

# **SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA**



# **SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA**

To  
FATHER JEROME HESSE  
(*or—is it Assisi?*)



# **Saint Anthony of Padua**

**HIS LIFE AND MIRACLES**

*by*  
**MABEL FARNUM**

*Preface by*  
**FR. RAPHAEL M. HUBER, O. F. M. CONV.**  
**Associate Professor of Church History**  
**Catholic University of America**



**DIDIER**  
**New York**

*Nihil Obstat:*

John M. A. Fearn, S. T. D.  
*Censor Librorum*

*Imprimatur:*

✠ Francis Cardinal Spellman  
*Archbishop of New York*

*January 8, 1948*

COPYRIGHT, 1948, BY

DIDIER, *Publishers*

All rights reserved

*No part of this book may be reproduced in  
any form without permission of the Publishers*

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In reconstructing the life of St. Anthony of Padua, conspicuous use was made of two monumental works: *Antonio di Padova*, by Most Reverend Vittorino Facchinetti, O.F.M., of Abschadi, Egypt; and *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order, 1182-1517*, by The Very Reverend Raphael M. Huber, O.F.M., Conventual, Associate Professor of History at the Catholic University of America. The *Enter St. Anthony* by The Reverend Isidore O'Brien, O.F.M., was consulted.

Gratitude is expressed for Fr. Raphael Huber's distinguished service in reading the manuscript and suggesting certain revisions and additions. Also, I wish to thank the friars of New Mexico, who guided the author over the old Franciscan trails of the Rio Grande, and introduced her to the missionary life that St. Anthony of Padua so gloriously illustrated: Father Jerome Hesse, O.F.M., Rector, Sacred Heart Cathedral, Gallup; Fr. Robert Kalt, O.F.M., St. Francis Cathedral, Santa Fé; and Fr. Pax R. Schicker, O.F.M., Secretary to Bishop

M55<sup>5</sup>2543

Espelage, of Gallup. To The Reverend John Forest, O.F.M., Director, St. Anthony's Guild, Paterson, New Jersey, I extend gratitude for his interest in this work and for supplying books for research; as well as to the Reverend Daniel J. Taglino, St. Rita's Church, Haverhill, Massachusetts, for similar assistance; to Fray Angelico Chavez, O.F.M., St. Francis Cathedral, Santa Fé, New Mexico, bard of the Franciscan Order, for suggesting the particular form of the dedication of this book.

Certain incidents generally included in the biographies of St. Anthony of Padua are not presented in these pages, since the best modern authorities do not accept them. Among them is the supposed controversy between St. Anthony and Brother Elias Bombarone, of which no record appears in the thirteenth-century biographies of the saint, but which crept into his bibliography at a later period. The author followed the best possible guidance in this matter.

N. B. Tradition maintains that St. Anthony was a descendant of Godfrey of Bouillon, a leader in the first crusade. Since no other form of the surname was available than the Italian, the full Italian title for Anthony has been carried through the book up to the point where he entered the Order of Friars Minor.

## PREFACE

---

Devotion to St. Anthony of Padua, a love of his personality, and the bibliography in his honor have so increased from century to century that fifty years ago Pope Leo XIII could style him "not only the saint of Padua, but the saint of the whole world." Like his great spiritual father, St. Francis of Assisi, whose livery he assumed and whose rule he professed, he has become "everybody's saint." No wonder, then, that literature concerning his life, sanctity, activities, miracles, and learning has been in constant demand by his ardent admirers throughout the world. The recent elevation of St. Anthony to the rank of a Doctor of the Church Universal by our present gloriously reigning Pope Pius XII, in virtue of the Decree of January 16, 1946, has given fresh impetus to renewed studies, biographies, and the publication of source material concerning his life.

In the life of every public hero, saint or soldier, artist or statesman, inventor or scholar, many legendary episodes have intertwined themselves with the branches of truth and fact pertaining to his biography. St. Anthony was no exception. The simple story of his life, as recorded by thirteenth-century biographers, has been augmented by folklore, deliberate interpolations to suit party affiliation and ambitions, and imaginary occurrences with absolutely no regard for time or place, so that only the objective critic, after long research, can eventually separate the grain from the chaff.

Dramatic biography, as differentiated from pure fiction, however, is based upon historical fact, upon living personages and real places, although it does allow itself a restrained freedom in secondary matters, such as the elaboration of detail, the description of local color, delineation of character, the course of conversation, and the concatenation of events or reaction to circumstances or occurrences. Such a dramatic biography is the present life of St. Anthony of Padua, as presented by the author, Mabel Farnum, of Boston, Massachusetts.

Miss Farnum is no stranger to the American reading public. As a steady contributor to leading Catholic periodicals and author of such works as *The Wool Merchant of Segovia—The Life of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez*; *Street of the Half-Moon—The Life of St. Peter Claver*; *The Sacred Scimitar—The Life of St. John de Brito*; *A Carrack Sailed Away; the Voyage of Master Francis Xavier*, and *The Seven Golden Cities—The Story of Fray Marcos of Nizza and Coronado's expedition*, she has endeared herself to her many readers. Even while awaiting the publication of her latest study, *American Saint*, a biography of Mother Cabrini for young people, she has immersed herself, at the suggestion of Dr. Cardozo, of the Catholic University, in a research study on the life and biographies of St. Anthony of Padua, her latest venture. With a deep sense of fidelity to fact, she has striven to reconstruct the places and spots in which the saint worked; to bring to life the people with whom he conversed; and to describe the scenes of his activities as though she had been an actual spectator. From a preview, I feel that she has lived up to her reputation for accuracy as portrayed in her other literary productions; and I feel that this work will, therefore, merit the same public acclaim, especially among those of her readers who do not understand Italian, Spanish, Portuguese or French, and who, accordingly, do not have

direct access to the complete scholarly works in these languages.

To these, in particular, Miss Farnum has endeavored to give the quintessence of her own knowledge of the Romance languages, plus her personal research and study,

FR. RAPHAEL M. HUBER, O.F.M., Conv.,  
Associate Professor of Church History,  
Catholic University of America.

Washington, D. C.,  
*Feast of St. Anthony of Padua,*  
June 13, 1947.





## *The Cloister of Silence*

**I**N THE cloister of the Monastery of St. Vincent-outside-the-Walls, at Lisbon, the novice, Fernando de Buglioni, walked at sunset.

Sturdy and straight as a candle he was, in his black habit of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, with the white rochet lighting up his face like the candle's glow.

His lips moved in prayer as he recited the antiphon for compline:

"Save us, O Lord, watching, guard us sleeping, that we may watch with Christ and rest in peace."

When he had finished the prayer he closed the book and, with hands clasped about it, looked out over the quiet landscape.

Against the fading blue of the sky, bright villas nestled along the picturesque range of the Cintra. The great harbor that could hold one thousand ships lay quiet beneath a white moon. Darkness was closing in. Soon it would blot out land and sea and the far horizon.

The Monastery of St. Vincent rose on one of Lisbon's traditional seven hills, a little beyond the city walls.

Alfonso I, King of Portugal, and his wife, Mafalda of Savoy, had founded it in 1145, fifty years before the birth of the novice, Fernando de Buglioni. The foundation, made during the siege of Lisbon, was a memorial to the Crusaders who had perished during the battle.

Adjacent to it was the magnificent church that likewise bore the name of Lisbon's patron saint.

The religious of Fernando's Community followed the regular mode of life observed by clerics living in common in that day. St. Augustine, its inspiration, had adopted certain customs of the early apostles, and to these he had added certain regulations of his own. His rule had spread rapidly throughout all the countries of Europe.

The monks of St. Vincent recited the divine office daily and chanted in choir. They followed sacred studies, and those of their number who were priests fulfilled the offices of the holy ministry. They were eager to enroll new candidates as future Augustinians, particularly if these youths showed exceptional promise.

They had welcomed Fernando de Buglioni, at the age of fifteen, into their ranks, believing that he would well satisfy their loftiest aspirations.

The novice's father, Don Martin de Buglioni, an intrepid soldier, and his mother, Donna Teresa Tavera, a woman of piety and good judgment, had reared their son carefully. The principal care of Fernando was left to Donna Teresa, since his father was away from home in the service of the army much of the time.

The family residence was situated in the northeast section of Lisbon, close to the Cathedral. This imposing edifice held priceless treasures of gold, silver, and rare gems, with sacred furnishings of great worth.

Each day, in his infancy, Donna Teresa had carried her little Fernando to this magnificent temple of worship. At the shrine of the Mother of God she had offered him to God as she had done when first he was laid in her arms.

Sometimes, when Donna Teresa, busy about the household tasks, was unable to visit the church, Fernando would hold out his little arms toward it, and cry to be taken

for his visit. His mother did not think this extraordinary. She knew that her little son was sensibly impressed by the majesty and beauty of the House of the Lord.

Before Fernando could speak, his mother had repeated the name "Mary" frequently to him. It was to be expected that he would develop a tender love for the Blessed Virgin, even in childhood, and he did so.

Don Gonzalo de Mendez, the Prior who received Fernando into the Congregation of Canons Regular, had heard much about him. All was reassuring. He had reason to believe that this young religious would add new luster to his Community.

The Prior and his associates knew about several incidents said to have occurred in the life of their new novice that seemed to presage his future holiness and exceptional gifts.

The story went about that one day, Fernando, as a young boy, while visiting the family villa with his father, had made the birds obey his will.

It was harvest time, and the fields of Don Martin were ripening beneath the amber rays of the sun.

As he looked happily across them, Don Martin's face suddenly clouded.

He saw that a great flock of sparrows was circling overhead. This meant disaster to the crops, for the birds would assuredly swoop down and destroy the harvest as soon as its owner had left the field.

Turning to the boy at his side, Don Martin said to him: "Fernando! You are old enough to have some care, now. See those sparrows overhead! They are a threat to our crops, for they have come to feed here. I must leave you for a while. You must stay here, and, whenever you see the sparrows preparing to descend, you must drive them off! Later, I will provide some means of safeguarding our harvest."

Fernando had been thinking of other business that he wished to carry out. This was to visit the near-by chapel. The quiet sanctuary, the ruby-colored lamp swinging before the tabernacle, the strong serene faces of the old saints in their niches attracted him singularly. He was always happy when he was in the church.

Don Martin departed, leaving Fernando alone in the field.

Looking up, the boy saw that the birds were patiently awaiting their opportunity to feast on the seeds and the young green sprouts in the field. Probably they would not be afraid of a little boy, and would soon come down to feed.

Portuguese mothers taught their children many lovely ways of communicating with the heavenly court. Donna Teresa had instructed her little son in these ways. So, now, Fernando was ready with an improvised prayer.

"Brother Angels," he said, addressing himself to the heavenly host, "my father has told me to stay here and guard our field against the sparrows. But I want to visit my sweet Jesus in the chapel! Please, Angels, help me to obey my father and go to the chapel too!"

Innocently and trustingly Fernando waited for the answer to his prayer.

It came.

He seemed to hear soft voices addressing him. They told him to call the sparrows, lead them to the villa, open the front door, and allow them to fly in, then close the door upon them.

Fernando immediately followed out his instructions.

He called the sparrows and incited them to fly after him to the villa. He waved them inside the opened door and, when the last of them had disappeared within, shut the door quickly and left them there, his prisoners.

Then he ran off to the chapel.

When Don Martin returned to the field shortly after, he found Fernando missing, and the sparrows, as well.

This seemed strange.

He thought he knew where to find his son. He went to the chapel. There was Fernando, kneeling before the tabernacle.

Don Martin waited until the boy came outside. Then he confronted him.

"My son, why did you disobey my orders? What about our harvest? The birds must have eaten their fill before flying away."

Fernando smiled brightly as he replied: "Don't bother about it, Father. The birds didn't touch anything. When you open the door of the villa, you will find them inside. I locked them up there."

Don Martin now had a new cause for anxiety. The birds could do grave damage to the house as well as to the fields.

He hurried to the villa and swung open the door.

There were the sparrows, clustered inside, perfectly quiet. Don Martin observed with thankfulness that nothing in the place had suffered the least harm.

The Prior and Community of St. Vincent knew of another incident concerning Fernando, which was said to have occurred during their novice's early boyhood. It was even more significant than the first.

One day, when Fernando was on his way to the Cathedral, he met a girl who carried on her head a huge jug, called by the Portuguese an amphora. The amphora was filled with water.

As the girl approached Fernando, the amphora slipped and crashed to the ground, where it was broken into many pieces.

The girl was a servingmaid in a Lisbon family. Frightened and alarmed by the accident to the jug, she began to cry.

"I know my mistress will punish me for this!" she told Fernando, who had stopped to sympathize with her.

"Don't cry!" he begged her. "We will fix the amphora!"

To her amazement, the girl saw him, after he had said a brief prayer, take up the broken pieces and put them together, restoring the amphora exactly as it had been before the accident.

Fernando attended a school for boys conducted by the Bishop. It was located close to the Cathedral. The sons of noblemen were educated in this school, and although Fernando was not of noble family, his parents and forebears were respected for their Christian culture and integrity.

Fernando was a favorite in this school, and Donna Teresa was very proud of his role of acolyte.

Fernando often remained behind in the church after his young companions had left, in order to visit the Blessed Sacrament. In his scarlet cassock and fluted surplice, modeled on the vesture worn by the Canons at the altar, he was quite content to be alone with his Lord.

One evening, as he was paying his usual late visit, a strong wind came suddenly blowing through the church. As Fernando looked toward the altar, he saw that a dense black cloud was settling over it and over the entire sanctuary. It cast weird shadows all about.

Shivering with fear, Fernando watched as a sinister figure, the evil spirit, appeared in the blackness. One could not mistake the flaming garments, the horns on the head, and the hideous grimaces.

The boy remained fixed to the spot where he knelt. He could not rise and run away, if he would. Then he re-

called something . . . the power of the Cross to dispel the bad spirit. . . .

Bending down, he traced a Sign of the Cross on the stones in the sanctuary floor.

At that instant the hideous monster, uttering a terrible cry, disappeared in the blackness.

The sanctuary regained its former appearance, and all was quiet once more.

Fernando went calmly home. He said nothing about the occurrence in the church until, with his companion acolytes, he was questioned by the Canons on the following morning.

Upon approaching the high altar to say Mass, each in turn had seen the Cross, imprinted in the sanctuary floor, as if carved into the stone.

Fernando was as truthful as well as an obedient boy.

He told the Canons what had occurred on the previous evening.

They said nothing further to him. But to one another they remarked: "God has great things in store for this boy!"

No one was surprised when Fernando, at the age of fifteen, announced his intention of entering the Congregation of Canons Regular, provided he should be accepted.

The Prior of St. Vincent made no difficulty about the matter. He gladly granted the petition.

Fernando remained for two years in the Lisbon Monastery. His novice master found him to be deeply in love with his Community life, and a good student. The new novice was cheerful, modest, obedient, and prayerful. His superiors were well satisfied with him.

At the close of the novitiate period, Fernando made his first vows and received the full insignia of the Congregation.

Now he was free to receive his friends, many of whom

came to visit him on the days when such visits were permitted. Not a few of them tried to induce him to return to the world, alleging that his talents and disposition fitted him for a high position in one of the professions.

Fernando had no desire to return to the world, nor any regret for having left it. The unwelcome interruptions caused by these visits troubled him and distracted his mind from his studies.

After thinking the matter over and asking light from the Holy Spirit on his problem, he begged his superiors to transfer him to the Monastery at Coimbra, where he would be free from this embarrassment.

The superiors recognized the wisdom of the request. They granted the permission for the transfer.

So, Fernando left St. Vincent and went to the Monastery of Santa Cruz, at Coimbra.

Coimbra was at this time the capital of Portugal. It was situated on the north bank of the Mondego River, amidst rich orange groves and gardens. The steep approach to the town was through an arched gateway.

The Coimbra Monastery of the Canons Regular occupied a site known as the Banhos d'el Rei, or Baths of the King. This religious house had been founded in 1130, by Don Telo, Archdeacon of the Cathedral. The Monastery Church adjacent to it owed its foundation to the generosity of royal families.

During its first two decades of existence, the Monastery of Santa Cruz had been ruled by St. Testonio who, as Abbot, had gained a widespread reputation for holiness and learning. His successors in the office had proved equally worthy of their charge.

When Fernando de Buglioni came to Santa Cruz, however, it was a Priory.

From the Cloister of Silence the monks could look down into the Monastery gardens, with their wealth of



rare and lovely flowers, and the fountain, with its ornate catch basin, where many species of birds came to bathe.

Don Fernando often paced this cloister, reciting the divine office or meditating upon the Gospel maxims, sometimes lifting his eyes to look over the stately poplars to the great world beyond. He believed that his mission to that world was to be largely prayer. He did not dream how much a part of it God willed him to be.

At Santa Cruz, as at St. Vincent, Fernando well satisfied his superiors, who admired his exactitude and cheerful spirit, as well as his practical piety. As day followed day, they realized still better what a treasure they had received into their midst.

As at St. Vincent, here at Santa Cruz Fernando acquired a reputation for an extraordinary closeness to the supernatural.

One morning, shortly after his arrival at the Monastery, the young Canon was working in the cloister gardens. Mass was being celebrated in the Priory Church just then, and he would have wished to be there, had not duty assigned him elsewhere.

He dug down into the rich warm soil, opening a ditch in which the water might run, as he had been ordered to do. Now and then he rested his eyes on the gray stones of the Church.

He could hear the voices of his brethren, stealing in rich cadences across the flowers. In his heart, he sang with them.

"Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus!"

Fernando united his intentions to those of the celebrant and the congregation, praying for all near and dear to him, and asking a blessing on his future career.

Then sounded the warning bell, telling that the Consecration was about to take place.

Don Fernando dropped his spade, and, kneeling on

the turf, bowed his head in solemn recognition of the great Act about to be consummated on the altar.

At the second invitation of the bell, he looked up. At that instant, the stones in the wall of the Church opened. . . .

Fernando saw the celebrant, as he lifted high above his head the small white Disc that held the Treasure of heaven and earth, of time and eternity, Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world.

The Consecration was over. The stones in the wall assumed their former appearance. Fernando, his heart almost stifled with joy and gratitude for the sublime favor granted him, returned to his work in the ditch. He dug diligently until his task was finished. Then he went to find his superiors, and acquainted them with what had occurred.

There was little to be said when he had told all. But there was much to be recognized and remembered by the men of God who had this favored young religious in their charge.

Tranquil days succeeded one another for Don Fernando de Buglioni. He was completely at peace in his life of consecration. When the day's program of spiritual exercises, study, and manual labor was ended, he often returned to walk in the Cloister of Silence.

He was happy to be communing with nature in this solitary and tranquil spot, recognizing the handiwork of the Master Craftsman in each wonder of the material universe.

It was pleasant to look down upon the orange groves, and upon the aged cedars that stood like statues, save when some vagrant breeze stirred their small scale-like leaves. Then the whole valley was flooded with fragrance.

Every Augustinian monastery had its special constitu-

tions. These specified and prescribed the obligations of the Community. The religious of Santa Cruz Monastery were pledged to dedicate themselves to the service of God, ministering to their fellow creatures in that manner allowed by their Rule.

The young Don Fernando de Buglioni took his turn serving the sick in the Priory Infirmary. There occurred an incident which left the Prior and his Council plunged in wonderment and edification anew, since it increased their realization that Fernando was endowed with supernatural powers.

A member of the Community, scarcely more than a boy, weak in health and prone to discouragement, was proving a strong trial to himself and to those about him. This boy was tormented by a strange delirium, which neither prayers nor medicinal remedies had been able to cure.

Fernando noticed the boy's condition. Recalling the startling episode which had occurred in his own boyhood, when a demon had appeared before him, he believed that the infernal spirit was torturing the young religious.

One day, when he was alone with the sufferer, Fernando removed his religious cloak from his shoulders, and placed it upon the boy.

Scarcely had he done this when the terrors began to fade from the boy's mind. However, he was seized with violent convulsions, and for several minutes he rolled on the floor in a frenzy. Meanwhile, the Infirmary, where this was taking place, was shaken as if by an earthquake, while a cloud of evil-smelling smoke filled it for a few moments. Then it floated away, leaving the atmosphere clear and fresh as before.

The boy became quiet. His face brightened, and his tone was cheerful as he spoke.

"Some dreadful evil has gone out from me!" he said to Fernando. When he attempted to thank the young Canon for his deliverance, Fernando bade him thank God for it.

After ordination, Don Fernando de Buglioni was assigned to an office in which he would have a unique opportunity to radiate the peace and joy of his spirit to many others.

The Prior appointed the young priest Guest Master of the Priory.

Fernando's new duties obligated him to meet and deal with all the guests who visited Santa Cruz, either to consult the Canons or to make a spiritual retreat.

The Prior knew that his young subject was not only patient and kind, but that he possessed a rare gift for discerning spirits.

Many mendicants came to the Monastery gates to beg alms and food, and sometimes lodging, until they could make other provision.

It was necessary to judge the character of these "guests" accurately, and to winnow the chaff from the wheat.

The Canons were unwilling to be imposed upon by vagrants who were unwilling to help themselves, while, on the other hand, they did not wish anyone to depart unaided from the Monastery who truly deserved consideration.

Also—and the Prior was not unmindful of this fact—as Guest Master, the young Don Fernando would reflect great credit upon his Congregation and upon the Monastery. All who met and dealt with him must carry away with them the impression of a saintly and cultured religious, whose virtues and talents were reflected in his pure open face as in an image cast by a mirror.

Don Fernando de Buglioni no longer dug in the Monastery gardens, coaxing the flowers from their hiding

places, pruning the shrubs and hedges, feeding the birds whose music replaced the notes of the great organ when they died away and when the monks were gone from their stalls to other duties.

Instead, the young priest was privileged to hold in his strong sunburned hands the Pearl of the Immaculate Host, as, in earlier days, he had so often watched others hold It.

Fernando continued to be very happy at Santa Cruz. And if, at times, his thoughts returned to the hill city of his birth, and he saw again the faces of loved ones; saw the great winged ships lying at anchor in the Tagus, and the gaily dressed peasants in the cobbled streets, it was with no shadow of regret that he would never again be a part of them.

Don Fernando de Buglioni believed that he was as contented as mortal man could be. He was quite unaware that even greater contentment, an even wider sphere of consecrated service, lay just ahead. His role of Guest Master of Santa Cruz was to be the portal admitting him to this service.

Opportunity came one evening as Fernando was pacing the corridors of the Cloister of Silence, his mind at peace in the thought of the Christ of his choosing, his hands busy with his beads beneath his woolen tunic.

Opportunity came, toiling up the hill on which the Monastery was situated, past the gently waving cedar branches and the hedgerows blushing with crimson bells. It came in strangely unfamiliar guise.

Five figures, dressed in a garb unfamiliar to the young Canon, came up the hill. Five men, clothed in rough gray robes, their hips girded with white cords, their heads covered with a rough hood, peaked in the center.

The evening was warm and the ascent rude and toilsome.

But—the strangers did not seem to mind that.

They walked like schoolboys, bound on a thrilling adventure.

They were, Fernando decided, religious of some Order, although he did not know any Order whose members dressed so.

A strange sweet emotion stirred in the heart of the young priest.

As yet he did not know that this was the Opportunity his Christ was sending him . . .

He turned from the Cloister of Silence, and went toward the Monastery gates, to welcome the strangers.

## II

---

### *The Coming of the Protomartyrs*

**B**EFORE the Guest Master of Santa Cruz could reach the great oaken doors of the Monastery, the bell in the outer courtyard rang. The five strange men had arrived and were seeking admittance.

As Don Fernando de Buglioni welcomed them to God's house, he noted that their robes were stained with dust and mud. Apparently, they had traveled a long distance, and on foot. All carried pilgrims' staves, but neither pouch nor provisions.

The poor travelers appeared to be very tired, and very hungry, too. Yet their manner was blithe and courteous. As Don Fernando greeted them with true Augustinian cordiality, he had reason to think them nourished by an interior grace. This much was reflected in their wan, bearded faces.

"We are seeking hospitality for the love of God," the spokesman for the group announced, bowing low to the young Canon. "We bear letters recommending us to the charity of the holy men who dwell in this house. We come from Italy, and we are here in Portugal for the purpose of embarking for Morocco. Our aim is to convert the Saracens to Christ. We hope, if God so wills, to win among those infidels the palm of martyrdom."

The stranger made known this ambition as a man might express the hope for a pleasant journey into a land of delights.

Don Fernando was deeply impressed by the avowal. The Apostles had set the example for other missionaries of Christ by going forth in the face of certain danger, to preach Christ fearlessly. Since that faraway day, courageous souls had aspired to the shedding of their blood for Him. And now here were five unknown pilgrims also coveting this heroic role.

Don Fernando ushered the wayfarers within and, after refreshment had been given them and they had somewhat removed the marks of their pilgrimage, seated in the Chapter Room of the Monastery, they told their story to the monks of Santa Cruz.

On the journey from Italy, they had met with harsh treatment from persons of all types, and in all the places through which they passed. Insults were hurled after them as they went their way in peace, aided by their staves, the sunshine of interior joy shining in their faces.

Often, their lips dry and their throats parched from thirst, they had sought some mountain or meadow stream, or a haystack in some field which might serve as couch during the night. Their rough hoods had served as poor protection from the withering suns and the pelting rains.

Often they had begged at doors, generally to be driven off with imprecations and curses. Occasionally, some charitable soul had given them a part of a loaf of dry bread, and this they soaked in brook water to make it palatable. Yet, despite these multiple miseries, the five little men were like happy-hearted children as they told their story to the Community of Santa Cruz.

Now and then the Prior of Santa Cruz withdrew his eyes from the fascinating strangers, to observe the effect of their presence and words upon his spiritual sons.



Their influence was like a sudden wind, blowing strong and free through the Chapter Room, bearing with it the exotic scents of many lands, the chants of all feathered creatures, the tinkling of silver waters, and the carefree laughter of God's littlest children at play.

Breathlessly, the Prior and the other members of the Community waited to be told the source of this exquisite gaiety, which seemed to savor more of heaven than of earth.

They had not long to wait.

Pressed to tell about their origin and plans, one of the strangers rose and began to speak. But, not in the usual manner. Rather, in a kind of chant, half spoken, half sung, low, modest, vibrant with feeling.

"We are sons of the holy Francis of Assisi," the little man, whose name was Berardo, said.

"Our Seraphic Father himself gave us our title—we are Friars Minor, Little Brothers, servants of Christ, who seek to do His Will.

"Our Founder is the son of Pietro Bernardone and Madonna Pica, of Assisi.

"Not so long ago, our Father Francis was a jovial cavalier. He led in sports and was intent upon following the pleasures of the times.

"One day, as he was reciting his prayers before a crucifix in the crumbling chapel of San Damiano, he was granted a vision of his Lord. The Divine Saviour told him to restore His house, which was falling into ruins.

"Our Father Francis accepted the commission. He gave away all his goods to the poor, and started in to serve God alone.

"Francis' father, a hard and worldly man, sternly disapproved of his son's new manner of life. He had Francis called before the city magistrates for judgment, and before the bishop of the place.

"But, Francis was not to be deterred from his chosen path. He sold his fine garments, and, clad in a mean robe, took as his mystical bride her whom he loves to call the Lady Poverty.

"As Herald of the Great King, a religious pilgrim, Francis tramped through the mountains of Subasio, through the Umbrian plains and valleys, and other parts of Italy. Everywhere he went, he spoke to men in burning words of the love of Christ for their souls, and urged them to turn to Him.

"Of course, our Founder was regarded as a buffoon and by many despised for his poverty and way of life. But, now and then, some true soul was won to join him in his quest for peace and joy through abnegation. Soon, a little group of us had started in to follow the way of Christian perfection, under Francis' guidance.

"We are vowed to complete poverty. Therefore, we carry neither funds nor provisions when we travel abroad. Our ambition is to preach more by example than by speech. We hope to do this among the Saracens, and, as I said, to give our lives for their conversion."

Continuing his thrilling narration, Berardo told his audience how Francis of Assisi, in the hope of winning martyrdom, had set out for the Orient; how a storm had thrust the ship on which he sailed on to the Dalmatian coast. How, forced to abandon his heart's desire, he went to Spain, eager to proceed thence to Morocco, and there preach Christ to the unbelievers.

"He got no farther than Burgos," Berardo went on, "for there sickness overtook him. Doubtless, his severe penances, together with the hardships of his journeyings, brought this on.

"When he became ill, he returned to his native land, of necessity. But, not to remain there for long. At this very time, our Seraphic Father has voyaged to Egypt, in the

hope of penetrating to the Holy Land, where he would visit the sacred shrines of Our Lord.

"To us, his sons, although so unworthy, our Founder has entrusted this expedition to Morocco, there to do what he himself wished to do, and would have done, had God willed it so."

Brother Berardo told his rapt audience about the young and lovely Sister Clara Scifi, who, on the night of Easter, 1212, seven years before this time, had secretly met Francis and his brethren in the little sanctuary of St. Mary of the Angels. There, before the altar of the Holy Virgin, Francis had shorn off her luxuriant hair and given into her keeping the tunic and cord of the Lady Poverty, covering her head with the veil of a spouse of Christ. Then he had led her to San Damiano, where she was to live, close to the chapel which he had restored with his own hands, and to the miraculous crucifix which had spoken to him.

There, Clara had received other maidens, eager, like her, to lead an angelic life, divided between prayer and penitential exercises.

The magnetic influence which Francis of Assisi so evidently exercised over his followers was manifest to the monks of Santa Cruz, when Berardo spoke of the Patriarch of Assisi.

"Our Holy Father is a true cavalier of the Round Table," he asserted. "It is impossible to meet him and not love and revere him."

The singsong narrative flowed on, while throughout the Chapter Room a deep silence reigned.

All five Friars Minor who were enjoying the hospitality of the Monastery of Santa Cruz were Italians. Some had come from Umbria, others from Tuscany. They were Brothers Berardo, Ottone, Pietro, Adiuto, and Accursio. Of the group, only Brother Ottone was a priest.

At the outset of their journey to Portugal, Brother Vitalis, whom Francis had named superior of the band, had been with them. But, at Aragon he had fallen ill, and was obliged to stay behind. All five friars were hardy, strong-souled men.

Near the close of his account, Berardo spoke of the final scene of the parting from Francis, as the latter sent his loyal sons forth to spiritual combat and probable death for Christ.

"My sons," Francis had said to them, "God has commanded me to send you on this journey, that you may preach and confess the Faith among the Saracens, and overcome the doctrines of Mahomet. It was my wish to go there myself. But, such was not God's Will. Make ready, then, beloved sons, to fulfill the Will of the Lord."

The little mission band had then knelt before Francis, their arms folded on their breasts and their hoods drawn over their heads in token of obedience to their Superior.

With sublime faith and courage, all had vowed together:

"We are ready to obey you in all things, good Father!"

As he received this steadfast declaration, Francis' eyes had filled with tears. This was the spirit he yearned to find in his young Order.

With the utmost sweetness, he had counseled the departing missionaries on the virtues most necessary for the success of their enterprise. Quoting the Psalmist, that he might encourage them to fortitude, he said to them: "'Cast your care upon the Lord,' my children, 'and He will sustain you.'"

The six friars—for Brother Vitalis was then with them—bowed their heads as their Founder, his beautiful eyes raised to heaven, blessed them:

"May the blessing of God the Father descend upon you

as it descended upon the Apostles. He will fortify you, console you and guide you in your tribulations. Have no fear, because the Lord is with you and will fight strongly for you.

"May the Lord show you His countenance; may He bless you and give you peace!"

With this touching souvenir of Francis of Assisi, Brother Berardo sat down, after humbly inclining toward the Prior. The Prior, however, was looking elsewhere just then. Scrutinizing the faces of his sons, he paused at one face in particular. This was the face of Don Fernando de Buglioni.

It was evident that the young priest had been deeply affected by the extraordinary story of Brother Berardo.

Fernando's deep expressive eyes were fixed on the little gray-robed Brother. Each time the Prior had looked at Fernando, the attitude of his spiritual son had been the same. Fernando seemed to be transfixed in his place, his thoughts far removed from the things he had hitherto known and of which he had been a part.

With a start, the Prior, an enlightened superior, realized that this highly gifted young religious had fallen in love with the ideals and manner of life proposed to his followers by Francis of Assisi, God's Troubadour. What would come of this unlooked-for visit of the Friars Minor?

No little disturbed in mind, the Prior dismissed the company with a blessing, and all repaired to the chapel for night prayers.

As he lay down on his bed to take the repose needed for another day of duty, Don Fernando de Buglioni found that he could not sleep.

In vain he tried to compose his thoughts. He addressed loving words to Jesus and Mary, and he counted his beads over in the hope of losing consciousness.

He could not.

Clad in a veil of silver, the moon looked in at the Monastery windows.

Fernando knew that in the silent valley below the Mondego was humming its love tune to its Creator. The cedar branches swished gently against the great stone arches of the Cloister of Silence.

In the Monastery gardens all was quiet. The fountain had ceased to make its music, shut off by one of the monks at the hour of sunset. All the birds slept in their nests, and the patter of leathern sandals along the corridors of the house had long since died away.

The very silence seemed pregnant with meaning.

Fernando watched the soft clouds scudding across the face of the moon, and thought of the ecstatic look on the face of Brother Berardo . . . Brother Berardo, in his dingy gray robe and rough peaked hood; Brother Berardo, with his pointed olive-tinted face and soft musical chant . . . to whom it had been given to see visions of holiness afar and to start bravely off in search of them.

On the following morning, after the High Mass, the five little Brothers would leave the Monastery and take passage to the land of mystery and lurking perils, land of the deluded followers of the Prophet Mahomet—Morocco, Land of the Farthest Sun.

As, in fancy, Fernando traveled with them, sleep crept over his eyelids, and all visions were blotted out.

Morning came, and Fernando said his Mass as if in a rapture, looking, as the Community remarked, more like angel than man. Afterward, he served as Deacon at the High Mass, sung by the Prior.

The five gray Brothers were there. They received Communion most devoutly. Fernando, passing along the altar rail beside the Prior, and holding the gold paten beneath their chins, allowed his eyes to rest upon their quiet faces.

He recognized them as his brothers in Christ and almost envied them their glorious vocation.

Her Majesty, the Queen of Portugal, received the Friars Minor later that day. When she insisted that they remain at Court for a few days, they could not well refuse to honor the request. Meanwhile, the Queen, with the help of her ladies, gathered and prepared the supplies needed for the journey.

Her Majesty asked, as a personal favor, in return for her bounty, a most extraordinary thing. She begged the Brothers to tell her precisely when God was to call her from life.

She was forced to plead long for an answer before Berardo was prepared to speak, for himself and his companions.

Then, inspired by God, he told her what she wished to know.

Then he said: "We go to martyrdom! This is what we desire, and it is God's Will!"

The five little Brothers left Portugal with the good wishes and blessing of all upon their sacred enterprise.

Don Fernando de Buglioni continued to fulfill his duties at Santa Cruz as before. He acted as Guest Master of the Monastery, while studying Church History, Apologetics, Theology, Controversy, and the Fathers of the Church.

His favorite study was the Sacred Scriptures. So well did the Canons know that his was a naturally brilliant mind, as well as a fervent soul, that frequently the most experienced among them consulted him on points of doctrine.

So passed the summer of 1219, and the memory of the five friars missioned to Morocco remained alive in the hearts of all the Augustinians. One, in particular, remembered them with longing and desire.

Don Fernando de Buglioni heard of them shortly. And he rejoiced over the tidings. Because, at last, they had won the palm so ardently desired—martyrdom for Christ.

The relics of the little Brothers were returned to Portugal. So Berardo, Ottone, Pietro, Adiuto, and Accursio again sought the hospitality of the Monastery of Santa Cruz. But now their tattered gray robes shrouded mutilated bodies, still in the repose of death.

They returned, Protomartyrs of the Order of Friars Minor, having achieved their cherished ambition in the land of the Mussulmen, after cheerfully enduring the most horrible tortures at the hands of the infuriated infidels.

Theirs was a tale of indomitable courage and fortitude, of supreme faith and zeal for God's honor and glory, intelligible only to those who could properly evaluate the sacrifice of men who make themselves fools for Christ.



### III

---

#### *The Blade of a Scimitar*

**T**HE Five Little Poor Men had proceeded from Portugal to Seville, in Spain, then a Mussulman city, capital of the Moorish kings.

The sons of Francis of Assisi were received in the house of a wealthy Christian merchant of the place. They remained there for a week, engaged in prayer and penances for the success of their mission.

Their Christian hosts thought it well that the friars should dress themselves in secular clothing. Otherwise, they might be exiled from the city at the very outset of their visit.

At first, the missionaries conformed to this suggestion. But soon they realized that the merchant and his family were not in sympathy with their plans, which those good people rightly adjudged to be very dangerous; and the Brothers again put on their cherished gray robes, and went boldly out into the streets.

They trudged along until they came to a mosque. At the moment, the devotees of Mahomet were inside, carrying on their religious exercises.

In the wake of the fearless Berardo, the Brothers marched straight into the mosque.

The Mohammedans, astonished and displeased at the intrusion of the oddly clad foreigners, stopped short in their devotions and waited in stunned silence for what was to happen.

What happened was that all five friars proceeded into the center of the mosque, and began, simultaneously, to preach the Gospel.

After a few moments of this extraordinary display, the Mussulmen came to themselves.

They were not angry with men whom they judged to be idiots, but they could not permit them to remain and preach a foreign doctrine.

After hurried consultation, they took the friars by the hoods and conducted them outside, with a word of expostulation. Surely, they thought, the "fools" would betake themselves elsewhere, and leave Mahomet's disciples to their much-prized peace.

However, the Little Brothers refused to desist from their apostolic efforts.

They went directly off to a second mosque, more imposing than the first.

Here, likewise, they overwhelmed the worshipers with surprise and displeasure. They were hustled outside the edifice, and the door was barred against their possible return.

Nothing daunted, Berardo suggested: "Let us go to the Mohammedan ruler, and preach our doctrine to him!" His companions were in full accord with this idea, and all five proceeded to the house of the potentate. Ushered into his presence by befuddled servants, they calmly announced themselves as "Ambassadors of the King of Kings."

The Moorish sovereign was even more astounded by this audacity than his subjects had been.

He summarily ordered that the little men be thrown out of the palace, and their heads removed at once.

The sentence of death was not carried out, because the ruler's son interceded for the condemned men. The king was devoted to his son, and he readily granted his plea.

After pondering long on what to do with such disturbing visitors as the friars, the king had the five imprisoned in a tower situated on the banks of the Guadalquiver River.

There would be no more preaching of the Christian Gospel in his realm—so the king thought.

He was quite wrong in his surmise.

There was more.

After taking note of their surroundings, Berardo and his companions ascended to the top of the tower. They then climbed out on the narrow balcony where; five times each day, the muezzin issued the summons to prayer. From this lofty vantage they called down to all who passed below, proclaiming that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the only Saviour of man, and that the religion of Mahomet was false and vicious.

"These men are not dangerous. They are merely lunatics!" the king exclaimed, when he learned of their latest escapade. "Shut them up in one of the prisons and let them meditate on their misdeeds!"

The friars were thrown into a miserable dungeon and left there to "meditate." Their meditations were not, however, in keeping with the king's ideas. Far from regretting their activities in the realm of the Prophet Mahomet, they planned how further to promote their missionary project.

Meanwhile, the king's advisers conferred with him in relation to the five "lunatics." These counselors gave it as their opinion that it was advisable to release the

friars, and send them out of the kingdom. They could be ordered off to Morocco, for instance, together with the other Christians of the city. Doubtless, by the time they reached there, they would be ready to rest their limbs, and their tongues, as well.

So the council advised, and the king deemed the plan excellent.

However, he was not dealing with lunatics, as he thought. Rather, with fearless apostles of Christ, ambitious men, but having ambitions vastly different from those that ate into the soul of the Mohammedan ruler.

The little gray men aspired to the supreme award which only God could give them—martyrdom. They yearned to shed their blood in the Mohammedan stronghold, that it might become the seed of countless Christian converts throughout the ages to come.

The five friars were released, conducted out of Seville, and set on their way toward Morocco.

After a distressing voyage, in which they endured all manner of hardships, they reached their destination, the city of Morocco, situated in the country of that name, on the northwest shore of Africa.

They were prepared to meet new trials, in exchange for their opportunity of preaching the Gospel—if, indeed, their mouths were not shut summarily by order of the Mohammedan chiefs.

Instead, they met with a royal welcome, extended to them by the Infante, Don Pedro, brother of Alfonso, King of Portugal.

Don Pedro had sought and found a haven in Morocco after enduring family difficulties at home. He enjoyed high favor with the Sultan, Abu-Jacob.

Abu-Jacob knew Don Pedro to be a courageous man. Even though the Infante was a Christian, the infidel

ruler made him commander-in-chief of the Mussulman army.

Don Pedro welcomed the Brothers with reverence and cordiality. His respect for them was increased when he observed how worn they were, and what little flesh hung upon their bodies.

"You may be assured of my protection," he assured them. "Only, I strongly recommend that you exercise extreme prudence in this kingdom. Otherwise, you will expose yourselves to renewed persecution, and you will even be in danger of death."

Death was definitely what the friars desired. However, they did not reveal their thoughts to Don Pedro. Speaking for all the band, Berardo promised: "We will follow your advice, and we are grateful for it."

The little gray men did intend to follow it. But, after spending an entire day in prayer and counsel together in the hospital where they were lodged, they agreed that their promise ought not be kept, because, they said, "to do that would be to act contrary to God's Will."

They went out into the streets and began to preach once more. Berardo took the lead as always, because not only was he their superior, but he was more familiar with the Moorish tongue than were his companions.

He mounted an empty cart he found standing in the market place. From this rostrum he could be readily seen and heard by the populace.

In a few moments the Mussulmen had crowded about the cart. A few Christians also drew near it; they were happy to find that missionaries of their Faith were present in the city.

But Berardo had not reckoned on the presence of one member of the motley assemblage. That one was the Sultan, Abu-Jacob, who happened to be passing in that

vicinity, on his way to visit the tombs of his ancestors.

No one in the crowd was disturbed when the ruler drew near the cart. Abu-Jacob was reputed to be a peaceable man. He forebore to persecute those who believed differently from himself, at least as long as they did not disobey his rulings. A man simple in his tastes, he devoted much of his time to the care of his fine herd of cattle.

Abu-Jacob had not forgotten that his father, Mohammed el Nasir, had been defeated in battle at Tolosa several years previously. This was one of the reasons why he had befriended the Christian prince, Don Pedro, and by so doing, honored the request of the Pope, Honorius III, who had asked that the Infante be treated with due respect and not molested in any way.

However, the presence of a Christian preacher, one who seemed to Abu-Jacob to be fanatical as well as diligent, in his stronghold stirred the tiny flame of resentment against "foreigners" anew.

Abu-Jacob had no intention of demeaning himself by speaking directly to the fervent Berardo, who was preaching in a loud voice, flinging his arms about in his effort to emphasize his points, his face flushed with zeal and enthusiasm for his cause. Berardo was aware that many Mohammedans stood about his pulpit, and he was anxious to take full advantage of his opportunity.

In the midst of a glowing summation of the tenets of Christianity, the apostle found himself jerked from his post and hustled away through the crowd.

Abu-Jacob sent a messenger to Don Pedro, to tell him of the occurrence. The ruler believed that Berardo's preaching was detrimental to his own religion, as well as a personal insult to himself. He told the prince that he would be satisfied to order the friars back to their homeland, after informing them that their presence was not desired in the kingdom.

Don Pedro was greatly disturbed over this message. He felt that Berardo had incurred the sentence of exile for the little band because of what the prince believed to be an act of indiscretion.

The prince took charge of the friars, and sent a guard to conduct them to a safe port at Ceuta. From there they could sail for Europe.

Brother Berardo followed his guide for some distance, with the other friars beside him. But, as soon as an opportunity of escaping from the escort presented itself, all slipped away and secretly returned to Morocco.

Scarcely had they entered the city when they were apprehended and imprisoned. At the same time, a series of public catastrophes began to occur, following one another in rapid succession.

The Christians of the place, and even some of the infidels, declared that these things came about as a result of the bad treatment of the friars.

Don Pedro, with the consent of Abu-Jacob, although now seriously embarrassed by his friar friends, enrolled them in a company he was about to lead against some rebellious elements in the kingdom. The friars were appointed to act as chaplains to the army.

The expedition was attended by serious discomforts to the leaders and the troops. Their cause was victorious, however, and they had set out on the return journey when Don Pedro suddenly realized that he had forgotten something absolutely essential to the well-being of all. This was the fact that the water supply was exhausted, and there would be little or none available for many days of the march.

As the prince had feared, no oases appeared as the company proceeded. Before long, all began to suffer from thirst. Don Pedro was in despair. But not so the friars. Brother Berardo began to pray, asking God for help.

When he had finished his prayer, he struck the soil three times with his staff.

To the amazement and joy of all the company, a spring of pure clear water spurted up.

The prince and his followers joined with the friars in thanking God for their miraculous deliverance from death by thirst. All the men drank as much as they wished, then they allowed the horses to drink. The leathern gourds were filled with the miraculous water, and all started on the way home.

So grateful were the soldiers for their deliverance that some insisted upon venerating the feet of the humble Brother Berardo. Even some of the Mussulmen joined in this act, to the friar's great confusion. He was happy, not only for having spared all the company further suffering and probable death, but most of all for having turned their thoughts to their Divine Deliverer. He wished no honor for himself.

The friars and soldiers re-entered Morocco. Immediately, Berardo confided to the others that now they must begin anew to preach the Gospel. It was even decided to seek an audience with Abu-Jacob and point out to him the falsity of his religion, showing him the true religion.

Abu-Jacob was weary of the friars, but he granted the audience.

When he had heard what Berardo had to say, in the name of all the band, he was incensed over the friar's daring.

"Take charge of these men, and dispatch them by the scimitar!" he ordered an officer of the court.

Abu-Jacob believed this to be the last resort in his difficulty. It seemed that the friars were perpetually under his feet, and they were likely to remain there to annoy him unless an end was made of them.

The officer, named Alboazaida, who received the order



of death, had been with those who witnessed the miracle in the desert. He could not bring himself to carry out the cruel assignment.

"Stop your preaching!" he implored the friars. "I am your friend, and I know that I cannot disobey our ruler without suffering the consequences of my act. And—the Mohammedan people don't want this doctrine of yours!"

Brother Ottone, the priest in the band, answered the man. He explained that it was the duty of himself and his companions to declare the true religion, and to do their best to win converts to it. Several times, during his defense, he said:

"We cannot do what you ask. We cannot stop preaching Our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Alboazaida saw that he had wasted his efforts on these extraordinary beings. All that was left to him to do—if he himself was not to fall into danger—was to hand over the friars to the executioner.

The latter bound Brother Berardo and the others with stout cords and dragged them through the streets in this fashion. Along the way, the Mussulmen vented their spleen upon them. Afterward, they were laid upon beds of splintered glass, and rolled over them until their flesh was cruelly scratched and torn. They were then whipped until their flesh hung off in places, leaving the bones exposed. When the guards had finished this work, they rubbed vinegar and salt into the raw wounds.

The martyrs of Christ suffered excruciating torments, for they were men. Yet without regret. They encouraged one another to final perseverance, and Ottone heard the confessions of the others, then made his own directly to God.

During the night, while the martyrs were caring for their wounds in their prison and praying together, the guards outside observed a brilliant light shining above it.

Hurrying to Abu-Jacob, they told him about the phenomenon.

"I will go myself and talk with these lunatics!" the ruler announced.

Abu-Jacob went to the prison. He spoke to the suffering friars in stern tones—with a faint last hope that they might accede to his wishes.

"Are you the foolish men who have dishonored our laws and our religion, and insulted God's Prophet, Mahomet?" he demanded.

One of the band answered for all.

"We have not dishonored the true Faith, because the religion of Mahomet is not true. We have not dishonored it, but defended and preached it, and we only regret that we are not permitted to explain its truth and beauty to all your people."

Abu-Jacob felt a little foolish to find himself pleading with his prisoners. He replied: "You make me a very uncomfortable man. But I will give you another chance to save yourselves.

"Accept our religion, and I will give you as wives the most beautiful of my women. I will also load you with riches and honors, and you shall stay here as long as you wish, praised and beloved by all."

The spokesman for the friars rejected this offer, to the ruler's amazement. "Prince," he told him, "we want no women or riches or honors. We freely cast them aside for the love of Christ."

At this hardy answer, Abu-Jacob's patience took flight. With fury in his face and voice, he cried:

"Very well! I know how to subdue you! You shall taste the point of my sword in return for your foolishness and audacity!"

The friar answered: "Do what you will with us. Our

bodies are in your power, but you cannot touch our souls. They belong to God!"

Abu-Jacob, angry and disappointed, called one of his officers, and told him to bring a scimitar.

When this was done the ruler approached the friars, and struck off the head of each, in turn.

"So much for your God, and you!" he said, and turning on his heel, left the scene.

The murderous deed was accomplished on the sixteenth day of January, in the year 1220.

## IV

---

### *The Home-coming of the Protomartyrs*

**T**HE Community at Santa Cruz Monastery, Coimbra, were filled with edification and admiration when the story of the martyred Friars Minor reached Portugal.

Of all the Community, none was so deeply moved as Don Fernando de Buglioni. The memory of the Little Poor Men had remained alive in his generous heart. He rejoiced that the bitter test of their fidelity was over, and that they were enjoying the reward of their tragic holocaust. Daily, he prayed to them to obtain for him some share of their heritage of zeal and love of God.

All Coimbra knew that the bodies of the Martyrs were on their way back to Portugal, whence the missionaries had set out from the little Franciscan monastery of Alenquer to meet Sister Death, as Francis of Assisi loved to call the angel who conducted the disembodied soul from this life into eternity.

After their execution, the Mussulmen had profaned the relics of the five friars in every possible way. However, rumor had it that miracles occurring at that time had attested to the sanctity of the dead friars, while those who had committed the sacrileges had met with dire calamities in payment for their evil deeds.

The Christian prince, Don Pedro, had eventually succeeded in obtaining possession of the mutilated bodies, with the aid of some of his followers. He had concealed

## HOME-COMING OF THE PROTOMARTYRS 47

them in a secret place, until he had finally won the permission of Abu-Jacob to have them returned to Portugal.

Don Pedro wished that it were possible for him to accompany the relics on their journey. But his unfortunate quarrel with his family made this inadvisable. After honoring them, he entrusted them to a gentleman of his court. They were transported safely to Seville, thence to Castile, and to Galicia. Lisbon was the first city of Portugal to receive them.

The precious remains of the dauntless Berardo, Otono, Pietro, Adiuto, and Accursio, enclosed in a silver casket, were carried through the streets of Lisbon, receiving the homage of the people on their triumphal way.

The King, Alfonso II, and his Queen, Urraca, with the clergy and the royal court, reviewed the solemn cortege, in which the casket was escorted by twenty-eight Cavaliers of the Cross. Through a lane formed by the gray-robed sons of Francis of Assisi it wound, while the entire city kept festival in honor of the Martyrs.

The casket was borne on the back of a mule. King Alfonso had ordered that it should be taken to the Cathedral and left there for a time, for the veneration of the faithful.

But the mule refused to proceed in the direction of the Cathedral. Instead, it insisted upon following the route leading to the Monastery of Santa Cruz.

Since no amount of coaxing, threatening, or switching could alter the mule's attitude, the officials in charge allowed it to proceed as it would. It went on until it reached the Monastery Church. Before the great doors, it stopped.

The king was a devout man. He believed that this singular incident was the expression of God's Will.

He ordered that the doors of the church be thrown open.

This was done. Then the mule went inside and ap-

proached one of the side altars. There it paused, and got down on its knees.

All who looked on were delighted with the behavior of the mule, just as, a short time before, they had punished it for what they deemed its obstinacy. This was accepted as an act of heaven.

There was one in the vast crowd who had followed the relics to the Monastery Church, who was anxious and troubled, as she participated in the homage paid the Martyrs.

Queen Urraca had asked Berardo to disclose to her the exact time of her death, believing that he possessed heavenly knowledge. He had told her, but only after her repeated pleas.

Recalling the prophecy, she had not wanted to approach the casket closely. However, the king had expressed the wish to have her beside him, and she could not refuse.

The repository containing the relics was removed from the casket and placed in an urn beneath the altar. When the Queen's turn to venerate them came, she approached them, trembling and fearful. As she knelt close to them, she became aware that Berardo's prophecy was to be soon fulfilled.

It was. Queen Urraca died shortly thereafter, in peace and trust.

The monks of Santa Cruz decided to keep the mule which was responsible for the location of the relics in their church. The little beast appeared quite contented in its new home, where it received tender care until its death, at a ripe age.

Even in its passing it was honored, for the Prior decreed that it should be buried in the outer cloister of the Monastery.

Don Fernando de Buglioni paid frequent visits to the shrine of the Protomartyrs. Meanwhile, he was learning

more and more about the Order which had given them to the Church. The more he learned, the more he admired and revered it.

The Prior suspected what was going on in the mind of the gifted young priest, a perfect religious, an ornament to his Community. However, wisely, he said nothing of his thoughts to Fernando. Yet he was fearful of the outcome of the struggle he felt the young priest was undergoing.

For ten years Fernando had lived as an Augustinian. They had been years filled to the brim with devotion to his Congregation and with zeal and love for his life of consecration. He was a model and an inspiration to young novices, to his priest associates, and to his superiors. None would wish to lose him. In particular, the Prior and the other officials of the Monastery felt that his inspired devotion to the Sacred Scriptures would greatly redound to the glory of God and the prestige of his Congregation.

Fernando, meanwhile, was undergoing a more serious conflict within himself than anyone realized. Sometimes, oppressed by the realization that to leave his Congregation would bring grief and disappointment to those who trusted him, such a step seemed nothing short of treason. Again, a secret impulse urged him to break with his present ties and take up the heroic missionary apostolate laid down in glory by the martyred servants of God.

Fernando prayed continuously for light and guidance, that he might know God's Will and have the strength and grace to follow it.

Although he was ignorant of the fact, the Prior, too, was having his own struggle, although not so difficult a one as that of his obedient subject. He realized that tremendous opportunities were open to the Order of Friars Minor. Its members were free to journey over the known earth, preaching Christ to men who did not know Him

—to infidels, heretics, lapsed Christians, even to the good who were called to be saints but who, perhaps, did not realize their high destiny.

The Prior of Santa Cruz was well versed in the inner life. He knew his duty as custodian of God's own in the life of the Canons Regular. Prayer and the humble scrutiny of his soul convinced him that he should remain where he was and carry out his charge. However, this would not hinder him from promoting the ideals of the Seraphic Francis of Assisi.

Fernando de Buglioni, now in his twenty-sixth year, asked from God a sign, that he might be certain of the Divine Will in his regard. Meanwhile, he continued in his role of Guest Master at the Monastery. Each day he courteously received the visitors who called, including the ever flowing tide of beggars, and the poor pilgrims on their way to visit the holy places.

Then, one day, he opened the great doors to find two gray-robed figures, standing outside. His heart beat more quickly beneath his woolen tunic as he bade them welcome, in God's Name, to the Monastery of Santa Cruz.

Fernando had met these friars before. They had come to beg, on previous occasions. But this time their visit was fraught with important consequences to the life of their host.

Fernando ushered the friars into the refectory, where he had food set before them. Then, seated beside them, he spoke to them about their martyred brethren. When the meal was finished, he led them into the Church, to the shrine of the Protomartyrs. Kneeling close to them at the side altar, Fernando knew, in a flash of interior light, that God's hour had struck.

When the friars left the church with him he spoke to them in a few straightforward words of his conviction that God was calling him to the Franciscan life.



The Brothers were delighted to receive this confidence. However, Fernando made a condition to his entrance into the Order with, of course, the blessing of his present superiors. This was that he should be free to go to Morocco, and there carry out the mission the Protomartyrs had begun. Fernando told the friars that his sole desire was to "share the lot of those heroes of the Faith, and merit their victory."

The Brothers assured the young Canon that they had every reason to believe his wish would be honored, because it was Francis of Assisi's dearest desire that his sons should undertake the missionary apostolate among the infidels. The Founder had even incorporated this desire into an article of his Rule. All the followers of the Povello respected it, and many of them were even then satisfying this holy ambition by laboring in infidel lands, the friars revealed to Fernando.

The two friars who heard the revelation of Don Fernando's secret ambition from his own lips knew that the young Guest Master enjoyed an enviable reputation for holiness and learning in his Congregation. They knew, too, that their Founder would be overjoyed to receive him as one of his sons. They told Fernando this in no uncertain words.

Since the friars also knew that they could safely promise Fernando the desired freedom to go on the missions, they assured him that on the following day they would return to the Monastery, carrying with them Fernando's new religious garb. They would then clothe him in the livery of the Seraphic Patriarch's little militia.

This rapid turn of events carried Fernando swiftly toward the goal of his desire, a thing he had feared might be achieved only after long delay and repeated representations to his Augustinian superiors.

Now he felt that those superiors would not hinder him from following his heart's desire. The relics of the Martyrs in the Monastery Church would plead eloquently in his behalf.

However, the revelation of his call to the Prior of Santa Cruz was a delicate and difficult thing to accomplish. Losing no time, Fernando went in search of the Prior. When the two men were alone together, he unfolded his story and asked his superior's blessing on his resolve.

The Prior was a man of God. He was neither shocked nor surprised by the avowal. He had suspected that Fernando was thinking of the Friars Minor in very positive terms.

He recalled the rapt expression on the face of the young priest when Brother Berardo had chanted the history of the Friars Minor in the Chapter Room of the Monastery. He recalled, too, his own reactions to that story of the Troubadour of Christ, Francis of Assisi, and his heroic work.

Furthermore, the Prior knew that Don Fernando de Buglioni was fitted for a more public life than that offered him in the Congregation of Canons Regular. He also knew that never had there been greater need of apostles to preach Christ abroad than now.

"My son, you have my permission to go where God calls you!" he told Fernando. "I well understand that in losing you, our Congregation loses a treasure. But"—and here the venerable superior laid a hand on the young priest's forehead, while he traced thereon the Sign of the Cross—"you shall go with the Brothers when they return here, tomorrow. You shall go, clothed in the robe of the Seraphic Francis of Assisi. But, when you are far from here, do not forget us, who love you!"

Deeply touched, but jubilant over the permission, Fer-

nando rose from his kneeling posture, kissed the hand of the Prior, and went to make his final preparations for the great transformation.

On the following day the two friars, accompanied by the Franciscan superior of the hermitage of Olivares, returned to the Monastery of Santa Cruz. One of the Brothers carried on his arm the rough gray tunic in which Don Fernando was to be clothed.

The Prior, anticipating the visit, had summoned all the religious of the house to the Chapter Room.

There, in the presence of the three friars and his own spiritual sons, he gave his treasure into the keeping of Francis of Assisi.

Humbly and gratefully, the Franciscans received their new brother. The Superior, taking the tunic from the hands of one of his sons, placed it upon Fernando. Then he bound the strong hips of the young priest with the white cord, symbolic of purity and sacrifice.

Amidst the felicitations of his former brethren and his new ones, Fernando, after many blessings given and received, knelt at the feet of the Prior of Santa Cruz and felt the trembling hands laid for the last time on his head, as the venerable man bade him Godspeed and asked his prayers, assuring him of those of all the Augustinians.

As the new Friar Minor, with shining face and quick step, passed to the Monastery door, one of the Canons addressed him.

"Go! Go, in order that you may become a saint!" he said, as if prophesying.

Fernando smiled, as he replied with charming simplicity:

"Very well! And, when you hear that I am a saint, praise the Lord for it!"

The new Friar-novice, his feet now bare and his rough

tunic clinging to his limbs, walked beside his Franciscan brethren down the slope leading from the Monastery.

His dark eyes rested lovingly upon the tranquil valley he had known so long; on the graceful arches of the Cloister of Silence; on the winding river, glowing with a rosy sheen; on the cedar groves and orange trees; on the gardens, redolent with rich perfume.

From the valley he climbed a farther slope leading to the Franciscan hermitage. Like a drowsy bird, it nestled in a declivity of the hill, hidden from the eyes of the curious by a silvery growth of olives. From these gnarled old trees, Olivares took its name.

Far off, now, the Monastery of Santa Cruz showed whitely through the foliage. Its peaceful walls had sheltered the new friar during ten richly filled, happy years. Lifting his hand in blessing, he bade farewell to it. Then, gradually, it was lost to sight, and the hermitage of Olivares peeped out in welcome to the new Brother. On its craggy height it reminded Fernando of a sheltering nest, where the eagles of God prepared for flight to wider horizons.

It did not occur to Fernando to contrast this simple, lowly retreat with the glorious home he had known so long, Santa Cruz of Coimbra. In that holy house, the pursuit of Divine knowledge was carried on, together with that of the natural sciences. Beauty, plenty, and prestige were there. There came the noble, the learned, the wealthy, to seek from the sons of the Monastery spiritual and cultural sustenance. And now the gates had opened and sent forth the most gifted of its sons, into a poorer and lowlier life, according to the appraisal of this world.

It was springtime of the year 1220, at the hour of sunset, when Fernando de Buglioni entered the portals of his new home. Here he was to find poverty, abnegation, pen-

ance, immolation, the gateway, even, to the shedding of blood for Christ.

The tiny Monastery of Olivares was the gift of Queen Urraca of Portugal to the friars when they had first entered the country, in 1217. The Franciscans who came at that time were in charge of two valiant leaders, Brothers Gaultiero and Accarius. Brother Gaultiero enjoyed the prestige of being one of the first followers of the Poverello.

Olivares was situated in a deep solitude. No site could be better suited to a life of prayer and preparation for a missionary career.

Olivares was not unlike the Portiuncula, or Rivotorto, the hermitage in which Francis of Assisi had started his Order. Beyond it, in the center of a little clearing, was a chapel, surrounded by a number of tiny huts.

The spiritual sons of Francis would have liked to enshrine the relics of their Protomartyrs in one of their own monasteries. Alas, they had no suitable house for such a shrine. Nor would pilgrims from distant parts come to visit such a rude spot as, for instance, Olivares, to honor these heroes of Christ. Regretfully, then, but willingly, they had confided their treasure to the Augustinians, hoping that at some future time they might provide a proper repository for the relics in one of their own houses.

In an atmosphere of simplicity and good cheer, Fernando de Buglioni began his life as a Friar Minor. The hills and valleys about the hermitage furnished an ever changing pattern of design and color. The fringe of purple mountains hemming Olivares about, with the Mondego River wandering beneath to find the sea, was a continuous inspiration to the friars, inciting them to praise their Creator for the bountiful works of His hands.

The Community at Olivares were not learned men, with the exception of their new brother, Fernando de

Buglioni, but they were most zealous, and deeply devoted to their Founder and to the Franciscan way of life. They lived up to the spirit and letter of their Rule; they cherished the ideal of poverty espoused by Francis, and lived by begging from house to house in the adjacent residential districts. Everywhere, they were reverently received by the people, who honored them for their lives of piety and sacrifice.

Don Fernando de Buglioni changed his name, with the permission of his superiors, in order that he might begin his Franciscan life as a new man. He chose the name, Anthony, in honor of the Father of Eastern monks, to whom Olivares was dedicated. This holy man had led a life of extreme poverty, subsisting on bread and salt, while, like St. Paul, he labored with his hands, making wicker baskets and chanting, meanwhile, the canticles of the Church. He had left his secluded home only to go to the amphitheatre to encourage the confessors to perseverance.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni prayed that he might grow to resemble his new Patron in sanctity and in works of mercy.

The Franciscan superior of Olivares showed the novice the regard which Anthony merited as a priest and as a former professed member of the Augustinian Congregation. Anthony's new brethren were pleased to note his apparent contentment with his life as a friar, and they assured him that when the time was ripe, he should go to Morocco, there to satisfy his missionary aspirations.

Anthony was permitted to make his Profession as a Friar Minor before he was assigned to the hazardous mission of apostle to the infidels. On the appointed day, the tiny chapel of the hermitage was prepared by loving hands as if for a bridal. The choicest flowers and ferns were culled from the gardens of Olivares and placed about

the altar and the sanctuary. When all was ready, the Community gathered there, in eager anticipation of witnessing the sublime offering of a chosen soul to his God.

Anthony celebrated Mass with deepest fervor.

Afterward, kneeling at the Superior's feet, he made his Profession of living until death according to the Rule of the Order of Friars Minor.

The Father Guardian received the oblation with great joy and thankfulness. He congratulated the newly professed Franciscan Brother and afterward delivered an impressive discourse on the blessedness of the state which the young priest had chosen.

He promised Anthony that if he remained faithful to his offering he would assuredly win the coveted prize:

"And I, on the part of God, promise you eternal life as your prize, if you remain faithful to your promises."

---

*In the Country of Abu-Jacob*

**I**N THE quietude of Olivares, the first Franciscan monastery in Portugal, Brother Anthony de Buglioni began his immediate preparation for the career of a friar-missionary to Morocco.

For some little time, none of his friends in the outside world penetrated his hidden retreat. This was precisely what Anthony desired, for his days were spent in prayer and study, and in the performance of his priestly duties.

He was increasingly gratified to find that his new brethren were simple, whole-souled religious, faithful to all the prescriptions of their Order and deeply devoted to their Founder. As Anthony saw them depart, each morning, on their questing tour, he could not help but feel that their presence was a lesson of love and service of God much more advantageous than the lessons culled from books.

Anthony studied the Franciscan way of life with reverence and appreciation. It inculcated the spirit of joy and peace in the most absolute poverty; it called upon those who were bound by it to be charitable, humble, and zealous for souls, particularly for the souls of infidels.

Although Anthony was the only priest at Olivares, he sat in spirit at the feet of his religious brothers and studied how he might absorb their virtues, thinking himself to be the least and most unworthy among them.

They, on their part, loved and revered their young



priest, but they took care not to embarrass him by any special attentions. Neither he nor Francis of Assisi would countenance anything of the kind.

Despite the newly professed friar's desire for solitude and freedom from his former ties, a very unusual and undesired interruption broke in upon his peaceful life one day at Olivares.

Anthony was informed that the Princess Sancia, accompanied by a maid of honor, had called at the retreat and had asked to see him.

He was greatly embarrassed by the request. He saw no reason why the princess should ask for him. As he was deliberating whether he should not decline to go to the reception room, he observed that the Brothers who had brought the message were distressed, anticipating a refusal. It would not be a pleasant task to deliver such a message to royalty.

"I will see her!" he told them.

Sancia was crying when he approached her. The delay occasioned by his hesitation had caused her to fear her request was going to be denied. And she had set her woman's heart on the interview.

She brightened when she saw Anthony. However, her joy gave way to astonishment, as she saw that in one hand he carried a straw taper, and in the other, a burning brand of fire.

Meeting the princess, he touched the brand to the straw. It blazed up and was consumed in an instant.

As courteously as possible, Anthony explained this act to Sancia.

"You see how the fire destroyed the straw. That is the way with religious who expose themselves to the eternal fires by indulging in useless conversations in the parlor. At least, those religious lose the fruits of recollection in prayer by such conversations."

Sancia knew that Anthony was right. He had entered on a period of retreat, preparatory to starting on his mission to Morocco. It was not a part of that preparation to carry on needless conversations with women.

The princess apologized for her intrusion and left the monastery with the realization that she had met and spoken—even so briefly and to her confusion—with a saintly religious. She never again broke in upon the solitude of Olivares with her visits.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni was rapidly approaching his long-desired goal—the mission to the infidels. In spirit he followed his Father in God, Francis of Assisi, whom as yet he had never seen as, with his companions or alone, Francis traveled across the land, breathing peace to all. Anthony watched him in spirit as, coming to a church or wayside shrine, he prostrated himself in the road, praying the prayer he had taught his sons:

“We adore Thee, O Christ, here and in all Thy churches over the world, and we bless Thee, because, by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed us!”

Or, as he drew near to some little white-roofed town, standing on a hillside and looking down upon it, he prayed, in the singsong chant the martyred Berardo had employed:

“Fear and honor, praise and bless, give thanks and adore the Lord God Omnipotent in trinity and unity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator of all things. Do penance, produce fruits worthy of penance, and all will be forgiven you. But, if you will not forgive men their sins, the Lord will not forgive you your sins.

“Blessed are they who die in penance for they will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Woe to those who do not die in penance, for they will be the sons of the devil, whose works they do, and will go into eternal fire.

"Beware, and abstain from all evil, and persevere unto the end in good."

Anthony knew from information given him by the Brothers that Francis of Assisi and his missionary sons who traveled abroad were scorned by worldly-minded people.

The crude gray robes of the friars were often defiled by dirt and mud, picked up in the streets, and thrown upon them. The Protomartyrs had been called fools and deemed such. Their living brethren were treated to the same derision.

Unhappily, Christians, as well as unbelievers, mistreated Francis and his sons. However, they did not resent this. Rather, they rejoiced in it so far as they, personally, were concerned.

Their brave world of the spirit was too full of beauty to permit them to dwell on the meanness of men. Not even when their robes were snatched from them by robbers, who sprang upon them from the ravines and mountain recesses leaving them half-stripped, did they rebuke or threaten the malefactors.

And so these poor "fools" went happily on their way, singing the praises of God and reconciling men with one another.

The newly professed Brother Anthony de Buglioni received his longed-for commission for the missions of Morocco.

A single companion was assigned to accompany him to that distant, exotic land. This was not a priest, but a lay brother, Brother Filippino, or Little Philip, as he had christened himself, out of humility. Filippino was a Spaniard, but, Spaniard or Portuguese, Italian or French, or anything else, it was all the same to men whose souls were knit together in a bond of fraternal charity.

Both friars were aware that the country which was their destination was characterized by a deep-rooted hostility to all Europeans.

If there had been no other evidence of this feeling, the history of the martyred friars attested it. Yet—martyrdom was the goal of Anthony's ambition, a goal to which Brother Filippino also aspired.

Morocco, or El Maghreb, Land of the Farthest Sun, was situated beside the blue Mediterranean, which the Mohammedans called the Ever-Troubled Sea.

As a one-time Roman Province called Mauretania, it had encountered many vicissitudes, as had the other Roman Provinces of Northern Africa during the decline of the Empire.

In A.D. 682, the tide of Arab invasion had swept over it, and it had finally been reduced to submission and to the rule of Mahomet, only, however, after vigorous resistance.

Its people had taken a conspicuous part in the conquest of Spain.

Into the ancient city of Morocco, one of the capitals of the Sultanate of Morocco, situated on the northern slope of the Great Atlas range, about ninety miles from the Atlantic seacoast, Brothers Anthony and Filippino went, at the end of a successful sea voyage.

Anthony's beautiful deep eyes rested for the first time on the spacious plain near the foot of the Atlas, at an elevation of from fourteen hundred to sixteen hundred feet.

Here, at last, was the land of his predilection, so long and ardently desired.

Here was the land of martyrdom.

The two friars approached the great wall of hewn stone which surrounded the city. This wall was from twenty-five to thirty feet in height, varying in height in places,

and seven-and-one-half miles long. It had numerous gates cut into the stone.

The Brothers entered the city by the nearest of these gates.

Although the climate of Morocco was hot, the air was fresh and clear. Anthony and his companion found themselves in a wide open space, dotted with gardens and market places. Beyond, in the built-up sections of the city, they could see the crooked, dirty streets. The houses were, for the most part, one-story limestone structures, flat-roofed, with unglazed windows for openings. They appeared to be poorly kept.

Here and there, above the roof tops, the nineteen mosques of the Mohammedans rose into the sky. To the south were the imperial buildings and gardens.

Anthony and Filippino walked along, seeking the house of a Christian of the place who was to provide hospitality for them during Anthony's preaching.

No one molested them. Abu-Jacob and his satellites would probably not do so, for the series of catastrophes which had followed the murder of Brother Berardo and his companions had alarmed them. The newcomers were safe, at least for the time being.

The Moroccan plains were inhabited by Arabs and Moors, peoples of mixed Berber and Arabic blood, and of Arabic culture. These were the people whom Anthony hoped to win to the Faith of Jesus Christ.

It would not be easy to accomplish this, if it could be done. The Moroccan government was a purely despotic monarchy. The Sultan was chief of state and head of the state religion, Mohammedanism. No regular system of justice was known in the land.

Anthony knew all this, yet he believed that he could accomplish his end through the power of the Proto-martyrs' blood.

As the two Brothers made their way in the direction of the Christian quarter of the city, solemn old men, hooded, veiled, and blanketed, were haggling almost beneath their feet. Now and then, dreadful curses issued from the voluminous folds of cloth draping their lean bodies from head to foot. This was the Moroccan market place, and merchants and patrons held their ground with fearful persistence, the subject of controversy being, of course, the price of the various commodities.

The merchants squatted, cross-legged, on rugs as the battle went on. Generally, it went on for some time.

Anthony and Filippino walked past the stalls, which were covered with straw matting to protect the wares from the sun. Black slaves, the property of the affluent citizens of Morocco, passed them, their white robes and red fezzes forming a brilliant contrast to the ebony hue of their skin. A few aged Negroes stood in the shelter of the porticoes or toddled by in the crowd, deep black holes where their eyes had once been. The plucking out of the eyes was a punishment meted out by the Mohammedans for theft.

In the motley crowd were two or three Berbers, gray-eyed, inscrutable of countenance, wearing cloaks of goats' hair. They lived in the mountains and were the more numerous and important part of the Moroccan population, a hardy aboriginal race.

Brothers Anthony and Filippino passed the snake charmers, who played on wooden flutes while they allowed the loathsome reptiles free play with their hands. However, their crafty masters had withdrawn the poisonous fangs from the writhing bodies before exhibiting them in public.

There were the storytellers, entertaining curious crowds with their recitals, stopping now and then at some partic-

ularly absorbing part of their narrative to pass around a plate for the jingling coins the audience was prepared to give. There were the jugglers, the beggars, the water-carriers, stooping beneath the heavy, bloated skins of their containers and tinkling small bells and cups to attract patrons. There were the sellers of sweetmeats; the bread vendors, squatting, sheeted and cowled, on little platforms, piled high with round flat loaves.

In the midst of the noise and confusion, the soft pad of camels' feet fell on the ears of the two Brothers, as the ungainly beasts meandered in and out of the throng, their backs laden with the goods of their owners. The Moroccan children, innocent of any shred of clothing, trod warily when they approached, for they knew that the camel was a savage biter should one step on his feet or strike against the shaggy hair of his sides.

Donkeys ambled along, bearing loads which seemed to be far beyond their capacity; ragged little beasts, their thick hides adorned with the stripes of many beatings from their masters' sticks.

Anthony tried to read these Moroccans whom he yearned to convert to the one true Faith. He saw that lines of stubbornness were cut deeply into their faces. Old and young alike exhibited an aloofness, an independence of spirit that fitted but poorly into the Christ-like philosophy of the Little Poor Man of Assisi.

Few women appeared in the streets and lanes. Those who walked abroad were enveloped in thick veils and folds of material that barely left their eyes exposed; their feet were shod with red leather slippers. These were the women of the upper class of Moors, whose attire conformed to the strict Mohammedan tradition. For the most part, their lives were spent in seclusion. When the heat of the sun had abated, one saw them seated on the flat

roofs of the houses, talking together. They had little other diversion.

In this exotic city, perchance in this very market place, Anthony thought, Brother Berardo, mounted on his cart, had preached to the people. Anthony aspired to do what the fearless Berardo had failed to accomplish.

In the house of the Christians who were to be hosts to the friars, Anthony and Filippino found the peace and refreshment they sorely needed.

These good people saw at a glance what Brother Filippino had already noted with dismay—that the young priest, Anthony, was very ill. His face was flushed by fever, and his strength was so spent that he could scarcely walk across the floor.

A bed was quickly prepared for him in one of the arched alcoves of the house, and Brother Filippino assisted him into it. He was not to leave it for a very long time.

The intrepid Founder of the Mendicant Friars had himself set out for Morocco with the same aim as that which inspired his talented and devoted spiritual son. Francis of Assisi had failed to conquer Morocco for Christ because of ill health. Now Anthony seemed destined to share his lot.

His heart was heavy with the pain of disappointment as he was forced to realize how ill he was. The Land of the Farthest Sun had permitted him to enter its sacred precincts without molestation. Whether or not it would permit him to accomplish his missionary crusade, should he recover his health, was problematical.

Brother Filippino, the Little Philip, too, aspired to martyrdom. However, his duty now lay in tending the dear invalid, who was very easy to tend, since his disposition was always meek and courteous.

Filippino knew his duty. He sent word to the Franciscan



superiors of the plight of their cherished Brother Anthony. Filippino knew that it would require a long time for the message to reach them. But he sent it promptly, and awaited the reply.

Meanwhile, he nursed the sick man with devoted care.

Sometimes, when he was free from his bedside duties and the precious invalid slept a little, Brother Filippino, who possessed little learning but great zeal and charity, did his own preaching to the members of the kind family who were his hosts, and to their Christian neighbors who came in to hear him.

While his audience sat on cushions in a circle about him—there were few chairs in Morocco—Filippino, standing in the midst of them, told them of the Seraphic Francis of Assisi and of the Order he had founded. Invariably, at the close of his discourse, the generous little Brother launched into a spirited account of the young missionary who lay so very ill behind the alcove curtains.

The fervent Christians listened with delight to the recital. In turn, they regaled Brother Filippino with what they knew of the details of the short missionary career of the Franciscan Protomartyrs.

From his hosts, Filippino learned much about the unbelievers who inhabited this strange country. Their maxims were quite contrary to the tenets of the Christian Faith. "What is to be, will be!" they said, and refused to be shaken from their belief. And they said, "When a thing becomes perfect, it soon fades."

The fervent Anthony had thought to break down these rude barriers with the sweetness of the Gospel story. Now, this was out of the question. Lying on his bed of pain, Francis' faithful son knew that as soon as he should be able to leave his bed and undertake the journey, he must return home.

The message had come from his superiors, at long last. Even had it not come, Anthony knew that he was physically unequal to the apostolate in Morocco.

When he had gained a little strength, the beloved invalid took a few steps in the sunny courtyard. His heart was torn with anguish as he looked over the old city, hemmed in by a shimmering terrain of mountains.

His dark eyes rested on the dwarf and date palms; on the rich fields of wheat, barley, and beans; on the almond and gum orchards, and the slopes where goats and sheep grazed in pastoral serenity.

Against the far horizon he saw the caravans of horses and camels cross, on their journey to other parts. And, five times each day, he heard the weird summons of the muezzin, calling the "faithful" of Mahomet to worship. It conveyed to Anthony a sense of frustration, which he had to combat with all the forces of his soul.

Brother Filippino continued to watch over his charge with vigilant care. He had known that Anthony was very ill from the moment they had set foot on Moroccan soil. The hardships of the ocean voyage had augmented the weakness induced by long fastings and vigils in prayer. The boiling sun of Morocco had thrown its first challenge into Anthony's eager young face—and he was unable to cope with it.

Anthony resigned himself to God's Will and offered his sacrifice to Christ in perfect submission. Yet, in his heart, he continued to cherish the thought that some day—even in the distant future—he might return to the land of his choice.

Francis of Assisi had recommended such submission to his sons who suffered from illness. In his First Rule, the *Regula Non Bollata*, of 1209-1221, which had been confirmed by Pope Innocent III (without a Bull), the Seraphic Patriarch had counseled:

And I ask the sick brother that he give thanks to the Creator of all things, and that he desire to be as God wills him to be; for all whom the Lord has predestined to eternal life are disciplined by the rod of afflictions and infirmities, and the spirit of compunction, as the Lord says: "Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise." (*Apocalypse*, 3-19.)

If, however, he be disquieted and angry, either against God or against the brothers, or, perhaps, eagerly ask for remedies, desiring too much to deliver his body which is soon to die, which is an enemy of the soul, this comes to him from evil, and he is fleshly, and seems not to be of the brothers, because he loves his body more than his soul.

Soon Brothers Anthony and Filippino took passage to Portugal. Both believed that in the pleasant retreat of Olivares, in the mild and invigorating air of his homeland, Anthony would find complete recuperation.

But Anthony was not destined to return to Olivares.

The ship carrying the friars was met by a furious tempest as it ploughed through the waters of the Mediterranean. The season was changing and storms were usual at this time. For many days the angry ocean seethed and roared about the vessel, yet she managed to remain afloat, not, however, on her appointed course.

The terrific force of the wind did not wreck her—perhaps because of the presence of the men of God on board. But it drew her to the shores of Sicily, to the Italian coast, where the Brothers had not thought to land.

There was nothing to be done but to go ashore and leave behind the perils of the ocean.

Anthony had never before seen the Sicilian coast. Sicily was reputed to be the loveliest country on the midland sea. Steps of beetling cliffs descended the island to the

north, while on the south the slopes fell gently to the water's edge through mountain chains and towering plains. Ten thousand feet above towered Aetna, her sides spangled with flowers of many hues. Meadows and dells were gorgeous bouquets, filling the air with a heavy fragrance. On every side, Sicily was fringed about by the delicate foam of opalescent waves.

Very different was this passionate beauty from the dirt and jumble of Morocco.

The orange groves, running up to the feet of the mountains, reminded Anthony of Coimbra and the white-walled Monastery of Santa Cruz. Thinking of his sojourn in that abode of peace and holiness, the heart of the young friar sank anew.

What would the Augustinian monks think, when they learned of his inglorious adventure?

What would his brethren in the Order of Friars Minor think?

What would his Father in God, Francis of Assisi, think?

Brother Filippino called his companion's attention to the scenes through which they walked, in order to free him, if possible, from his sorrowful introspection. Disappointment and longing were stamped all over the sensitive face of Anthony, as the full force of his present position swept over him.

Brother Filippino pitied the priest with all the generosity of his devoted heart.

The Brothers knew that their Order had a little convent and church in the neighborhood of Messina, a gift to the Order from the Basilian monks. This convent was the destination of the stranded travelers.

Threading their way past the Italians in the streets, and taking care to avoid the little two-wheeled carts with gaily painted decorations on their sides, their cargo fra-

grant narcissi, the Brothers were directed to the Franciscan house.

The Cathedral of Messina, a majestic edifice whose construction had been started in 1098, seemed to bless them as they passed. This temple of God had succeeded the regime of the haughty conquerors who, in turn, had overthrown Carthaginians, Mamertines, and Normans until, finally, the Crusaders ruled. They had brought Christ to the old city, and there He had remained.

Under rich old mulberry trees, which spread their lacy plumage like canopies across the streets, the two friars approached the Messina convent.

At the door they were greeted with the Kiss of Peace. They were then ushered within, and made to experience the full warmth and cordiality of a Franciscan abode.

Since Anthony had been informed that the General Chapter of his Order was to be held at Assisi in the near future, he was resigned to remain for two months at Messina.

Up to this time, all had honored and respected Anthony, realizing that he had relinquished fame and beloved associations to become a brother in a mendicant Order, a society new in the Church. Now came the first sharp proof of Anthony's spirit of submission.

At the time of the two Brothers' arrival at the Messina house, the Father Guardian was absent, preaching the Lenten sermons in another place. Anthony was vested with his authority for the time being.

It happened that the house lacked pure water, and that the friars had to go some distance away to obtain it. Anthony became acquainted with some kind benefactors, who gave him the funds to have a well dug close to the convent. All the Brothers assured him that he would not find water in that soil. However, Anthony had the well

dug. They were astonished and delighted when a stream of clear water gushed up from it.

Soon the Father Guardian returned. He learned what Anthony had done, and he was displeased with his act. He believed that the poverty of the Order rendered it fitting that the Brothers should bear the fatigue entailed by going a distance to draw the water and bringing it back to the house.

He administered a severe reproof to the innocent Anthony and placed him in confinement, at the same time ordering him to take a severe discipline.

Anthony bore the trial meekly, although he keenly felt the sting of the unmerited reproof.

While at Messina, Anthony often walked along the seashore, making his meditation. To those of the townspeople who saw him there, his presence furnished many a meditation. Anthony did not suspect this, otherwise he might have withdrawn from so public a place.

The Messina convent had its little garden, as did every Franciscan house. This was in tribute to Francis of Assisi, who loved flowers and, in fact, all growing and living things, honoring them as trademarks of his Creator.

The brothers of this convent were pleased when Anthony, who had learned much about gardening at Olivares, planted a young, tender lemon tree in the flower beds.

Tradition always maintained, from that time, that the lemon tree never died.

At least, the memory of the young friar who had set it in the garden was to live always.

## VI

---

### *The Chapter of the Mats*

**T**HE Troubadour of Christ, Francis of Assisi, a true spiritual father, realized the value of calling his sons together in a general reunion, at certain times.

Many of the friars were missioned in remote parts of Europe and Africa. However, even they planned to start for "home" as soon as possible, in order to participate in all the sessions of their Chapter. They looked to Francis to explain their Rule to them, and they anticipated with the utmost eagerness the opportunity of seeing and hearing their beloved Founder.

Francis had recently ordained that the Chapters should be held twice each year; the first at Pentecost, the second on The Feast of St. Michael, Archangel. Two of these assemblies had taken place when Fernando de Buglioni was received into the Seraphic Order—one in 1217, and the other in 1219.

The Pentecostal meeting of 1220, the third, was announced by Francis upon his return from the Orient.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni was thankful that the improved state of his health, after his two months' sojourn at Messina, was such as to permit him to make the journey to Assisi. Friar Filippo, a member of the Sicilian Community, was assigned him as companion on the way.

The brethren deemed it unwise to allow the two friars to undertake a sea voyage at this time. Therefore, Anthony and Filippo started off on foot.

They traveled by easy stages from Messina to Calabria, a territorial division of southern Italy, thence to Assisi, in the Province of Perugia. On the way they rested when it became imperative to renew their strength.

The Chapter was scheduled to open on May 30, and to continue for eight days.

As Brothers Anthony and Filippo came into the verdant country about Assisi, they chanted sacred hymns in praise of God and His Blessed Mother.

One after another, landmarks rose into view, to gladden their hearts.

High above Assisi, on Monte Subasio, stood the mighty fortress which protected the little city, and the majestic Abbey of the Benedictines. The Carceri, a Franciscan house of recollection, was perched, like an eagle's nest, among the rocks, entirely surrounded by a dense pine wood.

Below, on the slope of the hill, half hidden in the foliage, was San Damiano, where Sister Clara and her companions lived in contemplation, in the company of the miraculous crucifix which had spoken to their Father, Francis.

Not far distant, down along the river bank, lay Rio Torto, where Francis had gathered his friars for the first time after the approval of the Rule, in 1209.

The heavenly atmosphere of the little town seeped into the souls of Anthony and Filippo as they trudged happily toward St. Mary of the Angels, situated upon the wooded plain, at the opposite side of Assisi.

The land of the blessed Francis was sown on all sides with lovely flowers, while graceful trees bent to caress the green carpet of the sod. The sun struck its golden darts down on the roofs of the conical-shaped houses of the common people of the town, and on the sumptuous villas of its more affluent citizens.



In the distance the two Brothers saw a great number of little huts, scattered over the ground. These were to serve as shelters for the friars during their encampment.

Several thousand friars had traveled to the Chapter. Eagerly, Anthony scanned the faces in the crowds, as one after another of the Poverello's most famous followers were pointed out to him.

There was Brother Egidio, called The Ecstatic because of his delight in prayer; Brother Sylvester, The Contemplative; Brother Leone, The Little Lamb of the Order; Brother Masseo, Mirror of Humility; Brothers Rufino, Angelo, Pacificus and many others, each of whom bore some special title, attesting to his outstanding characteristic.

Brother Eliás Bombarone was there, a religious to whom Francis had entrusted important offices in the Order. Elias had succeeded Brother Pietro Cattaneo in the office of Vicar after Brother Pietro's death.

His Eminence, Cardinal Cappocio, Archbishop of Viterbo, presided at the Chapter. Around him were grouped numerous other prelates, all clothed in the splendid robes of their office. By contrast, the coarse gray robes of the Friars Minor were strikingly indicative of their profession of evangelical Poverty. However, those who wore them were keenly alive to the truth, that religious poverty begins in the soul, and that the exterior symbol is meaningless unless he who adopts it is truly poor in spirit.

In awed suspense, Anthony waited for a first glimpse of his Founder, Francis of Assisi. When he finally saw him, he knew that his most cherished ideals of Francis were fully justified.

Francis of Assisi was of medium height, slender, yet strongly built. His face, oval in shape, wore a happy, child-like expression. His eyes were small, and piercingly black. His hair and slight beard were dark brown.

Although not an imposing figure, Francis had about him a grace and delicacy, a distinctive bearing that betokened true nobility of character. It seemed that his influence on others was magnetic.

As Anthony continued to feast his eyes on the man to whom he owed his sublime vocation, he saw that Francis' eyes glistened, as if with unshed tears. His spiritual son believed that this betokened the Founder's burning love of God.

All the friars rejoiced that the Poverello was safe at home, after his long and perilous adventuring in the Far East. During his absence from home, many disquieting tales concerning him had been bruited about, proclaiming, for instance, that the Mohammedans had taken him prisoner and kept him in confinement for some time. Or that fearful tempests had overtaken the ship on which he sailed, and that he had perished in the sea. Or, even, that he had shared the fate of his five martyred sons, giving his precious life for the conversion of poor infidels.

Happily, his spiritual family now knew that Francis had not suffered imprisonment nor died by violence. He had survived all dangers, and now he was here, in the spot endeared above all spots to his affectionate heart, the crib of his Order, the Portiuncula.

One of the prelates celebrated Mass, invoking the Divine Blessing on the Chapter.

At its close, the Poverello stood up before the great assemblage.

His face glowed with happiness and his voice was tender as he spoke to his own, of the things nearest his holy heart:

"My children! Great things have we promised, but much greater are the things God has promised us. Let us follow what we have promised, and expect with certainty what has been promised us.

"Brief are the delights of the world, but the punishment

that follows their misuse is everlasting. Little is the travail of this life, but the glory of the other life is infinite."

Every ear was strained, every eye fixed on Francis, as he stood, with outstretched arms, as if he would embrace the whole world in the ocean of his love: exhorting, consoling, commending, warning the beloved of his virginal heart.

Francis counseled his friars to obey their Holy Mother Church in all things; to practice brotherly charity; to adore God before all peoples; to exercise patience in the trials of this world and to practice humility in prosperity; to be chaste, peaceable, and in concord with all men, and with their own consciences.

Near the close of his discourse, Francis said to his sons:

"I command, by virtue of holy obedience, that of all you who are gathered here, no one have care or solicitude for his body, but only to hear and praise God; and all such solicitude for your bodies leave to Him, because He has special care of you."

Anthony was moved to the depths of his impressionable being by the sight and words of his Father in God. Hidden in the midst of the other friars about him, he prayed to be worthy of such a father. He realized now, if he had not fully realized before, that his Order was blessed and approved, as by God's representative on earth, the Pope, so, also, by heaven itself, since a saint had received the inspiration for it and had accepted that singular grace of God.

During the remaining days of the Chapter, Anthony lived as one in a dream, a dream of blessed joy and peace, with the promise of great things to come.

At the close of the seventh day, preparations were made to close the encampment. One day was cut from the program because so many people from the surrounding countryside had swarmed onto the plain, carrying provisions

for the friars, that further order was out of the question. For this reason Francis had ordered the Chapter closed.

In the final session, the Founder sat at the feet of his Vicar, Brother Elias Bombarone, since he was completely exhausted by his exertions. Contemplating him in that lowly position, Brother Anthony de Buglioni was edified anew.

Brother Elias presided over the session. When Francis, to signify that nothing further remained to be said by him, drew his capuche over his head, Brother Elias addressed the assemblage:

"My brethren, our Father Francis has made known to us that there is a country called Germany, in which there are many Christians, whom we often see passing this way, carrying pilgrims' staves and flasks of food, having no care for sun nor sweat, but singing the praises of God on their way to visit the tombs of the apostles.

"Because some of ours were badly treated in the country of the Germans, (the previous year) Brother Francis is unwilling to constrain anyone to attempt a new mission in their midst. But, if there be any among you who, moved by the love of God and zeal for the salvation of souls, wishes to go there, he grants him that obedience, an even greater one than is wont to be granted to those who go to the Holy Land.

"Let anyone who has such a desire rise, and prepare to depart!"

Anthony was thrilled when at least ninety friars rose, to signify their desire to accept the obedience. He knew that these brethren were motivated by the zeal which had led him to undertake the mission to Morocco, and he grieved that he had failed, where they were about to conquer, with God's help.

To Anthony's mind came anew the scenes he had witnessed in the Moroccan market place—the grim, callous

faces of the Mohammedans, among whom his five brethren had yielded up their lives. Brother Berardo and his companions had dearly paid for their determination to sow the seed of Christianity in the Land of the Farthest Sun. Farthest, in truth, it was from the Divine Sun of Justice and Mercy and, perchance, would remain so for some time to come.

And now here were ninety other heroes of the Cross, volunteering to tread in the blood-stained footprints of the Franciscan Protomartyrs, although in another land where, also, Christ was by many rejected and despised.

Anthony bowed his head as he offered again to his Maker his act of submission. Even had he dared to rise and beg for the privilege of going to the mission field of pagan Germany, he had reason to believe he would not be accepted. His superiors would undoubtedly allege his poor health as cause for refusing his request. Or, might it not be that they would be unwilling to trust him again, since he had failed in his first venture?

In his humility, Anthony felt that they would be fully justified in rejecting him on this score alone.

Francis of Assisi gave his final assignments to the superiors of the Order. Each Provincial received his peculiar charge. Other friars then received theirs. Some were assigned to the houses of the Order in Portugal, Spain, France, beyond the Alps, or to a post in Italy. Others were to go to more distant and dangerous places, to labor for the conversion of the infidels.

At the close of the Chapter, every Friar Minor had received his commission—save one.

That one was Brother Anthony de Buglioni.

In the stress of the breaking-up of the encampment, and the many tasks awaiting the attention of the superiors, the young priest had remained unnoticed in the crowd. But not purposely.

The Minister General departed. Brother Graziano, the Provincial Minister of the Romagna, who stood a few feet from Anthony, also turned to depart.

Half stifled by fear lest he be denied the request he was about to make, Anthony approached the Provincial, and timidly pulled at the sleeve of his robe.

Brother Graziano turned and saw the young Brother.

"May I speak to you, Brother?" Anthony asked, the words seeming to stick in his throat.

"Certainly, Brother."

Brother Graziano drew Anthony aside, and bent to hear what he had to say.

"Please, Brother, receive me as one of your brethren of the Romagna, where I may learn the discipline of our Order."

Brother Graziano was interested. He observed the young religious closely. Then he recalled some of the good reports he had heard of him.

"Your wish is granted," he said. "You may accompany me back to the Romagna, to the Hermitage of Montepaolo."

A happy thought had come to the Provincial.

There were six friars in the Montepaolo Community. All six were lay brothers. They had often entreated their superior to send them a priest of their Order, who could say Mass for them and give them the Sacraments. And, up until now, Brother Graziano had had no priest available for the post.

Here was the answer to a pressing problem.

The Provincial conducted Anthony to the Montepaolo Hermitage and left him there, after bidding him dedicate himself to a life of prayer, study, and the duties of his ministry.

Anthony bowed happily to the obedience. He was well satisfied to know that his life at Montepaolo would keep

him hidden from the world, while his sphere of activities would include the priestly role of chaplain to the Brothers.

Anthony knew how dearly Francis of Assisi prized the contemplative life. Indeed, had not Francis felt so powerful an attraction for the work among the infidels, this career would have delighted him. Francis had written over the gate of the Montepaolo Hermitage the maxim of St. Bernard of Clairvoix: "*O, beata solitudo! O, sola beatitudo!*" ("O, happy solitude! O, sole happiness!")

Only at the earnest solicitations of Sister Clara and Brother Sylvester had Francis resigned his predilection for solitude in favor of a missionary career.

As a pledge of his love and esteem for this life, the Founder had set down, in his Second Rule:

"Let those brothers to whom the Lord has granted the grace of working, work with fidelity and devotion; keeping idleness, the enemy of the soul, far away, they shall not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion, which all temporal things should be made to serve."

Montepaolo was to Francis an oasis where the spirit of prayer hovered like a dove. Similar to his other retreats, it was situated on a little hill which formed one of the last ramifications of the Tuscan Apennines, on the confines of the Romagna, a tract fertilized by the Arno River. Tuscany was the Province which lay for the most part south and west of the mountain ranges. On its flanks, to the east, the vast plain of the Romagna stretched away to the Adriatic Sea. From this height of approximately twelve hundred seventy-five feet above the sea, an enchanting scenic panorama was unfolded.

Anthony loved to look toward the lofty mountain peaks which towered into the blue distance, their deep caverns pockmarked along the entire range. The air in the vicinity of Montepaolo was fresh and pure, and the simple-hearted Brothers at the hermitage believed that their young priest

would surely regain his health in such a favored spot.

Each morning Anthony said Mass in the tiny chapel. He rejoiced that the Brothers benefited by his ministry, and he appreciated their delicacy in leaving him free to indulge his taste for prayer and study during most of the day.

Close to the hermitage was a grotto, situated in a wind-swept grove. To this grotto, after his Mass and conference to the Community, Anthony repaired daily, to meditate and study the Scriptures and to perform acts of penance. However, his assiduity in these practices was an obstacle to any improvement to his health. No sooner had he come to Montepaolo than he had started in to perform bodily austerities of such a nature that he soon became weak, even ill. All this time, his only daily nourishment was dry bread and a cup of water at meals.

The devoted Brothers were saddened to know that their hoped-for goal, Anthony's recuperation, could not be attained in these circumstances. Yet, because he was a priest and they were lay brothers, they could do nothing in the matter.

Not seldom, when the convent bell called the little Community to the common exercises in the chapel, Anthony would totter in, assisted by two of the Brothers. All the Community could do was to pray that, even if it required a miracle, his health might be restored, and he be permitted to live long to shed luster on the Order of Friars Minor.

At Montepaolo, as in the other Franciscan houses, the Brothers went out questing each day. Anthony was troubled when he realized that he alone did nothing to assist in procuring the necessities for the convent. Since he had not been instructed by Brother Graziano to share in these expeditions, he knew that he should not perform them.

However, he decided to do something else to help his



beloved Brothers. One day, Anthony paid an unexpected visit to the kitchen of the hermitage.

Recognizing his visitor, the eyes of the Brother Cook opened very wide.

"Please, dear Brother, permit me to help you with your work! I will be glad to wash the dishes or scrub the floor, if you will kindly allow this."

The good Brother gulped in amazement. Anthony was a priest. He had been delicately bred, and he was unfitted for the rude manual labor of the lay brothers. But, it was not for the Brother Cook to deny his request.

So, the little Brother said nothing at all, only signifying by the expression on his face that he did not deny Anthony what he asked—because he could not!

From that day on, Anthony took his daily turn in the kitchen, removing the grease from the pots and pans, and even washing the floor on his knees, his robe tucked high about his waist.

Although this humility and abnegation was duly appreciated by the Community, they were troubled that Anthony persisted in performing these manual tasks. They believed that the delicately shaped hands of their young priest were vastly more suited to the performance of his sacred functions and the handling of books than of wringing out mops and scouring with brushes. Yet, they knew that their Founder, the lowly Francis, would heartily approve of Anthony's spirit.

With a delicacy akin to reverence, Anthony handled the terra cotta plates and porringers that graced the refectory table at mealtimes. All Franciscan convents had poor, simple furnishings.

Anthony also took his turn at caring for the cells of the friars, so low that one could scarcely stand upright in them. He revered the wooden boards that served as couches for the followers of the Crucified Christ. Here,

innocent loving souls communed with their Maker when the purple dawn crept over the mountains, or the evening star scaled high into the heavens.

During Anthony's sojourn at Montepaolo an incident occurred which was to have an extraordinary effect on his career. It happened that an ordination ceremony was to be held in the nearby town of Forli. Members of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders of the surrounding countryside were invited to attend. An imposing array of prelates was also invited.

Anthony went to the ceremony. The solemn rites were over, and the newly ordained priests, with the guests, sat down to partake of the collation and listen to the customary discourse.

The collation came to its end, with everyone well satisfied and in a happy mood. Then those at table waited for the orator to be announced, and for him to begin his discourse.

But it appeared that there was no orator! By some oversight, no one had been appointed to fill this important office.

Brother Graziano looked over the rows of priests present, particularly over the ranks of the Order of Preachers, sons of St. Dominic, some of whom were renowned pulpit orators. But, when approached, no one of them was willing to comply with the Provincial's request to speak extemporaneously.

Brother Graziano was deeply embarrassed. One thing only remained to be done. This was to appeal to his own spiritual sons, in the hope that one of them would undertake the office.

Again, the Franciscan superior was disappointed. Having appealed to most of the friars present with no better results than before, he was further troubled and perplexed.

Having exhausted all his resources, as he believed,

Brother Graziano happened to glance toward Brother Anthony de Buglioni, who was seated at a far end of the table.

The superior knew that Anthony was obedient and self-sacrificing. Possibly he might be induced to speak, although it was not to be expected that he would do more than ordinarily well in the role of speaker.

Brother Graziano went down the line and, bending over Anthony's shoulder, whispered in his ear.

Like the others, at first, the young priest begged to be excused. In his diffidence of self, he had no thought that he could satisfy an audience that was certain to be as exacting as it was distinguished. Many who were well fitted to speak had declined to do so—Anthony believed that it would be sheer presumption for him to attempt the role.

Observing that Anthony was grieved to disappoint him, Brother Graziano took advantage of the filial emotion.

Again, he pressed his suit.

This time Anthony felt obliged to consent, in order to spare his superior additional embarrassment.

He rose, and approaching the presiding bishop, asked for and received his blessing.

Then he turned toward his audience and began his discourse.

"Christ became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross."

The voice of the young priest was low and tremulous, for Anthony had not as yet found himself.

He continued for a few minutes in the same low tone, scarcely lifting his eyes toward those at table.

Possibly the others were surprised at his choice of text, for it would seem that the ordination banquet of the young religious should be a joyous occasion.

However, as Anthony continued, raising his voice unconsciously and forgetting himself in his ardor and zeal

for the sacred priesthood, they began to understand his motive in the choice of a theme.

They began to realize that it was fitting for one who had himself sought martyrdom in an infidel country to cherish a deep devotion to the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ.

Christ, the great High Priest, seemed to stand in the midst of that assemblage as Anthony went on to describe His loveliness, His generosity, His immense sorrows. He, the Prince of Peace, drew very close to the hearts of His followers in that crowded room, as they were made to visualize Him through the eyes of a young and singularly gifted friar.

From the Old Testament Books, Anthony drew emotion and doctrine for the Gospel story, particularly from the prophecies concerning the Redeemer of the World.

His eloquence became more and more inspired as he continued to speak, so that no man in that gathering of prelates and religious had ever heard so marvelous a discourse before.

All were amazed and overjoyed by Anthony's presentation, given so lucidly and with an artistry that only love could produce. For, now he lifted his hearers up to the realms of the disembodied spirits, showing them the glorified Christ, His great wounds shining like brilliant suns, the pledge of their future immortality. Now he cast them down into the abyss of their own nothingness and misery as he revealed the yawning chasm that stretched between—not holiness and sin—but holiness and mediocrity.

All present rejoiced to think that in their midst was an apostle of the Church of Christ who in a few short years had amassed the treasure of heavenly learning usually acquired only after a long period spent in God's service.

What future lay before this humble young son of Francis of Assisi?

What might not be expected of him in the years to come?

Dignitaries and religious talked animatedly together of the sublime discourse to which they had been privileged to listen, and they congratulated Anthony warmly on his achievement.

For himself, Anthony was only too eager to escape from this unwelcome notice and return to his hidden retreat. Engraved upon his innocent and faithful heart were the admonitions of his great Spiritual Father, Francis of Assisi:

I also warn and exhort the brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ that they beware of all pride, vainglory, envy, covetousness, the cares and solitudes of this world, of detraction and murmuring.

Let not those who are ignorant of letters care to learn letters, that is, do not learn simply to make a display of learning . . . but let them consider that, beyond all, they should desire to possess the spirit of the Lord and His holy operation, to pray always to Him with a pure heart, and to have humility, patience in persecution and in infirmity, and to love those who persecute, reprove and accuse. . . .

The "spirit of the Lord," as Francis recognized it, and as Anthony had imbibed it, had nothing in common with the pride of the world.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni rejoiced that he had satisfied his kind superior, Brother Graziano, to whom he owed his present happiness in the Order of Friars Minor, and also that he had enkindled in the hearts of his audience the flame of the love of Christ crucified.

Beyond that he had no ambition.

## VII

---

### *A Commission from the Poverello*

**B**ROTHER GRAZIANO, Anthony's superior, knew that his great-souled Founder, the Herald of the Great King, yearned to send other heralds into every country, to preach Christ to the infidels and to the renegade children of the Church.

Now the Provincial had discovered a youthful herald, Brother Anthony de Buglioni, a Friar Minor providentially prepared for the spiritual combat.

Brother Graziano's observation of the talented young religious at Forli, where Anthony had astounded him by his brilliant interpretation of the Scriptures and by his charming modesty, convinced him that the time was ripe for Anthony to leave his quiet retreat and go among the people as the authoritative preacher of the Order of Friars Minor.

He gave the commission to Anthony.

There was no question of declining it. Authority had spoken and the obedient religious accepted the assignment as God's Will for him. Although he felt unworthy of such a great responsibility, he was happy that the sublime thoughts welling up in his mind and heart could now be transmitted to others, and the Kingdom of Christ thus be more solidly established on the earth.

Anthony had come to Montepaolo in June, 1220. It was early spring of the following year when he left his loved hermitage to begin his mission as Friar Preacher.

Francis of Assisi and his first followers had delivered their message to the people in simple words, calculated to

inspire them to devotion and to stimulate their intellect. The shining qualities of heart and soul displayed by these men of God, so fervently and unselfishly, had won for the Order of Friars Minor the respect and love of the great multitude.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni's appeal was to combine in a most fruitful way both simplicity and learning.

Francis of Assisi upheld only pure and Christlike ideals. His spiritual sons had absorbed his spirit and doctrine, and had shown their loyalty and worth by adhering to their Rule most faithfully.

However, now came a time when one of those on whom the Founder relied was to fail him.

During Francis' journeying in the Orient, his Provincial, Brother Peter Stacia, had started a Franciscan school in the city of Bologna. At this time Bologna was the center of a distinguished learning. Well satisfied with this prestige, Peter Stacia had planned what he wished to do and had chosen certain members of the Order as his allies in the project.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere of Bologna, and particularly the neighborhood in which the Franciscan school was located, was utterly at variance with Francis' ideals. It was worldly and restless. This was scarcely the atmosphere in which Francis could expect to find perfect disciples. Prayer and the love of solitude were wholly at variance with self-seeking and vain ambition for glory.

This was the spirit in which the friars of Peter Stacia's school began their new life.

No sooner had he returned to Italy than Francis was told of this development. He was gravely displeased over the news, and, in addition, to find that the friars at the Bologna school claimed the property as their personal possession.

A happier chain of circumstances had preceded this

situation in the old university city. In 1212, Brother Bernard of Quintavalle, a faithful exponent of the Founder's ideals, had visited Bologna and preached there. In the following year he had established his residence in the city, in a house called Le Pugliole, situated just beyond the Porta Galliera.

Francis' Vicars, Pietro dei Cattani and Elias Bombarone, had studied at Bologna, as had several generals of the Order, including John Parenti, Aymon of Faversham, Crescentius of Jesi, and John of Parma. These friars had enjoyed high repute among the people, so much so that one of the university professors, Nicholas of Papolo, became a Franciscan. Another illustrious citizen of Bologna, who esteemed the friars highly, and favored them with many kindnesses, Accursius the Great, had donated his villa, La Richardina, to the original Bolognese Community of Franciscans when their quarters became too small for their growing membership.

Then had come Brother Peter Stacia to found his school—for he regarded it as his. And, not long afterward, came Francis, to settle the matter of personal ownership once and for all.

Francis had an understanding heart. He was aware of how the temptation to transgress the Rule in relation to poverty had come to Peter and his group. Formerly, Francis himself had been so strongly attracted to books that he had yearned to devote his entire life to them. However, always desirous of knowing and doing God's Will, he had resorted to prayer, in order to discern it, and he had not allowed nature to prevail. Taking up the Gospels, he had opened them at random, then looked on the printed page. His eyes rested on the text: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables."

Francis of Assisi had accepted the guidance and fol-



lowed it. Admonishing one of his novices, afterward, he had said to him: "There are so many who, in our day, wish to seek wisdom and learning, that happy is he who, out of love for the Lord, makes himself ignorant and unlearned." However, the prudent and enlightened Francis had also said: "We should honor and revere all theologians and those who serve us with God's Word, because they give us spirit and life."

Francis dealt summarily with the disloyal Peter Stacia. He went to the school at Bologna and called all the Community together. Then he ordered them to vacate the premises, "in the name of obedience." The order included a friar who at the time was ill in bed. Francis would have no compromise with the worldly spirit.

"Forgive us!" the unhappy Brothers begged their Founder. "We deeply regret the wrong we have done, and we promise to do penance and amend our lives!"

Francis forgave them, but he was saddened to note that Peter Stacia was not among the penitents. Painful as it was to him to cast off one of his own, he cursed Brother Peter, who had brought dishonor upon his Order by failing to honor the principles on which it had been founded.

The Poverello had received and accepted a heavy cross. But soon he was to merit a great joy. He learned that among his sons was one singularly endowed by nature and grace. This was Brother Anthony de Buglioni, one-time Canon of the Congregation of St. Augustine. The Founder also learned about the distinguished background of the young priest, who was the exemplar of all the Franciscan virtues, who was then residing at Montepaolo in the Romagna, and living the life of retreat. Francis was informed that Anthony had revealed himself as a marvel of sacred learning when he had preached the ordination sermon at Forli on a recent occasion.

The Poverello was supremely happy over these tidings. He wrote to Anthony:

"It pleases me that you should read theology to the brethren, so long as on account of study they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer, as it is ordained in the Rule. Farewell!"

Anthony must be the torch, spreading the flame of God's love wherever his voice could reach, be it from the cathedra of the classroom or from the pulpit of the church. This was Francis' thought and determination.

Anthony received the obedience humbly. Shortly, he bade *addio* to his brethren at Montepaolo, all of whom expressed their sorrow at losing him and gave him their good wishes for his future mission.

For the last time, Anthony communed with the cell where he had known peace and fervor; with the chapel, where he had officiated so many times at the altar; with the kitchen, where he had worked cheerfully at menial tasks. Lastly, he passed through the garden of the hermitage to pay his respects to the grotto in the wooded recess, where he had prayed and meditated, feeling a pang of regret that he must relinquish its serene joys for the tumult and disorder of great cities.

The young friar-theologian opened his mission at Vercelli, in Piedmont, in northern Italy.

Piedmont, traversed by the Po River and its tributaries, was a fertile region. Rice, hemp, fruits, olives, and wine were produced in abundance in its broad pleasant plains. It also had a thriving silk industry.

Anthony was glad to be able to preach to the country folk, who spent their lives laboring in one or other of these important industries. He took pains to adapt his speech to the understanding of his audiences. Everyone was pleased with him and showed an appreciation of his missionary efforts.

After concluding a very successful stay in this section, the young missionary trudged onward until he reached Rimini. Here he was to find a field of combat well suited to his God-given talents.

Rimini, on the Marecchia River, was a beleaguered city. The river had a fickle habit of rising at unexpected moments and flooding the entire lower town. When it had wrought its damage, it would recede as suddenly as it had rushed over the land.

From the outset of his preaching in this city, Anthony found himself heckled by two sects of heretics, the Cathari and the Patarini. Both groups were zealots and trouble-makers, whose domain was a wide terrain of the surrounding country.

On entering Rimini, Brother Anthony de Buglioni had stepped into a veritable hornets' nest of enemies. Threats of punishments to be meted out to them by the German Emperors, in the numerous edicts issued against them, had failed to disturb the equanimity of these rebels. They felt secure in their position, knowing that the Ghibelline Party, which continuously opposed the Church, was on their side.

In earlier times, St. Aldebrand, Bishop of Fossombrone, had visited Rimini and preached against the heretics. But he had been forced to flee for his life, due to their uprising against him. He had not returned to the scene.

Now came Anthony to the old city, youth and vigor in his strongly knit frame, and grace and charm in his bearing and speech.

He began his preaching, and crowds hurried to hear him. Often, the public squares were his pulpits. So great was his eloquence and the fervor of his appeal that many were converted from heresy and returned to the true Faith. Always, at the close of his sermons, he found persons waiting to consult him in private. He heard them one by

one, and when he had received their confidences, he laid open to them the way of inner peace and joy. Many consciences, long disturbed by the burden of sin, were cleansed as a result of his mission; enemies were reconciled with one another, and homes and hearts brightened because of the coming to the old town by the sea of Francis of Assisi's fervent spiritual son.

Sometimes, Anthony held disputations with the heretics in the churches of Rimini—this was an old custom—sometimes, in private homes, where the members of the family and their neighbors assembled to listen to him. The largest audiences always gathered in the Piazza of the town, crowding the aged cloisters, whose porches were ablaze with flowers in hanging baskets. In this picturesque setting Anthony could be found at almost any hour of the day, speaking to the people of the things of God.

It happened that there lived in Rimini a heretic named Bononillo. This man had often publicly declared that he did not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Anthony heard about Bononillo, and managed to meet him.

At the time, the heretic was leading his mule through the streets. In his eagerness to win this obstinate soul, the young missionary proposed to make a test in order to prove to Bononillo that Christ was actually present in the Holy Eucharist under the species of bread and wine. Anthony proposed that the man should keep his mule fasting for three consecutive days. At the end of that period, he was to lead it into the Piazza.

On one side of the open space, Anthony would stand, holding the Sacred Host in his fingers. On the opposite side, a tempting supply of food would be displayed for the disposition of the mule.

If the mule refused to touch the food, but instead bent

its knees before the Sacred Host, Bononillo must believe in the Real Presence.

Anthony made one stipulation in his challenge. If the miracle should not take place, Bononillo and the other onlookers were to understand that the missionary's sins alone were to blame.

As he regarded Anthony attentively, the heretic doubted that Anthony had ever committed a sin. . . . He willingly accepted the challenge, however, expecting victory, since he was well aware of the mule's capacity and liking for its food.

At the appointed time, Anthony appeared in the Piazza. In his anointed hand he held the Sacred Host.

Opposite him was Bononillo, and a very hungry mule. Confident of success, the heretic had invited all the people to witness the test, so that a great crowd stood in the Piazza, waiting in breathless suspense for the outcome of the event.

The mule was led to the food. But first it had looked on the Sacred Host in Anthony's hand. . . .

To the amazement of all except Anthony, the little beast turned away from the food, and, bending its knees and bowing its head, paid homage to its Creator.

Bononillo, a stubborn man, had persisted in his heresy for thirty years. But he could not deny the testimony of his own eyes. He admitted to the missionary that Christ must really be present in the Host, and he promised to abjure his heresy.

Anthony continued his zealous efforts to win the Cathari to the Faith they had renounced. However, these efforts were often hampered by their obstinacy and pride.

As he was preaching one day, in a church, to these deluded people, he was sadly disappointed to see them, at one part of his sermon, rise in a body and leave.

They had become enraged by his fearless denunciation

of their false and vicious doctrines and practices, and would hear no more.

Anthony left the pulpit and went out of doors.

The sun was shining brightly, and the peaceful aspect of the landscape somewhat soothed the sorrowful feelings of the young missionary. He walked to the river bank, close by.

Then, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he started to preach to the fish, who, at least, were living in conformity with their Creator's plan. No sooner had his first words floated out over the water than a multitude of fish began to swim toward the bank.

Looking out over the rippling waves, Anthony saw that other multitudes were coming, some from upstream, others from downstream, to join their fellow fish.

Holding their shining heads up out of the water, this unique congregation regarded the missionary attentively, meanwhile maintaining perfect order and quiet.

In the forefront were the smallest fish, behind them were those of medium size, while the largest fish were drawn up in the rear.

Beautiful was the message delivered by Francis of Assisi's favored son to these creatures of God, a silver-finned congregation:

My brother Fish, you ought often, according to your capabilities, thank our Creator for having given you such a noble element for your habitation, so that, at your pleasure, you may have sweet waters or salt waters, and many asylums whence you may flee from the tempests. You have likewise been given a clear and transparent element, and food, by means of which it is possible for you to live.

God, your gracious and benign Creator, when He made you, gave you the command to increase and

multiply, and He blessed you. Afterward, when the general deluge came, and so many other creatures perished, you alone were preserved by God without harm. And he has also given you "wings" (fins) by means of which you may hasten whither it pleases you.

To you it was granted, by the command of God, to preserve the Prophet Jonas, and, after three days, to cast him out upon the earth, unharmed.

You offered tribute for Jesus Christ, which He, a Poor Man, was unable to pay. And, you were the food of the Eternal King, Jesus Christ, both before and after His Resurrection.

For all these many reasons you ought to praise and bless God, Who has given you so many and such great benefits, more than to other creatures.

As Anthony preached, the fish began to open their mouths and to bow their heads, praising God by this attitude, as they had been told to do.

Seeing them in this reverential posture, Anthony cried out, joyfully:

"Blessed be the Eternal God, seeing that the fish of the sea, who have not reason, hear His Word, although unbelieving men refuse to hear it!"

During this preaching, many of the townsfolk of Rimini had seen the missionary, standing by the river bank, and also his extraordinary audience. They had rushed in crowds to the spot. Among them were many heretics. The majority were convinced that a miracle was taking place in favor of Anthony. Hundreds fell on their knees and blessed God for it. Some of the heretics confessed their errors and promised to be faithful Catholics in future.

In Old Testament days a dumb beast had spoken, by the power of God, to its master, Balaam, rebuking him. Now the fish had reacted as creatures endowed with intellect,

gathering in shoals and listening attentively to the Word of God as expounded to them by His devoted servant, Anthony.

From Rimini, all the way to dark-turreted Bologna the young missionary tramped, stopping in every town he passed along the way to deliver his message. His strongest warning to sinners was given in charity and kindness. He was content to follow his Founder's spirit and methods. He wished to know no other.

Anthony had heard about the unfortunate incident of Peter Stacia and his followers. In fact, the memory of it was fresh in the minds of all Francis' sons. For this reason, Anthony's visit to Bologna at this time was most opportune.

If any persons had thought Francis harsh in closing Peter Stacia's school and dismissing the friars from it, now they understood his motive for doing so. Anthony told them what it was—not so much by words, as by his presence and example. The Franciscan spirit was a spirit of poverty, meekness, humility, obedience. Peter Stacia and his group had violated these ideals, and their Founder had been forced to make a public example of them.

An artist would have found a charming subject for his brush in the gray-robed figure of the young missionary, as he stood in the Piazza of Bologna, whose ancient towers and palaces formed a bulwark about him, speaking to the multitudes, according to his commission from the Poverello. His face suffused with a heavenly brightness as he preached, Anthony communicated something of his brave, joyous spirit to his hearers.

When the weather was inclement, he preached in the shelter of the arcades of the old city; these picturesque asylums extended for miles, forming a succession of open galleries.

Persons of high rank and persons of low rank composed



Anthony's audience, and all understood his message as if it were addressed individually to each one, and to him alone. As the torrent of words poured from the eloquent lips, the shopkeepers, whose stalls jutted out into the arcades, could do no more than lean on their counters and listen, in curiosity or in sympathy, as the case might be. The force and artistry, the zeal and humility of this mere youth, astounded them. Well might they lean and listen, for they could expect no customers for the time being.

Anthony's mission of preaching was continuing with ever increasing fruits, but he knew that there was also the message from his Spiritual Father to teach, which required attention.

He had not asked himself whether he would prefer to confine himself exclusively to missionary work among the people, or to assume the post of Professor of Sacred Theology.

Therefore, he entered on his new duties in Bologna with docility and contentment. Because his reputation as a theologian and spiritual director was now widely recognized, he was sought in the churches as preacher for special occasions. The clergy, in particular, desired to study his methods and also to profit by his apostolic example.

Bologna boasted of having the most illustrious teachers of any Italian city of that day, yet many of its most famous professors sat at Anthony's feet and listened, enthralled, to his instructions.

Faithful to Francis' wishes, the young Professor of Sacred Theology was careful to give first thought to the brethren of his own Order. After that, he was only too ready to spend himself for others.

In the ranks of Brother Anthony de Buglioni's students were members of the Benedictine, the Augustinian, and the Basilian Orders, who had themselves created some stir

throughout the land by reason of their talents and achievements. Their new Professor was touched upon recognizing in his classes some of his former brethren in the Augustinian Order, the Congregation which had trained him in the religious and priestly virtues. On their part, these religious recognized the fruits of the renunciation their one-time associate had made. For, despite his attraction for the Franciscan way of life, it had been a sacrifice for Anthony to resign his prestige and security in an old established Congregation for the uncertain fortunes of a new Order.

Before the time of the Crusades of Francis of Assisi and Dominic Guzman, street missions had been unknown. In general religious had lived within their monasteries, which were perched on the mountain crests, looking down on the teeming multitude in the outer world. The monks had dedicated themselves to a life of prayer, study, and the fulfillment of their daily duties, and they had not traveled about preaching the Gospel.

Francis of Assisi had incorporated in his Rule the manner of life of the Divine Missionary, Jesus Christ. Like Him and His Apostles, Francis and his sons had gone about through many places, seeking to help souls. This they would continue to do.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni, pure in heart and self-denying, knew that his life work, whether as preacher or teacher, was barely beginning. He believed that he would be called upon to fight for the Faith and for Christian morality in places where thousands had fallen away through human weakness. These thousands had listened to false teachers, and had joined the multitudes of heretics.

Humble and charitable though he was, Anthony was forced to recognize that a purification of the clergy was a sore need of the times. Many ministers of the altar had corrupted themselves by carrying on simony, the traffic in ecclesiastical preferment.

Pope Innocent III had raised his voice in denunciation and warning against these evils. The Holy Father had gone so far as to declare that nothing less than fire and the sword could stamp them out.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni standing in the public places, his poor tunic stained and draggled, hoped that he might do much to bring about a happy solution to the Pope's sad problem.

Wherever Anthony preached, evils were overcome, souls were reconciled to the Church, and numerous priests were won to a more fervent life.

Anthony could not do all he wished to do. But he devoted himself to his preaching and teaching career with an ardor and selflessness, an enthusiasm and spirit of sacrifice, that won him the admiration even of many of the Church's enemies.

After only a short time spent as Professor in the Bologna convent, which Francis had been deterred from destroying only at the urgent request of his friend and adviser, Cardinal Ugolino, the now famous young friar found himself surrounded by a large group of satellites. Many of these men later became distinguished for their holiness of life and sacred teaching.

Many of the pilgrims who visited Bologna to pray at the shrine of the Most Holy Virgin of Victory were privileged to hear Anthony preach. He was always happy when he could speak directly to souls about the truths deeply imbedded in his own fervent soul. But, when the crowds had departed, or the hours in the lecture hall were over for the time being, Anthony would often visit the solitary hermitage in Bologna where his Founder had found refuge and repose, and where, after him, Bernard of Quintavalle and others of the brethren had come in retreat.

Long before this time, the Etruscans had advanced across the Umbrian fields, to make Bologna their greatest

city north of the Apennines. Their conquest, however, had not been lasting. Over the Alps had poured the Celtic tribes, and the Boii had taken possession of the Romagna, ousting the Etruscans.

Two centuries later had come Hannibal, and the one-time Celtic city became Roman. He was followed by Alaric, who battered down the Christian churches—for Bologna had been Christianized very early. A city of the Ostrogoth kingdom for a time, Bologna had afterward fallen to the Lombards. Finally, Charlemagne had destroyed the kingdom. Then Bologna began to develop her resources until, in 1122, the Emperor, Henry V, had recognized her as a free town.

In the Hohenstaufen aggression in Italy, Bologna had valiantly served the Pope, and the Papal forces had taken sides with the Italian towns in their resistance to the Germans.

The echo of all this strife and change had long since died away when Anthony came to conquer, by peaceful means, that part of the old historic city which would yield to his gentle persuasion.

Under the plane trees he walked, the sturdy young friar, with shining face and dust-stained tunic; under a softly blue sky, breathing in the fragrance of the air and dreaming of the peace of the Poverello, sometimes glimpsing from afar the winding Savenna or the Reno, as they flowed on to wider streams.

Proud and silent, the ancient watchtowers looked down on the youthful spiritual warrior, treading in their shadows. . . . Brother Anthony de Buglioni, who had come to teach poverty of spirit, meekness, forgiveness of enemies—all the serene Franciscan virtues.

## VIII

---

### *The Kingdom of the Lilies*

**I**N SEPTEMBER, 1224, Francis of Assisi was honored by a marvelous favor from his Crucified Lord. This was the impression of the Stigmata, the marks of the Five Wounds of Christ, on his hands and feet and side.

On the precipice of La Verna, within long walking distance from Assisi, the Poverello was keeping solitary vigil.

Suddenly—like a flash of lightning—a Form came winging toward him from the sky.

An instant afterward, it rested on a spur of the rock above him.

Trembling all over in amazement, Francis gazed at the apparition.

It had six wings. Two stood up straight, one at either side of the body. Two were outstretched, like those of a bird in flight. Two were folded about it.

As Francis continued to look in stupefaction at this strange creature, whose face was a blending of ecstasy and pain, he felt himself to be lifted up into the realm of disembodied spirits.

Then he experienced, in his own body, a succession of quick sharp stabs—in his hands and feet and side. Looking up again at the crest in the rock, Francis saw that the Form had disappeared. Looking down at his own form, he saw that his members, a moment before clean and smooth,

were now torn by gaping red wounds, wounds that bled even as the Saviour's had bled. There was one in each hand, one in each foot, and one in the right side, in the region of the heart.

To but one of his brethren did Francis reveal the intimate details of the Stigmata. This was Brother Leo, his confessor. Francis then saw to it that the ledge on which the seraph had rested was cleansed, and protected from desecration.

In honor of this sacred event in his life, Francis composed the "Praises," in which he gave recognition to the omnipotence and goodness of God . . . "Thou art holy, Lord God, Who alone workest wonders . . . Thou art our great sweetness. Thou art our Eternal Life, great and admirable Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Saviour!"

In this month of the Stigmata, Francis sent to Anthony the order to go to France, and there carry on his mission to souls.

Leaving the Romagna, Anthony proceeded to Languedoc, an old province in the south of France, situated between the Garonne and Rhone Rivers. The Franciscans had a convent in the city of Montpellier, a rich industrial city, under the Catholic rule of Aragon. At Montpellier, the bishops of the Church in France had held a solemn council, in which they had formulated plans for the overthrow of the Albigensian heretics, who then dominated meridional France.

The Albigenses had acquired their name from their principal center, the region of Alby, in Languedoc. Their heresy had originated in the East. It denied the divinity of Christ and the efficacy of the Sacraments, also the distinction between good and evil in God's eyes, and the belief in the after punishment of unrepentant sinners. It rejected all external cult, property rights, the validity of the death punishment, the legitimacy of war, the civil

authority, and the use of flesh as food. It taught that it was unlawful to kill animals, and its members practiced strict fasts.

The observance of these precepts of the Albigenses was binding only on perfect souls, those who had received what was called "the baptism of the spirit." This was presumed to be indispensable to happiness, and must be repeated each time one fell into sin.

To sum up the Albigensian heresy, it was the negation of all fundamental Christian doctrines.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni found his new field of apostolic effort most promising. The old city of Montpellier was built in terraces on the slope of a hill above the Lez River, in a fertile plain. Anthony counted upon meeting many renegade Catholics in its steep, narrow streets.

Montpellier was a handsome, prosperous town. Like the previous fields in which its new missionary had worked, it had undergone all the vicissitudes of wars and conquests. The early town, the ancient Magalona, believed to have been founded by the Phoenicians, had long been a thriving seaport. It had a famous Medical School, presumably founded by Arab doctors, who had been exiled from Spain. Some of its old courtyards were still paved with ancient Roman stones.

Brother Anthony was commissioned to teach theology to the brethren of the Montpellier Friary. This was a wise provision of his Founder, for the Albigenses were overrunning southern France, and winning a multitude of followers to their nefarious doctrines.

Anthony's deep love and understanding of Sacred Scripture was reflected in all he said and did. The friars listened in rapt attention to his exposition of the Old and New Testament texts and their relation to one another. His pupils realized that their Founder had acted in a provi-

dential way when he had charged this talented and virtuous religious to guide them in theology and Catholic culture.

When he was not occupied in this congenial task, or in preaching outside, the young missionary busied himself in further study of the Psalms and the other Books of the Old Testament.

Anthony's brethren at the Montpellier Friary did all in their power to show their appreciation of the professor's interest in and zeal for their formation. However, the object of their esteem never allowed himself to forget the tragic fall of Brother Peter Stacia of Bologna. Francis of Assisi had cursed pride, the pride that had caused this defection in the ranks of his sons. Brother Anthony de Buglioni frequently spoke to his Community on the virtues of their Seraphic Father, reminding them how greatly Francis yearned for their sanctification, as well as for their missionary success.

While Anthony remained at Montpellier, a novice residing in the house disappeared at night, when the rest of his Community slept. With him he took a Psalter of great value, one which Anthony had often used, and which he highly revered.

In the morning, when the novice's absence was discovered, the loss of the Psalter was also revealed. Anthony, gravely disturbed over this desertion, prayed for the unfortunate boy, that he might receive the light and grace of repentance, and return to the monastery.

A little later, a knock came on the door of his cell. Anthony opened the door.

On the threshold stood the novice, cowed and miserable. Apparently crushed by the weight of his wrongdoing, he dared not lift his eyes to those of the priest.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni was fearless in denounc-



ing impenitent sinners and heretics, men unfaithful to their God and their Church. But he was invariably kind and compassionate toward the penitent.

He drew the frightened novice into the room and closed the door. Then he encouraged him to tell his story.

Sobbing, the novice obeyed.

On the previous night, when the monastery was quiet and dark, he had risen from his bed, gone to the Chapter Room and abstracted the precious Psalter from its place on the lectern. He had stolen away with it, intending never to return to the Community, but to sell it and with the money flee to some place where no one would recognize his identity.

As the young thief was making his way through the deserted city, he came to a bridge, the Ponte San Marziale, which threw a succession of graceful arches across the river.

He had started across this bridge, when, suddenly, there appeared in his path a frightful apparition, a horrible monster, armed with a cutlass.

This specter raised the weapon above the novice's head and in a terrible voice, said to him:

"Return to the servant of God, Anthony, and give the Psalter back to his Order. If you do not, I shall kill you, by the Divine command, and throw you into the water!"

"At first I tried to get past him," the novice said. "But, I could not. I was afraid he would kill me, as he threatened. So, I came back here to return the Psalter.

"I'm sorry for what I did. I know now how wrong I was. Please, please let me stay in the Order, and I promise that I will never again be unfaithful to it."

Convinced that the boy was sincere, Anthony reassured him. He gave him sound advice, then sent him to his Superior.

Joyfully, the Community welcomed back their erring member. Touched by the charity of Brother Anthony, they helped the boy make good his promise.

Francis of Assisi cherished a special affection for the dumb creatures of God's universe, the animals, the birds, the fish, even the insects. He loved and revered all the flying, the creeping, the crawling, the swimming things, calling them his little brothers and sisters. Often, he worked miracles through them.

However much his spiritual sons admired his spirit and strove to follow it, they could not believe that their Founder would relish the croaking of the frogs in the vicinity of the Montpellier Friary. So loud and so persistent was the unpleasing chorus, especially at night, that the Community were experiencing great difficulty in getting a reasonable amount of sleep in preparation for their day of prayer and toil.

On a certain evening the friars were discussing this matter in Brother Anthony's presence.

Already, the melancholy strains were beginning to issue from the fields and swamps of the neighborhood.

Anthony said nothing, but left the room and went out of doors. Believing that he was about to exercise his God-given powers of thaumaturge, the others followed him.

Addressing the frogs in their hiding-places, Anthony called out in a loud voice:

"Brother frogs! I command you to be silent!"

Instantaneously, the chorus died away.

Never again was it broken in the accustomed manner.

The Professor of Sacred Theology at the Montpellier Friary trained his brethren most carefully in the tactics they were to use against the Albigenses. He explained the falsity of the doctrines put forth by the sect, and showed them the best way of combating them. He was

thoroughly acquainted with the heresy, which by this time had reached the apex of its influence.

Not content with winning many disciples from the Church, the heretics were seizing faithful Catholics, who refused to join them, and torturing them. They imprisoned some; they reviled their women. They burned churches, profaned the sacred altar vessels, and trampled on the Sacred Hosts. Priests, monks, and nuns were made the butt of the most atrocious of these activities.

The doctrines propounded by the Albigenses were peculiarly repugnant to the honest and pure-minded Anthony. His preaching against them, begun at Montpellier, was to continue for the entire ten years of his missionary apostolate. His first endeavor was to win back the deluded Catholics. Usually, the burning zeal of his appeal, joined to the beauty and charm of his personality, effected numerous conversions.

Anthony believed, with all the ardor of his loving soul, that the august Mother of God, his Patroness and Protectress, had, upon her holy death, been assumed, body and soul into heaven, there to take her place beside her Divine Son.

In the Martyrology, in the Office of Prime, there was a passage which seemed to reflect doubt upon this.

Anthony was troubled by the reflection. Therefore, one day, when the Community bell rang for Prime, he became deeply troubled. Should he go to the choir—where his presence was required by the Rule—and listen to the reading of that passage, which was contrary to his belief, or should he remain away, because he could not subscribe to it?

Innocently, Anthony hesitated in his cell, not knowing which course to take. However, he did not have to make the difficult decision. That was done for him. A dazzling

light suddenly flooded the cell. It did not come from the sun.

Anthony, looking before him, saw his Blessed Lady, peerless in holiness and beauty, standing there.

She had come to console and reassure him, in his dilemma.

Enraptured by Her loveliness, Anthony did not take his eyes from Her. Then Her lovely lips unclosed, and he heard Her voice, a very echo of the heavenly choirs, say to him:

"Be assured, my son, that this body of mine, which has been the living Ark of the Incarnate Word, has been preserved from the corruption of the grave.

"Be equally assured that, three days after my death, it was carried on the wings of angels to the right hand of the Son of God, where I reign as Queen."

The beautiful Lady then vanished, leaving Anthony in a rapture of love and gratitude.

By this time, the exercises in chapel were over. There was no need to do more than acquaint his superiors with what had occurred.

When he had told them, truthfully and concisely, he said, in tones of solemn assurance:

"The august Mother of God has been assumed into Heaven and placed above the angelic choirs."

The Community revered Anthony even more than before after this revelation, thinking themselves singularly blessed in having Mary's favored son in their midst.

However, the time had come when the missionary was to leave them and pass on to another field.

His immediate theater of apostolate was the city of Toulouse, the ancient capital of Languedoc.

Even though his stay here was to be brief, it was to be pregnant with the proofs of God's good pleasure in his

humble and devoted servant, Brother Anthony de Bugli-  
oni.

Toulouse, the capital of the Department of Haute-Garonne, lay in the center of the vast plain of Gascony and Languedoc.

This majestic old city, constructed principally of red brick, occupied a position on both banks of the Garonne River, at the junction of two canals. It also had been a Roman stronghold in earlier days, called Tolosa. It had had its sacred temple, renowned for its treasures, hidden in a little pond on the premises. After the vicissitudes of conquest, it had been converted to Christianity by St. Saturnin, its first Bishop, who was martyred in A.D. 252.

Among the many stately edifices which adorned Toulouse when Anthony went there was the Romanesque church named in honor of this martyr-bishop. It was built in cruciform style, and had been consecrated in 1096. It was believed the most perfect Renaissance structure in France in that day.

Long before Anthony's advent to Toulouse the city had been renowned for its saintly and erudite scholars who had taught with love and zeal in its schools. Occupying a central position between the three Catholic nations, Spain, France, and Italy, and equally distant from Madrid, Paris, and Rome, Toulouse was situated at the foot of rambling hills which looked across to the summits of the Pyrenees and over the wide plains watered by the Garonne.

Toulouse cherished a strong devotion to St. Dominic, who had preached there. When Anthony reached this old city, he found the devotion still strong. Sad to say, the city, ruled by the impious Raymond VII, a traitor to the Church, had declined in prestige and become the stronghold of heresy.

Both Dominicans and Franciscans had labored in Tou-

louse under its saintly and apostolic bishop, Monsignor Foulques.

The city was still wealthy and important. From the moment of his arrival, Brother Anthony worked tirelessly to offset the efforts of the heretics. He held disputations by day and often by night, caring nothing for his bodily needs. He explained the Catholic doctrine to them and answered their questions with winning appeal. Few could resist his logic or his personal address. Many were converted as a result of his mission.

Working very hard for several months, Anthony was satisfied to know that he had done everything possible for God's cause before passing to another field of labor.

In September, 1225, one year after the start of his mission in France, he was appointed Superior, or Guardian, of the Franciscan Convent of Puy-en-Velay.

Largely because of its geographical configuration, Puy-en-Velay had so far remained immune from the Albigensian invasion which had ravaged the Province of Languedoc. Yet, because it was close to that Province, its faith was far from secure.

Anthony realized the seriousness of the threat, and he knew that his task at Puy must be to strengthen the faith of the people and make them alert to danger.

The simple mountain folk received their young apostle with joy and thankfulness. They believed that they were most favored by his coming, and that this young Brother would be their competent and zealous guide in difficult and perilous times.

## *Brother Anthony and the Notary*

**P**UY-EN-VELAY, a city whose name signified "volcanic cone," so titled because of the volcanic needles of rock in the vicinity, was the center of a fervent devotion to the Mother of God.

In its Romanesque Cathedral, begun in the sixth century, and built of black and white stone, was a miracle-working statue of the Virgin, wrought in black marble.

Pilgrims from many parts of the land climbed the steep flight of steps leading to this shrine. Unfortunately, not all the Catholics of the place were living up to their religious faith, nor did all honor the Holy Virgin by leading virtuous lives.

Puy had welcomed the friars before Anthony's coming. Several years before this time, Franciscan missionaries had preached here. The missions of the Friars Minor in northern France had been decided upon in the General Chapter of the Portiuncula, at Pentecost of 1217, and in the same Chapter were also decreed those of Spain, Germany, Hungary, Persia, and the Holy Land.

Francis of Assisi had reserved France as his field of activity, "Because," as he said, "there is greater veneration for the Body of the Lord in France than in all the other Catholic countries."

Francis had set out, accompanied by Brother Masseo, for the Kingdom of the Lilies. But, upon reaching Florence, at one stage of the journey, Cardinal Ugolino, his friend, had counseled him to give up his project and return to Umbria, "where your presence is needed."

Because of these earlier associations with the Friars Minor, Puy welcomed Brother Anthony de Buglioni with special enthusiasm. Another reason for their satisfaction over his visit was the fact that the townspeople had heard much about his noble character and missionary gifts.

They understood why his mission was needed right there—the nearness of the Albigenses was a reason for a strengthening of their devotion to their Faith.

Where once a Roman City, Anicium, with its temple to Jupiter Anicensis, had stood, Anthony opened his preaching mission.

From all parts of the hill country about Puy, people flocked to hear him. He was pleased at this. But he soon learned that a number of influential citizens of the town were leading scandalous lives.

Anthony's apostolate brought him into all sections of the city and, in particular, into every public place. It was to be expected that he should meet a number of these unfaithful Catholics. When he stopped to speak to them, he often met with success in his efforts to convert them, although sometimes his gentle overtures were met with disdain.

A certain notary of Puy was among the unfaithful ones. He regarded Anthony as a menace to his peace of mind, and took good care to try to avoid him. Anthony, however, had heard about this man, and he went out of his way to confront him.

Ascertaining which route the notary took on his way to and from his office, the missionary made it his business to be in that vicinity at that time.

At the first meeting of the two men, Anthony bowed to the notary.

The man was surprised and discomfited. But, since the priest made no attempt to speak to him, he believed the contact would end there.



But it did not end there.

A second time the two met, and again Anthony bowed, it seemed reverentially, to the notary.

This was very annoying to the man of no faith. He tried to avoid another meeting with Anthony. He could not, since it was necessary for him to walk through the streets.

At the third meeting, Anthony bowed so low to the other that the notary became enraged.

Each time the two had met, the notary had felt the burning glance of the servant of God fixed upon him. The glance seemed to penetrate the inmost recesses of his guilty soul. Anthony angered him, and he could scarcely restrain his displeasure. However, he believed that the friar would eventually tire of these unwelcome attentions, and leave him in peace.

Anthony did not leave him in peace. He went out of his way, day after day, to make certain of meeting the notary. For the first meetings, the priest had simply inclined his head before the man. But, on the final day, he knelt before him in the road.

The notary could no longer contain his bottled-up wrath.

He believed Anthony was making sport of him, and his feelings gave way under the tension.

In a fury, he screamed: "If I did not fear the judgment of God, I would run you through with my sword. Why do you make fun of me by kneeling at my feet in this manner?"

He paused and waited for Anthony's reaction to his outburst.

It came. And it was astounding to the notary.

"My brother, if you only knew the honor in store for you!

"I envy you your lot! I myself longed for the grace of martyrdom, but the Lord did not grant my desire. Now,

He has revealed to me that this grace is reserved for you.

"When that blessed hour arrives, I beg you, remember him who foretold it to you!"

Amazed by the prediction, although incredulous, the notary continued on his way.

He could not forget what he had heard from the lips of the young friar-missionary. Little by little, it made its further impression upon him. The people of Puy soon noticed that he had altered his way of life, and they grew to respect him as a decent citizen.

Several years passed, and Anthony's prophecy was fulfilled.

Wishing to atone for his past sinful life, the notary enrolled in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land under the leadership of Stephen III, Bishop of Puy. There he bravely professed the Christian Faith before the Mohammedans, as the Franciscan Protomartyrs had done some years before.

Sentenced to death, the one-time notary told the friar who attended him of Brother Anthony's prophecy at Puy-en-Velay. He died by the scimitar, resigned and faithful to the end.

The fame of the young missionary's holiness and deeds spread throughout the city, and persons from all walks of life approached him, to seek his counsel and prayers in their needs.

One of those who confided in him was a noblewoman of Puy, who was soon to become a mother. As she recommended herself and her little one to Anthony's prayers, he said to her: "Take courage, my sister, and rejoice, because God will give you a son who will be great in His Church. He will become a Friar Minor, and will die a martyr for the Faith."

The young mother received this declaration in perfect confidence. A little later, a son was born to her, and named

Filippo. His mother instructed him carefully in his religion and was happy when, as a mere youth, he asked permission to enter the Franciscan Order. It was gladly granted.

Eventually, Filippo went to the Orient as a friar-missionary.

There, with two thousand other Christians, he fell into the hands of the enemy. All received the death sentence.

Filippo requested the executioners to spare him until all his companions had paid the supreme penalty for their loyalty to God. The request was made so that he might encourage and console the others and ensure their fidelity to the end.

The Sultan granted it. However, the ruler, who was present at the executions, became infuriated by the exhortations of Friar Filippo and ordered that his fingernails be torn out.

This was done, but notwithstanding the horrible mutilation and its attendant agony, Filippo continued to encourage his comrades to the sacrifice.

The Sultan then commanded that the living skin be torn from the middle of the friar's body. This, too, was accomplished. But, Filippo still went on to speak, his body streaming with blood and his face contorted with pain.

Finally, the Sultan had his tongue cut out. Even then the brave-souled friar did not cease his mission. He continued to nod his head in token of spiritual aid to his friends.

Only when all the others had died by the sword of sacrifice did he stop. Then, withdrawing his capuche from his head, he knelt and offered his bared neck to the scimitar.

One well-directed stroke, and his head rolled in the sand.

So Anthony's prophecy was fulfilled.

The missionary had been no more than two months in Puy, the ancient capital of Berry, when he received an invitation to preach at Bourges, before a distinguished assemblage of prelates and others of high rank.

He accepted the invitation and went to Bourges at the appointed time.

His way lay across flat country to the city, which was situated at the confluence of the Yèvre and Auron Rivers. Here, once more, he trod the soil of an ancient Roman stronghold.

Bourges had been the capital of the Bituriges when Caesar had taken it in 52 B.C., despite the heroic resistance described in his Commentaries. It had subsequently become the chief city of Aquitania Prima, and was successively captured by Euric, King of the Visigoths; by Clovis; by Pepin The Short, and by the Normans. After a period of independence, it had passed into the control of France. In Caesar's time, Bourges was considered the most beautiful city in all Gaul. For this reason, Augustus had made it the metropolis of Aquitania.

Anthony preached to the prelates and other guests at the gathering. However, his audience, in good part, was due for a rude shock. As the fervent young orator proceeded in his discourse, holding his listeners spellbound by his eloquence, of a sudden he paused and fixed his gaze on one of the archbishops who sat beneath the rostrum.

"And now I shall speak to you, O mitred one!" he announced. Then he went on to rebuke the prelate openly for his lack of the virtues necessary and to be expected in a leader of the Church.

As Anthony continued, evidently under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, the archbishop's eyes grew moist. Soon the tears rolled down his cheeks.

At the close of the meeting he asked Anthony to receive

him in private. When the two men were closeted together, the prelate asked and received from Anthony the explicit help he needed for the amendment of his life. He accepted the counsel humbly and put it into practice in his after life, so winning the esteem of those who had previously been scandalized by his laxity.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni was particularly solicitous for the ministers of the altar. He frequently pointed out to prelates and priests the virtues proper to their exalted vocation, and lovingly portrayed the Divine Priest, Jesus Christ, as the Model of all those called to God's service in the Church.

"Blessed is the prelate who can truthfully apply to himself the words of the Master: 'I am the Good Shepherd,' " Anthony told the prelates. . . . He then enumerated the qualities which, he declared, were essential for them: Chastity of life; knowledge of the Scriptures; discipline of subjects; eloquence of speech; perseverance in prayer; a solicitous care for the souls entrusted to their charge.

In the troubled period of history in which Francis' young son preached, the disorders which ravaged society did not exclude the clergy, many of whom were setting a bad example to their people.

Anthony preached fearlessly against this evil, which pressed sorely on his apostolic heart, at the same time showing his audiences the Perfect Priest, Jesus Christ, and urging priests to model their lives on His.

At the orders of his superiors, Anthony continued his mission in this locality until September, 1226, at which time the Provincial Chapter of his Order was held.

In this Chapter, Anthony was elected Custos of Limoges. The little Province of Limoges rose in a crescent on the right bank of the Ville and Cité. Its narrow streets were guarded by broad ramparts.

When its Roman masters had established the town,

they had built not alone palaces, baths, and an arena, but they had also created a senate and authorized a "mint."

Tradition had it that St. Martial, who introduced Christianity into this Province, was the little boy on whose head Christ had laid His hand when He said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." The head of the Saint was preserved in a shrine behind the high altar in the Church of St. Michel-des-Lions.

Another Saint who had left his impress upon the people of Limoges was St. Eligius, who was born toward the close of the sixth century. He was a skilled goldsmith, and eventually became artificer to Kings Clothair and Dagobert. However, he had resigned his craft to study for the Church, and, in the zenith of his career became bishop, a prelate beloved by his people. Limoges traced its fame and fortune as a center of goldsmiths to his influence.

In the tenth century, Limoges began to be grouped about the tomb of St. Martial, in rivalry with the city grouped about the Cathedral. Each ville had its own ramparts, its own overlord, and its own system of administration. The Cité was governed by a bishop, and the Ville, or Château, by the Viscounts of Limoges.

When Brother Anthony came to the old city, a bridge was under construction over the river, on the ancient Roman foundations.

Limoges, because it was protected by mountains, had not yielded to the efforts of the heretics. Anthony was happy to preach and labor for these simple, God-fearing Catholics, people faithful to their Church and moral in their lives.

At Limoges, Anthony's gift of reading the secrets of hearts was revealed in significant ways. He seemed to have no need to be told what was troubling many who came to him for spiritual help, but spoke to them of their

difficulties before they had confided in him.

A few years before this time, the friars had come to Limoges, one of the oldest French towns, to take up residence. They had established their friary near the Church of St. Paul.

Anthony often preached in this church, and it was always crowded to capacity on these occasions. When he appeared in the street, crowds ran after him, to ask his blessing and to touch the hem of his robe or his sleeve.

In the Church of St. Pierre-du-Queyraix, in Limoges, an incident took place which once more testified to the extraordinary favors granted by Heaven to Brother Anthony de Buglioni.

As he was preaching from the pulpit of this church, Anthony suddenly bethought himself that he had been appointed to chant in his Community Chapel at that very hour.

He stopped short in his sermon, and remained silent, standing there for some time. The congregation did not know what to think of this singular circumstance. All, however, felt that the young priest was the recipient of a heavenly favor unknown to them.

They waited in breathless suspense until Anthony took up the thread of his interrupted sermon, and went on to the end, as if nothing unusual had occurred.

What the congregation could not know was that Anthony, during that period of silence, had appeared in the convent choir in his Monastery, and had fulfilled his assignment there.

God had granted him the miracle of bilocation.

On the anniversary of the dead, the young missionary preached in the Benedictine Monastery of Limoges. He chose as text: "In the Evening There Shall Be Weeping, But in the Morning, Gladness."

His practical application of the text to the everyday

lives of the people touched all the hearts in the vast audience. On the following day, he preached to the monks of the Monastery on the theme: "Who Will Give Me the Wings of a Dove, and I Will Fly, and Be At Rest?"

Anthony pictured the religious life as the vocation of perfect peace and joy. Doubtless his recollections of his cloistered life in the Monastery of Santa Cruz, at Coimbra, were strong within him at the moment.

" 'Who Will Give Me the Wings of a Dove, and I Will Fly, and Be At Rest?'

"Such is the cry of a soul weary of this world and longing for the solitude and peace of the religious life. It is of the religious life that the Prophet Jeremiah spoke, when he said: 'Leave the cities, ye that dwell in Moab, and dwell in the rock: and be ye like the dove that makes her nest in the mouth of the hole in the highest place.' 'Leave the cities,' that is, the sins and vices which dishonor, and the tumult which prevents the soul from raising herself to God, and often from thinking of Him.

" 'Leave the cities,' for it is written: 'I have seen the iniquity and contradictions in the city. Day and night shall iniquity surround it upon its walls: and in the midst thereof are labor and injustice. And usury and deceits have not departed from its streets.' There is to be found iniquity against God and man: contradiction against the preacher of truth; labor in the ambitious cares of the world; injustice in its dealings; knavery and usury in its business transactions. 'Ye that dwell in Moab,' that is, in the world which is seated in pride, as the city of Moab. All is pride in the world; pride of the intellect, which refuses to humble itself before God; pride of the will, which refuses to submit to the Will of God; pride of the senses, which rebel against reason and dominate it. . . .

"But, to leave the world, to live remote from the tumult of cities, to keep oneself unspotted from their vices, is not



sufficient for the religious soul. Hence, the Prophet adds:

“ ‘Dwell in the rock.’ Now, this rock is Jesus Christ. Establish yourself in Him; let Him be the constant theme of your thoughts, the object of your affections. Jacob reposed on a stone in the wilderness, and, while he slept, he saw the heavens opened, and he conversed with angels, receiving a blessing from the Lord. Thus will it be with those who place their entire trust in Jesus Christ. They will be favored with heavenly visions; they will live in the company of angels; they will be blessed as Jacob was, ‘to the north and south, to the east and west.’ To the north, which is the Divine Breath, mortifying the flesh and its concupiscences; to the east, which is the light of faith and the merit of good works; to the south, which is the full meridian splendor of wisdom and charity; to the west, which is the burial of the old man with his vices. But, as to the soul which does not repose on this rock, it cannot expect to be blessed by the Lord.

“ ‘And be ye like the dove that maketh her nest in the mouth of the hole of the highest place.’ If Jesus Christ is the rock, the hole in the rock, in which the religious soul is to seek shelter and take up her abode, is the wound in the side of Jesus Christ. This is the safe harbor of refuge, to which the Divine Spouse calls the religious soul when He speaks to her in the words of the Canticle: ‘Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come, O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the deep hollow of the wall.’

“The Divine Spouse speaks of the numberless clefts of the rock, but He also speaks of the deep hollow. There were, indeed, in His Body, numberless wounds, and one deep wound in His side: this leads to the Heart, and it is hither He calls the soul He has espoused. To her He extends His arms; to her He opens wide His Sacred Side and Divine Heart, that she may come and dwell therein. By retiring into the clefts of this rock, the dove is safe

from the pursuit of birds of prey and, at the same time, she prepares for herself a quiet refuge where she may calmly repose and coo in peace. So the religious soul finds in the Heart of Jesus a secure refuge against the wiles and attacks of Satan, and a delightful retreat.

“However, we must not merely rest at the entrance to the hole in the rock; we must penetrate its depths. At the mouth of the deep hollow, at the mouth of the Wound in His Side we shall, indeed, find the Precious Blood Which has redeemed us. This Blood pleads for us and demands mercy for us. But, the religious soul must not stay at the entrance. When she has heard and understood the Voice of the Divine Blood, she must hasten to the very source from which it springs, into the innermost sanctuary of the Heart of Jesus. There she will find light, peace, and ineffable consolations.”

“‘And be ye like the dove that makes her nest in the deep hollow of the rock.’ The dove builds her nest with little pieces of straw which the world tramples under its feet. They are the virtues practiced by thy Saviour and thy Spouse, of which He Himself has set thee an example: humility, meekness, poverty, patience, and mortification. The world despises them as useless pieces of straw; nevertheless, they will be for thee the material wherewith to construct thy dwelling-place forever, in the profound hollow of the rock, in the Heart of Jesus.”

Anthony’s audience, profoundly touched by his discourse, begged him to remain awhile with them and speak further of the things of God.

Anthony, however, escaped as soon as possible, to find his own place . . . “to the deep hollow of the rock . . . into the innermost sanctuary of the Heart of Jesus.”

## X

---

### *The Thaumaturge*

**A**T LIMOGES, as elsewhere in his mission field, Anthony preached in the open, now in crowded squares, now in little back streets. All the people were eager to see and hear him, many even coming from outlying districts to swell his audiences.

In the midst of his sermon, on one occasion, a heavy shower of rain suddenly descended. When they saw it, the people in the street believed they would be drenched before they could reach their homes.

To their amazement, they found that not one drop of rain wet them, although the shower continued for some time.

Another day, when the missionary was speaking from a platform in the open, with his hearers grouped closely around it, the platform collapsed. However, this did not alarm anyone present, because, a few moments before, Anthony had told them:

“While I am speaking to you, the devil will cause this platform to collapse. But, I assure you, no one will be injured.”

A woman of Limoges, who had attended one of Anthony's sermons, had left her young child at home. On her return to her house, after the preaching, she discovered that the child had fallen into a cauldron of boiling water, which someone had left unguarded while out of the room.

As she rushed to rescue the little one, certain that it would have perished, the frantic mother's grief was changed to joy. For, she found the child unharmed, smiling and toying with the water.

The thaumaturgic power of Brother Anthony de Bugli-  
oni had saved the little one.

Scarcely had the report of these wonders spread throughout the city than another incident, equally astounding, occurred.

Another woman of the city, having attended Anthony's preaching, returned to her home to find her child, whom she had left in apparent health, dead.

Secure in her belief that the missionary could restore the child to life, she ran to him and told him of the tragedy, asking him to give her little one back to her.

Anthony reassured her and bade her go home, telling her that she would find the child alive and well.

Rejoicing, the trusting mother hurried back, and found that the missionary had spoken truly.

Her child had been restored to her by the Wonder-Worker of Limoges.

During his stay in the city, Brother Anthony rested from his missionary labors at certain periods, employing his free time in the composition of sermons. During the last years of his life, he revised these sermons at Padua.

Extraordinary fruits of conversion had attended Anthony's apostolate at Limoges. Now he began to feel as his Founder had so often felt—a need of solitude and rest, in order to recollect himself in prayer.

In the neighborhood of Brieu, near Limoges, there was a pleasant valley. It was separated from the adjacent plains by little undulations in the soil. It was enclosed on all sides by low hills, which rendered its solitude more profound. Forests of oaks and chestnuts covered the terrain, so that it assured to Anthony the seclusion he desired.

In this sheltered spot, in the year 585, Gunewald had been proclaimed King of Aquitania. In the center of the town was the Romanesque Church of St. Martin, begun in the eleventh century.

Brieu was a market center whose superlative fruits and vegetables, its chestnuts, peas, and truffles, had won for it an extensive trade with the outlying districts.

In the midst of this peaceful valley a benefactor of the Franciscans had enabled them to build a small convent by supplying the means for the construction.

To this convent Anthony now went.

With the consent of the friars residing in the house, he built a little cell, a short distance away. At the foot of the rocks he arranged a basin, to catch the water from a fountain on the premises.

In this grotto, as at Montepaolo, Anthony spent some time in meditation and penitential exercises, meanwhile acting as Superior of the convent.

The Brieu friars soon experienced the miraculous power of their revered Father Guardian.

It happened that one day the Community lacked the necessary food for the daily meals. Anthony, told of the embarrassment, confided the difficulty to a good woman who occasionally visited the convent to consult the Brothers. He begged her to send the Community a little supply of vegetables.

The woman went home and ordered her maidservant to go to the kitchen garden and gather a supply.

Because the rain was falling heavily just then, the maid begged to be excused from going. However, she yielded to her mistress' plea, went into the garden, and gathered the vegetables.

Then, carrying out further orders, she started for the friary, which was located some distance away, carrying the vegetables in a large basket.

The rain continued to fall in torrents as she went along. Yet, from the time of her trip to the garden until she reached the friary, she remained quite dry. This was also the case on her trip home.

As Anthony was journeying from Limoges to attend the General Chapter of the Order, he stopped along the way to take dinner with a poor woman, who had begged for the favor. A friar companion accompanied him.

In her haste to prepare the meal for her guests, the woman forgot to close the wine cask, after drawing off a part of its contents. As a result, unknown to her, the rest of the wine was spilled out on the floor.

As she was apologizing profusely to Anthony because she found that she could not replenish the glasses with the wine, a crystal goblet, loaned to her by a neighbor for the occasion, was accidentally struck by Anthony's companion. Broken at its base, it flew across the table. Fortunately, it did not strike anyone.

However, the poor woman was greatly distressed. The goblet did not belong to her, and crystal glasses were rare in that day, and therefore of great value.

She opened her eyes very wide when Anthony, after taking the broken goblet in his hand and praying over it, handed it to her quite whole, as it was before the accident.

A moment later, happening to notice the wine bottle, which had been empty, she saw that it was filled with wine. When tasted, this wine proved to be of a most delicious flavor.

The story went about that Anthony's prayer had restored the hair of a woman whose husband, in a rage when she had returned home late after attending Anthony's preaching, had torn some of it from her head. Rumor said that the husband was converted by this miracle, and had, in consequence of it, become a friend of the Franciscans.

At this time the missionary accepted an invitation from a nobleman who resided in the vicinity where he was conducting his mission.

This nobleman, the Lord of Chateauneuf, lived in one of the old mansions which had sprung up in Limoges near an old Benedictine monastery.

This visit was to bring to Anthony the most marvelous favor of the many that God had bestowed upon him in the past and would bestow upon him in the future.

One night during the visit, after the lord had retired to his room for the night, Anthony knelt in vigil of prayer in the chamber assigned to him.

As he prayed, suddenly a brilliant light shone about him.

In the midst of this extraordinary illumination, Anthony saw a radiant and exquisitely beautiful Child, standing before him.

The Divine Infant held out Its little arms to the young friar.

At the invitation, Anthony clasped Him to his heart.

As he lovingly caressed the Child, Anthony cried over and over:

"My God! My God!"

As he received and gave these rapturous caresses, Anthony failed to notice that his host, who had happened to be restless and was walking through the corridors, had opened the door of Anthony's room and looked in. He had seen a mysterious light streaming from beneath the threshold and wondered what it could be.

He was amazed and delighted to see the Divine Infant in the arms of Anthony. In the morning, he told Anthony what he had done and seen.

Anthony was embarrassed to find that his rendezvous with his Lord had been discovered—feeling utterly unworthy of it.

He cautioned his kind host not to mention the miracle —“at least, not during my lifetime!”

The Lord of Chateauneuf promised to keep the secret, and he did so. Only on the death of Anthony, after ten short years of missionary labors, did he reveal it.

While staying in the cave at Brieu, Anthony received the saddest of all messages.

This was the word of the death of his blessed Founder, Francis of Assisi.

The Poverello, who bore in his mortified body the marks of the Five Wounds of his Lord, had expired peacefully at his beloved Portiuncula, on the evening of October 3 of that year, 1226.

Because of the depressed state of Francis' health, his brethren were not greatly surprised by the news. Yet it was a great shock to them, for to Francis all the friars had looked for guidance, strength, and comfort in their lives of renunciation and apostolic toil.

The painful news was announced by Brother Elias Bombarone in a circular letter sent to all the houses of the Order.

As Vicar General, this sorrowful duty had fallen to the lot of Brother Elias, who, while he entertained ideas not completely in conformity with those of his Founder in relation to the strict observance of Poverty in the Order, loved and revered Francis as a man of sublime ideals and great holiness of life.

Brother Elias wrote to the Brothers in part as follows:

As I begin to speak, I sigh, and with good right; sorrow pervades my soul as a torrent which overwhelms me.

Alas! The trial I feared has fallen upon me, and upon all of you.

Far from us, now, is he who was our consolation;



the shepherd who carried us in his arms like sheep has left us for a distant country.

Dear to God and men, he has ascended into the habitations of light. After having taught us the laws of knowledge and life, he has left us the testament of his peace. We should rejoice for him, but weep for ourselves who, without him, find ourselves in the darkness and shadows of death. . . .

You, therefore, dearly beloved Brothers, to whom these present letters come, follow the example of the Israelite people, who wept for Moses and Aaron, their illustrious leaders, giving vent to their tears. Because, although it is fitting to rejoice with Francis, it is also fitting to mourn him from the moment when, not dying, but flying to the heavenly crowns, he has been taken from the midst of those whom he consoled in every trial, and we are left orphans, without a father.

But, as it is written: "To your care the poor are left; you will be the help of the orphan," so, most dear brethren, we all pray, consistently, that if the earthen vase of our Father has been broken in the valley of the sons of Adam, so the Sovereign Maker will give us another father, who will be a new Mac-cabeus, and will know how to guide our people in the combats and trials of the spirit.

All the Friars Minor mourned their Father in God, while rejoicing in his freedom from all toil and pain.

Francis had suffered great physical trials in the final days of his life. His eyes had failed him, and being badly diseased, they had caused him extreme pain. With Brother Elias' permission—for Francis would make no such decision for himself—the Papal physician had been requisitioned, to try to ease his misery.

The remedy employed should have tortured the patient.

Yet, Francis felt no pain, for, as he saw the red-hot iron coming close to his forehead, he addressed the fire, saying to it:

"O, Brother Fire, amongst all creatures the most noble, be courteous to me in this hour, for I have ever loved thee and ever will love thee for love of Him Who created thee!"

So adjured, Brother Fire had responded graciously to the plea. The physician applied the instrument of torment to each side of Francis' head in turn, with no effect whatsoever upon him.

His brethren, unable to endure the sight of what they believed would be the cruel agony of their Father, had left the room before the operation was begun.

When they returned, they were overjoyed to learn that Francis had felt no pain or heat whatsoever.

Lovingly, he chided them for what he termed their want of faith . . . "O, weak-spirited, and of little faith, why did you go away? In truth, I tell you, I felt no pain or sense of heat, so that, if I am not well burned, the surgeon may burn me better."

Later, a second operation had been performed, in the hope of curing the diseased eyes. Holes were pierced in Francis' ears with a heated awl, and the veins in his temples were opened, to let blood. These atrocious measures, however, did not help. Mercifully, Francis was spared all suffering, as before.

The Herald of the Great King had not stopped working for God until his tired body would no longer obey the dictates of his will. In the late spring of that year he had suffered a serious hemorrhage, yet he had rallied from its effects.

Brother Elias had gone to Siena, where Francis was at the time, and had seen to it that the Founder was taken "home" to Assisi. The city authorities agreed that the

Poverello should be conveyed to the Bishop's residence, knowing that he well merited this consideration. Francis wished for no honors, but he could not well decline the invitation. However, since the doctor had told him that his death would occur in September, or at the latest, in early October, he had asked and obtained his request to be removed to the Portiuncula.

He had already welcomed Sister Death, whom he called the Angel of Deliverance, with a canticle such as only he could compose:

Praised be my Lord for our Sister, the bodily death,  
From whom no living man can flee.  
Woe to them that die in mortal sin,  
Blessed those who shall find themselves in Thy Most  
Holy Will,  
For the second death shall do them no ill.

As the bearers carried their light burden toward the Portiuncula, Francis bade them set the litter down, with his face turned toward Assisi, that he might look upon the beloved little city for the last time. He could not look with the vision of perfect health, for he was blind. But in spirit he saw and blessed Assisi, lifting his hand above it as he prayed:

Lord, whereas of olden time this city was, as I believe, a place and dwelling of wicked men, now I see that, because of Thine abundant mercy in the time that it pleased Thee, Thou hast marvelously shown forth in her the multitude of Thy mercies, and, because of Thine Own goodness, has taken her to Thyself, to be the place and dwelling of those who should acknowledge Thee in truth, and give glory to Thy Holy Name and make manifest to all Christian peo-

ple the sweet odor of good fame, of holy life, of the truest Gospel teaching and perfection.

I beseech Thee, therefore, O Lord Jesus Christ, Father of Mercies, that Thou consider not our ingratitude, but be mindful always of Thine Own most abundant tenderness which Thou hast shown forth in her, that she may ever be the place and dwelling of those who acknowledge Thee truly and glorify Thy blessed and most glorious Name, forever and ever. Amen.

In his dying hours, Francis had dictated his Last Will and Testament which he bequeathed to his spiritual family.

He had no property to leave them; his bequests were, rather, tender admonitions and counsels to a fervent, pure, and generous life, spent in the love and poverty of Christ.

Sister Clara also, with her companions, received their Father's last testament. In it, he exhorted them:

I, Little Brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of Jesus Christ, Our Most High Lord, and His Most Holy Mother, and to persevere therein until the end.

And I beseech you all, my ladies, and counsel you to live always in this most holy life and poverty. And, watch yourselves well, that you in nowise depart from it through the teaching or advice of anyone.

In his last moments of life, Francis had begged to be laid on the floor, stripped of his garments, so that the poverty he had loved and fostered might be complete in him.

At the command of his Superior, a poor tunic was laid

upon him as he lay there on the hard boards, breathing his last.

It was evening when Sister Death came for her appointment with Francis.

As he sensed her approach, he assayed, in feeble voice, to recite the One Hundred Forty-Fifth Psalm: "With my voice I have cried to the Lord . . . The just wait for me, until Thou reward me."

Then Francis went away from the Portiuncula, his most cherished earthly home, and his brethren knelt in tears beside his emaciated body.

The Poverello of Assisi was temporarily enshrined in the little Church of St. George, in Assisi, to await the time when a more fitting tomb could be prepared for him.

As, little by little, the account of his last days on earth and the hallowed souvenirs of those who had attended his deathbed were made known, all the Friars Minor, in all the friaries of the Order, received them reverently, with sorrowing hearts, but with a holy pride in the sanctity and achievements of their Founder.

No member of the Order was more deeply moved by these souvenirs than Brother Anthony de Buglioni.

All the joy and peace he had experienced in his life as a Friar Minor he attributed to Francis of Assisi, after God.

Francis was no more on earth. But his magnificent work would go on and endure, together with the memory of his selfless ministrations to souls, the fruit of his marvelous love of God.

## XI

---

### *Padua and the Usurers*

**H**IS mission in France completed, Brother Anthony de Buglioni started for Italy. His destination was Rome, where he hoped to arrive in time to take part in the exercises of Holy Week.

He reached the Eternal City in good time. He found it crowded to overflowing with religious pilgrims, representing practically every nation, race, and tongue.

Anthony's holiness of life and his extraordinary gifts were well known in Rome. It was very difficult for him to accept the adulation of churchmen and the laity; therefore, as soon as possible, he went to greet the Holy Father, Pope Gregory IX, who had ascended the Papal Throne a few days before.

Anthony rejoiced to know that this Pontiff, as Cardinal Ugolino, of Ostia, had befriended the Friars Minor in many ways.

On one occasion, he had visited the Portiuncula during a conference held by the friars. With him was a group of distinguished prelates.

When the future Pope saw that the followers of Francis of Assisi slept on beds of straw and took their meals from the bare earth, he was overcome with emotion. With tears in his eyes he had exclaimed:

"How will it go with us, who live luxuriously, day after day, in superfluity and delights?"

In common with Francis of Assisi, Cardinal Ugolino had written the First Rule of the Order of the Penitential Brotherhood, or Third Order of Franciscans. This Rule was the foundation of the one later drawn up in 1228. It obligated the members, whether clerics or the laity, to live as Brothers and Sisters of Penance in their homes, performing works of piety and living in a Christian manner. Many noblemen had joined the Third Order, adopting the rough robe of its members in their eagerness to live as the Poverello of Assisi had counseled.

Pope Gregory IX had received his education in the Universities of Paris and Bologna. He could well appreciate the rare endowment of the young friar who now approached him in a spirit of filial devotion.

The Pope was a trained diplomat. He had served as Papal Chamberlain, as Arch-Priest of St. Peter's, as Cardinal Deacon of St. Eustachio, and as Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia and Velletri. As Papal Delegate he had carried out important missions to Germany in the role of mediator between the two contenders for the German throne after the death of Henry VI.

Gregory IX had proved himself the devoted friend of the Founder of the Order of Preachers, Dominic Guzman, and had introduced Dominic to Francis of Assisi. This introduction brought about a warm and sustained friendship between the two Founders, as well as between their respective spiritual sons, Dominicans and Franciscans.

This was the illustrious Pope who welcomed Anthony, after having first commissioned him to preach on Easter Sunday before a distinguished gathering.

The group Anthony addressed included illustrious personages from many countries, most of them speaking only their mother tongue.

Although Anthony preached in but one tongue, he was perfectly understood by everyone in his audience.

Pope Gregory IX sat at the feet of the gifted young son of the Poverello of Assisi, bending his hoary head that he might hear every word. The Pope was eighty years of age, yet still vigorous in health and intellect.

Anthony preached on his favorite subject—the Passion of Jesus Christ. Like an archangel he seemed to those who watched and listened. So feelingly did he paint a picture of Christ's sorrows and sufferings that there were few dry eyes in the assemblage when he had finished.

Then the Holy Father rose and expressed his warm appreciation of the discourse.

While all present gave careful attention to the words of the Spiritual Father of Christendom, the Pontiff declared that the young orator, by reason of his inspired knowledge of the Scriptures, was "a living Ark of the Testament."

Aside, the Pope pleaded with Anthony: "Stay here with Us, and continue to enlighten Us!"

Anthony humbly thanked His Holiness for his consideration, but begged to be excused from the honor which, he explained, would detach him from his beloved missionary labors.

Because, too, he wished to retire from the bustle and distraction of crowds long enough to make a spiritual retreat, he petitioned the Holy Father: "I beg Your Holiness to permit me to depart, so that I may retire into solitude for a while."

Gregory understood. He knew enough about the Franciscan way of life to be able to appreciate this yearning on the part of Anthony.

He gave the desired permission, although reluctantly.

Anthony gladly availed himself of it. He went to a remote spot in the Italian hills, and there entered into retreat.

He did not know that many of those who had heard his latest sermon had also entered into themselves, even



scourging themselves in atonement for their worldly lives.

There came the General Chapter of the Franciscan Order, which opened on May 30, 1227.

In this Chapter, Anthony was elected Provincial of the Province of Bologna. However, he was still free to combine his preaching apostolate throughout northern Italy with the duties of his new office.

Wherever he went, he preached vigorously against heresy, and succeeded in gathering back into the fold of the Church many lapsed Catholics. He continued this work, which he dearly loved, up to the end of 1227. For a while his headquarters were at Gemona. But, when the spring flowers began to enamel the land, he left that city and, passing through Treviso and Venice, preached in all the adjacent towns.

During 1228 he evangelized the entire Venetian Province, preaching the Advent sermon in the city of Florence.

In that city the report was circulated that Anthony had performed a striking miracle during his stay.

A distinguished Florentine gentleman had died, and Anthony was assigned to deliver the funeral discourse. He went to the services, and preached, taking as his text: "Where Thy Treasure Is, There Is Thy Heart, Also."

In the midst of the discourse, he came to an abrupt pause. Then, in tones of solemn assurance, he said:

"This rich man is dead, and his soul is buried in hell!

"Go! Open his coffers, and you will find his heart!"

The stupefied relatives of the deceased did as Anthony bade them.

They went to the treasure chest and opened it.

They were horrified to see, reposing in the midst of the gold pieces, the heart of the man who, although rich in the treasures of earth, had died poor in the things of heaven.

Anthony went on to Padua, one of Italy's richest cities in that day. Padua was seated on the Bacchiglione River, a

branch of the Po, which flowed through it in several rivulets. Over the various arms of the main branch were bridges, some dating from the Roman occupation. These bridges furnished promenades for the people.

Under the Emperor Augustus, Padua, then the third city of the Roman Empire, had also been one of the wealthiest cities of Upper Italy. Padua had witnessed many fiercely fought battles on her soil—sacked by Goths and Huns, it had finally been wrested from the Longobardi by Charlemagne. Five hundred noble knights were said to have dwelled within its walls in those early days, each of whom was believed to have been worth a fortune.

Because of its unprotected position, Padua had suffered at the hands of every horde of barbarians sweeping down over the Alps. These invaders had destroyed much of the city's early splendor, but a new and more beautiful city had arisen on the foundations of the old. Padua was one of the first Roman towns to wrest herself free from the imperial rule.

To this rich and populous city Brother Anthony de Buglioni went, in all the fervor and grace of his God-given vocation.

His eager eyes rested on the low skyline of Padua; on its many crowded buildings, all roofed with cupolas; on the narrow canals crossing the several arms of the Bacchiglione, and the Roman bridges spanning them.

A compact city, lying in one of the richest garden plains of Italy, Padua's seven gates beckoned to the young friar.

He opened his mission at once. Sometimes he spoke to the throngs gathered in the Piazza delle Erbe, sometimes in the Piazza dei Frutti, with their arcaded streets and quaint houses that threw weird shadows beneath them.

Like his Founder, Anthony loved the beauties of the landscape. Here was beauty to ravish his poetic heart. The plain in which Padua lay was backed by the Euganean

hills. The city was virtually buried in gardens and vineyards; its verdure was delightful. Above its high walls, the tall towers and many domes of the city lent to it a majestic aspect.

Anthony crossed the Bacchiglione frequently, by one or other of its bridges, walking beneath old windmills and overhanging houses, along a chestnut-bordered path into the town proper.

The streets of Padua were narrow; the arcaded walks ran along their sides, beneath weather-stained buildings. These promenades afforded grateful protection from the winter storms and the summer suns.

Anthony soon knew Padua by heart, particularly her stately old palaces, each having its spacious courtyard and radiant flower beds. The most picturesque of these were located in the center of the town. The principal churches stood in wide-open spaces, their surroundings affording a fresh and fragrant atmosphere.

Prominent among them was the old Cathedral of San Rufino.

Despite all this exterior charm, Anthony well knew that Padua was a wicked city, that it suffered from many evils, and that his mission here would necessarily be strenuous. However, he was happy to be of service to souls. He believed that the ideals of Francis of Assisi, which he intended to preach, would bring about a great transformation for the better. He was determined not to spare himself to achieve this goal.

When it became known that the famous young friar had arrived in Padua, all the people hurried to see and hear him. So important did the Paduans consider this visit that business houses, the courts, and labor agencies in general were closed, so that no one might miss the chance to assist at Anthony's preaching.

For a time Anthony preached in the churches of Padua.

But soon they were not nearly spacious enough to admit all who wished accommodation. Therefore, Anthony resumed his preaching in the open.

Immense throngs gathered about him, sometimes approximating as many as 30,000 persons. Anthony held the rapt attention of his audiences as he addressed his message to them with winning persuasion, now and then reminding them of the punishment which awaits sinners.

When he had finished his sermon, Anthony was weak in body and drenched with sweat. But the crowd, not noticing his condition, would rush upon him, trying to touch his robe or his hand. Some even went so far as to clip off tiny pieces of his tunic, to keep as relics.

This could not go on without positive danger to Anthony's health, even to his life. Therefore, a bodyguard of stalwart young men of Padua was assigned to guard him wherever he went in the city, particularly during his preaching.

The fruits of this apostolate were tremendous. Anthony was overjoyed to observe that the city soon assumed a wholly different character from its former one. Men and women of sinful lives were changed for the better; the confessionals of Padua were besieged. In one month only of Anthony's mission, a miracle of grace had been wrought.

During these fruitful days of his apostolate, the young missionary met numerous persons who asked for counsel. He dealt privately with each one, and answered every plea for help.

One of Anthony's principal preoccupations concerned the loan sharks of Padua, who had long made it a practice to fleece the poor out of their last coins, even confiscating their homes, their clothing, and having them thrown into jail, where they languished without hope of release.

The unjust rate of interest exacted by these rapacious

men sometimes scaled as high as sixty per cent. No pleading could soften the usurers' hearts. That is—until Anthony came on the scene.

The vice was too well organized to be routed at once, without a strenuous fight. Anthony began the fight as soon as he became aware of the evil. Little by little, he succeeded in bringing about a better order of things.

Later, as a result of his fearless crusade, Padua passed a law in favor of poor debtors, forbidding their creditors to imprison them if they had given over all their property in part payment of their debt.

Preaching against the usurers, Anthony said, on one occasion:

This vile sect swarms around us. The lion shakes his mane, which is the symbol of his strength; his breath smells. So does the usurers'. These men are indomitably proud; they fear neither God nor men; their breath is pestiferous and tainted with injustice and fraud.

They devour the substance of the poor; they rob convents and the Church of the gifts offered by the faithful. They leave their victims to die in absolute misery and want. . . .

Some, still timid, hide in the dark, like serpents concealed amidst the grass; others act shamelessly in the open, but in a restricted way; still others have neither shame nor remorse. These last are the most cruel and unrepentant; if they do not return what they have won by illicit means, they will be everlastingly damned.

The guilty men shrank before the open gaze of the young apostle. Many forsook their wickedness, but others went on as before, meriting the scorn of all the good people of Padua.

In the confessional, where he spent long hours, Anthony was brought face to face with strange and sorrowful problems of all kinds.

One day, as he was hearing confessions in one of the Paduan churches, a man named Leonardo visited his confessional.

This man had heard one of the missionary's sermons. Touched by it, he had repented of a vicious deed, perpetrated against his mother. Quarreling with her, he had become enraged, and, throwing her to the floor, had kicked her.

Leonardo confessed his sin to Anthony.

The confessor could not but recall his own mother, a saintly and tender-hearted guardian of her child, and, of course, he recalled the Mother of the Franciscan Order, Mary Immaculate.

Thinking more of the poor woman who had suffered the injury than of her son, his penitent, Anthony forgot that the latter was only a poor country lout, likely to take things heard literally.

He told Leonardo: "The foot that would kick a mother deserves to be cut off."

Leonardo got his penance—a stiff one, as he deserved—and went home.

He went to a cupboard in the kitchen of the house, and took from it a hatchet which he used to chop wood.

Then, without deliberating on what he was about to do, he sat down on the floor, and, with one swift stroke, cut off the foot that had committed the wrong.

His mother, coming into the room, and seeing her son lying in a pool of blood, one foot detached from its leg, raised a great outcry.

She bade Leonardo tell her why he had done this terrible thing.

He told her.

A friar named Anthony, to whom he had been to confession that afternoon, was the instigator of the deed.

Throwing her shawl over her head, the distraught woman ran off, bewailing her son's mutilation, to find Anthony.

She found him in the friary. At once she broke into recriminations against him, accusing him of a horrid crime, and asking him what he was going to do about it.

Although she had heard about the miracles performed by the young friar before her, she probably had no thought that he would or could do "something about it," and that something an act of the supernatural order.

Accompanying the embittered woman back to her home, Anthony entered, and found Leonardo in the same position in which his mother had left him.

By this time he fully realized what he had done, and he was in a sullen, angry mood.

When he saw the priest with his mother, he scowled deeply. Before he had time to make any remark, he saw, with bated breath, that Anthony took up the detached foot, fitted it to its bleeding stump, then made the Sign of the Cross over it.

Instantaneously, the bones knit together, the flesh became firm and whole, and the injured leg assumed a perfectly normal appearance, as it had been before the accident.

Leonardo, amazed and incredulous, rose to his feet, took a few steps, then fell on his knees before Anthony, giving thanks for the miracle.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni had performed great wonders in the cities in which he had preached. But, in Padua these triumphs became more numerous, and in some instances more significant.

Few could resist Anthony's charm of personality and his euphonious voice, together with his irrefutable philosophy

and the purity of his manners. Invariably, his sermons were a magnet which drew notorious sinners to amendment of their lives.

In a forest on the outskirts of Padua there lived a gang of robbers. It was their evil custom to watch for travelers passing that way, and when they appeared, to pounce upon them and strip them of their possessions, sometimes wounding or even killing them if they chose to resist.

Hearing of Anthony's presence in Padua, this gang of bandits decided to go in a body and see what type of man he was and whether they had reason to fear his interference with their manner of life.

They attended one of Anthony's sermons. Aroused in conscience by it, they all confessed their sins to him. When he had heard what they had to tell, he counseled them as to their future behavior, gave them their penances, and absolution of their sins.

The robbers returned to their lair in the woods, repentant, and resolved to change their lives.

All lived up to their promises for a time. Then, several of the band fell from grace and returned to their sinful careers. Anthony had warned them that, if they did this, they would die a painful death.

His prophecy was fulfilled. They themselves fell victims to other bandits, and perished miserably.

One of the robbers who had kept his resolutions and had received as his penance the order to go twelve times in pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles, met a Friar Minor long after his conversion. He told the friar about his meeting with Brother Anthony de Buglioni, and of his conversion to a better way of life.

Padua had a deadly enemy who lived in the neighboring city of Verona.

The podesta, or mayor, of Verona, was a creature of an infamous plunderer, named Ezzelino, surnamed The Fero-



cious because of his cruel crimes against the weak and those who opposed his methods and deeds.

Ezzelino was a Ghibelline, a member of the faction opposing the Pope. One of his atrocious acts was that of ousting from Verona, after his conquest of that city, the Guelphs, the members of the Pope's Party.

Anthony was fearless in working to help the helpless. He went to visit Ezzelino, and tried to intercede in behalf of his victims.

His mission failed.

Ezzelino refused to listen to him. He had captured Verona, and he cherished notions of capturing Padua, also.

He tried, but did not succeed in his enterprise. In revenge for his disappointment, he destroyed a great part of the city.

He had taken prisoner the leader of the Guelphs, with many of his followers. This leader was the Count of St. Boniface. Ezzelino had shown no regard for the nobleman's position nor for his family, but had imprisoned his victim, with the nephew of another nobleman of Padua, Tiso of Campo Sampiero, whom he held as hostage.

Anthony had managed to win Ezzelino's respect, although he had not won his request. The prisoners of war remained in confinement.

Anthony denounced this wrong in sternest measures. He knew that, in addition to the prisoners of war, many poor debtors languished in Ezzelino's clutches. He pitied their sad condition, knowing that since all their property had been confiscated, they would have no means of obtaining their freedom.

One of Anthony's penitents found that, when he knelt at the feet of the young priest, he could not name a single one of his sins, so filled with sorrow was his heart.

Anthony read that heart and knew that the man was sincerely penitent. He said to him: "Go home, write out

your sins on a piece of paper, then bring the paper back here."

The man did so. Anthony then bade him read the list. Obediently, the penitent started with the first. To his astonishment and delight, he saw that as soon as he had told it, the name of the sin disappeared from the paper. So it continued, until, when the last sin was confessed, the paper was perfectly blank.

As he walked through the streets of Padua one day, Anthony met a poor man, named Pietro, who was carrying his young child in his arms.

When he saw the priest, Pietro hurried up to him, and held the child out to him, meanwhile telling Anthony her sad story.

The child had been afflicted with epilepsy since her birth. She possessed no power over her legs, and when she tried to walk she could only writhe along after the fashion of a snake.

Anthony made the Sign of the Cross over the child and told her afflicted father to carry her home.

Pietro did so.

All the way to the house he carried her in his arms. When he reached the front door, and opened it, he set her down, inside.

He was speechless with joy when he saw that she stood alone.

The child remained weak for a little while, walking about with the aid of a stick. Gradually, however, she improved, and soon was completely cured of her malady.

In the midst of his strenuous missionary activities, Anthony clung fast to the ideals of poverty, humility, obedience, and all the other virtues exemplified by his Founder.

Francis of Assisi, once having espoused the Lady Poverty, had maintained his allegiance to her until he had

died, lying on the bare earth in the lowly Portiuncula.

In the First Rule of the Order, Francis had set down, with his own hand, the hand that had carried the stones to repair the Church of San Damiano, the hand that was later stamped with the Wound of His dying Saviour, the sum and substance of his desire:

Let the brothers take care that, wherever they may be, they never appropriate anything to themselves.

The Lord commands, in the Gospel: "Take heed, beware of all malice, and guard yourselves from the solitudes of this world, and the cares of life." Therefore, let none of the brothers, wherever he may be or whithersoever he may go, carry or receive money or coin in any manner, or cause it to be received, either for clothing, or for books, or as the price of any labor, or, indeed, for any reason except on account of the manifest necessity of the sick brothers. For, we ought not to have more use and esteem of money and coin than of stones.

Let us, therefore, take care lest, having left all things, we lose the kingdom of Heaven for such a trifle. . . .

Let all the brothers strive to follow the humility and poverty of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and let them remember that we ought to have nothing else in the world except as the Apostle says: "Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." Francis had exhorted his followers to cling to the ideal of poverty as he had conceived it, saying to them:

This is the sublime apex of that highest poverty which has made you, dearest brothers, heirs . . . of the Kingdom of Heaven, and, rendering you poor in substance, has enriched you in virtue.

Let this be your portion, that it may conduct you to the land of the living.

To you, most dearly beloved brothers, wholly attentive, nothing else, in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, should you seek to possess under the heavens.

Such were Francis' words, embodying the dearest wish of his holy heart for his spiritual sons.

## XII

---

### *Assisi, City of the Poverello*

**I**T WAS to be expected that Anthony's enemies, the heretics who refused to listen to his admonitions, should wish to get rid of him, and should try to do so.

Their determination was expressed in the most vicious manner—an attempt to take the life of the celebrated young missionary.

Soon after becoming Provincial of the Bologna Province, Anthony was subjected to a cruel experiment. He was invited to take dinner with a group of Patarini heretics, whose intention was to poison him. He accepted the invitation, aware that the meeting would afford him an excellent opportunity to renew his pleas for their conversion.

The guest of "honor" was warmly welcomed by the plotters and seated in the first place at table.

Then a dish was placed before him. It contained poisoned food.

Offering it to him, they found, to their amazement, that he knew its nature.

Anthony gently reproached them with their wickedness.

However, although greatly discomfited to find that their fancied prey had discovered their plot, they taunted him with being afraid to eat the food, reminding him that Christ had promised to protect His disciples in such dangers.

"My disciples shall drive away the devil, and if they drink of any poisonous drink, it shall not harm them."

Quoting the Sacred Scriptures in order to shame Anthony and discredit his doctrine, they challenged him to partake of the food.

"Eat this food," they said to him, "and, if it does not harm you, we swear we will embrace the Catholic faith. If you don't dare to eat it, we shall know that the Scriptures have lied!"

"I will eat it," Anthony replied, "not to tempt God, but to prove to you how much I yearn for the salvation of your souls."

Making the Sign of the Cross over the dish, Anthony took out a portion and began to eat.

The heretics watched him attentively, not knowing what to think.

However, in a few seconds they saw that the food, which should have caused him to fall into violent convulsions, had had no effect whatsoever.

"We believe!" they cried out, as in one voice. "We cannot refuse to acknowledge the testimony of our senses! We will do what you wish!"

They kept their word, and became faithful converts.

However, another group of heretics decided to try their own experiment.

They sent word to Anthony that they would be pleased to have him as their guest at dinner. The day selected was, by an evil intent, Friday. They had prepared a capon for the principal dish, and covered it with a sauce appropriate for fish.

If, they reasoned, Anthony was truly inspired by God in his missionary apostolate, he would know that the dish was meat, and not fish, and, undoubtedly, would refuse to partake of it on Friday.

The company sat down at table. Anthony was requested to serve the meal, starting with himself.

He took his portion, then passed the dish along to the person nearest to him.

The heretics watched him closely. They burst into loud guffaws when they saw him masticating the first mouthful with no evident concern.

However, one of their number, too eager for his meal to await the results of the ignoble test, had taken his own first mouthful of the food.

What was his astonishment when he found that it was not capon, but a delicious fish!

Brother Anthony de Buglioni had worked a miracle, to convince the heretics that his mission was divine.

During his intensive and uninterrupted apostolate of preaching, writing, and teaching, Anthony never forgot his venerated Father in God, the Founder of his Order, Francis of Assisi.

He was gratified that Francis had come into his own at last. Now he had his hour of triumph, well earned, and grudged him by none who knew the story of his heroic life.

Under the supervision of Brother Elias Bombarone, a magnificent basilica had been constructed at Assisi to the memory of the Seraphic Founder.

During the time of its preparation, the body of Francis had reposed in the little Church of St. George, in which he had often preached. Now he was to rest in a shrine more in keeping with his great work for Christ and His Church, and for all humanity.

The basilica was completed in ample time for the General Chapter of the Order, in the year 1230.

It had been decided to remove the sacred body at this time, when all the Franciscan Provincials and many other friars would be in Assisi.

A faithful follower of the Poverello, Brother John

Parenti, had succeeded to the post of Minister General of the Order, a post which Brother Elias had not coveted, because he was engaged in the important work of preparing the monument to Francis.

The basilica had been decreed by Pope Gregory IX.

Elias conferred with the authorities of the city in relation to the translation rites. All agreed that it was advisable to place the body of Francis in a secret repository in the new basilica, for the time being. For, as Brother Elias suggested: "There are many strangers in the city at present. It may be that they have come here to honor our holy Father Francis. But, on the other hand, it is possible that they have come merely to ascertain where our treasure is to be placed, so that later they may return and steal it from us."

Unholy as was such strife, rival factions often quarreled over the possession of the bodies of holy persons. The Assisi authorities did not want trouble in their city. They believed that Brother Elias' representation provided an excellent solution of a troublesome problem, and they agreed to it.

Brother Elias then anticipated the proposed rites by three days.

Under his direction, the tomb of Francis in the Church of St. George was opened, and the casket removed. It was then conveyed to the new basilica.

However, as the cortege which accompanied it reached the door of the edifice, a group of soldiers with drawn swords took possession of the casket by force, carried it hurriedly into the basilica, and barricaded the doors from within.

There, with neither prelate nor representative of the Order to witness it, the sacred deposit was placed in a stone sarcophagus and stored in a spot where no one would find it.



Actually, centuries were to pass before its hiding-place was discovered.

When the Pope learned of this happening, he sent a stinging letter of complaint to the city authorities. But the deed had been done, and it was not to be undone.

So, once more, the Poverello, who bore the Wounds of his Blessed Saviour in his frail body, found peace and quiet in awaiting the day when, the present difficulties removed, he should repose in his rightful place, in the midst of those who loved and honored him.

Pope Gregory had followed the career of Brother Anthony de Buglioni with unabated interest. Now he favored him with a singular mark of confidence and esteem. The Holy Father said to Anthony:

"And you, Brother Anthony, true Ark of the Testament in which repose the tables of the Laws and the treasures of wisdom, I absolve from all the obligations of your Order, and I propose you as an example to all the Brothers, present and future, inviting you to occupy yourself henceforth in prayer and in the composition of sermons."

It was said by some persons that Anthony had been offered the purple by Pope Gregory. If this was so, he did not accept it. His sole desire was to complete his days wearing the rough gray robe placed upon him when he was received into the Seraphic Order, and to wear it with honor and dignity, forgetful of self and creature interests.

The Holy Father had told Anthony that he might select any place of residence he wished as his future retreat.

Anthony chose the Monastery of St. Mary, at Padua.

He now felt that the time was ripe for a little pilgrimage to the Franciscan shrines of the vicinity. He gratified this desire without delay.

He visited the spots most dear to every Franciscan heart. . . . First and most cherished was Assisi, the little rose-pink city, clinging like a tender bird to its hillside,

a blue light shimmering over it, and the mellow voices of the birds, called by Francis his "Little Sisters," inviting the pilgrim to meditate within its hallowed precincts.

The bells of the Umbrian churches were pealing, and the leaves on the great trees along the way whispered to Anthony of the lowly friend of humanity, friend of Christ, who reposed within the walls of the town. Bright grass carpeted the roadsides as the young friar climbed upward.

He saw that a mystical veil seemed to rest over all nature, as if the growing and living things communed with the sweet soul they had known so intimately, and who had known and loved them.

At a little distance, Monte Subasio lifted its purple head, looking toward the old city. It too had held secret communings with Francis, as had the green valleys and the soft blue skies bending over this privileged land.

At the foot of the hill, clouds drifted like lambs over the roof of Santa Maria degli Angeli, St. Mary of the Angels, the Portiuncula, Little Portion of the Friars Minor. In the still fields about it, the *pecorella*, the little lamb which Francis had adopted and trained to follow him, had browsed as it awaited its master's return from meditation in the chapel.

There was the rose bed in which Francis had prepared to roll himself, stripped of his garments, amidst the thorns, but whose roses had afterwards miraculously divested themselves of those thorns.

Halfway up the hill was the site, forever hallowed, where Francis had finally blessed Assisi. There, in a spot unmarked, his bearers had rested his litter, whereon he lay blind and suffering, turning his face toward the little city as he had requested.

So he had blessed it for the last time, afterward going on to the Portiuncula, whence his innocent and loving soul had winged its flight to God.

Brother Anthony de<sup>1</sup> Buglioni entered Assisi through an old gateway in the solid wall. The larks were singing and the olive trees cast a silver shadow along his path. Assisi was a lovely jewel, encased in a rose and green wrapper.

Anthony's sun-tanned cheeks reflected the glow as, with eyes turned first toward one, then another landmark, he communed with the departed Francis.

Faces passed along the way—he did not recognize any one of them. They, however, looked on him reverently and saluted, knowing him to be one of the Poverello's sons.

They did not know that he was the most beloved and illustrious of them all.

In the Cathedral of San Rufino, dedicated to the Martyr-Bishop of Umbria, Anthony venerated the baptismal font in which Francis had received the waters of salvation, in September, 1182.

In the Portiuncula, he knelt in the tiny cell where Francis had received the call from heaven. Then, he visited the Founder's first tomb in the Church of St. George.

Lastly, he knelt in the new basilica which Brother Elias Bombarone had prepared, and gave thanks for his sublime vocation, made possible through the sacrifices and the constancy in sacrifice of the Poverello of Assisi.

Francis had finished his great work on earth, but the work of his Order would go on.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni believed that, in God's Providence, his own work would be blessed with still greater efficacy for the conversion of souls, and that he was to make still greater conquests for his Divine Lord.

However, he realized that his once vigorous strength had been sapped by the ceaseless labors and journeyings of his short years spent as a Friar Minor. Yet his courage was high, and his resolution undaunted.

Anthony's once lithe body had grown corpulent, so that

its master was often forced to pause for breath when ascending a hill. Nature had rebelled against his neglect of her. Now she was exacting the penalty for his harsh treatment of his physical being. But Anthony did not lessen his penances or his vigils because he was beginning to realize that he was somewhat ill. There was so much to be done, and so little time in which to do it!

Brother Anthony de Buglioni did not know that that time for him was to be very short.

Dusk was falling when he went down the hill and out of Assisi by an old gate. Behind him he left the relics most sacred to his Order, but in his heart they would be forever enshrined.

At Padua a large group of doctors and lawyers carried on their professions among the people. Anthony well knew the influence and danger of false teachings of many of these men. Therefore, when the clergy and people begged him to continue his preaching, he was inclined to yield to their pleas. He might have done so had not the Archbishop of Ostia requested him to perform another task.

This was to consign to writing his many beautiful sermons already preached, so that there might be a permanent record of them; also to write down sketches or outlines of those he might plan, but not be able to deliver, so that these also might serve as models for other orators speaking on sacred subjects.

Anthony worked diligently on this record for most of that winter. By spring he had completed his work. His manuscript was entitled: *Sermons for the Feasts of the Saints*. All were profound and inspiring.

As the result of Anthony's preaching, many men, who formerly had lived evil lives, were changed for the better and were living as good Christians. As an experienced and enlightened director of souls, the missionary realized that for many of them perseverance would be difficult, if not

impossible, surrounded, as they were, by many moral and spiritual dangers.

With the permission of his superiors he founded at Padua a retreat for penitents who wished to spend the rest of their days in prayer and in works of penance. This, like his other missionary projects, was most successful.

In his innocent boyhood, the young Fernando de Bugli-  
oni had met and put to rout Satan, who had appeared  
before him as he knelt in the sanctuary of his parish  
church.

Perchance Anthony did not expect to be molested by  
this same wicked spirit, now that he had spent so long a  
time in the service of his Lord.

If so, he was greatly mistaken.

One night, during Lent, as he was sleeping in the  
Monastery of St. Mary at Padua, he was awakened by a  
sensation as of being strangled.

He started, and opened his eyes. Horrified, he saw,  
bending over his bed, the evil one who had visited him  
many years before. Anthony cried aloud to his holy  
Mother Mary, begging her to come to his aid and save  
him.

Even as he called her name, the devil disappeared.

Anthony, weak all over, his body cold with sweat, lay  
quiet. In his soul there was a deep peace and thanksgiving.

His Immaculate Patroness had again revealed her love  
for her devoted child. Anthony offered all the fright and  
anguish of his horrid experience to her, asking that it  
might bind him still closer to her Divine Son.

The recording of the Feast Day sermons finished, An-  
thony resumed, to some extent, his preaching. His ser-  
mons, however, were preached only occasionally, and were  
brief, for the state of his health would not permit more.

Now and then he preached to the farmhands, who hur-  
ried from the fields to hear him at the close of their day's

toil. Always his message was received as from heaven by these poor laborers, who believed that a saint had come into their midst, perhaps ripe for heaven. So much Anthony's wan face and limp form told them, and they understood with grief and yearning.

Brother Anthony de Buglioni continued to work miracles in favor of those in need.

When the owner of the fields where the workmen had assembled to hear him complained that they had trodden down his grain, the young thaumaturge restored the crops to their former status, and they stood up straight and healthy as before.

Sometimes, walking pensively in the wood where solemn old trees formed a canopy over his head, and with Francis' "Worshipful Brother Sun" gilding his capuche and warming his weakened body, Anthony praised, in Francis' name, "Mother Earth," which "nourished and brought forth diverse fruits, with grass and flowers bright."

One shadow only rested on the heart of the zealous friar-missionary.

This was the realization that because of his failing health he could no longer do as much as formerly for his Divine Master.

### XIII

---

#### *The Coming of Sister Death*

**F**RANCIS OF ASSISSI, the Little Poor Man of Christ, had extolled the gentle virtues of humility and poverty, which he called his Lady. Brother Anthony de Bugli-  
oni revered these virtues because they were dear to God, and because they represented the spirit of his Founder and model. So, Anthony cared nothing for the splendor and magnificence of Padua; for its splendid University, a celebrated school for doctors and lawyers, to which scholars came from all parts of Europe to study; for its splendid courts and palaces. His heart was centered on his great vocation and the missionary works which expressed it so admirably.

Brother Anthony was now thirty-six years old. He had labored ten years in his preaching apostolate, and he began to feel that the period of his activity was nearing its close. As the days wore on, he discovered that he was no longer able to stand in the midst of the crowds and inspire them by his eloquence and winning charm. However, he continued his vigils and penances while his health became gradually weaker.

Anthony believed that a period spent in prayer and solitude would refresh him in soul and body. So, he went to visit a nobleman of his acquaintance, who possessed extensive estates close by Padua.

He asked this friend, Tiso da Campo, to permit him and

a few of his friar brethren to erect a small number of huts in a wooded glade bordering on the estates.

Tiso was only too happy to grant the favor, deeming it done to himself rather than to Anthony.

Anthony was edified when the nobleman, with his own hands, prepared for his friend, from wattles and rushes, a little cell, to be the place of his retreat.

The spot chosen, with Anthony's approval, was beneath a "walnut tree, that rose high above the other trees, from whose trunk sprang six branches in the form of a crown."

Thankfully, Anthony took possession of his new refuge, "in the name of the Lady Poverty."

His brethren were careful not to intrude on his meditations. However, they were very happy when he visited them, sometimes walking with them and conversing on the things of God.

Anthony felt very close in spirit to his blessed Founder in this quiet retreat. Here he had ample time and opportunity to praise and bless the Omnipotent Creator for the works of His bountiful hands.

He speedily made friends with the little feathered songsters of the wood—the larks and wrens and nightingales who made their homes in this solitude.

"Birds and friars are brothers," he often said, out of Franciscan courtesy giving first place to the birds.

He recalled how, at Greccio, as the Brothers told him, Francis of Assisi had tended the young robins, "our brothers," and how he had built a nest for the turtle doves at Siena.

"Sing the praises of God, Sister Cicada!" Francis had said to that tiny creature, as it hopped about the fields surrounding the Portiuncula. There came an hour when the light of those joyous eyes was quenched in darkness, and Francis was a blind man, no longer able to see his



little friends of field and wood. Then he satisfied himself with the music of their lyric voices, and glimpsed more clearly than before the things of the spirit.

Anthony, after the example of Francis, watched the movements of the birds in Tiso's wood and listened in delight when they caroled Matins and Vespers in their own inimitable way.

Sister Lark, with long, pointed wing, her feathers streaked brownish above, and whitish, streaked with brown, below, terrestrial in her habits, built her nest on the ground in open places and fed on the grain carried from Tiso's fields, and on the insects which were so temerarious as to come too close to her open beak. Pretty little songstress, she showed no fear when Anthony approached her and stroked her downy coat.

Sister Wren preferred a cosy nook for her home, building in the cavities of the century-old walnut tree that was Anthony's apartment. When he peered into her nest, he saw the numerous pinkish-white or reddish-brown speckled eggs. Sister Wren, a tiny bird, with a long, slender bill, curved near the tip, had likewise no fear of the gray-robed friar, but attended industriously to her business of grinding her food. The Wren family was partial to the chubby caterpillars that came crawling through the long grass, while the arched branches of the walnut tree furnished excellent foraging ground for this rare tidbit. Sister Wren was a nervous little creature, showing alarm at the slightest unusual sound or movement in trees or fields, then uttering displeased and insistent cries by way of protest. Yet, she showed no fear when Anthony came close to her and watched her at her household pursuits.

Anthony knew, too, the habits of the nightingale which made its nest in the dry parts of the wood, or in grass, artfully arched over with dead leaves, and so perfectly

blended with the color scheme of the surroundings as to be rarely discovered, unless, perchance, Sister Nightingale happened to be frightened from her nest.

Each fragile little life was endeared to the innocent childlike heart of Brother Anthony de Buglioni, as the handiwork of the Lord of all.

As the days passed, the friars in the wood observed that their beloved young priest was rapidly failing in strength. They were sad and distressed to note this.

Anthony's walks in the neighborhood of the wood were constantly growing shorter. One day, when he had gone up a gentle incline with a Brother companion, he stood silent for a while, looking down upon Padua.

Then, lifting his voice and hands, he blessed the city, as the dying Francis had blessed Assisi.

"Be thou blessed for the beauty of thy portion. Be thou blessed for the richness of thy fields. Be thou blessed, once more, for the crown of glory that heaven has destined for thee!"

His companion believed that Anthony spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And he was equally certain that the prophecy of the future glories of Padua stemmed from the holiness and apostolate of Brother Anthony de Buglioni.

In his bright young manhood, newly vested in the robe of Friar Minor, Anthony had sought martyrdom by the swift stroke of the scimitar. But his hope and dream of dying for Christ had not been realized. Now he knew that it was because God had willed him to be a "Hammer of Heresy" and an "Ark of the Testament." That his vocation was to lead blind and wounded souls into the light and healing of the Faith of Christ; that he was to be the inspired interpreter of the Sacred Scriptures to his own brethren and to as many others as would listen to his words.

He was satisfied with his present lot, because God had willed it.

There came the thirteenth day of June of that year of 1231. It fell on Friday, the day of the commemoration of the death of Christ.

Brother Anthony was taking the noon repast with the friars in the little hermitage in the wood when he was seized with a deadly weakness.

He sank back, while the Brothers sprang to his aid.

They carried him to his bed, believing that this was merely a passing infirmity, and that their dear young saint would soon recover.

They were quite wrong in their surmise.

Anthony grew weaker by the moment.

The dying friar had always been mindful of the comfort and convenience of others. So now he made a request of Friar Roger, who attended him.

"If you are willing, Brother, I shall go to St. Mary's, in order to spare you further trouble."

Anthony's companions wept openly as he spoke. They wished to keep him with them in the wood, in the place sanctified by his presence and prayers. But they knew that they could not give him the care he would receive in the Paduan monastery.

Therefore, they made him ready for his painful journey to the city.

The sole conveyance available for the transfer was a crude farm cart. In this cart the Brothers placed a thick layer of straw. Anthony was then laid upon it, with a Brother supporting him on either side.

The cart started on its slow, cumbrous way.

The country road over which it jogged was rough, and the rude vehicle jolted at every turn of the wheels. Yet the gentle sufferer made no complaint.

Anthony lay quiet, the fringe of his tonsure, dark and

thickly curled, accentuating the pallor of his face. His long black eyelashes swept the marble cheeks. His lips now and then moved slightly, as if he prayed.

Strange it was to Anthony that his body, long the obedient servant of his will, should now be helpless and racked by pain. This was the slower martyrdom, on which he had not counted. God often treated His beloved so, as if He would entrust to them some special share in the sufferings of His Divine Son.

The cart proceeded at a snail's pace, lest Anthony be made to endure more torment. He sank rapidly on the way.

"He will die before we reach St. Mary's!" one of the Brothers whispered to the other. . . .

Consulting together in whispers, they decided to stop in the suburb of Capo di Ponte, at the Monastery of Arcella, where the Poor Clares had their residence.

They did this. Anthony was borne into the apartment of the friar chaplain, and tenderly lowered into bed.

Although very weak, he made his confession to the friar.

When the others re-entered the room, they were astonished to hear him break into a rapturous chant:

"O, Gloriosa Domina!"

Anthony was calling on the glorious Lady who had so often come to his aid, the august Patroness and Queen of the Order of Friars Minor. He found voice sufficiently strong to enable him to pay this final tribute to her who had watched over him from the days when, in the arms of his good mother, he had visited her shrine in Lisbon Cathedral.

One of the friars prepared to anoint the dying Anthony.

Looking up at him with brightly shining eyes, Anthony said to him: "This unction is really within me. Although it is not necessary that I receive it, I wish to do so, because it is useful."

An instant afterward, Anthony's tired senses felt the soothing unction of the Holy Oils. Eyes, ears, nostrils, hands, feet—the senses and members which had glorified God through the years of preaching and praying and performing miracles—were sealed for heaven.

When the sacred rite was over, Anthony intoned, with his brethren, the Penitential Psalms.

Afterward, one of the Brothers, noting the seraphic expression of his face, asked the dying man:

"What do you see, Brother?"

"I see my Saviour!"

Brother Anthony de Buglioni spoke no more after this.

Whether he was conscious as he lay with closed eyes and folded hands; whether he saw, as it is said the dying see, in a panorama, all the scenes of his life on earth passing in swift review before his spirit, no one of those watching by the bedside knew. Perhaps Anthony was traveling across the years—from the villa at Lisbon where the sparrows had circled about at his bidding, across the hills and valleys of France and Italy, bearing with swift feet the Gospel of Peace to souls up to this final moment—if so—no one could tell.

Shortly before nightfall, the Brothers, peering anxiously into the pure young face, knew that Anthony had gone to God, Whom he had served so faithfully; to the joyous meeting with his Saviour, and with the Glorious Lady, His Mother; with Francis of Assisi, His great Founder; with the Franciscan Protomartyrs and all others whom he had known and loved on earth and in heaven.

At the instant when the angelic soul left its worn-out body, Anthony appeared to Abbot Thomas, with whom he had once lived in the Augustinian Monastery, and said to him:

"See, Father Abbot! I have left my body near Padual  
Now I am on my way Home!"

At the time, the Abbot was suffering from a serious throat ailment. But when Anthony had ceased speaking and had touched the ailing throat lightly, the disease completely vanished.

As he informed his Community of the miracle, the Abbot expressed anew the thought often in the minds of the monks of St. Augustine: happiness that the Congregation of Canons Regular had given a Saint, an Apostle and a Thaumaturge to the Order of Friars Minor.

## EPILOGUE

---

### *St. Anthony of Padua—"Saint of the Whole World." Doctor of the Universal Church*

**B**ROTHER ANTHONY DE BUGLIONI had selected the place of his final repose and requested the friars who attended his deathbed to see that his wishes were carried out. He had asked to be buried in the Monastery of St. Mary, in the city of his final apostolate.

As soon as it became known that the celebrated young missionary had passed from earth, the children of Padua ran through the streets of the city, crying: "The Saint is dead! Our holy Father Anthony is dead!"

Men and women took up the refrain, until soon the entire populace was announcing the sorrowful tidings.

The sacred body was made ready for burial. The friars of Capo di Ponte, fearing that the heat might be detrimental to its preservation, placed it in a coffin of plain wood, with the thought of depositing it in a grave on the premises until the arrival of the Provincial, who was absent from the vicinity.

However, it soon became apparent that the Brothers were facing a serious dilemma. A great crowd of people, coming from all directions, insisted that their beloved "Santo" should not be taken from their midst, but left with them for always, so that they might honor it as their personal treasure.

The Brothers knew what Anthony had wished, and they knew, also, that they had no fitting place in which to enshrine it.

They awaited further developments with deep misgivings.

Opening the friary doors stealthily, they observed the excited throng outside, and sensed their mood. It was one of determination.

Since the Provincial could not reach the Monastery before another nightfall, they turned to Bishop Jacopo Corrado, in charge of the See. He, in turn, consulted with his officials in order to judge what should be done.

Some of the council opined that the body of Anthony should be left at Capo di Ponte, others that it should be removed to Padua.

The Provincial arrived on the evening of June 14, the day following Anthony's death. He joined in the discussion with the bishop and the others. Meanwhile, the people of the district continued to clamor for the possession of the holy body.

In the end, it was decided to honor St. Mary's with the possession of the precious relics.

The bishop ordained that the ceremonies should be held on June 17, Thursday. He, therefore, summoned all the clergy of Arcella to attend them, and requested the mayor to take measures to ensure good order throughout the town.

The mayor, Stefano Bodoaro, issued orders threatening dire penalties on any who should disturb the peace during the translation ceremonies.

On the appointed day the bishop, clergy, friars, and members of the various lay organizations gathered at Arcella, and the solemn cortege was formed.

Anthony's coffin was placed on the shoulders of a group



of noblemen of Padua, and started on its triumphal way.

The streets over which it passed were bedecked with banners and flowers. The air was filled with the strains of chants and hymns, and all the church bells in the vicinity pealed.

Everyone agreed that, as the coffin passed, the poor wooden box gave forth a delicious aromatic odor.

The coffin was carried into the Church of St. Mary in Padua, where the bishop celebrated the Solemn Funeral Mass.

Afterward, with the prayers and last blessing of the Church, Brother Anthony de Buglioni was laid away within the sacred precincts.

From the hour of his entombment, crowds came to visit the remains of the Saint of Miracles, as he was universally called from the hour of his death. Miracles of healing were multiplied as the days went on, through the power of the great Thaumaturge, who had lived and died in humility, poverty, and penance.

In a short time, a petition was addressed to the Pope, Gregory IX, asking for Anthony's canonization.

Pope Gregory IX had known Anthony during his life, and had rightly apprized his sanctity and supernatural gifts. He gladly approved the forty-seven miracles, all duly attested, which were presented to him in favor of Anthony.

Having no doubt whatsoever that his beloved young friar was truly with God and enjoying the rewards of his heroic life, Gregory enrolled Anthony in the Calendar of the Saints on the thirtieth day of May, 1232. The decree was issued at Spoleto.

At the moment when the Holy Father made the solemn declaration, all the church bells in Anthony's native Lisbon rang out, without the intervention of human hand. All his countrymen rejoiced with the people of Padua, and

the other cities identified with the labors of the new Saint, in the honors accorded their beloved Fernando de Bugli-  
oni, the one-time Canon Fernando, the Augustinian monk,  
and lastly, Brother Anthony de Buglioni, professed mem-  
ber and priest of the Order of Friars Minor.

In the year 1263, thirty years after the death of Anthony, his body was removed from the Church of St. Mary in Padua and interred in a magnificent basilica, erected in his honor.

Among the distinguished personages who came from Rome to assist at the ceremonies of the second translation was St. Bonaventure, seventh General of the Minorite Order.

In his presence, and that of the other dignitaries, the coffin was opened for formal recognition of the relics.

It was found that the body had been wholly consumed with the exception of a few bones, and, wonderful to relate, by a miracle of God's favor, the tongue of the Apostle and Thaumaturge.

Whereas, normally, it too would have crumbled to dust, it was discovered to be quite intact, and as ruddy and soft as in life.

While all present knelt, adoring and thanking God for this glorious manifestation of His pleasure in Anthony, St. Bonaventure burst into a canticle of joy and praise:

"O, blessed Tongue!" he cried, "which has always blessed God and caused others to bless Him, now it appears evident how great were your merits before God!"

He then venerated the sacred Tongue, and gave it into the keeping of the magistrates of Padua, who received it on a gold platter and prepared to enclose it in a reliquary worthy of it.

An exquisite silver reliquary was made and studded with rare gems. The Tongue of Anthony was placed within it, its lower extremity pointing upward, to indicate

the fidelity and inspired eloquence with which he had extolled God during his marvelous career.

Not far from our own day, the late Pope Leo XIII, in eulogizing the merits and works of the Thaumaturge of Padua, said of him: "He is the Saint of the whole world!"

And, in our own day, our illustrious Spiritual Shepherd, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, in elevating St. Anthony of Padua to the rank of Doctor of the Universal Church, declared:

Be glad, fruitful Portugal; O, fruitful Padua, rejoice; for you have borne unto earth and heaven a hero, not unequal to the gleaming sun, glowing with holiness of life and renown for miracles, as well as the radiant splendor of heavenly doctrine, who has illumined the whole world and even yet sheds upon it a vivid light. . . .

However great the light shed by Anthony's teaching, it was no greater than that shed by his dissemination of the Word of God, as his contemporaries and modern authorities attest, lauding his wisdom in words of highest praise, extolling the holy power of his eloquence to the skies. To him who reads the *Sermons* of the Paduan with attention, Anthony will be revealed as being extraordinarily well versed in the Sacred Books; a remarkable theologian in dogmatic investigations; a distinguished teacher and master likewise in explaining ascetics and mysticism.

Since Anthony very often used proofs and ideas taken from the Gospel, he rightly appears worthy of the title, "Evangelical Doctor." It is certain that not a few Doctors of Theology and preachers of the divine word continually drank from this source, as from an everlasting fountain of living water, and today a great many of them do the same, so much so, in fact, that

they consider Anthony their master and style him a Doctor of Holy Church. . . .

We have unearthed evidence to show that, scarcely had the honors of sainthood been decreed for Anthony when his representation began to be painted and sculptured to foster piety and veneration toward this great Apostle of the Faithful; his images depict him holding in one hand, as though reading, an open book signifying wisdom and learning, and in the other a torch, the symbol of ardent faith. No wonder, then, that a great number of distinguished men, not only members of the Seraphic Order (which has many times authored in its general chapters petitions that the cult of Doctor, paid to the Wonder-Worker of Padua through the centuries, be confirmed and extended to the Universal Church), but also outstanding men of many groups, have not hesitated to reveal this same desire of theirs. . . .

Therefore, in free and gracious condescension to the petitions submitted by the Franciscans and all others, in virtue of these Letters, in sure knowledge and after mature deliberation, and with the fullness of the Apostolic Power, We appoint and declare the Confessor, St. Anthony of Padua, a Doctor of the Universal Church, any Constitutions or other Apostolic Ordinances of whatever kind to the contrary notwithstanding. We proclaim this edict, decreeing these present letters to be and remain forever authentic, valid and effective; that thus they must be interpreted and defined. . . .

Dated at Rome, at St. Peter's, under the ring of the Fisherman, on January 16, 1946, the Feast of the Franciscan Protomartyrs, in the seventh year of Our Pontificate.

Saint of the Whole World, Wonder-Worker, Doctor of the Universal Church, Saint Anthony of Lisbon and Padua has pointed to the inspiration of his entire lifetime. . . .

"If," he says, "we seek for gold, pure and unalloyed, we must approach the interior altar, the very Heart of Jesus, and there study the untold riches of His love."

*The End*





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.  
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

20Nov48RI	JAN 09 1991	
22Dec'48RG	AUTO DISC DEC 12 1990	
40Oct'63BB		
REC'D LD		
AUG 10 '64 - 8 AM		
Due end of SUMMER Period subject to recall after —	SEP 22 '72	87
REC'D LD	OCT 16 72 - 10 AM	80

LD 21-100m-9,'47(A5702s16)476



C031953835

4564

M552543

