

THE PRIMA DONNA.

CHAPTER XIX.—(CONTINUED).

And the bloated face in the mirror gave me no hint or suggestion that could in any way explain to me why Mina did not come. Even a mirror could not make me see myself, and, feeling no responsibility but bitter rebellion against her, I found the sentiment of satisfaction, and, with it, consoling myself, I determined to go to the gallery and see those wonders of art which the critic had so superlatively praised.

I was early in arriving and the gallery was large, but already a crowd had gathered about the paintings. The door keeper frowned as I approached the gate, but I held the money in my hand where he could see it, and, like the world he represented, he yielded to the temptation and let me pass. My francs as it fell into the box returned a curious melody to my ears. Dearly had I earned it in painting those pictures, and now it was going back again into the pictures to cut short, by a franc's worth, the closing reel of the last figure of the dance of Death for me. But what did it matter?

As I entered the throng pressing toward the paintings, many a stranger drew away from me in disgust. There were artists there eager to gain what they could of valuable hints from those greatest productions of the day; but they shrank from me with a loathing shudder. There were gold-lined celebrities there, coming to purchase, muttering to themselves the various amounts they would offer to possess those artistic triumphs of the age; but they started in horror when they found themselves near me, and for a moment they forgot their estimates. Fair women of Paris cringed as they looked at me and turning hurried on that, in the marvellous beauty of Anthony Winthrop's work, they might forget that ghastly sight they beheld in me. Little children cast frightened glances toward me and pressed closer to those who had brought them there, in order that they might say, long years afterward, that they, too, had once looked upon the greatest works of the artist whose name, at that moment, at least, was the most celebrated in the world; but, better than the paintings and longer, I think, those little ones remembered me! The dealer, as he moved through the admiring throng of satellites, was startled beyond measure at the sight of me and caught me roughly by the shoulder, dragging me away from the paintings that those more worthy to look might, untroubled, feast their eyes upon the treasures furnished him by Anthony Winthrop's brush.

Glad enough to escape from my surroundings I shrank into a secluded corner and hid myself in the shadows, sitting on a low bench almost concealed by the drapery about the window. After all, I was not so anxious as I thought I should be to see those paintings of Anthony Winthrop's. It was not worth the difficulty of reaching a position near them, and I did not again attempt it, but sat all day upon the hidden bench, till, late in the afternoon, the dealer approached arm in arm with one whom I recognized as a leading banker of Paris. The dealer I had known well in my "palmy" days. More than once he had visited Florence as my guest, and once he had been there as mine. The banker said to him:

"I do not question the fact that they are the finest figure-pieces that have been produced by modern art, but what I say is, that men of our day are not rich enough, and are too sensible to run wild over pictures. I will give sixty thousand francs for those two paintings, delivered at my house to-night; and I warn you, you cannot do better."

The dealer shrugged his shoulders, smiled and shook his head, refusing sixty thousand francs for the labor of three weeks three days and a night.

A gentleman, lady approached. In the prevailing fashion of the time the lady's face was completely hidden by a thick veil; but, even then, the fear crept over me that, notwithstanding this, a woman's eyes might penetrate my hiding-place, and it made me shrink farther behind the curtains, and bury my face behind my hands, in the hope of hiding its hideousness. The gentleman said:

"If Monsieur will pardon the interruption! We are in haste, but wish to speak to him of purchasing the paintings."

"Surely! Surely!" exclaimed the enthusiastic dealer. "Monsieur, my friend here, has just made me an offer of them, it is true, but he will surely pardon me that I quit competition among the purchasers quite as he hails it among the dealers."

"I have no desire to compete with any one," replied the other. "I simply wish to purchase the pictures if they be available. What is your price, Monsieur?"

"Indeed, I have none, as yet," responded the skillful salesman. "Believe me, I had not even thought of selling them for a long time to come. I am really more anxious to keep them on exhibition a month, at least, before parting with them, and, Monsieur, my honored friend, has simply made me an offer at his own suggestion, not at mine."

"Ah! and I understand that you wish me to make you an offer upon the same terms," said the gentleman, a little scornfully. "Very well, I will make it. I will give you sixty thousand francs apiece for the paintings after you have exhibited them one month."

"A hundred and fifty thousand for the two to-night!" muttered the banker.

"I did not look up but I knew by his voice that the other was smiling as he replied:

"Now, Monsieur, I see where we stand, and I will change my offer. I will pay you two hundred thousand francs for the paintings and you may keep them for one year."

"Three hundred thousand francs for them now!" ejaculated the banker.

The halcyon days of life were coming! The El Dorado of my wildest imagination! The elysium of the earth! The one ambition of my life was this!

"Gentleman," the dealer cruelly interrupted, "you truly appreciate, as I do, that these paintings have a value which is only limited by what one must and can afford to pay for them. Why? why? could I afford it, gentlemen, believe me most sincerely, no one should ever purchase them. Yes, and even now, I am quietly bidding with myself against you. I am saying to myself, for instance, that, to exhibit those painting for a year will be worth a hundred thousand francs to me, and—"

"Three hundred and fifty thousand francs to close at once!" said the banker sharply. "Pardon me!" exclaimed the obsequious dealer, growing warm to his subject, and

constantly increasing in civility. "What I am saying to myself is really this: 'Why can I not, after all, actually arrange to keep those paintings for myself, and by exhibiting them until all Europe has seen them, and then (I quite understand that it would ruin their value for sale) I would have them copied in chromo, plain lithograph and engraving, and, in the end, I actually believe that I should realize more money than I have been offered and yet have the paintings to myself.'"

"Four hundred thousand francs I will give you, to-night, for those paintings!" the banker ejaculated fiercely. "And while you will be sure of your money, at once, you may thank the gods that you are saved the damnably vulgarizing of two noble works of art by having them chromoed and lithographed."

"I will pay you four hundred and fifty thousand francs within an hour," remarked the other deliberately, "and you may reserve the right to exhibit those paintings for one year, and at the end to publish as many copies as you choose, on one condition—that competent judges shall pronounce them worthy of the originals."

There was silence in the little group. Four hundred and fifty thousand francs and the right to copy was the gorgeous sum and total value of three weeks and three days and—No! of my life!

"You are anxious to possess them," the banker muttered with a curse.

"Yes, I am more anxious than you are," was the brief reply.

"Then take them," sounded in a parting snarl as the banker walked away.

"Are they mine?" asked the purchaser.

The dealer's voice was not professionally calm now, as he replied:

"As a rule, one is so jealous that no copy of any kind shall be made of high-priced works of art that—pardon me, Monsieur—your very generosity makes me—makes me—"

"Doubt my ability?" asked the purchaser. "The man who bid against me did not recognize my face, it is true; but he will readily recognize my name and honor my draft for double and treble that amount. Is not that sufficient?"

"For the money? Oh, my dear sir, believe me! For that I had no thought. It is only that the offer you have made destroys for you all money value in your purchase and perplexes me."

"I have not seen the paintings," the purchaser replied, "therefore I was not appraising them at their money value."

"But, my dear sir, you perplex me even more. Now, may God forbid that I offend you! Remember that I am standing here, hesitating to accept the largest profit that was ever realized upon two works of a living artist, for I would willingly sacrifice it—though it left me to beg my bread—before I would do an unkind or discourteous act to Anthony Winthrop. That is my trouble. Let me explain it, if I can, without offending you. If M. Winthrop were dead, these works would be purchased for the Louvre, and there they would be admired by all, with the highest and purest sentiments of the human heart; for among the purest things are pure. But you know it is evil to him who evil thinks, and if, through my carelessness, these works should slip from me to find a place in such a great gallery as that in the halls of the Jardin Mabille, for which place their having been copied would not injure them but rather enhance their value, I can see that they would be worth four hundred and fifty thousand francs to become the evil genius of the grand salon. And, Monsieur, I tell you frankly, I would be a beggar all my life before I would see Anthony Winthrop for himself, or as the son of Carlo Winthrop, so disgraced."

Anthony Winthrop! A man thus defended by a comparative stranger! A man whose unbounded possibilities, unlimited facilities, abundant resources centering in that arrogant Utopia—self! culminated in the shivering drunkard, cringing in the corner, lest the eyes of one of God's creatures should penetrate the shadows and be defiled by resting on him.

"What is it then that you ask of me?" enquired the customer.

"Simply that you satisfy me concerning the purchaser," replied the dealer, "and that you make the usual contract with high-priced works of art, giving me the right to repurchase at the price paid, if the terms of the sale be violated. It is quite customary, Monsieur, even with the works of much less value, to make that contract."

"The contract is of little moment. I will readily consent to it," replied the customer.

"Then as to the hands into which it is to fall?" queried the dealer.

"Is it in confidence?" the other asked.

"Be assured it is information for myself alone," replied the dealer.

"Very well, Monsieur, I am a business manager for this lady, Mlle. Wilhelmina von Steinberg. She is the purchaser."

Gasp! I tottered to my feet.

"Vagabond!" cried the dealer, catching me by the throat. "Once to-day I have ordered you out!" He was dragging me to the rear entrance. "Out with you! Drunken wretch! he muttered as he thrust me through the open door to fall upon the pavement of the dark alley."

He paused for a moment to readjust his dress, then, closing the door upon me, he returned to complete the sale of those paintings upon which he was to realize a fabulous fortune, which he would have sacrificed, though it left him a beggar all his life, before he would do an unkind or a discourteous act to Anthony Winthrop.

CHAPTER XX.

LET ME TOUCH BUT THE HEM OF HER GARMENT.

As he dragged me past my Mina my hand touched the hem of her garment. In hell a drop of water fell upon my lips from over the great gulf, and the result was just as it had been when Mina caught my hand upon the Rhine. It made me think.

With what I had accomplished in art Mina was satisfied. She was paying four hundred and fifty thousand francs for the only part of me with which she was satisfied; the only part to which I ever had given a single thought that it should be worthy of her admiration; a single suggestive consolation to the drunkard, lying listless upon the pavement whether he had been thrust, that he might not pollute the air which she was breathing.

There, on the Rhine, I saw my life, looking forward, in a picture. In Paris, in that wretched alley, I saw a picture, looking backward, in my life; and they were both alike. All my life had been treading a battle

scene, where love, like the water, was all the wrong color, where ambition, the knight in the foreground, was so out of proportion that, when I presented it to Mina, she could not do otherwise than admit that I could do better.

Reaching the miserable apartments, where misery had driven me, I sat down, and for the first time in my life sank into silent and serious contemplation; for, a countless suggestions, it began to dawn upon the dark valley where my self-esteem had built an hermetical fortress, that it was with me and not with my art that Mina was dissatisfied. For the first time I put myself in Mina's place, and, seeing all, I marvelled just as you have, at my own blindness, bigotry, selfishness, weakness and folly. I saw how each day had driven her farther away from me; how I had bolted the door and wondered that she did not enter; how I had built a great wall between us, wondering that she did not cross it, and now, suddenly, I realized that it was so high and so strong that by no possibility could I ever tear it down, by no possibility could Mina ever come over it.

What a night of revelation it was! In the morning I was ready to marvel at the divine forgiveness that enabled her even to possess those paintings that had come from my forgotten studio, when, with all her heart, she could but loathe me, as, with all my heart, I loathed myself, and, turning fiercely upon me I muttered: "It is you, not Mina, who has done all this!"

Sufficient unto the night was the horrible revelation of it. I will not stir the embers of the fire through which I passed to emerge so offended, disappointed and enraged with what I had been that, though I had no longer any hope of winning even so much as a friendly approval from Mina, there was absolutely nothing left me but to resolve, with all the strength that remained in me, to turn from what I was and do something, anything that should at least be instigated by a desire to do better; but at eight-and-twenty, as I stepped from that old into the unknown new, I was more helpless than that starving boy of fourteen, sitting, shivering under the shadow of the Lolelei.

Gray haired and prematurely old I found no longer a blank behind me, only waiting to be filled out with study, for the future, but a life that was full to the brim with the results of wasting energy, arrogance and shame. I was ashamed to acknowledge myself as the painter of my pictures. I was ashamed to confess myself as the bearer of my own name. I was ashamed to disclose myself to friends who might still be friendly. I was ashamed of myself anywhere and everywhere.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Progress in Science.

In Frankfurt experiments are shortly to be made to show the application of electricity to aerial navigation. The pulley which controls the ascent and descent of the balloon will be operated by an electric motor, and a telephone wire will enable conversation to be carried on between those in the balloon and those at the starting point below.

The following plan is adopted in the Paris Laboratory for testing the comparative durability of paving stones. A sample of the rock is placed upon a horizontal plate rotating around a vertical axis and pressed against it by suitable contrivances. The wear is then compared with that of a standard material under the same conditions.

In relation to his scheme for a tubular railway across the Straits of Dover, Sir E. J. Reed points out that, unlike the tunnel, the tube can be destroyed if required with torpedoes or mines by the fleet, and hence could never be used by an enemy to maintain the communications of an army of invasion.

English electrical experts have concluded that the relation said to exist between chemical analysis and specific insulation resistance holds good only when one remains within the four walls of the particular factory in which this relation was established.

The demand for Percheron horses for export is so great that the purity of the breed is seriously threatened, and a stud book has been recently started in France by which the pedigree may be preserved and the race kept up to the standard.

A report on electric lighting of trains in Germany leads to the conclusion that such lighting must be independent of the locomotive, and that it must be on the accumulator system.

One of the mechanical curiosities of the gramophone is the fact that etched record itself is the screw which propels the diaphragm from periphery to centre.

A new process has been invented for aging wine by means of electricity, the novelty of the process consisting of the special apparatus employed.

Men of science declare that the orange was originally a berry, and that its evolution has been going on more than a thousand years.

The most unalterable of water colors has been found to be yellow ochre, terra sienna, saphia, and blues.

Many of the explosions in flour mills have been traced to electricity generated by belts.

His Wife For a Pony.

A few months ago a man named Zimmerman arrived in Darlington, Beaver county, says a Pittsburg, (Pa.) correspondent, with a herd of ponies. Among those who looked longingly on a particular pony was George Davis, a young married man of that place. Davis had no money, but he possessed a wife, whom he offered to exchange for the animal and a money consideration.

The wife was consulted, and after a few days, dickered Zimmerman agreed to give the pony and a deed to 144 acres of land in Montana in exchange for the woman. The papers were drawn up and Zimmerman took the woman and Davis the pony. The cowboy and Mrs. Davis went West, but she soon repented and asked to be taken back to her first love. By this time Davis discovered that Zimmerman did not own a foot of land in Montana or any other place. The innocent-looking pony turned out to be everything that was bad and when Mrs. Davis arrived home the other day she was gladly welcomed by her rightful husband.

"Dear me!" said old Mr. Hoggs, hesitatingly; "I know I've forgotten something, but for the life of me, I can't remember what it is."

STAMPEDED BY THE STORM.

A Graphic Account of an Accident of Cattle Driving in No-Man's-Land.

"Fellers, they air goin' to run to-night." As he uttered this prophecy the old tallsman eyed a big dun brute that walked out alone for a few steps, threw his muzzle toward the north and after a few preliminary sniffs gave that long, low, peculiar-half moan, half howl, that old cow hands have learned means foul weather ahead. Having thus sounded the warning, as it were, the animal turned back and was soon lost in the mighty herd that was nervously cropping the grass that grew fetlock high.

Old Joe, the speaker, turned in his saddle and began to scan the horizon. As he caught sight of a cloud no larger than your hand that was just beginning to show itself away to the northwest, he repeated the prophecy, and added: "An' I don't think we'll have any kick a comin' about the dusk termorror, either."

The time was in the seventies, the locality, No-Man's-Land, and we were on the old Dodge trail, with 1,690 beeves, bound for Ogalalla. The herd had been put up some six weeks before on the Brazos. At Red River crossing we had picked up a bunch that had been lost out of a previous drive belonging to the same company. These steers were placed in our herd against the advice of old Joe. "They air ole stampedeers, and they'll spile the whole herd. Let them wait for one of them dogie outfits behind us."

When it came to cattle, and especially trail cattle, the old man was an authority. Among the "kids" his word on any subject pertaining to stock was accepted as gospel.

However, the foreman determined to risk it, and in they went. The addition had been made only a few days when a change began to be noticed. The very best tenderfoot could see that the herd was growing uneasy and restless. Instead of grazing from the bed grounds when we threw them off the trail, they would ramble in bunches. If a herder attempted to hold them up they would either stop and stare at him or else turn and travel to the further side. Where we formerly watered in any creek or fair-sized pond, it now required a river or lake. Most of us looked for trouble any night, while the few doubters were silenced by the colored horse wrangler, who expressed his views as follows:

"Uv cose dey is gwine ter run, for ole Joe done sed it, and he's rep' is at stake; an' dey is gwine ter run ef ole man baster git down ermong 'em some night wid de slicker."

At supper that evening but little was said: even the cook's yarns, told in his inimitable style, fell flat. Every few minutes our foreman would cast uneasy glances at the great black clouds that were slowly rising in the north-west. Instead of picketing the horses, as was the custom, the animals were saddled and tied to the wagon, or to bushes close by.

The first guard had hardly more than taken charge when the rest of the outfit prepared to roll in. The cook, after tying a lantern to the tongue, climbed in the wagon, tied the sheet down, and thanked the Lord that he was a cook. The wrangler found a place under the coupling pole that suited his complexion, while the riders unstrapped their little "hot roll" on the ground and piled in without removing even boots and spurs.

For some reason I was restless and unable to sleep. All the slumber-producing receipts were tried in vain. I lay on my back and watched the clouds obscure star after star until the whole heavens were hid. I counted the number of rounds the guards were making, and then fell to watching the lightning and trying to judge how far it was off by seeing how many I could count before I heard the thunder that followed every flash.

After a while, growing weary of this, I turned toward the fire; by it sat one of the guards sipping strong coffee between whiffs at his cigarette. The rattle of the chains on his spurs and bit as his horse joggled along told the whereabouts of another, while the wild Spanish song that floated from the far side of the bed ground indicated that "Little Jack," in thoughts at least, was with his black-eyed sweetheart on the distant Rio Grande.

I closed my eyes for a few minutes and when I looked again the guard had left the fire, Little Jack's song was finished, and the only song from the bed ground was the deep breathing of some animal that had just lain down. The thunder had ceased for a few minutes, and the hoof of an owl in the cottonwood made the darkness still darker and the night more dreary.

As I dozed off Old Joe's words kept ringing in my head: "There ain't no danger as long as any of 'em air up an' a-grazin', but when they air all down, an' it's that quiet you kin hear your own heart beat, then you wanter git ready ter ride."

I was still semi-conscious when I heard a roar like a mighty tornado and sprang up as some one shouted:

"They are gone, fellows! They are gone!" In less than a minute every man was in the saddle and rushing after the fleeing herd. No need to ask the way: the trained night horses knew their duty, and are straining every nerve. The lightning's play is grand; electricity is everywhere: flames dance along the mane, a ball of fire gleams on each ear tip. By the flashes the riders locate the lay of the land in front.

Soon we begin passing the drags. No need to look after them; they'll follow, and the real work is on ahead. Far away, in front, above the roar of cattle and thunder, the guards can be heard singing and shouting to the maddened herd. As we dash on the sounds appear to be coming more and more from the left; the leaders are being pressed around, and soon by a flash we see them coming; right in front of the crazed animals, looking like a ghost in his long white slicker, his fiery little night horse lunging and fighting for his head, rode Little Jack, singing, calling, and swearing by turns.

By a concerted action, in which good luck, stout lungs and heavy quilts all play important parts, the herd is thrown together and the milling begins. Around and around they go, each animal with its head over the rump of the one just in front—no beginning, no end, just a solid mass, staring, moaning, as only stampeded cattle can. Balls of fire leap from horn to horn. The cowboys are seated on their horses still as statues, all forming a picture that can't be duplicated. The order is passed along to "Give more room!" the riders fall back the "mill" ceases, and soon is heard a series of coughs: "Jes clear in' their pipes for another dash," some one says.

Nov 13 - rain begins slow, than in-

creasing, till finally it is coming in a driving sheet. With the first drops the cattle turn and begin drifting with the storm, all the riders getting in front and endeavoring to hold them back.

"If I kin only hold 'em till their hides get wet I believe we've got 'em," Old Joe says.

But it wasn't to be. Something gives them a scare and away they go. No sooner are the leaders checked than others turn leaders, and the whole herd goes thundering after them. Another mill is formed and the same performance gone over again. Once a buffalo trail filled with water checks them, again an arroyo running breast deep is no obstacle. During a lull between runs an animal walks out alone toward the riders. By a flash Old Joe recognizes the dun steer that gave the warning, and immediately the old man accuses the brute of being the instigator of all the trouble, and vows that he must die to-morrow.

So the night wears away. The runs grow shorter: occasionally an animal begins to eat. The rain is over, though the clouds still hang heavy. The lightning has ceased, and the riders sit still and motionless, unable to see even the heads of the horses they ride. Water stands everywhere, and the cattle begin grazing in all directions. The foreman gives orders to ride away, as our presence would only serve to stir up and scatter the herd.

Some unsaddled, roll up in their wet blankets, and sleep. Others light pipes and cigarettes and begin watching for signs of the coming morning. With the first gray streaks in the east horses are saddled and the crew gather around for orders; then for the first time it is discovered that two men are missing. The outfit scatters, and, as soon as it is light enough to see, begin throwing together all cattle in sight. The practised eyes soon discover that we are "out" a part of the herd. Herders are selected from those whose horses are most jaded and the rest a-tatter again, this time to "cut for sign." A big trail is soon located and the finder makes this fact known by riding back and forth upon it. It is easily followed through the deep mud and broken weeds. Here where the ground is tramped in all directions is where the boys "milled" them. Again where the arroyo makes a bend they held them awhile. As we gain an elevation over which the trail ran two miles away we see the missing men and cattle. The bunch is driven to the main herd and camp located by the smoke, which is raising straight as a chimney.

After a hot breakfast, during which all tell their experiences of the night, and Old Joe swears for the hundredth time that this is his last trip on the trail, beds are dried, fresh horses are caught, the herd is tallied and found correct, and once more we head for Ogalalla.

CURIOUS FACTS BRIEFLY STATED.

Mr. Vanderbilt owns over 2,000,000 acres of land.

A hog recently killed in Perry, Ga., had three complete sets of lungs.

Six millions of letters are annually torn and sold as old paper in Washington.

About the only women in the world who swing their arms walking are Canadians and Americans.

Two young men went to Visalia, Cal., lately and took out licenses to marry the same girl.

The greatest ocean depth ever found by measurement was in the Atlantic near Puerto Rico, 4,651 fathoms.

A man at Athens, Ga., owns an antiquity in the form of a water bucket hewn out of the solid rock.

A woman heavily veiled visited Sherman's grave recently and besought the guard to sell her some dirt from it.

It has been raining in Sumner county, Ga., incessantly for sixty days. The damage to farms is estimated at \$50,000.

A Tennessee man has been fined \$600 for kissing a woman three times, and he is gallant enough to say he got off cheap.

A Nebraska competitor in a guessing contest came within one of the exact population of the State as given by the census reports.

An auctioneer advertises: "For Sale—A large quantity of oil paintings by some of the most ancient masters of the day."

An immense 200-ton pillar of granite, which will dress to a pillar 6 feet in diameter by 45 feet long, has recently been quarried near Petersburg, Va.

A foreign watchmaker has patented a device by which an hour or two before a clock runs down the word "wind" will appear at an opening in the dial.

A Yale (Mich.) business man, whose sign reads "Undertaker and Photographer," is said to give a photograph of the deceased with every coffin he sells.

The poundmaster of Oakland, Cal., sold for \$12 at an estray auction an unclaimed horse. The animal was subsequently identified as a \$4,000 thoroughbred trotter.

Mrs. Clarissa Berry, of Chicago, after twenty-one years' search, has found her seventy-three-year-old husband, Herman Berry, at Cleveland, and immediately commenced suit for divorce.

A stern father in Keya Paha county, Neb., with a large family of girls, has passed the cold edict that each bean who frequents his domicile during the Winter must contribute a load of sawed stove wood.

It is stated that among the records in the Tower of London a document was found according to which a man was hanged in the time of Edward I. for no other crime than having been caught burning coal.

The oldest inscription in Hebrew, that cut in the rock which was discovered by a boy while bathing in the pool at Silcan, has been cut out and carried away. It is said that the vandals broke it while getting it out, and that a Greek of Jerusalem has bought the fragments.

A large block of wooden buildings in the Chinatown of Victoria, B. C., has been burned by order the city council to make room for a new public market. It was deemed advisable to get rid of the old rockeries in this way instead of by removal, so as to avoid all danger of sickness. The Chinese theatre was among the buildings burned.

La grippe is so prevalent in Chicago as to seriously interfere with public and private business.

An epidemic resembling diphtheria is prevailing among the children of the Hechsher ville valley, in Pennsylvania.