

ANTONIO DI CARARA

A PADUAN TALE

The languor of Italy in climate, manners, and pursuits, melts away all individual character in the central southern division of the land. But the north boasts of manlier propensities. The wind blows vigor of mind and body from the Alps. Beyond those hills lie Switzerland, the country of penury and freedom; Germany, the country of toil, mental and bodily. Even the rough mountaineer of the Tyrol gives his share to the general activity of the region; and even the Veronese, though glancing on the luxuriant landscape that spreads like the waves of a summer sea to the south, feels the spirit of the hills and forests in him, at every breath from those noble bulwarks of the land. The character of the Italian is thus mingled of contending elements, and, as chance directs, it is propelled to lavish indulgences of the Neapolitan, or to the hardy habits of the region that every morning glitters with its ten thousand pyramids of marble, and its ten times ten thousand pinnacles of eternal snow above his head, in the north. The Count Antonio di Carara was a Paduan noble, descended from the famous Cararas, Princes of Padua. Antonio was a true Italian, steeped to the lips in the spirit of the south, elegant, luxurious, and languid. But the vicinage of the north had its share in his composition. His life was a dream. His paternal opulence flowed away on singers, dancers, and diletanti. He wrote sonnets—he composed cavatinas—he even invented a new fashion of wearing the hat and plume—and was the first authority consulted on every new arrival of a first-rate maestro of the violin, the sword, dancing dogs, anything.

But the spirit of the Alps was not altogether extinguishable. Antonio began to grow weary of lingering for ever in the midst of the squabbles of bullying priests and effeminate dragons, the abbesses of rival convents, and opera singers, all perfection, and all ready to poniard or poison each other. The Austrian grasp, too, was heavy on the politics of his calm and venerable city. Yet it had charms still, whose spell defied even the tooth of time, and the insolence of the Austrian corporals.

Padua, as all the world knows, is the paradise of the far niente, the original Castle of Indolence, the Palace of Slumber; the soft, silent, somnolent downland of Italy. The air itself slumbers; the grape-vine nod on the vines; the mules tread as if they were shod with felt; and though Padua produces no longer the silk and velvet that once made her name memorable to the ends of the earth, the genius of them both is in everything. All is silky, smooth, and gravely superb. A drowsy population yawns through life in a drowsy city, taught the art of doing nothing by a drowsy university. The old glories of Paduan science are gone to sleep; her thousand doctors, once shedding wisdom into her myriads of students, have sunk down into shadders of poppies—a few innocent old lingerers among the shelves of her mighty libraries, dry as their dust, silent as their authors, and not half so active as the moths that revel in their sultry sunshine. Life creeps away in eating grapes, and drinking the worst wine in the world; in having the Malaria fever in summer, and the pleurisy in winter; in sitting under the shade of sunburnt trees that mock the eye with the look of verdure, and fall in to dust at a touch; and in blackening the visage over wood fires that make man the rival, in odour, colour, and countenance, of the boar's ham that hangs in his chimney.

Antonio loved this velvet way of gliding through the world, and in this taste fulfilled all the duties that the world expects from a citizen of Padua. But in Padua even this graceful lover of his ease was not to be altogether tranquil. One day when he was indulging in the memory of cool air—for the reality of it was not to be found in even his marble palace, the month being August, and the heavens burning over the national head like the roof of an immense furnace—the Count of Carara, was roused from lying at his full length on a sofa in a veranda that overlooked his ample gardens by the announcement of a stranger with letters of introduction. The stranger was admitted—the letters were from a cousin of the Count, a general in the Austrian service, recommending the Herr Maximilian Balto to his good offices, as a Hungarian of family addicted to science, and who was attracted to Italy by his desire to see the wonders and beauties of the most famous and lovely land of the world.

The stranger was a man of mature age, with a form bowed by either years or study, and a pale but highly intelligent countenance. The Count's picturesque eye immediately set him down as an admirable study for a painter, and his place in the Titian gallery of the palazzo was fixed on before he uttered a word. But Antonio was equally susceptible of the charms of conversation; and the stranger's conversation was adapted to captivate a man of his skill in the graceful parts of life. The Herr Maximilian had travelled much—had seen everything that was remarkable in the principal regions of the globe, and had known or seen the principal personages of the time. His conversation was admirable—easy, fluent, and various; its animation never flagged; its variety never degenerated into trifling, nor its description into caricature. The Count, a man of higher capacities than any that would be required by the indolence of his life, felt his intellectual consciousness revived. He was, as all men are, delighted with the discovery; entered at once into the full enjoyment of his awakened understand-

ing, and began to wonder what he had been thinking of during the last thirty years.

To suffer the friend who had done him this service to take his departure as suddenly as he came, was out of the question. He pressed him to make the palazzo his residence for a week; the week passed, the request was lengthened to a month; the month passed away only to convince the Count, that, without the society of the accomplished Hungarian, Padua would become dull to an intensity beyond all human suffering. The request was extended to a year. His guest smiled, but told him that matters of importance compelled him to think of returning homeward; and that though he was determined to revisit Italy and the Count, some years must elapse before his return.

Carara felt as an Italian feels on every occasion that thwarts his propensities, be they what they will; he was in despair. There was but one alternative, to leave Italy and travel with this man of accomplishment round the world, consume life thus gyrating, and die after a prolonged conversation of fifty years. The Hungarian argued strenuously against this genuine Italian romance; sat up half a night suffering himself to be convinced, gradually gave way to all the Count's arguments, and even pointed out the means of making this peregrination a much more delightful adventure than it had seemed to the glimpse of dawn, glided from his chamber, with his valise on his shoulder, into the suburbs. As Padua would have been asleep all day, it could scarcely have eyes for the simple and lonely fugitive, who threaded its dozing streets at an hour when no Paduan on record had ever known whether it was the full blaze of sunshine, or the darkness of Erebus. He made his way accordingly; passed through streets of palaces and walks of state as invisible as a spirit; walked through magnificent gates where no sentinel challenged, and no Swiss kept the key, straight forward through Sousovino's bronze horseman, and Barbarini's; and, unbayed at by a solitary dog, reached the Cemetario grande; the true emblem of the city, weedy, calm, soundless, and decaying—a bed of but more steady slumber—a Padua under ground.

A year passed away, but not like the years before. The Hungarian was a philosopher, and the world had many meanings at the time. He had seen many nations, and the view had not raised his conception of human nature; he had lived under various governments, and his conception of the wisdom of kings and the happiness of their subjects did not prevent him an occasional sarcasm on both; he was a man of imagination, and one of its employments was the construction of an Utopia. He was a man of science and the sudden discoveries of the French and German chemists in the last century had kindled him into the reveries of the century before, and made him a searcher after the philosopher's stone. What must have been the power and impulse of so much curious speculation, inventive skill, bold theory, and actual knowledge, pouring suddenly upon the sensitive spirit of an Italian aroused for the first time to a feeling of his own sensitiveness! It was the sudden opening of his curtains at midnight, to show him the blaze of a conflagration; the sudden perception that there was round him, not the monotonous luxury of an Italian palace, but the vividness, activity, and intellectual vigour of a world—a world all alive, vigorous, stirring, fierce, enthusiastic, brilliant—a world in which ambition might fly abroad, until it wearied its wildest wing; in which vanity might play its most fantastic game; in which philosophy might build its noblest conceptions, till they reached to the very gates of heaven; in which science might explore the depth of things until it reached the centre; a world of grandeur, beauty, strength, weakness, life, immortality; a world of wonders.

The luxurious Italian became the philosopher; he rose with the sun, he studied until midnight, he plunged into the mysteries of science, he grew reclusal, pale and severe. But the delight of discovery repaid all the labours of the pursuit. The transmutation of metals, that most dazzling dream of science, which will dazzle to the end of time, let him onward with an enthusiast's disregard of all things but his crucible. In the meanwhile he himself had become an object of attention; and the Count Carara had already marked the day and hour when he was to become master of the grand secret of this world's wealth, when a knock at his study door disturbed him in the midst of the operation, and a corporal of grenadiers handed a paper to him, containing an order for his arrest on the ground of freemasonry.

The Count was indignant at the interruption; the fire of the Italian character blazed out in wrath at the insolence of disturbing a noble in his own sanctuary; but the corporal had no ears for reason, the bayonets at his back were better arguers; and in the midst of a platoon of whiskered giants, the philosopher was marched first into the presence of the governor—who informed him that his estate was confiscated to the use of better subjects, of whom the governor himself was to be presumed the most deserving—and next to the well-known Torre di Eccelino. This famous remnant of the ages of blood,—which every living Italian records as the ages of glory, when every little town of Italy had its battlements, its territories, its slaves, its army, its despot as fierce as the Grand Turk, and its enemy

within half a league, as inveterate as the Kalmuc Tartar; its war once a month, bloody, as if the weal of the world depended on the sword; and its siege, storm, and sack once a year,—had been just converted into a state prison. Yet it was the very spot which, if Carara, had been free to choose, he would have chosen. From its summit, Eccelino, the most sanguinary of the sanguinary, the most subtle, daring, and ambitious of an age of civil and martial ferocity, watched the movements of the vast turbulent city below, then filled with partisans of all the desperate feuds of the day. From its summit he too had watched the stars, that as they rose or set, twinkled above, or flashed in constellation, wrote in characters of fire the fates of heroes and empires. Within its recesses, too, the man of power and blood had plunged in those forbidden studies, which shock sovereigns from their thrones, disturbed popes and conclaves with new terrors, filled nations with sudden tumults, and laid waste the happiness of human nature. But here he was declared, by the tongue of all Italy, to have laid the foundations of his incomparable success; to have discovered the means of overthrowing all resistance in the field, and baffling all resolve in the council; to have found wealth inexhaustible knowledge that surpassed the reach of the human mind, sagacity that nothing could perplex, and strength that nothing could overwhelm, and to have paid, for all, the fearful price of his own soul. Such was the legend; and when Carara entered the cell where this extraordinary being had so often trod that his spirit seemed to haunt the place, he shuddered as he saw, transcribed upon the wall above his head, the lines of Ariosto—
"Eccelino!—Immanissimo tiranno
Che fia creduto figlio del demonio."

But there is nothing which decays more rapidly than the imagination in prison. The first day's solitude, the second day's solitude, and the third day's solitude drove every phantom from his presence. The age of poetry was no more; the clank of the sentinels' pike, and the rattle of the jailer's keys, reclaimed him from the dominion of magic, and he began to descend in thought to that world, to which he was never likely to descend in reality, but on his way to the scaffold.

A prison strips off the embroidery of life prodigiously; and in the course of this operation Carara discovered that he had a wife and child.

That wife he had purchased at the cost of the only struggle which had marked his silken existence. Julia di Monteleone had been the most celebrated beauty of the Court of Milan, had been sought in sonnets and serenades, in love, and even in marriage, by a hundred cavaliers of the highest grades, had laughed at all, scorned many, repelled some with open contempt, and finally taken refuge from the universal storm of sighs in the Palazzo di Carara, to which she brought a large dowry, a noble alliance, the handsomest face in Italy, and one of the highest hearts that ever spoke in coral lips and diamond eyes. The choice was made, like all the choices of women, by the eye. Carara was the finest figure, the best dancer, and the most brilliant in his equipages of any of the myriad who paid their homage at the shrine of the lady's loveliness. The point was then decided. The prize, however, was not to be won in a nation of swordsmen and dagger-bearers without its hazard. It cost him three duels with the indignant suitors, and had nearly cost him his life, by a sturdy blow of a dagger in his side, as he was in the act of handing his bride elect into her chariot at the door of the Grand Opera. He fell covered with blood, languished for a month on the verge of death, was cheered by the beautiful lady's redoubled protestations of living or dying with him, and recovered only to be the most envied husband from the Alps to the Apennines.

But this was but a thunderbolt plunged into a lake; it flashed, blazed, and shook the waters from shore; it was extinguished, and the waters were as smooth as glass again, no breath disturbing their blue complacency, the quiet mirror of the quietest of all skies. Carara had brought his noble bride to his palazzo, showed her to the homage of his hundred domestics, in new costumes of scarlet and gold, walked with her through his spacious apartments, marble floored, and glowing with the frescoes of Giorgione and Spagnolet; had pointed out to her vivid glance the Titians, the Raphaels, and the Tintoretts; had unfolded the purple curtains which concealed the virgin loveliness of the Madonna of Correggio from the profane eye; had given a concert to her on her arrival, and a ball to the podestat, and every soul that called itself noble for ten leagues round Padua; and then—returned quietly to his tranquil career, subsided out of the world's hearing, lapsed into Elysian slumber; listened to the murmurs of his fountains, and the cooing of his doves, till they both sent him to sleep; and, wrapping his soul in more than all the silks and velvets of the land, he prepared himself to dream through the world.

The heart, stifled by the trappings of prosperity, often learns to bear only when the trappings are plucked away. Carara, the prisoner in his cell, was a different being from Carara, the elegant but weary voluptuary in his palace. The vision of his wife and child came before him, and made him often forget the massive beams and iron stanchels that stood between him and those whom he loved. He revolved the hours which he had flung away with them; resolved, if his fortunes should turn again, to disdain the silver stream of life, and think of the surge; to show himself fit for something better than the master of French valets, and the companion of Spanish lap-dogs; to take the goods that rank, wealth, and nature gave, and be a noble, a husband, and a father, and worthy of the names.

But his prison-bars were still as strong as ever, the cell as high from the ground, the jailer as sullen, and the day as solitary. To bribe the vigilance of the turnkeys was hopeless;

for the first act of justice had been to plunder him of every ducoat. To address the governor's reason was equally hopeless; for the strict order of that governor was, that the prisoner should have no means of making any appeal. To summon the public to the decision of his rights and wrongs, must be deferred until there was a public; or until he could find any Italian in existence who cared an inch of macaroni for the rights and wrongs of anything on earth. The feeling of solitude grew painful, bitter, agonising, intolerable. The far niente life never had such a trial, and never was more torturing. Carara would have exchanged his being with that of any lazzarone that begged and burned in the noon of any city of hovels in the realm. Books, the pencil, music, all the resources of a life of idleness, of gracefulness, or of industry, were alike forbidden to him. He felt himself day by day more mercilessly cut off from mankind, receding hourly from existence, turning into a wild beast, degenerating into the uselessness of a stock or a stone, and regretting only that with their uselessness he had not their insensibility.

The sting of all this wretchedness was envenomed by its uncertainty. If his enemies, or their instrument the governor, had declared to him that his imprisonment was to last for a year, or fifty years, or to lay him in the grave, he might have prepared himself for the duration; he might have braced up his mind for a calamity of which he knew the extent; he might have said to himself, "Joy and hope are shut out for ever. I shall seek and struggle for them no more. My dungeon must be looked on as my final home. I must sternly conform myself to ruin. I must look upon my imprisonment only as a slower death, and be contented as I may." But from the tower of Padua he might be released at a moment, or never. He might return that night to his own roof, or never lie down under its shelter. While he was speaking, the order might be at his prison-doors for restoring him to the arms of his wife and child, or the merciless spirit that had torn them asunder might be darkly decreeing an eternal separation to them all. But it was the doubt, the near possibility of the enjoyment, that made him still nurture his agony. He could not heroically harden himself to endure. He must tremble, for he must hope.

To Be Continued.

YEARS OF SUFFERING.

Brought About by a Fall in Which the Back Was Severely Injured—The Pain at Times Almost Unbearable.

Mr. Geo. F. Everett, a highly respected and well known farmer of Four Falls, Victoria Co., N.B., makes the following statement:—"Some years ago while working in a barn I lost my balance and fell from a beam, badly injuring my back. For years I suffered with the injury and at the same time doing all I could to remove it but in vain. I at last gave up hopes and stopped doctoring. My back had got so bad that when I would stoop over it was almost impossible to get straightened up again. When I would mow with a scythe for some little time without stopping it would pain me so that it seemed as if I could scarcely endure it, and I would lean on the handle of my scythe in order to get ease and straighten up. At other times I would be laid up entirely. After some years of suffering I was advised to use Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and decided to try one box. Before I had finished it I saw the pills were helping me. I bought six boxes more and the seven boxes completely cured me. It is three years since I took them and my back has not troubled me since. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are an invaluable medicine and I highly recommend them to any person suffering likewise. I consider that if I had paid \$10 a box for them, they would be a cheap medicine."

Rheumatism, sciatica, neuralgia, partial paralysis, locomotor ataxia, nervous headache, nervous prostration and diseases depending upon humors in the blood, such as scrofula, chronic erysipelas, etc., all disappear before a fair treatment with Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. They give a healthy glow to pale and sallow complexions. Sold by all dealers and post paid at 50c. a box or six boxes for \$2.50 by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont. Do not be persuaded to take some substitute.

LUGGAGE AWHEEL.

A new device for carrying luggage awheel consists of a kind of shelf-like arrangement put on over the mud-guard on the rear wheel. A rod extends from the hub of this wheel backward and upward to a point a little higher than the mud-guard. From the end of this rod a wooden strip, wide enough to hold a moderate sized bag, extends horizontally forward, just clearing the mud-guard, and is fastened to the saddle post. In the case of a drop frame wheel, a bag resting upon this shelf is entirely out of the way, and does not interfere with the mounting or riding. With a diamond frame machine the shelf would be in the rider's way as he mounted or stepped off from the rear, so that the device seems intended chiefly for the use of women cyclists.

A BIRD'S NEST.

A bird's nest was found last summer in the suburbs of Lille, France, that was made of white wood and strips of paper from a telegraph office several miles away.

DAYS OF RAIN.

It rains on an average of 208 days in the year in Ireland, about 150 in England, at Kezan about 90 days and these are made effective by a thorough in Siberia only 60 days.

Young Folks.

EDUCATING HIMSELF.

William Pengelly, on his father's side was descended from a long line of Cornish sailors. Hereditarily that biological law by which living beings tend to repeat themselves in their descendants, would have made William a seaman, had it not been frustrated by his mother's urgent wish that her only surviving son should remain at home.

He did serve, from his twelfth to his sixteenth year, as a cabin boy, on a coasting-vessel commanded by his father; but in deference to his mother's wish he gave up the life of a sailor after the death of his younger brother. His filial piety was rewarded. He became an eminent geologist, whose explorations of caves established the antiquity of man.

William, while a cabin-boy, used to read aloud to the sailors when head winds gave them a "tailoring day" for repairing their clothes; and they, in return mended for him his garments. One of the books he read to them was the "Spectator;" but it was not a favorite with the sailors, who, thinking it both nonsensical and untruthful, called it the "Lying Book."

A popular book was an "Arithmetic," from which he read questions that his shipmates tried to solve mentally. As the answers were given in the book the young reader was able to announce who had made the nearest guess.

One question was, What will be the cost of shoeing a horse at a farthing for the first nail, two farthings for the second, four for the third, and so on in geometrical progression for thirty-two nails? The answer, a sum little short of four and a half million pounds, was so unexpected and so enormous that the sailors called the "Arithmetic" also a "Lying Book."

While living at home young Pengelly worked during the day for a bare maintenance, and at night studied, for many hours, in order to master mathematics. He walked one day fifteen miles to a town where he could buy the books he needed for his studies. He bought twenty volumes of second-hand books, and paid for them out of money he had been a long time saving. Then with an empty pocket, and the bundle of books on his shoulder, he tramped back over the Cornish hills to his home.

One day Dick Harper, an old general utility man of the Cornish village, said to young Pengelly, "I was working yesterday in Mr. R.'s garden, and 'e was there reading. When 'e went away 'e left his book on the seat, and I took en up and look at en—'twas called 'Milton's Paradise Lost.' Did 'e ever 'ear tell on it?"

Dick was sincerely religious, and the word "Paradise" had caught him, for he was fond of hearing religious books read.

"Oh, yes, I've heard a good deal about it," answered the youth, "and I once saw it. I should like to read it, if you could borrow it."

"I'll try," answered the old man, "if so be you'll promise to read en out loud to me."

"I've got en," said Dick, at the close of the next day, producing the book. It was arranged that as the days were long the two should meet in an orchard at seven o'clock on Tuesday and Friday evenings. There the old man of seventy and the boy of sixteen, seated under an apple-tree steadily read "Paradise Lost," through from end to end, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The mythological allusions puzzled them, but a small "Johnson's Dictionary," which contained a chapter on gods and goddesses, helped them to understand the poet's thoughts. When they reached the end of the poem the old man and the boy were so impressed by the last five lines that they committed them to memory. When occasionally they met, each repeated to the other "Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon."

The world was all before them, where to choose.

Their place of rest, and Providence their guide,

They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,

Through Eden took their solitary way."

These lines appealed to the boy. Some of his young acquaintances derided the youthful reader; older persons advised him to lay aside his books, and even his father and mother firmly, but kindly remonstrated with their son for wasting his time on "Euclid" and literature.

"I have a vivid recollection," Pengelly wrote, twenty years after, "of the little table at which I wrought the oracular and practical mathematics; the very small pile of books; the wretched light, the fireless grate, the damp, cold stone floor, the aching head, the swollen feet, the shivering frame, and that which enabled me to bear the whole—the determination to know something of the beautiful and astonishing universe. I thank God I was enabled to persevere."

FROM A BOY'S STANDPOINT.

Here is a genuine boy's composition: "Girls are stuckup and dignified in their manner and behaviour. They think more of dress than anything and like to play with dolls and rags. They cry if they see a cow in the far distance and are afraid of guns. They stay at home all the time and go to church on Sundays. They are always sick. They are always funny and making fun of boys' hands, and they say how dirty. They can't play marbles. I pity them poor things. They make fun of boys and then turn round and love them. I don't believe they ever kill a cat or anything. They look out at night and say oh ant the moon lovely. There is one thing I have not told and that is they always now their lesson better boys."