

## Highland Park News-Letter

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### In Appreciation

THE Presbyterian Church of Highland Park is fortunate indeed in receiving from Mr. L. G. Yoe an indefinite loan of a beautiful copy in oils of the "Sistine Madonna," by Raphael. This copy was made from the original by order of Mr. Yoe's father in 1858 and has since hung in his home in Chicago. The friends of the Presbyterian Church heartily appreciate the kind generosity which allows it now to grace the lecture room of their church.

The picture is a little more than one-half the size of the original painting, and is set in a heavy gold frame.

The "Sistine Madonna" is considered by many art critics to be the sublimest picture ever painted. It was done by Raphael in 1518, scarcely three years before his early death, and was the last Madonna painted by the great artist. The original painting is nine feet and three inches high by seven feet wide. It is supposed to have been painted for the monks of the Monastery Church of St. Sixtus in Piacenza, a little village in the north of Italy, to be used as a processional standard carried between two poles. It was, however, early placed as a chief altar-piece in the church itself.

In 1753 the picture was bought by Augustus III, elector of Saxony, and later placed in the Royal Gallery in Dresden, Germany. It was first carried into the throne room of the king of Saxony, who, struck by the wondrous beauty of the painting, ordered his throne to be removed from the place of honor and the picture to be substituted, saying, "Make way for the immortal Raphael!" The picture occupies a separate room in the Dresden Gallery and stands on a beautifully hand-carved, altar-like structure, the lower part of which bears the following inscription in Italian: "For the Black Monks of San Sisto in Piacenza, Raphael painted a picture for the high altar showing Our Lady with St. Sixtus and St. Barbara—truly a work most excellent and rare."

The green silk curtains are drawn back from the picture, disclosing a vision of the Virgin in blue mantle and red tunic, with the wonderful Child enthroned in her arms. As she stands on the clouds in the midst of the glory of the cherubim, clasping the Eternal Son in her arms, the Madonna truly appears as the Queen of Heaven. On one side kneels Pope Sixtus, for whom the picture is named, and facing him on the other side is St. Barbara, while in the background only dimly seen are myriads of cherub heads. Below is a light parapet on which two beautiful boy angels rest their elbows and look up with wistful eyes. The story goes that after the picture was completed the artist saw two little boys looking lovingly at it through the open window. They had often watched him at his work, and as they now gazed upon the beautiful painting, their eyes to Raphael seemed full of worship and to resemble the eyes of the angels in his picture. So taking his brush he painted the little heads below the Holy Mother and Child, then he added wings and left them there. In this way the little

Italian boys became a part of the wonderful picture.

There is something indescribable in the countenance of the Madonna, a blessed calm in every feature, and "never has the loveliness of childhood been blended so marvelously with the solemn consciousness of a high calling as in the features and countenance of this Child." The picture has well been called "the apex of all religious art."

### Stevenson's Birthday Gift

ONE of Robert Louis Stevenson's Letters is more characteristic than that sent to a little girl in Vermont, daughter of Mr. Henry C. Ide, then ex-chief justice of Samoa, and now vice-governor of the Philippines. Mr. Stevenson first sent her this document:

I, Robert Louis Stevenson, Advocate of the Scots Bar, Author of The Master of Ballantrae and Moral Emblems, stuck civil engineer, sole owner and patentee of the Palace and Plantation known as Va'lima, in the island of Upolu, Samoa, a British subject, being sound in mind, and pretty well, I thank you, in body;

In consideration that Miss Annie H. Ide, daughter of H. C. Ide, in the town of Saint Johnsbury, in the county of Caledonia, in the State of Vermont, United States of America, was born, out of all reason, upon Christmas Day, and is therefore out of all justice denied the consolation and profit of a proper birthday;

And considering that I, the said Robert Louis Stevenson, have attained an age when O, we never mention it, and that I have now no further use for a birthday of any description;

And in consideration that I have met H. C. Ide, the father of the said Annie H. Ide, and found him about as white a land commissioner as I require:

Have transferred and do hereby transfer to the said Annie H. Ide all and whole my rights and privileges in the thirteenth day of November, formerly my birthday, now hereby and henceforth the birthday of the said Annie H. Ide, to have, hold, exercise and enjoy the same in the customary manner, by the sporting of fine raiment, eating of rich meats and receipt of gifts, compliments and copies of verse, according to the manner of our ancestors;

And I direct the said Annie H. Ide to add to the said name of Annie H. Ide the name Louisa, to be used with moderation and humanity, *et tamquam bona filia familia*, the said birthday not being so young as it once was, and having carried me in a very satisfactory manner since I can remember;

And in case the said Annie H. Ide shall neglect or contravene either of the above conditions I hereby revoke the donation, and transfer my rights in the said birthday to the President of the United States of America.

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and seal this nineteenth day of June, in the year of grace eighteen hundred and ninety-one.

The little girl accepted her strange gift in the same spirit, promptly changed her middle name to Louisa and wrote a letter of thanks, inclosing her photograph and a pencil drawing, to Mr. Stevenson. Here is his reply:

My Dear Louisa: Your picture of the church, the photograph of yourself and your sister, and your very witty and pleasing letter, came all in a bundle, and made me feel I had my money's worth for that birthday. I am now, I must be, one of your nearest relatives; exactly what we are to each other I do not know, I doubt if the case has ever happened before, your papa ought to know, and I don't believe he does; but I think I ought to call you in the meanwhile, and until we get the advice of a counsel learned in the law, my name-daughter. Well, I was extremely pleased to see by the church that

my name-daughter could draw; by the letter, that she was no fool; and by the photograph, that she was a pretty girl, which hurts nothing. See how virtues are rewarded! My first idea of adopting you was entirely charitable; and here I find that I am quite proud of it, and of you, and that I chose just the kind of a name-daughter I wanted. For I can draw, too, or rather I mean to say I could before I forgot how; and I am very far from being a fool myself, however much I may look it; and I am as beautiful as the day, or at least I once hoped that perhaps I might be going to be. And so I might. So that you see we are well met, and peers on these important points. \* \* \* You are quite wrong as to the effect of the birthday on your age. From the moment the deed was registered (as it was in the public press with every solemnity), the 13th day of November became your own and only birthday, and you ceased to have been born on Christmas day. Ask your father; I am sure he will tell you this is sound law. You are thus become a month and twelve days younger than you were, but will go on growing older for the future in the regular and human manner from one 13th of November to the next. The effect on me is more doubtful. I may, as you suggest, live forever; I might on the other hand, come to pieces like the one-horse shay at a moment's notice; doubtless the step was risky, but I do not the least regret that which enables me to sign myself your revered and delighted name-father.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### O Captain! My Captain!

*In Memory of Abraham Lincoln.*

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,

The ship has weather'd every wrack, the prize we sought is won,

The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,

While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,

For you are here, in our midst,  
The shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here, Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck

You've fallen cold and dead.

My captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,

My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,

The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,

From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck where my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

### A Definition

HERE IS a certain Maine lad's definition of anatomy: "Anatomy is the human body, which consists of three parts, the head, the chest and the stummick. The head contains the eyes and brains, if any; the chest contains the lungs and a piece of the liver. The stummick is devoted to the bowels, of which there are five, a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes w and y."

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