

ANTONIO DI CARARA

A PADUAN TALE

He had already given his farewell to the old soldier, and was forcing his way through the snow, when he found himself followed by the contrabandist. This hardy fellow, a native of the Tarentaise, had waited until he saw the Count's resolution wrought to its height; the solid purse which had been shown during the treaty with the peasants appeared to him a matter which should not be carelessly considered; and, with the intention of sharing in it, amicably in the way of service, or if not in any other way that might be effectual, he now proposed to join the Count as a guide. Carara was glad to find a companion, rough as he might be, and the travellers pushed forward vigorously. Two days' toil at last brought them within sight of the famous pass of the Brenner, and as his guide pointed it out to him in the distance, rising sharp and boldly among a wilderness of precipices that seemed less a part of this world than the works of a former one, he felt a new pulse of hope beat high in his bosom.

Night fell again; and, sleeping on the snow with no other canopy than a shelf of rock, and no other shelter than the stunted foliage of a wild pine, he felt a delight in rest, a keenness of enjoyment even in his couch of snow and his pillow of stone, that he had never experienced in the Carara Palace. Real hunger made the simplest food a banquet, real fatigue made the rudest resting-place a couch of down. He had discovered what the Roman tyrant sought for in vain in all his silken luxury,—a new pleasure.

He was on his feet by dawn, and prepared to scale the mountains with a foot as elastic as their own chamois. But the contrabandist hung back. "We had better not be too much in a hurry this morning," said he, pointing to the pass, "for the old brute there is angry. Look how he raises up his bristles like a wild boar, and if we were but a league or two nigher, we should hear him howling and gnashing his teeth. We must stay where we are till the old savage is quiet." The Count's comprehension of this metaphorical displeasure was not aided by any further discussion. The contrabandist either would not, or could not, explain farther than by pointing to the pass, which now certainly appeared to put on some resemblance to the ridgy back of a wild boar, a phenomenon not uncommon in the mountain atmosphere, and which is understood universally to predict a storm. "The weather promises ill but my business admits of no delay. What is to be done in case of a tempest?" asked the Count. "Return to the caserne—what else could be done?" answered his companion, sullenly. "Another league," said Carara, "and your pay shall be doubled." His guide hesitated, but surveying the Count's face of determination, and seeing him already striding onward through the snow-drifts, he at length made up his mind and followed. As they reached the next ascent, the prospect was still more gloomy; the wind had lulled and except now and then a short sharp gust, there was a death-like stillness. Man, beast, and bird, had equally deserted the region. Above, the sky stooped almost to the ridge of the hills, as if unable to bear its burthen of snow and tempest. A single vulture, that started from a pile of grey crags, far above their heads, and continued sailing and wailing over them like an evil omen, made the scene of desolation still more desolate. Sleet began now to cover the few points of the rocks which the gusts had stripped. The air became intensely cold, and the wind rose, and blew in bursts, hollow and melancholy. The guide again remonstrated. But Carara was not to be deterred by the elements, much less by the selfishness of a hired guide. He still strode onward, leaving the contrabandist to complain to the winds.

The tempest now palpably moved down the huge ravine, and its roar was heard long before its violence was near enough to be felt. The heavens and earth were rapidly darkened by a livid and sepulchral shade as it came. Everything seemed to quiver through the dense air; and the pinnacles, trees, and mountain paths, shifted their places to the eye as if they wavered in the storm. The sleet now thickened into snow, and the air became a fleecy cloud, through which it was impossible to see farther than a few yards. Carara felt a strange mixture of despondency and determination filling his mind. How or where to advance he knew not; he was possessed of something approaching to a melancholy conviction that the night and the hour were to be his last; yet the original vigour of his soul was roused, and he resolved never to return but successful, or a corpse. The contrabandist, however, thought otherwise. He had formed his determination, too, but it was to return to the caserne, and yet not to return without being a richer man than when he left it. The Count was still within his reach, though wrapped in a snow sheet, that swept round him like a shroud. The contrabandist was not a man to suffer any embarrassment where his object lay straight before him. He had no appetite for the hazard, and was not inclined to use any unnecessary ceremony on the occasion. He struggled forward to where Carara stood gazing through the storm, and demanded the double pay that had been promised.

"Complete the league," was the answer, "or guide me to the summit of the pass, and you shall have every ducat in my possession."

"And that is to be your last speech to me?" interrogated the fellow, with a ferocious look.

"My last and only one," said the

Count, "and now onward."

"Your last, then, be it!" exclaimed the ruffian, and, plucking a pistol from his bosom, fired it at Carara's head. The shock stunned him, and he fell. The contrabandist, conceiving that he had effected one part of his purpose, proceeded to accomplish the other without loss of time, and springing forward, began to rifle the supposed corpse. But his victim had fallen on a fragment of one of the rocks disengaged by the whirlwind, the footing was slippery, and while the assassin was engaged in the double operation of steadying his steps and searching the Count's pockets, Carara returned to his senses; his quick apprehension comprehended the whole at once; he started on his feet and flung his entire strength into the blow which he struck his intended murderer. It was given with good intent, and was tremendous. The assassin sprang upward with the pain, reeled a few feet backward to the edge of the precipice, found the ground giving way with him, uttered a roar of despair, and threw himself at his full length, grasping the ground. The effort was convulsive but it only prolonged his agony. The snow yielded with every grasp more and more; at every new struggle he approached closer to the dreadful declivity, until a last despairing bound loosened the whole mass, and he went headlong. His yell rang in the air as he shot downwards. All was silence. He was shattered into atoms.

The blood trickling from Carara's forehead recalled him from gazing with horror on the depth where this miscreant had plunged, and told how nearly he had run the chance of lying beside him. But, as if all the evils of the day had passed with the last breath of the treacherous guide, the air began to clear, the storm visibly slackened, and by one of those changes so frequent in the Alpine tracts, the clouds rolled off, and a broad burst of sunshine gladdened earth and heaven. Even the violence of the wind had prepared his route, the road had been partially cleared to the summit of the pass; the wild bare back of the Brenner had lost its ominous elevation; and a long line of silver sparkling among its piles of eternal granite, showed where the celebrated cascade of the pass poured down those waters, which so singularly divide themselves to the extremities of Europe, one-half of the stream splitting off to the Adige and the Adriatic, and the other to the Danube and the Euxine.

The pass was reached. Carara stood on the summit of the Brenner, and when his eye glanced back over the frozen region, the kingdom of winter through which he had toiled, the impression on his heart was gratitude and wonder. But here this toil was at an end. The Austrian government had provided for the remainder of the road. Soldiers were stationed from point to point to clear the way for the Imperial couriers, on the occasion of the Monarch's projected visit to his Italian states; and in three days he entered the time-worn, and heavily-flourished portals of the "ancient and noble inn of the Swartz Adler," at Innsbruck, which he found crowded with aides-de-camp, dragoons, chamberlains and valets enough to have driven silence and sleep from the cavern of Morpheus himself.

Carara threw himself on a couch, which would have defied his most dexterous slumber in other days, but which now was to his wearied limbs a bed worthy of a Sybarite. He slept with the clamor of five hundred voices ringing in his ears; he defied them all, and slept. The sun blazing through his low chamber at last roused him. But where was the clamor of the night before? All was hushed. No rough dragoon roared a camp-song over his flagon. No rattle of the dice-box in more polished hands was heard. No charger clamped and pawed in the courts. The Count rose to investigate the miracle. It was soon developed, to his infinite dismay. The crowd of Imperial attendants were gone. Despatches from France had reached the Emperor but twelve hours before. A council had been instantly held, and the result, was, that the whole establishment was on the road by daybreak. This was a bitter blow, and no man could feel it more keenly than the husband, the father, and the noble, united in the person of the unfortunate Count. He began to think that fortune took a peculiar indulgence in crushing him, that he had better have perished in the Padovine dungeons, or in the Alpine snows.

Another day of despondency succeeded. He wandered through empty streets, which, but the day before, were glittering with the train of a monarch. He gave a look of bitter disappointment, as he passed the proud old council-house, where, but the day before, Francis had given audience to all, and received the petitions of every rank of his subjects, with the fatherly kindness which had already so distinguished the reign of the "good Emperor." Night fell on his contemplations, and he returned to the Swartz Adler with a spirit as dark as that sable emblem of the House of Hapsburg, but as he sat at his solitary meal, a new surprise was prepared for him. A stranger, wrapped in a cloak, whose embroidery showed that its wearer was a man of rank, entered to discharge some of the accounts remaining after the departure of the Emperor. His voice struck Carara's ear. He looked up, and, even under the enormous hat and plume of an officer of the Imperial staff, he recognised the friend whom he had given up for lost in the Tyrolese snows. The Hungarian stood before him.

The enthusiastic and astonished Count instantly rose and threw him-

self into his arms. But the astonishment was equally great, if more gravely demonstrated, on the side of the Imperial officer. He gazed on Carara's countenance with a look of fixed incredulity. However, the recognition was at last complete. The friends sat down to table together, and their singular escapes formed, a topic which kept them in conversation for half the night. The sudden departure of the Emperor was now explained. "The Republican French had exhibited symptoms of renewing their attacks on Lombardy, of which the Monarchical French had in every age been so fond. The time pressed; an insurrectionary movement had been organised in the north of Italy, for the open purpose of assisting a new invasion; and the Emperor had gone at full speed to Milan, to smite the conspiracy by the promptest measures in the power of the sword. "But this dress," he added, "may tell you my connection with the Count; you must come with me to Milan; your memorial will be forwarded with increased influence, by being put into the Imperial hands through me; and I shall have the satisfaction of repaying, in the amplest manner, some portion of that debt of hospitality which I owe to the Count Carara." The Hungarian's narrative of himself was succinct. He had been carried down by the avalanche, but had, like his friend, been cast into a cleft of the rock, which preserved him, though actually buried under some fathoms of snow, until the peasantry, in digging away the wreck, had found him still breathing. Care, an Alpine cottage, and the absence of all doctors, had restored him; and having accomplished all the purposes of his Italian tour, he had returned to his former station of one of the staff and Colonel of the Royal Hungarian Guard. At daybreak the friends were on the road to the famous capital of the Lombards.

If Carara's spirit had not been so deeply absorbed by the momentous nature of his mission, his eye might have revelled long and richly among the landscapes that lay before him as he hurried along the Milanese. The flatness of the territory enfeebled it to the spectator who has but just descended from the grandeur of the Alpine amphitheatre. But the joyous profusion, the exuberance of colour, and produce of harvest and fruitage, and the almost extravagant fertility that covers the Lombard plains, the whole outpouring of the cornucopia of corn, flowers, wine and oil, make the approach to this noble city one of the most delicious banquets ever offered to the gaze of man. It was now in the full glow of harvest, robed in its autumnal glory. The land, from east to west, from north to south, was a vineyard. Thousands and tens of thousands crowded every road to the capital, with the produce of one of the most luxuriant harvests ever known even in those fields of plenty. Carara, little accustomed as he was to the language of that magnificent oriental devotion, that high personification of feelings and impressions, which, in Scripture, makes the mountains heave with joy, the dew drop sweetness, and the valleys laugh and sing, yet acknowledged the power of nature over the human heart, and wondered anew at the singular disregard of delight which had made him know the difference of summer and winter only by his lounging on the Corso during the one, and his lounging at the Opera during the other.

As they reached Monza, the road became more crowded still. Couriers in the imperial livery flying in all directions, gave evidence of the active business to which the stagnation of the good Court of Austria had been at length compelled. The march of troops from different points of the plain, all converging towards the city, showed the imperial sense of insecurity; the rattle of baggage-wagons and field-guns, the galloping of aides-de-camp, and the long lines of dust that marked the advance of more baggage-wagons, more guns, and more troops, too distant to be more clearly discerned, told Carara that he was at last come into the centre of the whirlpool of power; the heart of anxious empire, the depth of the mine, where all was explosive, and which, at a touch might fling its whole fearful charge in fire and bloodshed upon the land.

He had his cares still, but his spirit had gained unconscious vigour from struggling. He felt the force that every mind gains from the new sense of an object worthy to task all its powers. The noblest of women depended on him for protection; the hopes of a noble house depended on him in his child; the revival of a great name rested on his activity and resolution; and last, and not least, the retrieval of his own sense of dignity, the recovery of his self-respect, the atonement for those wasted years, wasted opportunities, and wasted faculties, whose abuse he now looked upon with pain and astonishment; and which, in his generous remorse, he was determined to compensate, if it could be done by the most unhesitating sacrifice within the means of a human being.

His companion gave him full leisure for those meditations, for fatigue or his own thoughts kept him unusually silent, and during the approach to the city he scarcely spoke. The flourish of the drums and trumpets of a magnificent regiment of cavalry, which had just opened to let their equipage pass, at last roused the Hungarian. It was his own regiment of the Guard doing the honours to their colonel on the march. His eye brightened with the natural gratification of a soldier at the sight. Carara was not less delighted with so fine a martial display. The carriage was instantly surrounded by the officers—compliments and congratulations were offered on all sides, and the meeting ended by the colonel's mounting a charger, and with his friend riding at the head of the regiment into Milan. A supper at their quarters concluded the day. It was of course sumptuous. The profusion of the Imperial Guard was proverbial. The conversation was what might be expected from the elite of camps and courts, easy, various, and animated.

Pleasure, travel, war, were touched on, even politics found their way among the topics, and the Italian, reared in a land of spies, was surprised to find the fearless facility with which matters that would have shaken the souls of an Italian city with terror, were talked of at this brilliant board, within hearing of the whole train of Imperial chamberlains. But among those men of grace and gaiety, their colonel shone conspicuous. He brought his admirable and almost universal knowledge to bear upon the most passing topic, and flashed a new light upon everything. Every great transaction of Europe for the last century seemed to have passed in his presence; every peculiarity of every court of Europe was familiar to his taste for animated anecdote; every casual description was graphic; every accidental trait characteristic; every play of fancy keen, pointed, and luminous. Yet, with that fine tact which marks the highest grace of accomplished society, he repressed no one, he bore down none by excessive display; his chief skill was exerted in drawing out whatever latent animation was to be found in the circle, and enabling every man to shine in turn. The Count's Italian elegance required only this stimulant to show the native lustre of a remarkably sensitive and brilliant mind. He kindled at the Hungarian's flame, until he first equalled and then surpassed it. The conversation at length fell solely into their hands. No graceful concession to the surrounding board, no dexterous appeal to their opinions or experience, could now draw them into the sphere of this perpetual vividness. All were converted into listeners, but delighted listeners. The hours flew; all were equally excited, amused, and admiring. The banquet closed at last, with an universal expression that the companionship which had thus gracefully commenced should not terminate with the night. Carara was sounded as to his inclination to take service in the Imperial troops. He had "nothing to discline him, and much," as he frankly owned, "to make the measure at once useful and gratifying." "So be it," said the Colonel, grasping his hand. The officers rose and embraced him. His name was entered at the instant on the books of their regiment, his memorial to the Emperor was dictated by the general voice of the corps, and, on rising to take his departure, a general toast to the health of the "Count Carara, Cornet of the Imperial Hungarian Guards," made the ancient hall ring, and proudly finished one of the most delightful and cheering evenings of his existence. (To Be Continued.)

A CANVASSER'S EXPERIENCE.

Suffered From Kidney Trouble and Rheumatism—Was Becoming Despondent When Aid Reached Him.

From the Journal St. Catharines.

One of the most recent witnesses about Fonthill and vicinity regarding the virtues of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills is John F. Price, who is widely known in the Niagara District as he has been on the road as an advertiser and canvasser for six years, and has thousands of acquaintances. His complete cure has added fresh lustre to the reputation of this great medicine. Hearing of Mr. Price's sufferings and restoration a history of his case was requested. His story is:—"I am 26 years of age and have been afflicted with rheumatism for seven years. At times I have been unable to get my clothes on or off without assistance, and have often been compelled to have my food cut for me at table. In the winter of 1897 I was attacked with la grippe which settled in my kidneys. I then became so ill that I was compelled to abandon all employment. At that time my liver and kidneys combined in what seemed to me their last attack. I used several medicines and doctors without getting any relief, so my confidence in medicine was about gone. I was getting no rest day or night and was becoming despondent finally I was persuaded to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I did so and have used in all eight boxes, and am now able to state that I feel better than in the past ten years. These pills are the nearest to a specific of anything I ever used, and they are the cheapest and best medicine I ever tested, having thoroughly reached my case and effected a cure. I feel so gratified for the relief I have obtained that I think it my duty to publicly make this statement. If all who are suffering will give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills an honest trial, I am sure they will be as enthusiastic in their praise as I am."

THE INCREASE OF NATIONS.

While European Russia will need only forty-five years or so, Germany about sixty-five years, Austria-Hungary, seventy years, England eighty years and Italy 110 years, it will take France over 800 years to double its population. What signifies the loss of Alsace Lorraine's 1,500,000 souls compared with the loss France suffers every day? In the last five years the German population has increased by 3,000,000, who are every one fully German. France meanwhile has increased her people by only 175,000, who are not even of French nationality. The increase of a nation is of the utmost importance to the success of its country. It has meant much in the nineteenth century; it will mean more in the twentieth.

THOUGHTLESS GIRL.

A most thoughtless girl, said her mother in accents of despair. "What has she done?" asked her father. She sat on the bench this morning so close to the water that the spray from a breaker unexpectedly reached her, exclaimed her mother. And took the curl all out of her hair, I suppose, suggested her father. "Worse than that," answered the mother. It ruined her bathing suit.

THE HEIGHT OF SOLDIERS.

A Decline in the Average Stature of Fighting Men as European Armies Are Increased.

As the size of modern armies is increased the average height of fighting men is diminished. The Tageblatt of Berlin ascribes the reduction in the average stature of soldiers in modern armies to conscription, and says that in the German army it is now only 60.63 inches. In the British Army the height is 64.69 inches, showing the tallness of the average Englishman and Scotchman. Frenchmen and Spaniards are taken at 1.54 metres, Italians at 1.55 metres, 61 inches, and the same minimum measurement is the rule in Austria. The Russian minimum is 1.54 metres, and in the United States it is 1.619 metres, 63.78 inches. In 1860, before the beginning of the American civil war and before the general arming of Europe, the average height of men serving in the various European armies was as follows, given in inches: Italian, 65; Spaniard, 65.5; French, 66; Hungarian, 66.1; Austrian, 66.5; Belgian, 66.9; Russian, 67; English, 67.5; Irish, 68; Scotch, 68.5, and Norwegian 69.

Although the average height of soldiers has decreased during the last few years considerably in those countries in which conscription is the rule, it is found generally that in countries in which peaceful conditions prevail so great standing army is maintained, the stature of new soldiers is gradually increasing. This is shown conspicuously in the case of Sweden, where the average height of new soldiers between 1840 and 1850 was 60 inches, 66.2 between 1850 and 1860, 66.8 between 1860 and 1870, 66.8, between 1870 and 1880, and 69 between 1880 and 1890. The proportion of rejected soldiers in France has decreased from 37 per cent. in the decade beginning 1840, 35 per cent. in the decade beginning 1860, and 33 per cent. in the decade beginning in 1880, to 30 per cent. at present. The number of conscripts now rejected on account of height is less every year, in consequence, perhaps, of the fact that the minimum height limit of the French Army has been steadily decreased. American soldiers have preserved during many years the same height substantially, though the fact is well known that soldiers from the Western and Southwestern States are, as a rule, taller than those from the East and from the Southern Atlantic States.

PERFECT TRUTH AT LAST.

With delight will the woman who is far seeing and up to the times go about her task of trunk packing this summer. No longer is she to have visions of possibly crushed gowns at the end of her journey, and of hats "squashed" out of all semblance to the original styles. For there has come a fresh era in trunks and "boxes" and packing will have no more terrors.

The trunk that has been popular for so many years—the "trunk" that was simply a packing case, various in size and shape, with one deep tray divided up into boxes of odd sizes—has this year passed into the realm of departed fashions. In its place there is a new trunk of very different pattern. It is a trunk of trays—four or five trays, and in the case of the largest even six—all fitting snugly into the trunk's framework.

Each of these trays is intended to hold one gown and three small pieces. They are quite as convenient for men's clothing—trousers and coats travelling in them without rumpling or creasing. In the trunk's very bottom, under the lowest tray, boots, slippers and heavy articles generally may be stowed, held in place by the tray directly over them, the necessity of tightly wedging thus being avoided.

It is not that the average clever woman cannot pack everything and in a space that mathematicians would at once declare entirely too small. The trunks of the past have presented no unsolvable problems when it came to filling them up. But with these new trunks the wear and tear and the worry of packing is all past and gone, and the daintiest dresses can with the greatest expedition be laid in the trays and the cover closed.

To put hats in trunks this year will be no part of the feminine philosophy. The woman who has pretty hats will be foolish to trust them in the recesses of a trunk amid linen, gowns, and the odds and ends of lady's gear. Modern mechanical science has devised a very simple answer to the question, "How can we most safely carry our elaborate summer hats?"

A hat box has been invented, that, though small in compass itself, can hold six hats of the greatest amount of "fuss and feathers." In this, on sides, bottom and top, there are small metallic arms that turn and can be slipped over the brim. The sides carry four hats, the bottom the fifth, the cover the sixth. Firmly held in place in this manner none of these can interfere with each other. This hat box locks in precisely the same manner as does a trunk. Not only does its cover lift up, but on opening one of the sides falls. Thus any hat can be taken out or put back without disturbing the others.

A POINT AGAINST HIM.

He's free even from a breath of suspicion, declared she who is his best girl.

"Oh, I don't know," replied the jealous friend. He never took me to the theater yet that clothes did not give him a breath of suspicion.

NEW PIGMENT.

A Scotch artist has discovered that a pigment of great beauty of color can be made from the smut of the oat, the color being a deep, rich amber shade.