

Blessed Sacrament by way of protest against certain false theological views, and when the practice of elevating the Sacred Host was introduced into the Mass about this time, people became persuaded that some special virtue and merit were attached to the simple act of looking at It. The famous miracle of Bolsena, about the middle of the same century, led to the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi with its public procession of the Blessed Sacrament. Processions on other occasions became common, and by degrees the Blessed Sacrament came to be carried in transparent vessels, so that the people might be able to satisfy their devotion by looking at the Host. This custom in turn led to the erection in churches of imposing tabernacles, more or less open in front, where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in a monstrance, and also to the practice of exposing the Blessed Sacrament during any function, when it was desired to make it more solemn.

'Now it seems certain,' concludes Father Thurston, 'that our present Benediction service has resulted from the general adoption of this evening singing of canticles before the statue of our Lady, enhanced as it often came to be in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, which was employed at first only as an adjunct to lend it additional solemnity. The blessing at the close seems to have been added simply because the custom gained ground of making the sign of the cross over the people whenever the Blessed Sacrament was replaced in the tabernacle after a procession, or after being carried to the sick or any kind of an exposition. But in the course of the seventeenth century, we find numberless bequests for *Saluts* (Benedictions) in French wills, the items to be sung, often of a most miscellaneous character, being minutely specified, and among these the condition is frequently appended that the Blessed Sacrament should be exposed during the whole time of the *Salut*' (*Encycl. Cath.* II, 446).

The Storyteller

FANNY ROTAPFEL'S TRIP TO VENICE

When I was studying music in a German city I lived in a great high building, the home of many families in moderate circumstances, and various students in circumstances more straitened. Not being possessed of a large income, I lodged on the top floor, opposite a little dressmaker, hunchbacked and lame, but in her own way a remarkable personage. She was so skilful that she never lacked employment, so resourceful that she could make the ordinary dollar do the work of two, so tasteful that she had converted a sordid room into a most comfortable spot, with its flowers and chintz curtains and pretty home-made ornaments; so cheery and kind that there was no dweller beneath the self-same roof who was not better for having known her. She was called by the singular and uneuphonious name of Fanny Rotapfel (Red Apple), which did not suit her in the least, as she was neither plump nor rosy.

The owner and proprietor of the building, Herr Armleder, had a bookshop on the ground floor, with his living apartments just above, where he resided with his only daughter, Gertrude, a girl of twelve, and an old servant, Barbara, who had taken charge of his house and daughter since the death of his wife, eleven years before.

Herr Armleder was a very good man, who looked after his daughter as well as he could, but was perhaps a little too indulgent with her. She was not fond of study and seldom brought home good reports from school, but the father did not attach much importance to that. Though a bookseller, he was not a book-lover; the daily paper comprised nearly all his reading. The little seamstress on the top floor was, on the contrary, a great reader, especially of books of travel; and, while Gertrude seldom opened a book herself, she

took great delight in listening to the stories of foreign lands which Fanny Rotapfel took equal delight in telling. Gertrude spent many a leisure hour in Fanny's attic, and from my open door I saw and heard a great deal that went on in that pleasant, neighborly little room.

One sunny afternoon Fanny was seated in her little sewing-chair, with its soft, bright chintz cushion, feather-stitching a baby's gown. On the corner window-seat beside her sprawled Gertrude, her head resting on her hands, her long blonde curls falling over them, making a very pretty picture, as, with sparkling eyes, she announced some interesting news.

'What do you think, Fanny? The Grand Duke and Duchess, on their way to Venice, are going to stop here half a day, or maybe a whole day. All the schools will be dismissed, and every girl will be dressed in white and strew flowers from the station to the Town Hall. And there is to be a reception, and I have been chosen to read an address of welcome.'

'You!' exclaimed Fanny Rotapfel in surprise. 'I wonder they did not select one of the best scholars.'

'Yes, that would have seemed right,' rejoined Gertrude, indifferently. 'But the principal said that, because my grandpapa had once saved the life of the Grand Duke's father on the battlefield, I ought to read it. That's the way it happened.'

'Are you glad?' asked Fanny.

'Yes, I'm glad, because I shall stand in the very front row, and papa will get me the handsomest bouquet he can find in town. Aunt Sophie bought me a pretty white dress this morning, and I am to have blue ribbons on my hair and a blue sash.'

Fanny Rotapfel laid down her sewing and, reaching for a book on the shelf behind her, began to turn over the pages.

'How I should love to go to Venice again!' she said with a soft little sigh.

'Again?' exclaimed Gertrude. 'Why, Fanny Rotapfel, you know very well you have never been out of this town in your whole life.'

But the little seamstress continued to turn the pages as she replied smilingly:

'I have often been there, Gertrude. I like it better than any place I have ever visited. My father and I used to enjoy those trips above all we ever took together. For some time past I have been thinking of Venice a good deal, and now that you have put it into my head I shall start this very moment, and take you with me, if you would like to come. I am tired sewing, anyhow, and there is no hurry about this little frock.'

She drew another and larger book from the shelf as she spoke, while Gertrude abandoned her recumbent position and cried in astonishment:

'Why, Fanny Rotapfel, I believe you're going crazy! You must have been working too hard. Papa says hard work often makes people lose their minds.'

The seamstress leaned back in her chair and laughed merrily, Gertrude regarding her with astonishment.

'When and how do you go to Venice?' asked Gertrude after a while.

'In books,' was the reply. 'My father had several large volumes on Italy. We travelled through the whole, beautiful land that way, and, as I said before, I'll be glad to take you along this time if you want to go.'

Gertrude approached nearer, and knelt beside her friend.

'What lovely pictures!' she said. 'The houses are all built on the water, aren't they?'

'Yes, they face the water, but there are gardens at the back. It is a city of old palaces, with canals between them, and about four hundred bridges. Are you not familiar with it, Gertrude? Haven't you studied it in your geography?'

'Oh, yes, some, but I never paid much attention. What queer looking boats, Fanny!'

'They are gondolas. People go about in them instead of in carriages. They are rowed by men in picturesque costumes who, as they row, sing most beautiful "barcarolles."'