

**GABRIEL
AND THE HOUR BOOK**



Gabriel

**GABRIEL AND THE
HOUR BOOK**

BY

EVALEEN STEIN

**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

Cover and arrangement © 2005 Yesterday's Classics.

This edition, first published in 2005 by Yesterday's Classics, is an unabridged republication of the work originally published by L. C. Page & Co. in 1906. For a complete listing of the books published by Yesterday's Classics, visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of the Baldwin Project which presents the complete text of dozens of classic books for children at www.mainlesson.com under the editorship of Lisa M. Ripperton and T. A. Roth.

ISBN-10: 1-59915-042-5

ISBN-13: 978-1-59915-042-0

Yesterday's Classics
PO Box 3418
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

TO

My Friend

CAROLINE H. GRIFFITHS

CONTENTS

	Page
I. THE LITTLE COLOUR GRINDER	1
II. BROTHER STEPHEN'S INSPIRATION	9
III. GABRIEL INTERVIEWS THE ABBOT	17
IV. THE HOUR BOOK	25
V. THE COUNT'S TAX	33
VI. GABRIEL'S PRAYER	38
VII. THE BOOK GOES TO LADY ANNE	45
VIII. LADY ANNE WRITES TO THE KING	51
IX. THE KING'S MESSENGER	60
X. GABRIEL'S CHRISTMAS	69
XI. THE KING'S ILLUMINATOR	82

THE LITTLE COLOUR GRINDER



T was a bright morning of early April, many hundred years ago; and through all the fields and meadows of Normandy the violets and cuckoo-buds were just beginning to peep through the tender green of the young grass. The rows of tall poplar-trees that everywhere, instead of fences, served to mark off the farms of the country folk, waved in the spring wind like great, pale green plumes; and among their branches the earliest robins and field-fares were gaily singing as a little boy stepped out from a small thatched cottage standing among the fields, and took his way along the highroad.

That Gabriel Viaud was a peasant lad, any one could have told from the blouse of blue homespun, and the wooden shoes which he wore; and that he felt gladness of the April time could easily be known by the happy little song he began to sing to himself, and by the eager delight with which he now and then stooped to pluck a blue violet or to gather a handful of golden cuckoo-buds.

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

A mile or two behind him, and hidden by a bend in the road, lay the little village of St. Martin-de-Bouchage; while in the soft blue distance ahead of him rose the gray walls of St. Martin's Abbey, whither he was going.

Indeed, for almost a year now the little boy had been trudging every day to the Abbey, where he earned a small sum by waiting upon the good brothers who dwelt there, and who made the beautiful painted books for which the Abbey had become famous. Gabriel could grind and mix their colours for them, and prepare the parchment on which they did their writing, and do many other little things that helped them in their work.

The lad enjoyed his tasks at the Abbey, and, above all, delighted in seeing the beautiful things at which the brothers were always busy; yet, as he now drew near the gateway, he could not help but give a little sigh, for it was so bright and sunny out-of-doors. He smiled, though, as he looked at the gay bunches of blossoms with which he had quite filled his hands, and felt that at least he was taking a bit of the April in with him, as he crossed the threshold and entered a large room.

“Good morrow, Gabriel,” called out several voices as he came in, for the lad was a general favorite with the brothers; and Gabriel, respectfully taking off his blue peasant cap, gave a pleasant “good morrow” to each.

The room in which he stood had plain stone walls and a floor of paved stone, and little furniture,

THE LITTLE COLOUR GRINDER

except a number of solidly made benches and tables. These were placed beneath a row of high windows, and the tables were covered with writing and painting materials and pieces of parchment; for the brotherhood of St. Martin's was very industrious.

In those days,—it was four hundred years ago,—printed books were very few, and almost unknown to most people; for printing-presses had been invented only a few years, and so by far the greater number of books in the world were still made by the patient labour of skilful hands; the work usually being done by the monks, of whom there were very many at that time.

These monks, or brothers, as they were often called, lived in monasteries and abbeys, and were men who banded themselves together in brotherhoods, taking solemn vows never to have homes of their own or to mingle in the daily life of others, but to devote their lives to religion; for they believed that they could serve God better by thus shutting themselves off from the world.

And so it came about that the brothers, having more time and more learning than most other people of those days, made it their chief work to preserve and multiply all the books that were worth keeping. These they wrote out on parchment (for paper was very scarce so long ago), and then ornamented the pages with such beautiful painted borders of flowers and birds and saints and angels, and such lovely initial letters, all in bright colours and gold, that to this day large numbers of the

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

beautiful books made by the monks are still kept among the choicest treasures of the museums and great libraries of the world.

And few of all those wonderful old illuminations (for so the painted ornaments were called) were lovelier than the work of the brotherhood of St. Martin's. Gabriel felt very proud even to grind the colours for them. But as he passed over to one of the tables and began to make ready his paint mortar, the monk who had charge of the writing-room called to him, saying:

“Gabriel, do not get out thy work here, for the Abbot hath just ordered that some one must help Brother Stephen, who is alone in the old chapter-house. He hath a special book to make, and his colour-grinder is fallen ill; so go thou at once and take Jacques's place.”

So Gabriel left the writing-room and passed down the long corridor that led to the chapter-house. This was a room the brothers had kept for years, as a meeting-place, when they and the Abbot, who governed them all, wished to talk over the affairs of the Abbey; but as it had at last grown too small for them, they had built a new and larger one; and so the old chapter-house was seldom used any more.

Gabriel knew this, and he wondered much why Brother Stephen chose to work there rather than in the regular writing-room with the others. He supposed, however, that, for some reason of his own, Brother Stephen preferred to be alone.

THE LITTLE COLOUR GRINDER

He did not know that the monk, at that moment, was sitting moodily by his work-table, his eyes staring aimlessly ahead of him and his hands dropped idly in his lap. For Brother Stephen was feeling very cross and unhappy and out of sorts with all the world. And this was the reason: poor Brother Stephen had entered the Abbey when a lad scarcely older than Gabriel. He had come of good family, but had been left an orphan with no one to care for him, and for want of another home had been sent to the Abbey, to be trained for the brotherhood; for in those days there were few places where fatherless and motherless children could be taken care of.

As little Jean (for this was his name before he joined the monks, when one's own name was always changed) grew up, he took the solemn vows which bound him to the rules of the brotherhood without realizing what it all would mean to him; for Brother Stephen was a born artist; and, by and by, he began to feel that while life in the Abbey was well for most of the brothers, for him it was not well. He wanted to be free to wander about the world; to paint pictures of many things; and to go from city to city, and see and study the work of the world's great artists.

It is true he spent the greater part of his time in the Abbey working on the illuminated books, and this he loved; yet it did not wholly satisfy him. He longed to paint other things, and, above all, his artist nature longed for freedom from all the little rules of daily life that governed the days of the brotherhood.

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

Brother Stephen had brooded much over this desire for freedom, and only the day before had sought out the Abbot of St. Martin's and asked to be released from the vows of obedience which he had taken years before, but which now he found so hard to live up to. But, to his great disappointment, the Abbot had refused to grant his request.

The Abbot had several reasons for this refusal; one of them was that he himself dearly loved all the little daily ceremonies of the Abbey, and he could not understand why any one who had once lived there could prefer a life in the world. He really thought it was for Brother Stephen's own good that he should stay in the brotherhood.

And then, too, perhaps there was another reason less to the Abbot's credit; and this reason was that of all the beautiful illuminated books for which the Abbey of St. Martin's had become so famous, none were quite so exquisitely done as those made by Brother Stephen. So perhaps the Abbot did not wish to lose so skilful an artist from the work-room of the Abbey, and especially at this particular time. For just before Brother Stephen had had his talk with the Abbot, a messenger from the city of Paris had come to the Abbey, bearing an order from the king, Louis XII., who reigned over France, and Normandy also, which was a part of France.

Now the following winter, the king was to wed the Lady Anne of Bretagne; and as Lady Anne was a great admirer and collector of beautiful painted books, the king thought no gift would please

THE LITTLE COLOUR GRINDER

his bride quite so much as a piece of fine illumination; and he decided that it should be an hour book. These books were so called because in them were written different parts of the Bible, intended to be read at certain hours of the day; for most people at that time were very devout, and the great ladies especially were very fond of having their hour books made as beautiful as possible.

As King Louis thought over the best places where he might have his bride's gift painted, at last he made up his mind to send to the monks of St. Martin's. He commanded that the hour book be done in the most beautiful style, and that it must be finished by the following December.

The Abbot was delighted with the honour the king had shown the Abbey in sending this order; and he determined that Brother Stephen should stay and make the entire book, as no one else wrote so evenly, or made quite such lovely initials and borders as did he.

When the Abbot told this to Brother Stephen, however, it was a pity that he did so in such a cold and haughty way, that altogether Brother Stephen's anger was aroused, for he had a rather unruly temper; and so, smarting under the disappointment of not receiving his liberty, and feeling that the book for Lady Anne was one cause of this, he had spoken angrily and disrespectfully to the Abbot, and refused point-blank to touch the king's order.

At this, the Abbot in his turn became angry, and declared that Brother Stephen should be

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

compelled to paint the hour book whether he wished to or not; that he must do it as punishment for his unruly conduct; and the Abbot threatened, moreover, that if he did not obey, he would be placed under the ban of the Church, which was considered by all the brotherhood as a dreadful misfortune.

And so with this threat hanging over him, that very morning, just before Gabriel reached the Abbey, Brother Stephen had been sent to the old chapter-house, where he was ordered to work by himself, and to begin the book at once. And to complete his humiliation, and for fear he might try to run away, the Abbot caused him to be chained to one of the legs of the heavy work-table; and this chain he was to wear every day during working hours.

Now all this made Brother Stephen very angry and unhappy, and his heart was full of bitterness toward the Abbot and all of the brotherhood, and all the world in general, when all at once he heard Gabriel's knock at the door; and then, in another moment, the door was softly pushed open, and there, on the threshold, stood the little boy.

BROTHER STEPHEN'S INSPIRATION



GABRIEL knew nothing of Brother Stephen's troubles, and so was smiling happily as he stepped into the room, holding his cap in one hand, while with his other arm he hugged to him his large bunch of violets and cuckoo-buds. Indeed he looked so bright and full of life that even Brother Stephen felt the effect of it, and his frown began to smooth out a little as he said:

“Well, my lad, who art thou?”

“I am Gabriel Viaud, Brother Stephen,” answered the boy, “and I have come to help you; for they told me Jacques is fallen ill. What would you like me to do first?”

To this Brother Stephen scarcely knew what to reply. He was certainly in no mood for work. He was still very, very angry, and thought himself terribly misused by the Abbot; and though he greatly dreaded the latter's threats, he had almost reached the point of defying him and the king and everybody

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

else, no matter what dreadful thing happened to him afterward.

But then as he looked again at the bright-faced little boy standing there, and seeming so eager to help he began to relent more and more; and besides, he found it decidedly embarrassing to try to explain things to Gabriel.

So after a little pause, he said to him: "Gabriel, I am not ready for thee at this moment; go sit on yonder bench. I wish to think out a matter which is perplexing me." Then as Gabriel obediently went over to the bench and seated himself, he added: "Thou canst pass the time looking at the books on the shelf above thee."

So while Brother Stephen was trying to make up his mind as to what he would do, Gabriel took down one of the books, and was soon absorbed in its pages. Presently, as he turned a new one he gave a little involuntary exclamation of delight. At this Brother Stephen noticed him, and—

"Ah!" he said, "what hast thou found that seems to please thee?"

"Oh, Sir," answered Gabriel, "this is the most beautiful initial letter I have ever seen!"

Now Gabriel did not know that the book had been made a few years before by Brother Stephen himself, and so he had no idea how much it pleased the brother to have his work admired.

Indeed, most people who do good work of any kind oftentimes feel the need of praise; not

BROTHER STEPHEN'S INSPIRATION

flattery, but the real approval of some one who understands what they are trying to do. It makes the workman or artist feel that if his work is liked by somebody, it is worth while to try to do more and better.

Poor Brother Stephen did not get much of this needed praise, for many of the other monks at the Abbey were envious of him, and so were unwilling really to admire his work; while the Abbot was so cold and haughty and so taken up with his own affairs, that he seldom took the trouble to say what he liked or disliked.

So when Brother Stephen saw Gabriel's eager admiration, he felt pleased indeed; for Gabriel had a nice taste in artistic things, and seemed instinctively to pick out the best points of anything he looked at. And when, in his enthusiasm, he carried the book over and began to tell Brother Stephen why he so much admired the painting, without knowing it, he really made the latter feel happier than he had felt for many a day. He began to have a decided notion that he would paint King Louis's book after all. And just then, as if to settle the matter, he happened to glance at the corner of the table where Gabriel had laid down his bunch of flowers as he came in.

It chanced that some of the violets had fallen from the cluster and dropped upon a broad ruler of brass that lay beside the painting materials. And even as Brother Stephen looked, it chanced also that a little white butterfly drifted into the room through the bars of the high, open window; after vaguely

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

fluttering about for a while, at last, attracted by the blossoms, it came, and, poising lightly over the violets on the ruler, began to sip honey from the heart of one of them.

As Brother Stephen's artistic eye took in the beauty of effect made by the few flowers on the brass ruler with the butterfly hovering over them, he, too, gave a little exclamation, and his eyes brightened and he smiled; for he had just got a new idea for an illuminated border.

"Yes," he said to himself, "this would be different from any I have yet seen! I will decorate King Louis's book with borders of gold; and on the gold I will paint the meadow wildflowers, and the bees and butterflies, and all the little flying creatures."

Now before this, all the borders of the Abbey books had been painted, in the usual manner of the time, with scrolls and birds and flowers more or less conventionalized; that is, the artists did not try to make them look exactly like the real ones, but twisted them about in all sorts of fantastic ways. Sometimes the stem of a flower would end in the curled-up folds of a winged dragon, or a bird would have strange blossoms growing out of his beak, or perhaps the tips of his wings.

These borders were indeed exquisitely beautiful, but Brother Stephen was just tired of it all, and wanted to do something quite different; so he was delighted with his new idea of painting the field-

BROTHER STEPHEN'S INSPIRATION

flowers exactly like nature, only placing them on a background of gold.

As he pictured in his mind one page after another thus adorned, he became more and more interested and impatient to begin at once. He forgot all about his anger at the Abbot; he forgot everything else, except that he wanted to begin King Louis's book as quickly as possible!

And so he called briskly to Gabriel, who meantime had reseated himself on his bench:

"Gabriel, come hither! Canst thou rule lines without blotting? Canst thou make ink and grind colours and prepare gold size?"

"Yes, sir," said Gabriel, surprised at the monk's eager manner, "I have worked at all these things."

"Good!" replied Brother Stephen. "Here is a piece of parchment thou canst cut and prepare, and then rule it, thus" (and here he showed him how he wished it done), "with scarlet ink. But do not take yonder brass ruler! Here is one of ivory thou canst use instead."

And then as Gabriel went to work, Brother Stephen, taking a goose-quill pen and some black ink, began skilfully and carefully to make drawings of the violets as they lay on the ruler, not forgetting the white butterfly which still hovered about. The harder he worked the happier he grew; hour after hour passed, till at last the dinner time came, and Gabriel, who was growing very hungry, could hear the

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

footsteps of the brothers, as they marched into the large dining-room where they all ate together.

Brother Stephen, however, was so absorbed that he did not notice anything; till, by and by, the door opened, and in came two monks, one carrying some soup and bread and a flagon of wine. As they entered, Brother Stephen turned quickly, and was about to rise, when all at once he felt the tug of the chain still fastened about the leg of the table; at this his face grew scarlet with shame, and he sank back in his chair.

Gabriel started with surprise, for he had not before seen the chain, partly hidden as it was by the folds of the brother's robe. As he looked, one of the two monks went to the table, and, with a key which he carried, unlocked the chain so Brother Stephen might have a half-hour's liberty while he ate. The monks, however, stayed with him to keep an eye on his movements; and meantime they told Gabriel to go out to the Abbey kitchen and find something for his own dinner.

As Gabriel went out along the corridor to the kitchen, his heart swelled with pity! Why was Brother Stephen chained? He tried to think, and remembered that once before he had seen one of the brothers chained to a table in the writing-room because he was not diligent enough with his work,—but Brother Stephen! Was he not working so hard? And how beautiful, too, were his drawings! The more Gabriel thought of it the more indignant he grew. Indeed, he did not half-enjoy the bread and savoury soup made

BROTHER STEPHEN'S INSPIRATION

of black beans, that the cook dished out for him; he took his wooden bowl, and sitting on a bench, ate absently, thinking all the while of Brother Stephen.

When he had finished he went back to the chapter-house and found the other monks gone and Brother Stephen again chained. Gabriel felt much embarrassed to have been obliged to see it; and when Brother Stephen, pointing to the chain, said bitterly, "Thou seest they were afraid I would run away from my work," the lad was so much at a loss to know what to say, that he very wisely said nothing.

Now Brother Stephen, though he had begun the book as the Abbot wished, yet he had by no means the meek and penitent spirit which also the Abbot desired of him, and which it was proper for a monk to have.

And so if the truth must be told, each time the other monks came in to chain him, he felt more than anything else like seizing both of them, and thrusting them bodily out of the door, or at least trying to do so. But then he could not forget the Abbot's threat if he showed disobedience; and he had been brought up to dread the ban of the Church more than anything else that could possibly happen to him, because he believed that this would make him unhappy, not only in this life, but in the life to come. And so he smothered his feelings and tried to bear the humiliation as patiently as he could.

Gabriel could not help but see, however, that it took him some time to regain the interest he had

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

felt in his work, and it was not until the afternoon was half-gone that he seemed to forget his troubles enough really to have heart in the pages he was making.

When dusk fell, Gabriel picked up and arranged his things in order, and bidding Brother Stephen good night, trudged off home.

GABRIEL INTERVIEWS THE ABBOT



HE next day of Gabriel's service passed off much the same as the first, and so it went for almost a week; but the boy saw day by day that Brother Stephen's chain became more and more unbearable to him, and that he had long fits of brooding, when he looked so miserable and unhappy that Gabriel's heart fairly ached for him.

At last the lad, who was a sympathetic little fellow, felt that he could stand it no longer, but must try and help him in some way.

"If I could only speak to the Abbot himself," thought Gabriel, "surely he would see that Brother Stephen is set free!"

The Abbot, however, was a very stately and dignified person; and Gabriel did not quite see how a little peasant boy like himself could find an opportunity to speak to him, or how he would dare to say anything even if he had a chance.

Now it happened the very morning that Gabriel was thinking about all this, he was out in the

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

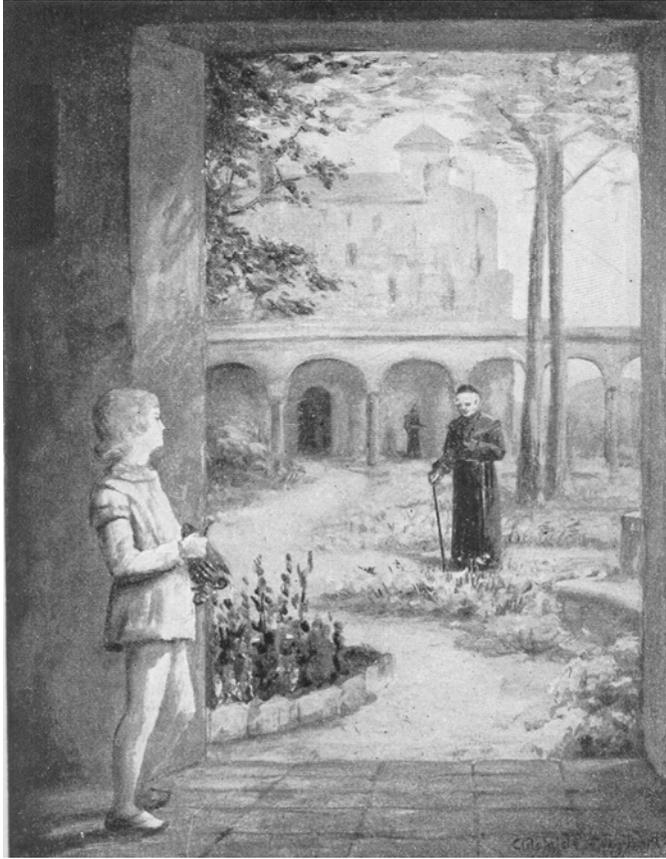
Abbey kitchen beating up the white of a nice fresh egg which he had brought with him from home that day. He had the egg in an earthen bowl, and was working away with a curious wooden beater, for few people had forks in those days. And as he beat up the white froth, the Abbey cooks also were busy making pasties, and roasting huge pieces of meat before the great open fireplace, and baking loaves of sweet Normandy bread for the monks' dinner.

But Gabriel was not helping them; no, he was beating the egg for Brother Stephen to use in putting on the gold in the border he was painting. For the brothers did not have the imitation gold powders of which we see so much to-day; but instead, they used real gold, which they ground up very fine in earthen mortars, and took much trouble to properly prepare. And when they wanted to lay it on, they commonly used the white of a fresh egg to fasten it to the parchment.

So Gabriel was working as fast as he could, for Brother Stephen was waiting; when all at once he happened to look out the kitchen door, which opened on a courtyard where there was a pretty garden, and he saw the Abbot walking up and down the gravel paths, and now and then stopping to see how the tulips and daffodils were coming on.

As Gabriel looked, the Abbot seated himself on a stone bench; and then the little boy, forgetting his awe of him, and thinking only of Brother

GABRIEL INTERVIEWS THE ABBOT



"He saw the Abbot walking up and down"

Stephen and his chain ran out as fast as he could, still holding his bowl in one hand and the wooden beater in the other.

As he came up to where the Abbot was sitting, he courtesied in such haste that he spilled out half his egg as he eagerly burst out:

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

“O reverend Father! Will you not command Brother Stephen to be set free from his chain?”

The Abbot at first had smiled at the droll figure made by the little boy, whom he supposed to be one of the kitchen scullions, but at this speech he stiffened up and looked very stern as Gabriel went on breathlessly:

“He is making such a beautiful book, and he works so hard; but the chain is so dreadful to him, and I was sure that if you knew they had put it on him, you would not allow it!”

Here the Abbot began to feel a trifle uncomfortable, for he saw that Gabriel did not know that he himself had ordered Brother Stephen to wear the chain. But he mentioned nothing of this as he spoke to Gabriel.

“Boy,” he said, severely, “what affair of thine is this matter about Brother Stephen? Doubtless if he is chained, it is a punishment he hath merited. ’Tis scarcely becoming in a lad like thee to question these things.” And then, as he looked sharply at Gabriel, he added, “Did Brother Stephen send thee hither? Who art thou?”

At this Gabriel hung his head, and, “Nay, sir,” he answered, simply, “he does not know, and perhaps he will be angry with me! I am his colour-grinder, and I was in the kitchen getting the egg for his gold,”—here suddenly Gabriel remembered his bowl, and looking down in dismay, “Oh, sir,” he exclaimed, “I have spilled the egg, and it was fresh-laid this morning by my white hen!” Here the boy

GABRIEL INTERVIEWS THE ABBOT

looked so honestly distressed that the Abbot could not but believe that he spoke the truth, and so he smiled a little as he said, not unkindly:

“Well, never mind about thy hen,—go on; thou wast in the kitchen, and then what?”

“I saw you in the garden,” answered Gabriel, “and—and—I thought that if you knew about the chain, you would not like it;” (here the Abbot began to look very stern again); “and,” Gabriel added, “I could not bear to see Brother Stephen so unhappy. I know he is unhappy, for whenever he notices the chain, he frowns and his hand trembles so he can hardly paint!”

“Ah,” said the Abbot to himself, “if his hand trembles, that is another matter.” For the Abbot knew perfectly well that in order to do successfully anything so delicate as a piece of illumination, one must have a steady hand and untroubled nerves; and he began to think that perhaps he had gone a little too far in punishing Brother Stephen. So he thought a minute, and then to Gabriel, who was still standing before him, not quite knowing what to do, he merely said:

“Go back to thy work, lad, and mind thy colours; and,” he added with haughty dignity, “I will do as I think best about Brother Stephen’s chain.”

So Gabriel went back to the kitchen feeling very uncomfortable, for he was afraid he had displeased the Abbot, and so, perhaps, done more harm than good to Brother Stephen. While he was quite sure he had displeased Brother Stephen, for he

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

had kept him waiting a long while, and worse still, had spilled the best egg there was in the kitchen! However, the lad begged one of the cooks to let him have another egg, and, whisking it up as quickly as he could, made haste to carry it to the chapter-house.

As he pushed open the door, Brother Stephen said, sharply, "How now! I thought they had chained thee to one of the tables in the kitchen!"

"I am so sorry," said Gabriel, his face very red,—“but—I—spilled the first egg and had to make ready another.”

He hoped Brother Stephen would not ask him how he happened to spill it; for by this time he began to realize that the high-spirited monk probably had reasons of his own for submitting to the punishment of the chain, and that very likely he would be displeased if he knew that his little colour-grinder had asked the Abbot to free him. So Gabriel felt much relieved when, without further questions, Brother Stephen went on with his work, in which for the moment he was greatly absorbed.

And thus the day went quietly on, till early in the afternoon; when, to the great surprise of both of them, the door slowly opened, and in walked the Abbot himself.

The Abbot was haughty, as usual, and, as Brother Stephen saw him come in, he raised his head with an involuntary look of pride and resentment; but neither spoke as the Abbot stepped over to the

GABRIEL INTERVIEWS THE ABBOT

table, and examined the page on which the monk was working.

This particular page happened to be ornamented with a wide border of purple flag-flowers, copied from some Gabriel had gathered the day before in a swampy corner of one of the wayside meadows. Their fresh green leaves and rich purple petals shone with royal effect against the background of gold; while hovering over them, and clinging to their stems, were painted honey-bees, with gauzy wings, and soft, furry-looking bodies of black and gold.

As the Abbot saw how beautiful it all was, and how different from any other of the Abbey illuminations, he smiled to himself with pleasure. For the Abbot, though he never said a great deal, yet very well knew a good piece of artistic work when he saw it. Instead of merely smiling to himself, however, it would have made Brother Stephen much happier if he had taken the trouble to say aloud some of the nice things he was thinking about the work.

For Brother Stephen felt very bitter as he thought over all he had been made to bear; and even as the Abbot looked, he saw, sure enough, that his hand trembled as Gabriel had said; for the poor monk had hard work to control his feelings.

Now the Abbot really did not mean to be unkind. It was only that he did not quite know how to unbend; and perhaps feeling this, he soon went out.

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

Gabriel, who had been very much afraid he might say something to him about their conversation of the morning, felt greatly relieved when the door closed behind him; and the rest of the afternoon he and Brother Stephen worked on in silence.

THE HOUR BOOK



UT the next morning when Gabriel reached the Abbey, to his great joy he found the chain gone (for the Abbot had so ordered after his visit to the chapter-house), and Brother Stephen already hard at work, and happy as a bird. For like many other artist souls, when things went wrong, Brother Stephen suffered dreadful unhappiness; while, on the other hand, when pleased, he was full of boundless delight; and so, being relieved from the chain, he was in one of his most joyous moods.

He smiled brightly as Gabriel entered; and the April sunlight streaming in through the high narrow windows sparkled so radiantly, and so filled them with the life and energy and gladness of the spring-time, that each of them felt as though he could do no end of work, and that King Louis's book should be one of the most beautiful things in all the world!

And that morning was but the beginning of a long series of happy days that Brother Stephen and Gabriel were to spend together. At first the monk knew nothing of how it happened that he was freed

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

from the humiliation of the chain; but one day he heard about Gabriel's talk with the Abbot from one of the brotherhood who had chanced to be in the garden that morning, and had overheard them.

At first Brother Stephen was rather displeased; for he did not like it that the little boy had begged of the Abbot something which he himself was too proud to ask. But when he thought it over, and reflected that it was out of sheer kindness that Gabriel had made the request, his heart strangely warmed toward the lad. Indeed, through all his life in the Abbey, no one had ever really cared whether he was happy or unhappy; and so poor Brother Stephen had no idea how very pleasant it would be to have even a little peasant boy take an interest in him. And as day after day went by, he began to love Gabriel, as he had never before loved any one.

Yes, those were very happy days for both of them, and very busy ones, too. Every morning Gabriel would come to the Abbey with his hands filled with the prettiest wild flowers he could find on the way; and from these Brother Stephen would select the ones that pleased him best to paint. Sometimes it would be the sweet wild hyacinths of pale blue, sometimes the yellow marsh-marigolds, and again the little deep pink field-roses, or some other of the innumerable lovely blossoms that every season brought. And with them all, as he had said, he put in the small flying creatures; butterflies and bees, scarlet ladybugs and pale green beetles, whose wings looked like scraps of rainbows; and

THE HOUR BOOK

sometimes, in his zeal, he even painted the little snails with their curled-up shells, and the fuzzy caterpillars that happened to come in on Gabriel's bouquets, and you really would never believe how very handsome even these looked in the gold borders, when Brother Stephen got through with them.

And so, day by day, the book grew in perfect beauty. And as Brother Stephen worked, there was much for Gabriel to do also. For in those days artists could not buy their ink and paints all ready for use as they do to-day, but were obliged to prepare by hand almost all their materials; and a little assistant such as Gabriel had to keep his hands busy, and his eyes open, too.

For instance, the matter of the ink alone, Gabriel had to have on his mind for weeks; for one could not then buy it ready made, in a bottle, as we do now without the least trouble, but the monks or their colour-grinders had to make it themselves.

And this is the way Gabriel had been taught to do it: morning after morning of those early spring days, as he trudged along on his way to the Abbey, he kept sharp watch on the young hawthorn-trees by the roadside; and when their first buds showed, and while they were still tiny, he gathered armfuls of the boughs, and carried them to the Abbey, where he spread them out in a sunny corner of the courtyard to stay until quite dry. Then he had to put them in a stone mortar and pound off all the bark; and this he put to steep in great earthen jars of water, until the

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

water might draw all the sap from out the bark. All this took several weeks to do.

And then Gabriel spent a number of busy days in the great kitchen. There he had a large saucepan, and in it he placed, a little at a time, the water in which the bark was steeping; and then raking out some coals from the blazing fire of logs, he set his saucepan over them, and watched the barky water until it had boiled down very thick, much as one boils down syrup for preserves.

Then he dipped out the thick liquid into little bags of parchment, which he had spent days stitching up very tightly, so that nothing could leak out. After the little bags were filled, he hung them out-of-doors in the bright sunlight; and as the days grew warmer and warmer, the sun soon dried their contents, so that if one of the little bags were opened it would be found filled with a dark powder.

And then, last of all, when Brother Stephen wished some fresh ink for his writing, or for the delicate lines about his initial letters or borders, Gabriel would take a little of the dry powder from one of the bags, and, putting it in a small saucepan over the fire, would melt it with a little wine. And so at last it would be ready for use; a fine, beautiful black ink that hundreds of years have found hard work to fade.

Then there was the gold to grind and prepare: that was the hardest of all, and fairly made his arms ache. Many of the paints, too, had to be worked over very carefully; and the blue especially, and other

THE HOUR BOOK

brilliant colours made from vegetable dyes, must be kept in a very curious way. Brother Stephen would prepare the dyes, as he preferred to do this himself; and then Gabriel would take little pieces of linen cloth and dip a few in each of the colours until the linen would be soaked; and afterward, when they had dried in the sun, he would arrange these bits in a little booklet of cotton paper, which every night Brother Stephen, as was the custom with many of the monks, put under his pillow so that it might keep very dry and warm; for this preserved the colours in all their brightness. And then when he wanted to use some of them, he would tell Gabriel to cut off a bit of the linen of whatever colour he wished, and soak it in water, and in this way he would get a fine liquid paint.

For holding this paint, as dishes were none too plenty in those days, mussel shells were generally used; and one of Gabriel's tasks was to gather numbers of these from the banks of the little river that ran through one of the Abbey meadows. That was very pleasant work, though, and sometimes, late in the afternoons of those lovely summer days, Brother Stephen and Gabriel would walk out together to the edge of this little river; the monk to sit on the grassy bank dreaming of all the beautiful things he meant to paint, while Gabriel hunted for the pretty purple shells.

And oftentimes the lad would bring along a fishing-pole and try his luck at catching an eel; for even this, too, had to do with the making of the book. For Brother Stephen in putting on the gold of

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

his borders, while he generally used white of egg, yet for certain parts preferred a glue made from the skin of an eel; and this Gabriel could make very finely.



"Dreaming of all the beautiful things he meant to paint."

So you see there were a great many things for a little colour-grinder to do; yet Gabriel was very industrious, and it often happened that he would finish his tasks for the day, and still have several

THE HOUR BOOK

hours to himself. And this was the best of all; for at such times Brother Stephen, who was getting along finely, would take great pleasure in teaching him to illuminate. He would let the boy take a piece of parchment, and then giving him beautiful letters and bits of borders, would show him how to copy them. Indeed, he took so much pains in his teaching, that very soon Gabriel, who loved the work, and who had a real talent for it, began to be quite skilful, and to make very good designs of his own.

Whenever he did anything especially nice, Brother Stephen would seem almost as much pleased as if Gabriel were his own boy; and hugging him affectionately, he would exclaim:

“Ah, little one, thou hast indeed the artist soul! And, please God, I will train thy hand so that when thou art a man it shall never know the hard toil of the peasant. Thy pen and brush shall earn a livelihood for thee!” And then he would take more pains than ever to teach Gabriel all the best knowledge of his art.

Nor did Brother Stephen content himself with teaching the boy only to paint; but in his love for him, he desired to do still more. He had no wealth some day to bestow upon him, but he had something that was a very great deal better; for Brother Stephen, like many of the monks of the time, had a good education; and this he determined to share with Gabriel.

He arranged to have him stay at the Abbey for his supper as often as he could be spared from

GABRIEL AND THE HOUR BOOK

home; and hour after hour of the long summer evenings he spent teaching the lad to read and write, which was really quite a distinction; for it was an accomplishment that none of the peasants, and very few of the lords and ladies of that time possessed. Gabriel was quick and eager to learn, and Brother Stephen gradually added other things to his list of studies, and both of them took the greatest pleasure in the hours thus passed together.

Some times they would go out into the garden, and, sitting on one of the quaint stone benches, Brother Stephen would point out to Gabriel the different stars, or tell him about the fragrant growing plants around them; or, perhaps, repeat to him some dreamy legend of old, old Normandy.

And then, by and by, Gabriel would go home through the perfumed dark, feeling vaguely happy; for all the while, through those pleasant evenings with Brother Stephen, his mind and heart were opening brightly as the yellow primroses, that blossomed by moonlight over all the Abbey meadows.