German also, with true feminine glibness? (For Peter, in his heart, thought it unmasculine to have a polyglot tongue.) He knew how well his sister could speak, because he had paid her bills during the six years of her education abroad. These bills had been large; of course, therefore, the knowledge must be large as well.

Miss Senter was always chronically annoyed that she and her brother did not possess the state entrance. As the palace was at present divided, the tenants of the noble floor descended by an outside stairway to a large inner court, and from this court opened the second water-door. Their staircase was a graceful construction of white marble, and the court, with the blue sky above, one or two fretted balconies, and a sculptured marble well-curb in the centre, was highly picturesque. But this did not reconcile the American lady to the fact that their door was at the side of the palace; she thought that by right the gondola of the Consul should lie among the heraldic poles on the Grand Canal. But, in spite of right, nothing could be done; the antiquity-dealer held his premises on a long lease. Miss Senter, therefore, disliked the dealer.

Her dislike, however, had not prevented her from paying a visit to his establishment soon after she had taken possession of the high-ceilinged rooms above. For she was curious about the old palace, and wished to see every inch of it; if there had been cellars, she would have gone down to inspect them, and she was fully determined to walk "all over the roof." The dealer's name was Pelham; "Z. Pelham" was inscribed on his sign. How he came by this English title no one but himself could have told. He was supposed to be either a Pole or an Armenian, and he spoke many languages with equal fluency and incorrectness. He appeared to have feeble health, and he always wore large arctic overshoes; he was short and thin, and the most noticeable expression of his plain small face was resignation. Z. Pelham conducted the Consuless through the dusky space behind his show-room, a vast, low, open hall with massive squat columns and arches, and the skeletons of two old gondolas decaying in a corner. At the back he opened a small door, and pointed out a flight of stone steps going up steeply in a spiral, enclosed in a circular shaft like a round tower. "It leads to the attic floor; her Excellency wishes to mount?" he inquired, patiently. For, owing to the wares in which he dealt, he had had a large acquaintance with eccentric characters of all nations.

"Certainly," replied Miss Senter. "Carmela, you can stay below, if you like," she said to the servant who accompanied her.

But no: Carmela also wished to mount. Z. Pelham preceded them, therefore, carrying his small oil-lamp. They went slowly, for the steps were narrow, the spiral sharp. The attic, when they reached it, was a queer, ghostly place; but there was a skylight with a ladder, and the Consuless carried out her intention of traversing the roof, while Mr. Pelham waited calmly, seated on the open scuttle door. Carmela followed her mistress. She gave little cries of admiration; there never were such wonderful ladies anywhere as those of America, she declared. On the way down, the stairs were so much like a corkscrew that Miss Senter, feeling dizzy, was obliged to pause for a moment where there was a landing. "Isn't there a secret chamber?" she demanded of the dealer.

Z. Pelham shook his head. "I have not one found."

"Try again," said Miss Senter, laughing. "I'll make it worth your while, Mr. Pelham."

Z. Pelham surveyed the walls, as if to see where he could have one built. His eye passed over a crack, and raising his lamp, he showed it to the Consuless. "One time was there a door, opening into the rooms of her Excellency. But it opens not ever now. It is covered on inside."

"Oh, *that* isn't a secret chamber," answered Miss Senter; "we have doors that have been shut up at home. What I want is something mysterious—behind a picture, or a sliding panel."

Partly in return for this expedition to the roof, and partly because she had a liking for wood-carvings, Miss Senter purchased from Mr. Pelham shortly afterwards his best antique cabinet. It was eight feet high, and its whole surface was beautifully sculptured in odd designs, no two alike. Within were many ingenious receptacles, and, better than these, a concealed drawer. "You see I have my secret chamber, after all," said the Consuless, making a joke. And there was a best even to this better, for, after the cabinet had been placed in her own room, Miss Senter discovered within it a second hiding-place, even more perfectly concealed than the first. This was delightful, and she confided to its care all her loose money; she thought with disgust of the ugly green safe, built into the wall of Peter's Rochester house, where she was obliged to keep her gold and silver when at home. Not only was Miss Senter's own room in the old palace handsomely furnished, but all the others belonging to the apartment were rich in beautiful things. The Consuless had used her own taste, which was great, and her brother's fortune, which was greater, deferring to him only on one point, namely, warmth. In Peter's mind the temperature of his Rochester house remained a fixed standard, and his sister therefore provided in every room a place for a generous open fire, while in the great drawing-room, in addition to this fire, two large white Vienna stoves, like monuments, were set up, hidden behind screens. As this salon was eighty feet long and thirty feet high, it required all this if it was to be used—used by Peter at least—in December, January and February; for the Venetian winter, though short, is often sharp and raw.

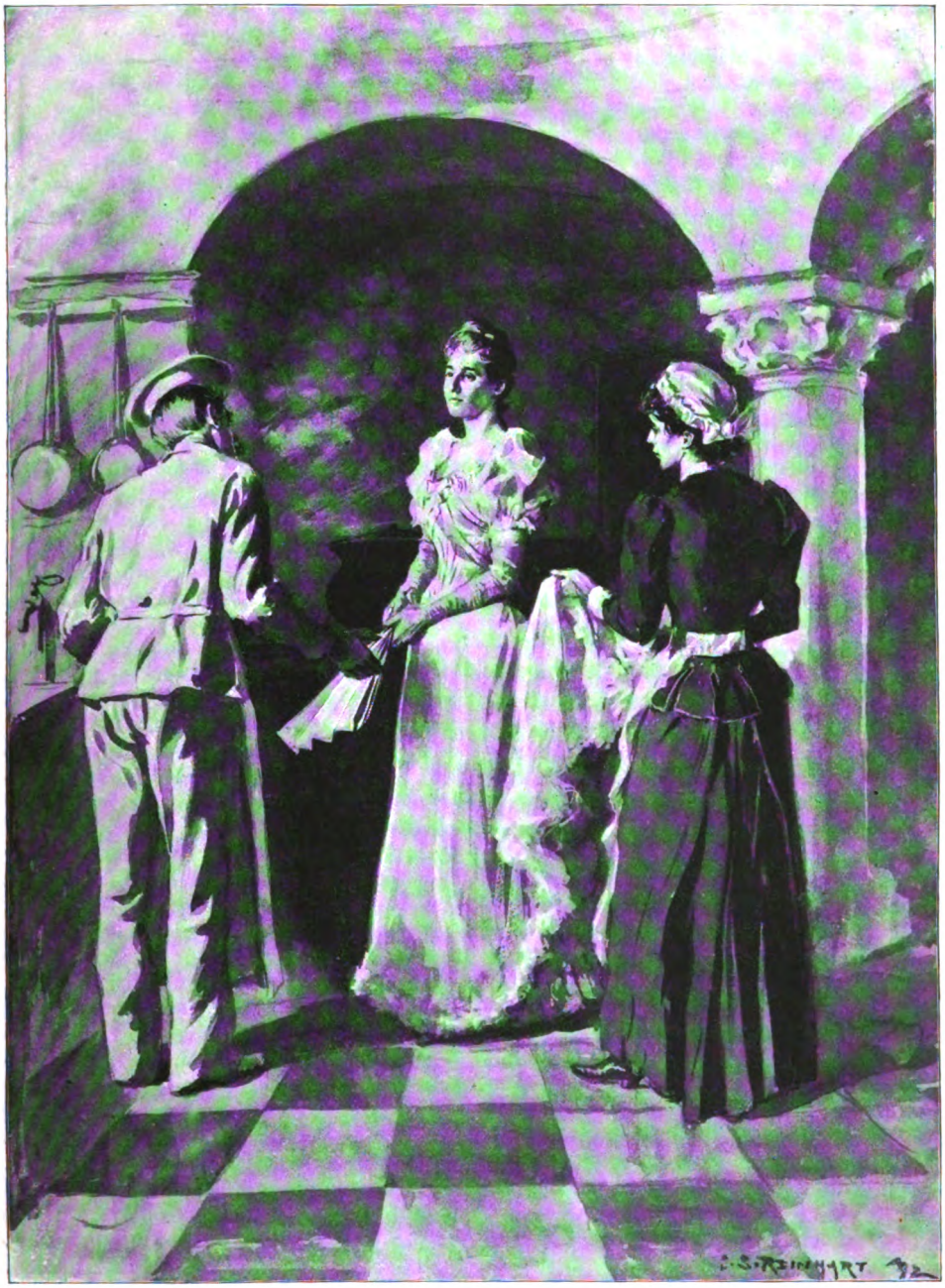
On Christmas eve of their third year in Venice this drawing-room was lighted for a party. At one end, concealed by a curtain, stood a Christmas tree; for there were thirty children among their invited guests, who would number in all over fifty. After the tree had bestowed its fruit, the children were to have a dance, and an odd little projection like a very narrow balcony high on the wall was to be occupied by five musicians. These musicians would have been much more comfortable below. But Miss Senter was sure that this shelf was intended for musicians; her musicians therefore were to sit there, though their knees would be well squeezed between the wall and the balustrade. Fifteen minutes before the appointed hour, which was an early one on account of the children, the Consuless appeared. She found her brother standing before the fire, surveying the room, with his hands behind him.

"Doesn't it look pretty?" said the sister, with pride. For she had a great faith in all her pots and pans, carvings and tapestries. Any one, however, could have had faith in the chandeliers of Venetian glass, from which came the soft radiance of hundreds of wax candles, lighting up the ancient gilding of the ceiling.

"Well, Barly, you know that personally I don't care much for all these second-hand articles you have collected," replied Peter. "And you haven't got the room very warm, after all; only 60°. However, I can stand it if the supper is all right—plenty of it, and the hot things really hot; not lukewarm, you know."

"We can trust Giorgio. But I'll go and have a final word with him, if you like," answered Miss Senter, crossing the beautiful salon, her train sweeping over the floor behind her. The Consuless was no longer young (the days when Peter had paid those school bills were now far distant), and she had never been handsome. But she was tall and slender, with pretty hands and feet, a pleasant expression in her blue eyes, and soft brown hair, now heavily tinged with silver. Her brother's use of "Barly" was a grief to her. She had tried to lead him towards the habit of calling her Barbe, the French form of Barbara, if nickname he must have. But he pronounced this Bob, and that was worse than the other.

On her way towards the kitchen the Consuless came upon Carmela. Carmela was the servant who had the general oversight of everything excepting the cook-



"MADEMOISELLE NEED GIVE HERSELF NO UNEASINESS."

ing. For Giorgio, the cook, allowed no interference in his department; in the kitchen he must be Cæsar or nothing. Carmela was not the housekeeper, for Miss Senter herself was the housekeeper. But the American would have found her task twenty times, fifty times more difficult if she had not had this skilful little deputy to carry out all her orders. Carmela was said to be middle-aged. But

her short slender figure was so erect, her little face so alert, her movements were so brisk, and her small black eyes so bright, that she seemed full of youthful fire; in fact, if one saw only her back, she looked younger than Assunta and Beppa, who were Venetian girls of twenty. Carmela was always attired in the French fashion, with tight corsets, a plain black dress fitting like a glove round her little waist, and short enough to show the neat shoes on her small feet; over this black dress there was a jaunty white apron with pockets, and upon her beautifully braided shining dark hair was perched a small spotless muslin cap. The younger servants asserted that the slight pink tint on the tidy little woman's cheeks was artificial. However that may have been, Carmela, as she stood, was the personification of trimness and activity. Untiring and energetic, she was a wonderful worker; Miss Senter, who had been much in Italy, appreciated her good fortune in having secured for her Venetian housekeeping such a coadjutor as this. Carmela was scrupulously neat, and she was even more scrupulously honest, never abstracting so much as a pin; she economized for her mistress with her whole soul, and kept watch over every detail; she told the truth, she swept the corners, she dusted under everything; she worked conscientiously, in one way and another, all day long. Even Peter, who did not like foreign servants, liked Carmela; he said she was "so spry!"

"Is everything ready?" inquired Miss Senter as she met her deputy.

"Yes, signorina, everything," answered Carmela, briskly. She was looking her very best and tightest, all black and white, with black silk stockings showing above her little high-heeled shoes. As she spoke she put her hands in their black lace mitts in the pockets of her apron, and, middle-aged though she was said to be, she looked at that moment like a smart French soubrette of the stage.

"I am going to the kitchen to have a word with Giorgio," said the Consuless, passing on.

"If the signorina permits, I carry the train," answered Carmela, lifting the satin folds from the floor. Thus they went on together, mistress and maid, through various rooms and corridors, until finally the kitchen was reached. It was a large, lofty place, brilliantly lighted, for Giorgio was old and needed all the radiance that could be obtained to aid his failing sight. He was a small man with a melancholy countenance. But this melancholy was an accident of expression; in reality, old Giorgio was cheerful and amiable, with a good deal of mild wit. He was the most skilful cook in Venice. But his health had failed some years before, and he had now very little strength; the Consul, who liked good dinners, paid him high wages, and gave him a young assistant.

"Well, Giorgio, all promises well, I trust?" said Miss Senter as she entered, her steps somewhat impeded by the tightness with which Carmela held back her train. "The Consul is particular about having the hot things really hot, and constantly renewed, as it is such a cold night. The three men from Florian's will have charge of the ices and the other cold things, and will do all that is necessary in the supper-room. But for the hot dishes we depend upon you."

Giorgio, who was dressed entirely in white, bowed and waved his hand. "Mademoiselle need give herself no uneasiness," he said in French. For Giorgio had learned his art in Paris, and whenever Carmela was present he invariably answered his mistress in the language of that northern capital, even though her question had been couched in Italian; it was one of his ways—and he had but few—of standing up, as it were, against the indefatigable little deputy. For, clever though Carmela was, she had never been out of her native land, and could speak no tongue but her own.

"Are you feeling well, Giorgio?" continued Miss Senter. "I see that you look pale. I am afraid you have been doing too much. Where is Luigi?" (Luigi was the cook's assistant.)

"He has gone home; ten minutes ago. I let him go, as it is a festival. He is young, and we can be young but once. *Che ruole!* In addition, all was done."

"No," said Miss Senter, who was now speaking French also; "there is still much to do, and it was not wise to let Luigi go. You are certainly very tired, Giorgio."

"Let not mademoiselle think of it," said the old man, straightening himself a little.

"But I *shall* think of it," said Miss

Senter, kindly. "Carmela," she continued, speaking now in Italian, "go to my room and get my case of cordials."

Carmela divined that the cordial was for the cook. "And the signorina's train?" she said. "Surely I cannot leave it on this *dirty* floor! Will not the signorina return to the drawing-room to take her cordial? Eh—it is not for her? It is for Giorgio? A man? A *man* to be faint like a girl? Ha, ha! it makes me laugh!"

"Go and get it," repeated Miss Senter, taking the train over her own arm. She knew that Carmela did not like the cook. Jealousy was the one fault the hard-working little creature possessed. "She has tried to make me dismiss Giorgio more than once," she said to her brother, in confidence; "but I always pretend not to see the feeling that influences her. It is only Giorgio she is jealous of; she gets on perfectly well with Luigi, and with Assunta and Beppa, while for Ercole she can never do enough. She is devoted to Ercole!"

Giorgio had not taken up the slur cast upon his immaculate floor. All he said was, "Comme elle est méchante!" with a shrug.

"Where is Ercole?" said Miss Senter, while she waited.

"He is dressing," answered Giorgio. "He makes himself beautiful for the occasion."

Ercole was the chief gondolier, a tall athletic young man of thirty, handsome and clever. Miss Senter had chosen Ercole to assist her with the Christmas tree. The second gondolier, Andrea, was to be stationed at the end of the little quay or riva down below, outside of their own water-door; for here on the small canal were the steps used by arriving and departing gondolas, and here also floated the handsome gondola of the Consul, with its American flag. The two gondoliers also had picturesque costumes of white (woollen in winter, linen in summer), with blue collars, blue stockings, blue caps, and long fringed red sashes, the combination representing the American national colors. To-night Ercole, having to appear in the drawing-room, was making a longer stay than usual before his little mirror.

Carmela returned with the cordial-case. "Ah, yes, our cook *is* pale—pale as a young virgin!" she commented, as Miss Senter, unlocking the box, poured into one of the little glasses it contained a generous portion of a restorative whose every drop was costly.

Giorgio, taking off the white linen cap which covered his gray hair, made a bow, and then drank the draught with much appreciation. "It is true that I am pale," he remarked, slyly, in Italian. "I might, perhaps, try some rouge?"

And then the Consuless, to avert war, hastily bore her deputy away.

Half an hour later the guests had arrived; they included all the Americans in Venice, with a sprinkling of English, Italians, and Russians. The grown people assembled in the drawing-room. And presently they heard singing. Through the anterooms came the children, entering with measured step, two and two, led by three little boys in Oriental costumes. These three boys were singing as follows:

"We three Kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we've travelled from far,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star."

Here, from the high top branch of the Christmas tree which rose above the concealing curtain, blazed out a splendid star. And then all the procession took up the chorus, as they marched onward:

"Oh, star of wonder,
Star of might,
Star with royal
Beauty bright!"

Ercole, who was behind the curtain, now drew it aside, and there stood the tree, blazing with fairy-lamps and glittering ornaments, while beneath it was a mound composed entirely of toys. The children behaved well; they kept their ranks and repeated their carol, as they had been told to do, ranging themselves meanwhile in a half-circle before the tree.

"We three Kings of Orient are,"

chanted the three little Kings a second time, though their eyes were fixed upon a magnificent box of soldiers, with tents and flags and cannon. The carol finished, Miss Senter, with the aid of her gondolier, distributed the toys and bonbons, and the room was filled with happy glee. When Ercole had detached the last package of sweets from the sparkling branches he disappeared. His next duty was to conduct the musicians up to their cage.

Miss Senter had allowed an hour for

the inspection and trial of the toys before the dancing should begin. It was none too much, and the clamor was still great as this hour drew towards its close, so great that she herself was glad that the end was near. Looking up to see whether her musicians had assembled on their shelf, she perceived some one at the drawing-room door; it was Carmela, hiding herself modestly behind the portière, but at the same time unmistakably beckoning to her mistress as soon as she saw that she had caught her eye. Miss Senter went to the doorway.

"Will the signorina permit? A surprise of Ercole's," whispered Carmela, eagerly, standing on tiptoe to reach her mistress's ear. "He has dressed himself as a clown, and he *is* of a perfection! He has bells on his cap and his elbows, and if the signorina graciously allows, he will come in to amuse the children."

"A clown!" answered Miss Senter, hesitating. "I don't know; he ought to have told me."

"He has been dancing to show *me*. And oh! so beautifully, with bounds and leaps. He makes of himself also a statue," pursued Carmela.

"But I cannot have any buffoonery here, you know," said Miss Senter. "It would not do."

"Buffoonery! Surely the signorina knows that Ercole has the soul of a gentleman," whispered Carmela, reproachfully.

And it was true that Miss Senter had always thought that her chief gondolier possessed a great deal of natural refinement.

"Will the signorina step out for a moment and look at him?" pursued the deputy, her whisper now a little dejected. "If he is to be disappointed, poor fellow, may he at least have *that* pleasure?"

The idea of the gondolier's disappointment touched the amiable American. She turned her head and glanced into the drawing-room; all was going on gayly; no one had missed her. She slipped out under the portière, and followed Carmela to a room at the side. Here stood the gondolier. He wore the usual white dress and white mask of a clown, and, as the Consuless entered, he cut a splendid caper, ringing all his bells.

"I had no idea that you were such a skilful acrobat, Ercole," said his mistress.

Ercole turned a little somerset, gave a high jump, and came down in the attitude of the Mercury of John of Bologna.

"Why — you are really wonderful!" said Miss Senter, admiringly.

And now he was dancing with butterfly grace.

Miss Senter was won. "But if I let you come in, Ercole, I hope you will remember where you are?" she said, warningly. "Can you breathe quite at ease in that mask?"

The gondolier opened his grotesque painted lips a little to show that he could part them.

"Yes, I see. Now listen; in the drawing-room you must keep your eye on me, and if at any time you see me raise my hand — so — you must dance out of the room, Ercole. For the sign will mean that that is enough. But, dear me! there's one thing we haven't thought of; who is to see to the musicians upstairs, and to go back and forth, telling them what to play?"

"I can do that," said Carmela, who was now all smiles. "Does the signorina wish me to take them up? They are all ready. They are waiting in the wood-room."

The wood-room was a remote storeroom for fuel; it was detached from the rest of the apartment. "Why did you put them *there*?" inquired Miss Senter, astonished.

"They are musicians—yes; but who knows what else they may be? Thieves, perhaps!" said the deputy, shrewdly.

"Get them out immediately, and take them up to the gallery," said Miss Senter. "And tell them to play something lively as a beginning."

Carmela, quick as usual, was gone before the words were ended.

"Now, Ercole, wait until you hear the music. Then come in," said the Consuless.

She returned to the drawing-room, making a motion with her hands as she advanced, which indicated that her guests were to move a little more towards the walls on each side, leaving the centre of the room free. And then, as the music burst out above, Ercole came bounding in. His dress was ordinary: Miss Senter was vexed anew that he had not told her of his plan, for if he had, she could have provided a perfectly fresh costume. But no one noticed the costume; all eyes were fixed upon the gambols; for, keeping time to the music, he was advancing up the room, dancing, bounding, leaping, turn-

"A SMALL CHILD PERCHED ON EACH OF HIS SHOULDERS."

ing somersets, and every now and then striking an attitude with extraordinary skill. He was so light that his white linen feet made no sound, and so graceful that the fixed grin of his mask became annoying, clashing as it did with the beauty of his poses. This thought, however, came to the elders only; for to the children, fascinated, shouting with delight, the broad red smile was an important part.

"It's our gondolier," explained Miss Senter. "It's Ercole," she had whispered to her brother.

"You are always so fortunate in servants," said Lady Kay. "That little woman you have, Carmela, she is a miracle for an Italian."

Four times the clown made his pyrotechnic progress up and then down the long salon, never repeating the same pose, but always giving something new; then, after a final tremendous pigeon-wing, he let his white arms fall, and his white head droop on his breast, as if saying that he was taking a moment for repose.

"Yes, yes; give him time to breathe, children," cried Peter. "I'll tell you what," he added, to Sir William Kay; "I've never seen a better performance on any stage." And he slapped his leg in confirmation. The Consul was a man whose sole claim to beauty lay in the fact that he always looked extremely clean. He was meagre and small, with very short legs, but he was without consciousness of these deficiencies; in the presence of the Apollo Belvedere, for instance, it had never occurred to him to draw comparisons. Nature, however, will out in some way, and from childhood Peter Senter had had a profound admiration for feats of strength, vaulting, tumbling, and the like. "I'll tell you what," he repeated to Sir William; "I'll have the fellow exhibited; I'll start him at my own cost. Here all this time—two whole years—he has been our gondolier, Ercoly has, and nothing more; for I hadn't a suspicion that he had the least talent in this line. But, sir, he's a regular high-flier! And A Number One!"

Meanwhile the children were crowding closely round their clown, and peering up in order still to see his grin, which was now partly hidden, owing to his drooped head; the three Kings of Orient, especially, were very pressing in their attentions, pinching his legs to see if they were real.

"Come, children, this will be a good time for our second song," said Miss Senter, making a diversion. "Take hands, now, in a circle; yes—round the clown, if you wish. There—that's right." She signalled to the music to stop, and then, beginning, led the little singers herself:

"Though we're here on foreign shores,
We are all devotion
To our land of Stars and Stripes,
Far across the ocean.
Yankee doodle doodle doo,
Yankee doodle dandy,
Buckwheat cakes are very good,
And so's molasses candy."

Singing this gayly to the well-known fifelike tune, round and round danced the children in a circle, holding each other's hands, the English and Italians generously joining with the little Americans in praise of the matutinal cakes which they had never seen; the Consul-ess had drilled her choir beforehand, and they sang merrily and well. The first four lines of this ditty had been composed by Peter himself for the occasion.

"I hear *you* haf written this vurra fine piece?" said a Russian princess, addressing him.

"Oh no," answered the Consul; "I only wrote the first four lines; the chorus is one of our national songs, you know."

"But those first four lines—their sentiment ees so fine, so speerited!"

"Well, they're *neat*," Peter admitted, modestly.

The clown, having recovered his breath, cut a caper. Instantly "Yankee Doodle" came to an end, and the children all stopped to watch him.

"Tell them to play a waltz," said Miss Senter to Carmela, who was in waiting at the door. The deputy must have flown up the little stairway leading to the gallery, for the waltz began in less than a minute. Then Ercole, selecting a pretty American child from among the group, began to dance with her in the most charming way, followed by all the little ones, two and two. Those who could waltz, did so; those who could not, held each other's hands and hopped about.

Supper followed. The hot things were smoking and delicious, and the supplies constantly renewed; old Giorgio was evidently on his mettle. It was the gondolier, still in his clown's dress, who brought

in these supplies and handed them to the waiters from Florian's.

"You need not do that, Ercole," said Miss Senter, in an undertone; "these men can go to the kitchen for them."

Ercole bowed: it would not have been respectful to reply with his grinning linen lips. But he continued to fill the same office.

"Perhaps Giorgio won't have Florian's people in the kitchen!" the Consuless reflected.

As soon as supper was over, the children clamored for their clown, and he came bounding in a second time, and, after several astonishing capers, selected a beautiful English child with long golden curls and led a galop, followed again by all the others, two and two. Peter, his mind still occupied with his project of taking the young Italian to America as a star performer, moved from point to point, in order to get different views of him. One of these stations was in the doorway, and here Carmela spoke to him in a low tone, and asked him to come to the outer hall. He did not understand her words; but he comprehended her gesture and followed her. She was talking angrily, almost spluttering, as she led the way. But her talk was lost on her master, who, however, opened his eyes when he saw four policemen standing at his outer door.

"What do you want here?" he said. "This is a private residence, and you are disturbing a Christmas party."

The chief officer told his tale. But Peter did not comprehend him.

"You should have gone to the Consulate," he went on. "The Consulate, you know—Riva Skevony. The vice-consul won't be there so late as this; but you'll find him early to-morrow morning, sure."

The policemen, however, remained where they were.

"There's no making them understand a word," said Peter to himself, in irritation. "Here, you go and call my sister," he said to Carmela, who, in her wrath over this intrusion, stood at a distance swallowing nothing in a series of gulps that made her throat twitch. "Let's see; sister, that's sorelly. Sorelly!" he repeated to Carmela. "Sorelly!"

The enraged little deputy understood. And she got Miss Senter out of the drawing-room without attracting notice. "The master wishes to see the signorina," she said, in a concentrated undertone. "I burn with indignation, for it is an insolent intrusion; it is an insult to his excellency, who no doubt is a prince in his own country. But they *would* not go, in spite of all I could say. Nor would they tell me their errand—brutes!" And with her skirts quivering, she led the way to the outer hall.

"Find out what these men want, Barly," said Peter when his sister appeared.

And then the chief officer again told his story.

"Mercy!" said Miss Senter, "how dreadful! Somebody was killed, Peter, about seven o'clock this evening, in a café near the Rialto, and they say they have just found a clew which appears to track the assassin to this very door! And they wish to search."

"What an absurd idea! With the whole place crowded and blazing with lights, as it is to-night, a mouse couldn't hide," said Peter. "Tell them so."

"They repeat that they must search," said Miss Senter. "But if you will exert your authority, Peter, make use of your official position, I am sure we need not submit to such a thing."

Peter, however, was helpless without his vice-consul; he had no clear idea as to what his powers were or were not; he had never informed himself.

Carmela, greatly excited, had drawn Miss Senter aside. "There was a sixth man with those musicians!" she whispered. "I saw him. He did not play, but he sat behind them. And he has only just gone. Five minutes ago."

Miss Senter repeated the information to the chief officer. The officer immediately detached two men to follow this important clew; he himself, with the third, would remain to go through the apartment, as a matter of form.

"As the rooms are all open and lighted," said Miss Senter in English to her brother, "it will only take a few minutes, if go they must, and no one need know anything about it. But whom shall we send with them? If we call Ercole, it will attract attention; and Florian's men, who were due at another place, have already gone. We could have Andrea come up. But no; Giorgio will do best of all. Call Giorgio to go with these men," she added in Italian to Carmela.

"Let *me* conduct them," answered the deputy.

"Yes, on the whole, she will be better than any one," said Miss Senter to Peter. "She is so angry at what she calls the insult to you, and so excited about the mysterious person who was with the musicians, that she will bully them and hurry them off to look for him in no time. They can begin with a peep into the drawing-room; I'll tell them to keep themselves hidden." She turned and explained her idea in Italian to the officer; they could glance into the drawing-room first, and then Carmela would take them through all the other rooms; the Consul, though he had the power of refusal, would permit this liberty in the cause of justice. Their search, however, would be unavailing; under the circumstances, it was impossible that any one should have taken refuge there, unless it was that one extra man who had been admitted with the musicians to the gallery. And he was already gone.

"Perhaps he only pretended to go?" suggested the officer. "With permission, I will lock this door." And he did so.

They went to the drawing-room, the policemen moving quietly, close to the wall. When the last anteroom was reached, the two men hid themselves behind the tapestries that draped the door, and making loop-holes among the folds, peeped into the ballroom. For it was at that moment a ballroom. The children had again taken up their whirling dance round Ercole, and the gondolier, who had now a small child perched on each of his shoulders, was singing with them in a clear tenor, having caught the syllables from having heard them shouted about fifty times:

"Yankee dooda dooda doo,
Yankee dooda dandee,
Barkeet cakar vera goo,
Arso molarsa candee."

Miss Senter had sent Peter back to his guests. She herself, standing between the tapestries as though she were looking on from the doorway, named to the hidden policeman, as well as she could amid the loud singing within, all the persons present, one by one. Finally her list came to a close. "And that is Mr. Barlow, the American who lives at the Danieli; and the one near the Christmas tree is Mr. Douglas, who has the Palazzo Dario. And the tall, large gentleman with silver hair is Sir William Kay. That is all, except the clown, who is our gondolier, and the five musicians up in the gallery; can you see them from here? If not, Carmela can take you up." And then she thought, with a sudden little shudder, that perhaps the officer's idea was not, after all, impossible; perhaps, indeed, that extra man had only pretended to go!

The policeman signified that this was enough as regarded the drawing-room; they withdrew softly, and waited outside the door.

"Now take them through all the other rooms, Carmela," whispered the Consuless. "Be as quiet about it as you can, so that no one need know. And when they have finally gone, come and stand for a moment between these curtains as a sign. If, by any chance, they *should* discover any one—"

"The signorina need not be frightened; I saw the man go myself! And he *could not* have re-entered without my knowledge. As for these beasts of policemen—" And Carmela's eyes flashed, while her set lips seemed to say, "Trust *me* to hustle them out!"

"Run up first and tell the musicians to play the music I sent them," said the Consuless. And then she rejoined her guests.

For the next dance was to be a Virginia reel, and some of the elders were to join the children; the two lines, when arranged, extended down half the length of the long room. It began with great spirit, the clown and the three Kings of Orient dancing at the end of the file.

"It is really Sir Roger de Coverley, an English dance," said Lady Kay to the Russian princess, who was looking on from the chair next her own. "But the Senters like to call it a Virginia reel, they are so patriotic. And we never contradict the Senters, you know," added the English lady, laughing; "we let them have their way."

"It seems to me a vurra good way," answered the princess, who was a plain-looking old woman with a charming smile. "I have nowhere seen so many reech toyees" (here she glanced at the costly playthings heaped on a table near by). "Nor haf I, in *Italy*, seen so many tings to eat. With so moche champagne."

"Yes, they always do that," answered

the baronet's wife. "They are very lavish. And very kind."

Miss Senter herself was dancing the reel. Once she thought there was a quaver in the music, and glancing up quickly towards the gallery, she perceived the heads of the policemen behind the players. The players, however, recovered themselves immediately, and upon looking up again a moment afterwards, she saw with relief that the sinister apparition had vanished. Ten minutes later the trim little figure of the deputy appeared between the tapestries of the doorway. Miss Senter, still dancing, nodded slightly, as a signal that she perceived her, and then Carmela, with an answering nod and one admiring look at Ercole, disappeared. After all, now that there had been a suspicion about that extra man, it *was* a comfort to have had the apartment searched; it would make the moment of going to bed easier, the American lady reflected.

It was now half past eleven. By midnight the last sleepy child had been carried down the marble stairway, the music ceased, and the musicians departed. The elders, glad that the noise was over, remained half an hour longer; then they took leave. Only Lady Kay and her husband were left; they had waited to take a closer look at Miss Senter's Christmas present to her brother, which was a large and beautifully executed copy of Tintoretto's "Bacchus and Ariadne," from the Anticollegio of the Doge's Palace. It had been placed temporarily on the wall behind the Christmas tree.

"How exquisite!" said Lady Kay, with a long sigh. "You are most fortunate, Mr. Senter."

"Oh yes. Though I don't quite know what they will think of it in Rochester, New York," answered Peter, chuckling.

Sir William and his wife intended to walk home. When it was cold they preferred to walk rather than to go to and fro in a gondola; and as they were old residents, they knew every turn of the intricate burrowing chinks in all the quarters that serve as footways. When they took leave at one o'clock, Peter and Miss Senter, with American friendliness, accompanied them to the outer door. Peter was about to open this door when it was swung back, and a figure reeled in—Ercole. He had taken off his clown's dress, and wore now his gondolier's costume; but this costume was in disorder, and his face was darkly red, a purple red.

"Why, Ercole, is it you? What is the matter?" said Miss Senter, as he staggered against the wall.

"Oh; her Excellency the Consuless, I have been *beaten!*"

"Beaten! Where have you been? I thought you were down at the landing with Andrea," said Miss Senter.

"The antiquity-dealer suffocates," muttered Ercole. "And Giorgio—dead!"

This "dead" (*morto*) even Peter understood. "Dead! What is he saying, Barly?"

"The man is saying, Mr. Senter, that an antiquity-dealer is suffocating, and that somebody he calls Giorgio is dead," translated the pink-cheeked, portly Lady Kay, in her sweet voice. "It's your gondolier, isn't it—the one who played the clown so nicely? What a pity! He has been drinking, I fear."

While she was saying this, Sir William was leading Ercole further away from the ladies.

"Yes, he is drunk," said Peter, looking at him. "Too bad! We must have help. Let's see; Andrea is down at the landing. I'll get him. And you call Giorgio, Barly."

Here Ercole, held by Sir William, gave a maddened cry and threw his head about violently.

"Oh, don't leave my husband alone with him, Mr. Senter," said Lady Kay, alarmed. "He's a very powerful young man, and his eyes are dreadful. To me he looks as if he were mad. Those somersaults have affected his head."

And the gondolier's eyes were indeed strangely bloodshot and wild. Miss Senter had hurried to the kitchen. But Giorgio was not there. She came back, and found Ercole struggling with the Englishman and her brother.

"Let me try," she said. "I am not afraid of him. Ercole," she continued, speaking gently in Italian, "go to your room now, and go to bed quietly; everything will be all right to-morrow."

Ercole writhed in Sir William's grasp. "The antiquity-dealer! And Giorgio—dead!"

"Where *is* Giorgio, Barly?" said Peter, angrily, as he helped Sir William in securing the gondolier. "And where are the other servants? Where's Carmela? Find them, and send one down to the landing for Andrea and the other for Giorgio. Quick!"

"Oh, Peter, I've been, and I couldn't find Giorgio or any one."

"Carmela was in your bedroom not long ago," said Lady Kay, watching the gondolier's contortions nervously; "she helped me put on my cloak."

Miss Senter ran to her bedroom, her train flying in the haste she made. But in a moment she was back again. "There is no one there. Oh, where *are* they all?"

Ercole, hearing her voice, peered at her with his crimsoned eyes, and then breaking loose suddenly, he came and caught hold of her arm. "The antiquity-room. *Will* she come?"

Peter and Sir William dragged him away by main force.

"The gentlemen, then. Will *they* come?" said the gondolier, hoarsely. And again freeing himself with two strokes of his powerful arms, he passed out (for the door was still half open), and began to descend the outside staircase.

"Oh, thank Heaven, he has gone! Oh, lock the door!" cried the two ladies together.

"We must follow him, Mr. Senter," said Sir William. "He is plainly mad from drink, and may do some harm."

"Yes; and down there Andrea can help us," answered Peter; and the two gentlemen hastened down the staircase. It was a very long flight with three turns. The court below was brilliantly lighted by many wall lamps.

"I *don't* like my husband's going down," said Lady Kay, in a tremor, as she stood on the landing outside. "If they are going to seize him, the more of us the better; don't you think so? For while they are holding him, you and I could run across and get that other man in from the riva."

But Miss Senter was not there. She had rushed back into the house, and was now calling with all her strength: "Giorgio! Carmela! Assunta! Beppa!" There was no answer, and seized with a fresh panic by the strangeness of this silence, she hastened out again and joined Lady Kay, who was already half-way down the stairs. The gondolier had not turned towards the water entrance; he had crossed the court in the opposite direction, and now he was passing through a broad low door which led into the hall on the ground-floor behind the show-room of Z. Pelham, throwing open as he did so both wings of this entrance, so that the light from the court entered in a broad beam across the stone pavement.

"My dear, *don't* go in!" "Oh, Peter, stop! stop!" cried the two ladies, as they breathlessly descended the last flight.

But Peter and Sir William had paid no attention. Quickly detaching two of the lamps from the wall, they had followed the madman.

"The other gondolier!" gasped Lady Kay.

And the two women ran swiftly to the water-door and threw it open, Miss Senter calling, in Italian, "Andrea! come *instantly!*"

The little riva along the small canal was also brightly lighted. But there was no one there. And opposite there was only a long blank wall.

"Oh, we must not leave them a moment longer!" said Lady Kay.

And again they rushed across the broad court, this time entering the dark water-story; for it was better to enter, dreadful though it was, than to remain outside, not knowing what might be happening within. Ercole meanwhile had made his way into Mr. Pelham's show-room, and here he had struck a match and lighted a candle. As he had left the door of the show-room open, those who were without could see him, and they stopped for a moment to watch what he would do next. It was now a group of four, for the ladies had joined the other two, Miss Senter whispering to her brother,

"Andrea isn't there."

The gondolier bent down, and began to drag something across the floor and out to the open space behind. "Here!" he said, turning his purple face towards their lamps. "I can no more." And he sat down suddenly on the pavement, and let his head and arms fall forward over his knees.

Peter and Sir William, giving their lamps to the ladies, were approaching cautiously, in order to secure him while he was quiet, when they saw, to their horror, two human legs and feet protruding from the object which he had dragged forth.

"Why, it's the second-hand dealer; it's Z. Pelham!" said Peter, in fresh excitement. "I know his arctics. Bring the lamp, Barly. Quick!"

The two ladies came nearer, keeping one eye upon Ercole. Peter and Sir William with some difficulty cut the

rope, and unwound two woollen coverlids and a sheet. Within, almost suffocated, with his hands tied behind him, was the dealer.

"I suppose *he* did this," whispered Lady Kay to Miss Senter, her pink face white, as she indicated the motionless gondolier.

Sir William lifted the dealer's head, while Peter loosened his collar.

"Now will Excellencies look for Giorgio?" muttered Ercole, without changing his position.

"He says now will you look for Giorgio," translated Lady Kay. "That he *tells* his crimes shows that he really *is* mad," she added, in a whisper.

"No; I think he has come to for the moment, and that's why he tells," said Peter, hastily rubbing Z. Pelham's chest. "Ask him where we shall look, Barly; ask while he's lucid."

"Where must we look for Giorgio, Ercole?" quavered Miss Senter, her Italian coming out with the oddest pronunciation.

"Back stairs," answered the gondolier.

"Back stairs, he says," translated Lady Kay.

"There are no back stairs," replied Peter.

"I'll put this coverlid under his back. That will make him breathe better," said the Englishman, his sympathies roused by the forlorn plight of the little dealer, whose carefully strapped arctic shoes gave ironical emphasis to his helplessness.

Meanwhile Miss Senter, saying "Yes, there *are* stairs," had run across the pavement with her lamp, found the door at the back of the hall, and opened it. Z. Pelham began to breathe more regularly, although he had not yet opened his eyes. Sir William drew him further away from the gondolier, and then he and Peter hastened across and looked up the spiral. "It goes to the attics," explained Miss Senter.

"You two stand here at the bottom with one lamp, and Sir William and I will go up with the other," said Peter. "Keep your eye on Ercole, Barly, and if he so much as *moves*, come right up and join us."

"Wait an instant," said the Englishman. "Stay here with Mr. Senter, Gertrude." Making a detour so as not to rouse the gondolier, he entered the antiquity-dealer's show-room and tried to open the outer door. But it was locked, and the key was not there. "No use," he said, coming hurriedly back; "I had hoped to get help from outside to watch him while we go up. Now remember, Gertrude, you and Miss Senter are to come up and join us *instantly* if he leaves his place." And then he and Peter ascended the winding steps, carrying one of the lamps. Round and round went the gleam of their light, and the two ladies at the bottom, standing with their skirts caught up ready to run, watched the still form of the gondolier in the distance, visible in the gleam of the candle burning in the show-room. It seemed an hour. But a full minute had not gone when Peter's voice above cried out:

"It's Giorgio! Good God! Killed! Bring up the other light."

And the two ladies rushed up together. There on the landing lay the poor old cook, his eyes closed, his face ghastly, his white jacket deeply stained with blood. Miss Senter, who was really attached to the old man, began to cry.

"He isn't quite dead," said Peter, who had been listening for the heart. "But we must get him out of this icy place. Then we'll tie up Ercoly—we can use that rope--and after he is secured, I can go for help. Here, you take his head and shoulders, Sir William; you are the strongest. And I'll take his body. Barly can take the feet."

"It will be difficult," said the Englishman. "These steep stairs—"

But Peter, when roused, was a veritable little lion. "Come on," he said; "we can do it."

"Please go down first and see if Ercole is still quiet," begged Miss Senter of Lady Kay. And the English woman, who now had both lamps, went down and came back in thirty seconds; she never knew how she did it. "He has not stirred," she said. And then old Giorgio was borne down, and out to the brilliantly lighted court beyond.

"Now," said Peter, whose face was bathed with great drops of perspiration, "we'll first secure him," and he indicated Ercole by pointing his thumb backward over his shoulder towards the water-story, "and then I'll go for a doctor and the police."

But as he spoke, coming out of the door upon his hands and knees, appeared Z. Pelham, who, as soon as he saw the

cook's prostrate body, called back hoarsely, in Italian, "Ercole, get my brandy flask."

"Oh, don't call him!" said Lady Kay, in terror, clapping a fold of her skirt tightly over the dealer's mouth and holding it there. "He is mad, quite mad!"

Mr. Pelham collapsed.

"Good heavens! Gertrude, don't suffocate the poor creature a second time," said Sir William, pulling his wife away.

Z. Pelham, released, raised his head. "Ercole has been bad beat, and that makes him not genteel," he explained. "Ercole, bring my brandy flask," he called again in Italian, and the effort he made to break through his hoarseness brought out the words in a sudden wild yell. "My voice a little deranged is," he added, apologetically, in English.

They could now hear the steps of the gondolier within, and the ladies moved to a distance as he appeared, walking unsteadily, the flask in his hand. "Not dead?" he said, trying to see Giorgio. But his eyes closed convulsively, and as soon as the dealer had taken the flask, down he went, or half fell, on the pavement as before, with his head thrown forward over his knees. Sir William placed himself promptly by his side, while Peter ran within to get the rope. Z. Pelham, uncorking the flask, poured a little brandy between Giorgio's pale lips. "You have all mistake," he said to Sir William as he did this. "Ercole was bad beat by a third partee who was done it all—me, and he, and this died cook; a third partee was done it all." And he chafed the cook's temples with brandy.

"A third party?" said Peter, who had returned with the rope. "Who?"

"I know not; they knocked me from behind. It was lightning to me, in *my* head also," answered Z. Pelham, going on with his chafing.

"Come here, Barly," said Peter, taking command. "Say what I tell you. Don't be afraid; Sir William and I will grab him if he stirs. Say, 'Ercoly, who hurt you?'"

"Ercole, who hurt you?" said Miss Senter, tremulously.

"*Non so. Un demonio*," answered the gondolier, his head still on his knees.

"He says he doesn't know. A demon," said Lady Kay.

"Ask when it happened."

"It was after he had taken the presents from the tree," translated Lady Kay again. "He was struck, dragged down the back stairs, gagged, and left in the antiquity-room. He has only just now been able to free himself."

"How could he act the clown, then?" pursued Peter.

"He says he hasn't been a clown, or seen a clown. Oh, Peter, it was some one else, disguised! Who could it have been?" cried Miss Senter, running away as if to fly up the staircase, and then in her terror running back again.

The cook's eyes had now opened. "He says see what is stoled," said Mr. Pelham, administering more brandy. Mr. Pelham was seated, tailor fashion, on the pavement, his feet in their arctics under him.

"Giorgio knows something about it too," said Peter. "Ask him, Barly."

But Miss Senter was incapable of speaking; she had hidden her face on Lady Kay's shoulder, shuddering. The clown with whom she had talked, who had danced all the evening with the children, was an assassin! A strange and savage murderer!

"I'll do it," said the Englishman. And bending over Giorgio, he asked, in correct, stiff Italian, "Do you know who hurt you?"

"A tall dark man. I never saw him before," answered the cook, or rather his lips formed those words. "He stabbed me after he had struck down Ercole."

"Now he is again gone," soliloquized Z. Pelham, as Giorgio's eyes closed; "I have fear this time he is truly dead!" And he chafed the cook's temples anew.

"It's all clear now," said Peter, "and Ercoly isn't mad; only hurt in some way. So I'll go for help at once."

"Oh, Peter, you always get lost!" moaned his sister.

And it was true that the Consul almost invariably lost his way in the labyrinth of chinks behind the palace.

"I'll go," said the Englishman. "It's not very late" (he looked at his watch); "I shall be sure to find some one."

"You must let me go with you, my dear," urged Lady Kay.

In three minutes they were back with two men: "I've brought these two, and there's a doctor coming. And I sent word to the police," said the Englishman.

And following very soon came a half-

dressed youth, a young American doctor, who had been roused by somebody. The cook was borne up the stairway and into the salon, where the chandeliers were shedding their soft radiance calmly, and where all the fairy-lamps were still burning on the Christmas tree; for only twenty minutes had passed since the host and his guests had left the room. Behind the group of the two men from outside, who with Peter and the doctor were carrying Giorgio, came Sir William leading the gondolier, who seemed now entirely blind, while Z. Pelham followed, last of all, on his hands and knees.

"This old man has a deep cut—done with a knife; he has lost a good deal of blood; pretty bad case," said the doctor. "Your gondolier has been dreadfully beaten about the head; but it won't kill him; he is young and strong. This third man seems to be only sprained. Get me something for bandages and compresses, and bring cold water."

"Get towels, Barly," said the Consul.

"Oh, Peter, I'm afraid to go," said Miss Senter, faintly. "The man may still be hidden somewhere. And I know he has murdered Carmela and the other servants too!"

Peter ran to his own chamber, and came back with a pile of towels, a sheet from his bed, a large jug of water, and a scissors. "Now, doctor, you stay here and do what you can for all three," he said, as he hurried round the great drawing-room, locking all the doors but one. "And the ladies will stay here with you. The rest of us will search the whole apartment immediately. Lock this last door as soon as we're out, will you?"

"Oh, Peter, don't go!" cried his sister. "Let those two men do it. Or wait for the police."

"My dear, pray consider," said Lady Kay to her husband; "if any one *is* hidden, it is some desperate character—"

But the Englishman and Peter were already gone, and the ladies were left with the doctor, who, comprehending everything quickly, locked the last door, and then hurried back to the cook. Old Giorgio's mind was now wandering; he muttered incoherently, and seemed to be suffering greatly. The gondolier, his head enveloped in wet towels, was lying in a stupor on one of the sofas. Z. Pelham quietly tied up his own sprained ankles with a portion of the torn sheet, and then assisted with much intelligence in the making of the bandages which the doctor needed for Giorgio.

Sir William, Peter, and the two men from outside began with the kitchen; no one. The pantries and store-rooms; no one. The supper-room; no one. The bedrooms; no one. The anterooms and small drawing-room; no one. As the whole house was still brightly lighted, this did not take long. They now crossed to four rooms on the north side; no one. Then came a large store-room for linen. This was not lighted, so they took in a lamp; no one.

"There's a second door here," said Sir William, perceiving one of those masked flat portals common in Italy, which are painted or frescoed so exactly like the wall that they seem a part of it.

"It opens into a little recess only a foot deep," said Peter, going on with the lamp to a second store-room. "No one could possibly hide there. Now after we have finished on this side, there is only the wood-room left; that is off by itself in a wing."

The Englishman had accompanied his host. But having a strong bent towards thoroughness, he was not satisfied, and he quietly returned alone and opened that masked door. There, flattened against the wall, not clearly visible in the semi-darkness, was the outlines of a woman's figure. His exclamation brought back the others with the lamp. It was Carmela.

She stood perfectly still for an instant or two, so motionless, and with such bright eyes staring at them, that she looked like a wax figure. Then she sprang from her hiding-place and made a swift rush down the corridor towards the outer door. They caught her. She fought and struggled dreadfully, still without a sound. So frantic were her writhings that her apron and cap were torn away, and the braids of her hair fell down and finally fell off, leaving only, to Peter's astonishment, a few locks of thin white hair in their place. It took the four men to hold her, for she threw herself from side to side like a wild-cat; she even dragged the four as far as the anteroom nearest the drawing-room in her desperate efforts to reach that outer door. But here, as she felt herself at last overpowered, a terrible shriek burst from her, her face became distorted, her eyes rolled up, and froth appeared on her lips.

The shriek, an unmistakably feminine one, had brought the doctor and the two ladies from the drawing-room.

"A fit," exclaimed the doctor as soon as he saw the froth. "Here, get open that tight dress." He unbuttoned a few buttons of the black bodice, and tore off the rest. "Gracious! corsets like steel!" He took out his knife, and hastily cutting the cashmere across the shoulders, he got his hand in and severed the corset strings. "Now, ladies, just help me to get her out of this harness."

And with trembling fingers Lady Kay and Miss Senter gave their aid, and after a moment the whole edifice—for it was an edifice—sank to the floor. What was left was an old, old woman, small and withered, her feeble chest rising and falling in convulsions under her coarse chemise, and the rest of her little person scantily covered with a patched, poverty-stricken under-skirt.

"Oh, *poor* creature!" said Lady Kay, the tears filling her eyes as all the ribs of the meagre wasted body showed in the straining, spasmodic effort of the lungs to get breath.

"Bring something to cover her, Barly," said Peter.

And Miss Senter, forgetting her fears, ran to her room, and brought back the first thing she could find—a large white shawl.

"All right now; she's coming to," said the doctor.

The convulsions gradually ceased, and Carmela's eyes opened. She looked at them all in silence as she sat, muffled in the shawl, where they had placed her. Finally she spoke. "The Consul is too late," she said, with mock respect. "The Consuless also. Did they admire the dancing of the clown? A fine fellow that clown! You need not hold me," she added to the two men from outside, who were acting as guards. "I have nothing more to do. My son is safe, and that was all I cared for. They will never find him; he is far from here now. He is very clever, and he has, besides, to help him, all the money which the Consuless so kindly provided for him by keeping it in a secret drawer, whose 'secret' every Italian, not an idiot, knows. But the Consuless has always had a singular self-conceit. I had only to mention that extra man with the musicians —poor little Tonio the tailor it was—and she swallowed him down whole. I could have got away myself if I had cared to. But I waited, in order to keep back the alarm as long as possible: I waited. Oh yes, I helped all the ladies to put on their cloaks; I helped this English ladyship to put on hers last of all, as she knows. When their Excellencies went down to the water-story, I then tried to go; but I found that they could still see the staircase, so I came back. What matters it? They may do with me what they please. For myself I care not. My son is safe." On her old cheeks, under the falling white hair, were still the faint pink tinges of rouge, and from beneath the wretched petticoat came the two young-looking high-heeled shoes. She folded her thin hands on her lap, and refused to say more.

Assunta and Beppa were found in the wood-room, gagged and bound like the others, but not hurt. And in the morning the Consul's gondola was discovered floating out with the tide, and within it Andrea in the same helpless state. The man, who was an ex-convict, a burglar, suspected of worse crimes, after committing the murder at the café, had fled to the palace. Here he and his intrepid little mother had invented and carried out the whole scheme in the one hour which had followed the distribution of the presents from the tree, before the dancing began. Carmela had even left the house to obtain a clown's costume from a dealer in masquerade dresses who lived near by. And she had herself opened for her son's use the disused door which led to the spiral steps.

That son was never caught. His mother, who had worked for him indefatigably—worked so hard that her hands were worn almost to claws—who had supported him and supplied him, who had made herself young and active like a girl, though she was seventy-four, in order to be able to send him money—his mother, who had allowed herself nothing in the world but the few smart clothes necessary for her disguise, who was absolutely honest, but who had stolen for him three thousand francs from the secret drawer, and had stood by and aided him when he beat, stabbed, and gagged her fellow-servants—this mother was not arrested. She should have been, of course. But somehow, very strangely, she escaped from the palace before morning.

Old Giorgio was never able to work again. But as Peter pensioned him handsomely, he led an easy life, while Ercole became a magnate among gondoliers.

It was not until three years afterwards, in Rochester, New York, that Peter, surrounded by Z. Pelham's entire collection (which he had purchased, though thinking it hideous, at large prices), confessed to his sister that he had connived at Carmela's escape. "Somehow I couldn't stand it, Barly. That thin white hair and those poor old arms of hers, and that wretched, wasted, gasping little chest—in prison!"

SOME TYPES OF THE VIRGIN.

BY THEODORE CHILD.

FOR the purposes of piety, of culture, and of the love of beauty, it is proposed in the following pages to present to the contemplative reader a few supreme types of the Virgin, according to the ideals of certain painters of the fifteenth century. In the profusion of pictures which this theme has produced, the selection of half a dozen examples might at first sight seem to be a task of unsurmountable difficulty; and the choice itself necessarily arbitrary. In order at once to soften the possible severity of criticism, let it be stated that the scope of the present essay is limited. Its plan eliminates those more primitive paintings where material or plastic beauty is absent, though beauty of expression, of character, and of sentiment is often present with singular intensity. It eliminates also the work of imitators, and of those painters who were so far removed from the spirit of mediæval Christianity that the Virgin could no longer be to them a source of spontaneous inspiration. The types chosen were created at an epoch when the means of art were perfect, or approaching perfection. The painters who created them were essentially inventors of beauty. The pictures reproduced remain as landmarks in the history of human culture; and the very inadequate comments of the accompanying text are offered with all humility in the hope that they may be found suggestive of culture to sympathetic souls.

In art, as in all human creations, there is nothing absolutely isolated and without antecedents. Not that the idea of progress can be fitly introduced into the imaginative order, so far as the essential personality of the artist is concerned; otherwise the artists of each succeeding generation would be able to take advantage of the æsthetic experience of their predecessors, and so necessarily surpass them. We know, on the contrary, that the true artist depends upon himself, and is surety for himself alone; his own works are all that he can promise and bequeath to the future; he cannot teach others to become great; he cannot hand down the lessons of his own experience, unless it be in a few technical artifices, which are of small importance when we are considering the spiritual personality. In the study of the truly great artists we are not concerned with classification by order of superiority or of inferiority; we find ourselves in presence of inventors who are the great and rare geniuses, and of imitators who may often have a certain personality, power, and charm, but who do not introduce a thoroughly new note into art. The inventors are all great, but great in such different ways that the establishment of comparisons can generally result only in rhetorical exercises. In the art of painting, Fra Angelico, Lippo Lippi, Mantegna, Bellini, Perugino, Botticelli, Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Memlinc, suggest themselves as consummate types of revealers of new visions of nature, or, in other words, of inventors of beauty. But what good can come of an attempt to compare and classify these men? It suffices to know that they were inventors of beauty, and to ascertain the kind of beauty formulated by each one of them; and then, if such be our inclination, we may intensify our enjoyment of that beauty by studying and comprehending it in its relations to the history of human thought and noble pleasure. It is from this point of view especially that we may say, in speaking of the manifestations of art, that they are never absolutely without antecedents. The invention of beauty appears, on the contrary, to be an operation of singular and mysterious complexity, defying ultimate