

commenced to drink, and they found that it was not water but excellent wine. Failing for the moment to realise that it was a miracle, they turned to the Saint and said:—

"Heavens, Sister Ubaldesca, whatever have you done? To-day is Good Friday when we drink no wine—yet you have given us some without considering that we are fasting on bread and water in memory of the Passion and glorious death of our Lord Jesus Christ."

They had hardly uttered these words when they perceived the miracle. Filled with astonishment, they at once threw themselves at the Saint's feet and, kneeling before her, kissed her hands in all reverence and humility. On the subject of her virtues and merits they overwhelmed her with praises. Her humility, however, would not suffer these good people to do her so much honour, and she was so abashed that the colour flooded her cheeks. She at once made them rise and earnestly begged them, for the love of God, not to mention the miracle to a soul. In memory of this, artists usually represent the Saint with a pitcher in her hand. To-day this actual pitcher is in the Convent of the nuns of St. John preserved with great reverence, and as an act of charity, the nuns take it to people suffering from fever, filled with water from the well, and the sick drink it with all faith, and it is often found helpful in effecting a cure. One of the wells which the Saint was accustomed to use, is at St. Sepulchre, where people resort on her Feast Day to drink. All the rooms of the nuns which St. Ubaldesca used may still be seen, with the exception of one which is kept private. It may be added here, that on the wall of the Convent garden, certain small crosses are discernible, carved, it is said, by the Saint's own hand. As she was unable to leave the enclosure to attend public devotions, she made these Stations herself in the garden with the usual prayers. The nuns say that when they devoutly kiss these crosses, they appear to exhale a wonderful sweetness. This Holy Virgin's picture may be seen, notably in Pisa, where she is painted in two styles—the antique and the modern, as in the engraving above, showing the pitcher which she carries in memory of her miracle. Some earlier artists placed a palm in her right hand, suggesting martyrdom on this earth on account of her great sorrows and sufferings.

On completing the course of this life, her holy remains, to which the faithful testify infinite zeal and reverence, were solemnly entombed according to the instructions of the Venerable Abbess of the Convent and Father Otto d'Occhi, Chaplain of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, who at that time had the care of the souls of the Church of St. Sepulchre and of the said nuns. But this reverend father had, shortly after, a divine revelation that the holy Ubaldesca was enjoying eternal happiness in Heaven and he resolved to remove her body from the place where she was buried, and place it in a more costly and elaborate one, within an entirely new casket which he had made. However, the Pisans, learning when the Saint was to be exhumed, collected in crowds and solemnly accompanied her. Noteworthy amongst them were twenty-two sick, mostly cripples, who, for their great faith and devotion, together with the intercession of the Saint, were granted by God a complete cure of their ills, when all the efforts of man had failed.

St. Ubaldesca did not remain long in her new shrine. Father Bartolo de Palmieri de Cascina, of the Priory of the Holy Sepulchre at Pisa, having been deprived of his Priory by the Grand Master and the Convent of the Hospitallers for some faults committed, after piously commending himself to God and St. Ubaldesca, made a solemn vow that, if ever he were reinstated in his office, he would annually celebrate the Saint's Feast (which occurred on the day of the Holy Trinity), when her beautiful soul left her mortal body. As a matter of fact, what he so earnestly desired most fortunately happened, and he did not fail to accom-

plish his vow. This was, and still is, observed each year in Pisa, where it is celebrated with the utmost reverence by all, in honour of the Most Holy Trinity and the immortal glory of St. Ubaldesca. This Prior of the Holy Sepulchre again removed the sacred relics from the coffin where they rested, and transferred them to a beautiful casket, but he gave the head to the nuns of St. John, who still preserve it most lovingly in their chapel. At the same time he transported the body to the Church of St. Sepulchre, where it was honourably placed upon an altar. Many miracles are regularly recorded in both places for the common Christian good, by the merits of this glorious Saint. Later it happened that the Cardinal Grand Master Frà Hughes Loubenx Verdale, actuated by a great devotion to the Saint, summoned his Council, by whose instructions the Knight Frà Guilio Zanchini da Castiglioncho, a Florentine and Lieutenant to the Prior of Pisa, took charge of the removal to Malta, and of depositing in the Great Conventual Church of St. John Baptist, part of these Holy Relics. This was done by the permission and authority of Pope Sixtus V, who by a Brief given at Rome on 20th September, 1586, decreed that after the transference of these remains, every year on the 20th May should be celebrated in the Maltese Church of St. John Baptist the Feast in honour of St. Ubaldesca, and the same Office as the one used in the Metropolitan Church of Pisa. He further granted in perpetuity a Plenary Indulgence to all Faithful, piously visiting the Relics on the day of their translation, which was 20th May in the year of grace 1587.

Pray for us then, O Holy Virgin Ubaldesca, in order that by your merits and your prayers it may please Our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ to make us worthy eternally to praise, bless and thank Him with you in heavenly Glory.

AMEN.

A chance reference in a history of the Order of St. John, connecting Ubaldesca with Acre, made an article upon her seem topical while our Syrian campaign was in progress. The statement that she was at Acre did not appear improbable in view of the fact that many patrician ladies of Italy worked in centres of the Christian Church in the East during the early centuries of our epoch; A Roman lady named Agnes was attached to the Order during the Jerusalem period. Mr. Veevers-Thompson, however, raises grave doubts as to whether Ubaldesca was at Acre, so closely is her story bound up with Pisa. None the less, we are glad to have been led to the above history of this gentle saint even if one feels a certain disappointment that the story of her activity in Acre is not supported by available evidence.

The Ancient Spirit of the Order of St. John.

We have read much of the history of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and we had a curious little illustration of how the same spirit as of old still exists within it—a kind of "Imagination," as it would have been called in the Middle Ages when mystery plays, incidents in life, pictures and the like were chosen rather than words, to inculcate some teaching into the hearts of the people. As we walked under the arch of St. John's Gate, the sharp eyes of the erudite scholar of ancient writings caught sight of a small brown bee on the pavement. He immediately stopped, picked her up and set her in a crevice in the wall of the archway, with the half apologetic remark: "I cannot bear to think of these things being trampled on." In a flash it was no longer the buildings at Clerkenwell that surrounded us. Time and space had dropped away. Instead there were warrior monks tending the wounded and the dying in the city of St. Jean d'Acre, there was the tenderness to the sick and the decency towards the dead that called forth the historic eulogy of the Hungarian king who visited Acre nigh upon eight hundred years ago.

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