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On a Church Wall in Milan...

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On a Church Wall in Milan . . .

By Edna Rhoades A. A.

The Last Supper

At Easter time, when our thoughts are occupied with sacred matters, we become more interested than ever in the beautiful pictures of the early masters which deal with the life of Christ. One of the most famous of these is Leonardo da Vinci’s “The Last Supper.” Miss Rhoades has made a comprehensive study of the picture and interprets it for us in the following article.—The Editor.

All of us have experienced the feeling of fellowship, as friends gathered around a table at a simple meal. The bond of fellowship was stronger if the friends were together for the last time before a long separation.

We can imagine something of the feeling of the apostles at the Last Supper, as their hands touched one table in common in the presence of their Divine Leader. They were drawn closer to each other in the inspiration of that Presence—an all-pervading Love. Christ had tried to tell them how it was needful that He go away, but they could not understand His language, nor see even vaguely what was now clear to Him. Whatever the following days might bring, for that one eternal moment, life was complete for them and they were content. The Christ, in a voice revealing marvelous control, sent these words home to their sensitive souls, “One of you shall betray me.”

It is at this point that the artist, Leonardo da Vinci, gives us the picture known as “The Last Supper.” Other artists have tried to portray this subject, but Leonardo da Vinci’s painting seems the most perfect expression of the powerful significance of this dramatic moment.

Christ has spoken. His arms are open, His hands relaxed on the table. The right palm is down as if to hold nothing for Himself; the left palm, the one nearest His heart, is held out, as if to give all in perfect trust, to God and man. His hands are ready to receive the print of the nail, the mark of betrayal. He is majestic in His resignation. The perfect perspective carrying all the lines to the light back of Him are only a symbol of the “now and true perspective” in which He sees all Life.

In this moment, what has happened to the peace and contentment of the others? Suddenly their oneness of spirit gives way to concern for self, “Is it I?” Indignation, painful uncertainty, grief, sadness, anger and horror break up the group and bring it instantly together again in threes, huddled together in their common concern for their Leader.

Surely the artist must have understood the human heart, and the expression befitting each of its reactions. Let us study the group at Christ’s right. Here is the Beloved Disciple, John, so crushed by the thought that He rests against the angered Peter and the shrinking Judas. The artist’s conception is not that which we get in John 13:23-25, but here he may be using a spiritual interpretation. In his heart, John is ever in the bosom of Christ. This may be felt more strongly, as his body falls away from the majestic portrayal of Jesus. Has the thought of betrayal already come into Judas’ heart, or is that moment yet at hand? (Compare Matthew 26:24-25; Mark 14:20-21; Luke 14:21-22, with John 13:26-27.) Perhaps Judas still loves his Master, whose heart, even now, goes out to him. If we understand the Christ-heart, we may believe that Christ’s grief is more for the ingratitude of man as exemplified in Judas, than it is in sorrow for Himself. (Matthew 26:24.)

The grouping of three forms the basis for the entire arrangement of figures, whose postures tell so much. Christ is the central figure in their thought, as He is in the picture.

It’s a Shrine the World Worships

The original of this painting is on the wall of the monastery, S. Marie delle Grazie, in Milan, in northern Italy. It is in a state of ruin, due to four main causes. At one time the room was flooded with water. Later, soldiers using the room as a stable cut a high doorway in the lower center. Defective construction of the wall itself is one cause. The artist’s tendency to experiment, however, is largely responsible for the ruin, because (Continued on page 16)
Lorado Taft Speaks . . .

(Continued from page 2)

Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman writes of the possibilities of moving pictures in the instruction of children in astronomy, geology, zoology and the development of man; but the appreciation of beauty in nature and art was strangely omitted. "In every community there appears from time to time an unusual talent; every school reveals an occasional child with an enthusiastic 'vocation,'" Mr. Taft said, "but as a rule these talents, which might be capitalized for the common good, are carelessly wasted. "There is inspiration in the thought that in learning to enjoy good art, we are actually making ourselves better citizens and contributing to the welfare and advancement of the land we love," concluded Mr. Taft.

Dame Fashions Forecasts

(Continued from page 4)

and semi-fitted with a scarcely noticeable flare at the hemline. Belted models continue their popularity with slender girls and women. Navy blue and black lead in colors for coats; however, beige and gray are shown in the shops, too, and are gaining favor. Undoubtedly, white will be featured later in the season.

Hats are in a variety of types, with new shapes in brims and crowns. The brim which extends away from the face, halo types and detachable wide brims, and a variety of odd shaped turban affairs are featured. It will not be hard for any person to find the hat which suits her type, since so many different styles are being shown.

In a Milan Church

(Continued from page 1)

of his use of oil instead of fresco on the plastered wall. The quality of the original can best be judged by contemporary copies, one in Milan, near the original; another in the Royal Academy in London; and a third, an engraving by Raphael Morghess.

A few facts about the artist may be of interest. Leonardo, born in the village of Vincie, Italy, near Florence, lived and worked at the time of the discovery of America. His work in art represents only one phase of his activity. He was not only a sculptor and painter, but made scientific studies in geometry, physics, chemistry and the laws of perspective. He is said to have made an airplane that he believed would fly.

Leonardo da Vincie's paintings are few, yet his "Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa" rank among the greatest of all times.