BEFORE THE SHRINE

The sun had barely risen out of the sea when the sexton opened the doors of the pretty church of San Glacomo on the little island of Chioggia, which the Canal Grande separates from Venice. It was holy week, and the pious islanders gathered

for early mass.

The space within was cold and gray.

The sun had not yet climbed the height of the stained glass windows of the holy cell-fice. A thin cloud of incense floated around the marble pillars. The perpetual light glowed in a deep red bowl before the image of the Madonna, and the worshipers egan to fill the worm eaten, wooder

They were nearly all women, for the young and hardy men of Chioggia are out on the sen, saying their morning prayers under the done of the sky. By the side of the wife of some poor fisherman kneels the judge's spouse in elegant affire. Not far from her sits the pilot's daughter muffed in fleeey shawls to ward off the draft that comes in between the chinks

and cracks in the windows and doors,

In the first pew before the image of the
Madonna crouched on this morning in
holy week a slender young woman of extraordinary beauty. She was oblivious of
her surroundings. Her head was bowed
over her folded hands, and from her eyes
a tear trickled now and then. She did not
see the old vegetable buckster perchad on s tear trickled now and then. She did not see the old vegetable huckster perched on a stool the sexton had provided expressly for her, because she could no longer kneel. Nobody heeded the girl, except this old stone, who watched her curiously. The young woman's rich black hair betrayed her. It was Lucia, handsome, dark eyed Lucia. her. It was Lucia, handsome, dark eyed Lucia, her cousin Enrichetta's only daughter. The sliver bracelet around the dim-pled wrist was hers. The old woman would have known her anywhere with hat trinket on her arm.

Lucia seemed in great despair. Sora Bingia wondered. Could it be true, what the woman of Chioggia were saying, that Lucis was in love with the fair hatred German painter who had employed her for his model? Had she been faithless to Filippo, who had asked her to marry him, and whose wife she had promised to be? Now the Tedesco has gone his way, and she kneels in despair before the image of the Madonna—the old, old story! Sora Biagia had always been fond of Lucia, and her heart ached for the sorrow-

ing creature, but of late the girl had made no confidante of her old relative. When mass was over and the people dispersed, the old woman waited patiently for Lucia, who was still lost in devout prayer. At last she arose, brushed the wavy strains of her black hair from her forehead, and cast a last, imploring look upon the image of the Madonna.

"Hey, Lucia!" cried Sora Biagia. On the church steps behind her stood the

"What will you have?" queried the girl

with low, oppressed voice.
"I am sorry, Lucia mia," whispered
Sora Biagia, laying her hand on the young
woman's shoulder. "I wish I could help you. Don't take it too much to heart! If Filippo loves you, he'll come back to marry you, believe me, Lucia!"

"But he cannot, Sora Biagia," moaned the girl. "He cannot come back to me. Filippo is dead, drowned—and I am the

She buried her face in her hands and "Oh, Holy Virgin," murmured the old

know what you are talking about. You

are losing your mind!"
"It's true, only too true," cried Lucia

vehemently. "I will tell you all, Sora Bingia, Flippo was jealous of the stranger for whom I sat as a model. I was foolish to flirt with him, but I have never wronged Filippo-the Holy Mother knows! It vexed me to have him so sure of me, and when he told me that he was the only man I could ever love I laughed at him. Then he came back and asked me to marry him. But I was obstinate, Sora Biagia, and said that I would think about it. We had a quarrel and parted in anger, yet we love each other dearly. Filippo went to sea again, though it was his intention to remain at home after our marriage. Last night came the news that the Speranze was wrecked in the English channel. She was Filippo's boat and everybody on board was lost. I am not weeping for the stranger, Sora Biagia, but for Filippo, whom I will never see again!"

The girl broke completely down, sobbing out her grief on the old woman's shoulder. "Are you sure that all the crew were lost, Lucia? I see old Sor Frediano, the pilot, standing in his door. He is sure to know. Hey, Sor Frediano, hey! Any news from the Speranza?"

"The Speranza's gone, but word has just been received that the crew was saved. They are on their way home now.

ery of joy broke from Lucia's lips Half laughing, half weeping, she sank upon the stone steps of the church. Thou hast heard my prayer, O Madon

I have not sent him to his death." On Easter morning there was great rejoicing on the pretty little island of Chi-The crew from the Speranza came ome just as the Easter bells called the worshipers to church.

On the wharf, near enough for the water to dampen her pretty shoes, stood Lucia with Sora Biagia.

As the boat drew near that brought the young lover home the old woman asked:
"What will you say to Filippo should he ask you again to become his wife!!"

Not a single word. Som Bingia. I will throw my arms around his neck and kiss him. He will know."

At Whitsuntide Filippo and Lucia were married before the image of the Madonna, at whose shrine the girl had poured out ber grief and implored ber belp. -St. Louis

The Good Samaritan. The following tale, related to me by friend, is absolutely true, says a writer in the London Sketch. A lady recently touring in the highlands—for obvious reasons I omit the lady's name and the name of the district-had the misfortune, while riding alone through a picturesque but scantily populuated glen, to meet with an accident, being thrown from her machine, badly bruised and shaken and more or less cut and scratched about the hands. Upon recovering her equanimity she made her way to the nearest habitation, which chanced to be the manse, and asked to be allowed to wash the mud off her hands and then to rest awhile. The minister was absent, but his housekeeper received her kindly, and, having attended to her wants, offered and gave her a cup of tea. Soon afterward the minister returned

and was, of course, duly informed of the presence of the unexpected guest. Thereupon his reverence entered the kitchen, where the lady was resting, and, after surveying her critically with and, after surveying her critically with
a suspicious eye for several moments,
he addressed her in the following friendly manner: "Ma'am," he said, "I'm
sure I don't know who you are, and I
don't know where you come from, and,
for anything I know, you may carry off
some of my property, so I think the
sooner you leave my house the better."
The poor lady, in dire distress, promptly
rose and complied with this inhospitable
request and was shortly afterward found request and was shortly afterward found by a pleasant woman sitting by the roadside and in tears. This good Samaritan quickly led the wanderer to the nearest inn, where a dogoart was soon procured, in which the unfortunate lady and her damaged bicycle were conveyed

Chinese Jewelers.

There are two jewelers in Chinatown, but their establishments do not resemble the ordinary places known as jewelry shops. The Chinese jeweler is a manufacturer as well as a shopkeeper. His establishment is a tiny room up one or two narrow flights of stairs. The room in one place is divided by an openwork iron partition, with an arch and a counter near the window, where the jeweler stands at work. He is an elderly Chinaman, wearing glasses, and he works over a tiny fire in the window. All his work is done by hand, and some of it is beautiful. There are heavy silver bracelets, which open with a hinge and fasten with an oda little staple. The fine raised pattern is out out, every bit of it, by hand. There are gold rings made in the same way. They are fine rings, made of 24 carat gold. Almost nothing is kept in stock. There may chance to be a few rings and bracelets, which are taken from a small safe. Most of the goods are made to order. When the manufacturer is asked the price of a ring, be weighs it before he answers. His scales consist of a slender stick of ivory, perhaps a third of a yard long, covered with Chinese characters. At one end is a small brass plate suspended from the woman, crossing herself. "You do not stick by fine threads, and a very small weight, also hanging by a thread, is moved along to the balancing point by the jeweler as he holds the little machine in his hand. The front part of the little shop is filled with a stove, table, dishpan, dishes—as many things as could be crowded into it.-New York Times.

> The brain of woman is absolutely smaller than that of man, but is stated to be somewhat larger in proportion to the weight of the body.

An Occult Study of Rubies.

The ruby, as indeed every other gem, had its magical properties in those old times when occultism was an article of faith. The oriental ruby defied both poison and the plague. Worn on the person or ground to powder and drunk as a drug it preserved the wearer and the swallower from that ever present danger of poison, that ever present fear of the plague. When misfortunes and evil days threatened the wearer, it lost its brilliancy and became sad and dark.

A learned German with an unpronounceable name testifies to this. "On the 5th day of October, 1600 after the birth of Christ Jesus, as I was going with my beloved wife Catharine Adelmannie (of pious memory), from Stutgard to Cahena, I observed by the way that a very fine ruby which I were mounted in a gold ring (the one which she had given me) lost repeatedly and each time almost completely its spleudid color, and that it assumed a somber, blackish hue, which blackness lasted not one day, but several, so much so that, being greatly astonished, I drew the ring from my finger and put it into a casket. I also warned my wife that some evil followed her or me, the which I augured from the change of the ruby. And truly I was not deceived, for within a few days she was taken mortally sick. After her death the ruby resumed its pristine color and brilliancy."-New York Dispatch.

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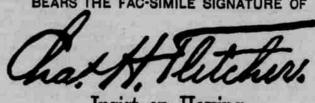
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