THE PAINTER OF PARMA;

— OR, —

THE MAGIC OF A MASTERPIECE.

"Oh! you did! And how much had he painted this afternoon?"

"I shall not tell you."

"Why not?"

"Because it is none of your business."

"That means—he had not touched it! Come, come! Acknowledge the truth. He had not touched a brush to the canvas! Good heavens! what are we coming to? Madelon! Madelon! I am astonished at you! A woman of your age—set by your trusting, confiding master, to watch over the welfare of the most precious treasure he possessed—for you to thus wink at such duplicity and fraud! Oh, Madelon, I am ashamed of you!"

"You are a great, good-for-nothing, ugly beast, Marquis Steffano! I winked at nothing. I don't know anything about the painting, only that it is beautiful, even now, with the face not at all finished—only just begun.."

The Marquis, who had drunk wine enough to make him reckless and oblivious to all social and moral propriety, laughed aloud—laughed until he saw that he was attracting the attention of others, when he restrained himself; and shortly thereafter, without further remark, he bowed to the princess with mock humility, though seemingly polite, and turned on his heel and left them.

As soon as he had gone beyond hearing, the duenna turned upon Isabel a look of unutterable amazement.

Holy Mother of heaven! how did he know?"

"How did he know what?" demanded the princess.

"That there hadn't been any painting. Of course I wouldn't have told him—I'd have seen him dead first; but he must have known all the same."

"Madelon, what are you talking about? Had you asked me at the studio how much Signor Zanoni had painted this afternoon I should have told you—not a bit. He could not paint. At least he would not go at the work until he had told me about the gross and heartless insult the Marquis Steffano offered him yesterday after we left him."

And thereupon the girl related to her companion the story as Zanoni had told it to her. When she had finished—had told how the artist had disarmed the Marquis, and how Count Denaro and two others had got him away—she went on:

"This led Signor Zanoni to remark upon the lack of personal resemblance between the two brothers. They were as unlike in form and feature as they were in character, he said; and thereupon I asked him if he had ever heard the story of those two brothers. He said he never had, and he asked me if I would kindly tell it. I did not wish to refuse.; in fact, I felt that he ought to know it."

"And thus it happened, dear mamma, that when you came in the painting had not been touched; and of course you know it was not touched after you joined us. Now tell me, Madelon, frankly, can you see anything in the event at all out of the way?"

"Only, dear girl, in the construction others might put upon it if they knew."

"Aye, dear Madelon, there it is! Why should others know it? They can not, if you hold your peace."

"Ah! but does not Steffano know it already?"

"No," replied the princess emphatically. "He knows nothing at all about it. His remarks to you was but a bold reckless fling—an insinuation that we were abusing the confidence of the duke. He would have spoken to me if he had known anything. No, no, Madelon. Be sure no living person, saving the painter himself and you and I, know the truth. Now answer me—and answer me honestly and sincerely—will you be my friend, and speak not a word of this matter to anybody?"

The duenna promised; and before opportunity was offered for further remark they had arrived at the palace; and while they enter and remove their out-door garbs, let us take a look after the Marquis.

There was a social organization in Parma called the Correggio Club. It was the most exclusive and most popular club in the city; and the man who gained membership there considered himself extremely fortunate. Originally its membership had been confined to the nobility and men of high military renown; but after a time men celebrated in art and in civil affairs of government had been admitted. The duke himself had proposed the name of Juan Zanoni, and he had been elected without opposition.

To this club belonged the Marquis Steffano. He had been elected before his character had become generally known. The duke had told him more than once in those later days that, were he not already a member, he, the duke, would on no consideration propose him. And it is doubtful if he could have found many among the good and true who would have ventured the presentation of his name to the board of censors. Nevertheless, no one had as yet cared to move for his expulsion.

The quarters of the Correggio Club were in a large and imposing marble structure on the Grand Plaza, and thither, after he had left the princess and her duenna, he bent his steps, proceeding directly to the principal reception-room on entering. Here he remained for a little time, chatting with a few individuals of his acquaintance who chanced to be there, but without taking a seat. He had inquired in the outset if Count Denaro had arrived, and had been answered in the negative. By-and-by he went to a glazed door in the far corner of the room, and rapped gently on one of the panels, and in response a voice from within bade him to enter.

It was the office of the superintendent of the rooms of the club, and the man himself was there, busy, as usual.

"Signor Guillette, I have come to ask a favor."

"Be seated, marquis. What can I do for you?"

"I wish to look at the record of membership of the club."

"Have you the permission of the board of censors to do so?"

"I hardly thought it necessary to go to that trouble, signor, since I am performing the mission at the request of the duke—my brother."

The intendant reflected for a little time, and finally arose, and took the volume—a large folio, heavily bound in boar's hide—from its place of safe-keeping, saying as he did so:

"You are aware, marquis, that our record of members is very full and explicit, and there are cases in which matters are set down that are not for the public eye—items of biography that may possibly be of value in after-years but which the subject would not wish should be discussed in open club. You assure me that the duke has authorized you to ask for the book."

The calm, deliberate lie cost Steffano not an effort. It came as natural to him and passed his lips as easily as the breath of life. This answer in the affirmative was prompt and assuring. And the book was placed before him.

The marquis, when he had so disposed of the ponderous volume that he could handle it easily, turned to the page on which appeared his own name. That was eight years back. He had been admitted shortly after arriving at the age of twenty-one. There he glanced over the closely written lines, but without recognizing even a letter, until the intendant had turned to his work. Then, without the slightest rustle he turned over the leaves until he had come to the entries of one and two years agone, and finally his eyes rested upon the name of Juan Zanoni.

He glanced up at the intendant, and found him absorbed in his work. Then he referred again to the entry in the book before him, and the following were of the items he found there set down:

"Age twenty-seven. Place of birth—not sure, but thinks Carthagena, Spain."

The next item was with regard to his parentage. His father, he believed, had been an officer of high rank in the Spanish army, and had been killed in battle somewhere in the East. His mother had been of Italian birth, and had taught him her language.

Next—the years of his life, till the age of nineteen, had been passed in Spain, mostly at Madrid. Since that time he had resided three years in Rome, one in Venice, another at Milan, and the remainder of the time at Parma.

There were other items, but no more that interested Steffano. It was herein set down who had been his teachers in art, the length of time he had given to preparatory study, the subjects of what he considered his best pictures, together with other matters not necessary to mention.

"What is the idea," asked the marquis as he gave up the book, "of putting in so much of the lives of our members?"

"I think it a very good idea," replied the official, putting down his pen and leaning back in his chair, "and I can inform you that on more than one occasion the value of those records has been proved. How often it happens that a friend is taken from us—removed by death—of whose past life we knew nothing. Perhaps he settled among us late in life, a man without family and without near relatives, and yet he has become honored. Let us take a single case—though we must suppose it. Take the painter, Juan Zanoni."

The marquis caught his breath, and shut his hands tightly. The intendant went on, without noticing the effect his words had produced upon his listener.

"Suppose he should be suddenly taken away, it would be the desire of the club, as it would be of the public at large, that a biographical sketch should be published. In fact it is one of our laws that on the death of a member the committee having that especial work in charge shall make out and publish as full and complete a record of the life of the deceased as the material at hand will permit."

Steffano thanked the man for the information he had vouchsafed. He said, further, that he could now understand the matter, and it met his hearty approval.

From the office of the intendant the marquis made his way to one of the upper chambers, where games of hazard were played, and found it unoccupied. Here he sat down and thought. His brow was dark and furrowed, his lips tightly compressed, his large, coarse hands clenched, while his eyes, with a baleful light, seemed searching for something afar off. At last his thoughts found words:

"I cannot be mistaken. It is he—alive—living here in Parma, and—heavens! how do I know that he is not on my track? Yet I do not think he knows me—he could have never known me. Though I saw and knew him I doubt if he ever set eyes on me."

Here he lapsed into silence for a time, while he arose from his seat and paced to and fro across the floor. Presently a terrific imprecation burst from his lips and his eyes flashed back vengeance.

"The matador betrayed me!" he muttered. "He lied to me! Oh, if I could but see him! But to what end? He would lie again and I should be none the better off. Ah! Mark! that should be Denaro's voice. Aye, and so it is!"

"Now," smiting his hand upon his breast, "good fortune attend me! What shall I do? This painter is dangerous! He must be put out of the way at any cost; and you, my gay and gallant count, must give me aid. No! I think I can find a way."

"Guiseppe!" he cried, as the count entered the room where he was; "I heard your voice and was just coming in search of you. You are the very man I wished to see."

"Then our wishes were alike," returned Denaro, as he took the other's extended hand, "for you are the very man I have been in search of for half an hour at least."

"Well, here we are, and alone, and not likely to be interrupted before dark."

"Do you realize, Steffano, that it is almost dark even now?"

"I faith! so it is. But never mind that. Tell me for what you have been seeking me,"

The count sat down and brushed his hand across his brow and over his eyes. He was evidently in trouble. His brow, usually fair and open, was gloomy and contracted, with deep lines above the bridge of the nose, the cheeks hotly flushed, and his lips quivering.

"Dear Marquis," he said, when his companion had seated himself by his side, "you must not laugh at me, for I tell you my heart is sore. Oh, if you could know how I love the Princess Isabel!"

He was not looking toward his friend, so he did not see the curl of contempt that played around his sensual lips, nor the gleam of hate that shot forth from his sinister eyes.

"My love for her," he went on, with a passionate wringing of his hands, "has become a madness. If I should lose her, I should not prize life another hour!"

"My dear Guiseppe, you must not lose her. The duke favors your suit, and—but my assistance you do not want."

"Yes, yes, Steffano!" the count exclaimed, vehemently. "Your good offices may help me much. I know you will give them to me."

"Of course I will. Command me in any way you please, and I will serve you if I can. And now, old fellow, tell me what is the particular burden on your mind at the present time?"

"Steffano," the count returned, after a slight hesitation, as though he ought to feel ashamed of the confession he was about to make, "I saw the princess go into Zanoni's rooms this noon. It was but a few minutes past meridian, I know, because I looked at my watch. I saw her when she entered the vestibule of the house, and I saw her when she came forth. How long do you suppose she remained there?"

"Probably most of the afternoon."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I saw her, with old Madelon, going toward the palace, just before I came in here. I was on the opposite side of the way, but I saw them very plainly."

"Yes, you did! And they had just come from the painter's studio. In heaven's name, marquis, what does it mean? Can you believe it possible that she can have become infatuated with his pale, hypocritical face?"

"There is one thing I can believe," Steffano said, looking his companion straight in the eye: "I believe that Juan Zanoni, poor and proud, with ambition far above his station, has his greedy eyes fixed upon not only the beautiful princess, but also upon the wealthy heiress. I have thought so ere this, and now I am sure of it, Aye, and I will tell you one thing more; I know Isabel di Varona. She is as romantic as she is lovely. She is fond of poetry and poets. I verily believe, if Virgil could have lived in our time and she could have known him, she would have thrown herself into his arms if he had been as old as her grandsire and as ugly as a ghoul! And did you know this painter is a poet? I have been told that he has written verses that have received high commendation from the holy fathers of San Herculanus."

"Steffano! Steffano!" the poor count cried in an agony of torture, "What can I do? Will you advise me? If we could open the eyes of the duke! But we can not. He is blind. If this thing goes on he may get his picture, but he will lose his fair ward."

The marquis arose from his seat and took a turn across the room. Finally he stopped before his friend and said:

"Guiseppe, it is growing dark, and they will soon be here to light the lamps. Listen to me. We must find proof of what we fear. That first, and then we can act understandingly. I have a plan in mind. Shall you be at the palace this evening?"

"Yes. I have an invitation from the duke."

"All right. Look to it that you do not fail. No! Ask me nothing now. You will see for yourself in good time.

"And now, my dear count, let us adjourn to the refectory. Our steward has received a fresh supply of our favorite Lachryma Christi. Oho! What a rare old monk he must have been whose inspiration gave us that name!"

(To Be Continued.)

MOLD IN CELLARS.

Perhaps mold in cellars should be encouraged as going to show that the walls are damp, and hence that an unhealthy condition of things exists. If, however, it is desired to exterminate the mold, it can be done by dusting it over with powdered quicklime. If the walls are dry where the mold grows, they should first be moistened. After a day has passed, the walls may be washed down. It is said that the growth will not appear for two years after this treatment. The lime must be powdered as it comes out of the barrel. If it is powdered by slaking, it will not operate.

ALWAYS WILLING.

Mattie—What would you do if a young man was to kiss you against your will?

Helen—Oh, pshaw! Such a thing would be impossible.

FROM THE LAND O' CAKES.

INTERESTING NEWS NOTES FROM BONNIE SCOTTISH BRAES.

Stray Scraps of News Perfumed by the Heather—Happenings of a Week Told in a Few Words.

Paisley corporation's new baths cost £10,036.

Ayr Carnegie Free Library and site cost £12,126.

A Gladstone memorial is to be erected in Glasgow.

Railways within Troon burgh are assessed for £3,581.

Mr. Brockie has been elected Provost of Lockerbie!

The fishing in Shetland is reported light and variable.

Paisley favors the overhead system of trolley traction.

Donald R. Henry, editor of the Ross-shire Journal, is dead.

A medal has been offered for a reliable ascent of Ben Nevis.

Paisley is to have six representatives at Bisley this year.

Saltcoat's commissioners propose acquiring the gas works there.

Lanimer Day was celebrated in Lanark in old-time manner.

A bawbee has been taken off the four-pound loaf in Glasgow.

As a barley market in Scotland, Elgin ranks next to Edinburgh.

During the recent epidemic Port-Glasgow had 508 cases of measles.

Five big locomotives for the Belgian Government are being built in Glasgow.

In the Pothead colliery there has only been one fatal accident in thirty years.

The severity of the weather has had a bad effect on the crops about Portpatrick.

Last year Glasgow School Board spent £256,593. The income was £260,264.

John N. Weyness, a cattle dealer, well known in the north of Scotland, is dead.

Shootings in the Highlands are in demand this year and command big rentals.

Lord Elgin, Viceroy of India, is expected to arrive at Broomhill in November.

Helensburgh commission is prepared to give £29,000 for the local gas works.

Dalkeith is to erect a lamp and drinking fountain in memory of the poet Burns.

William Black, wool sorter, a well-known character in Jedburgh, is dead, aged 90 years.

D. Bryden, of Ross Mains, Dumfriesshire, was dangerously bitten in the face by a horse.

Greenock and Port-Glasgow Tramways Company are contemplating the introduction of electricity

There are 639 patients in the Montrose Asylum. The grounds are to be enlarged and the buildings improved.

At Rothes, in Morayshire, the money placed in a bottle under a foundation stone became the plunder of burglars.

J. Smith, Brae Farm, Pitfodels, succeeded in suiciding in the second attempt by throwing himself in front of a train.

Piper Findlater does not think it better to be a gatekeeper at Balmoral than a dweller on the stage at the Empire.

Leith is satisfied with the Spanish-American war. It has greatly increased its import trade with the United States.

An Aberdeen steamer has sighted the annual sea serpent. It was 115 feet in length, 30 feet being head and the remainder tail.

An association has been formed to protect fishing in the Gala at Stow.

An abundant fruit crop is expected in Alyth district.

In Perthshire the weather has at last consented to "tak' a thocht an' mend," almost tropical heat having been experienced lately.

An unknown gentleman has volunteered to build the second block of consumption hospitals at Bridge of Weir, at a cost of £8,000.

The postman for Eastbairn district is now provided with a bicycle, which enables him to deliver letters to farms hitherto exempt.

The directors of Mushets Iron Works, Dalkeith, finding that the business cannot be profitably carried on have resolved to wind up the company.

"Lack of little common sense" is the reason given for the falling through of the negotiations for a union of the Free and U. P. kirks at Dumfries.

Donald McPherson, a Nairn hotel-keeper, recently deceased, claimed the proud distinction of having been initiated into the mysteries of angling by John Bright.

To Gladstone's mother belongs the honour of having originated Sabbath schools in the Highlands, the first Sabbath school in Dingwall having been conducted by her.

Langholm has been presented with a dozen seats to be placed on the surrounding roads, but the Duke says he would prefer to make all seats to be placed on his ground.

While four trumpeters in the Forfar and Kincardine Militia were bathing at Foresands, two of them—Edward Noble and Taylor—swam out a distance of thirty yards in a pretty rough sea, and Noble was drowned.

The gross revenue earned by the Glasgow tramways for the year to 31st May last amounted to £294,111, and the working expenses to £293,594, leaving a balance of £100,517.

In the Original Secession church, Ayr, the anniversary of Drumclog was celebrated by a special service. One of the flags carried at the battle was displayed in a prominent place.

The first sod of the extension of the Lanarkshire and Ayrshire railway from Lugton to Cambuslang was cut on June 6th by the Hon. Mrs. Vernon, in the presence of landowners, railway officials, coal-masters and traders.

The Engineering and Shipbuilding Federation has decided to concede a five per cent. advance in wages to all grades of Clyde shipbuilders, the advance to come into force on August 1st, and to remain in operation for six months.

At a meeting of the Aberdeen Town Council it was resolved to contribute £2,000 to the guarantee fund of £20,000 required for the International Fisheries Exhibition next year, and also decided to grant a site on the links for the Exhibition.

The penny bank is quite an institution in Dumbarton. It was founded many years ago, and not a few of those who took the sage advice to take care of the pence have learned habits of thrift that will stand them in good stead so long as they live.

Sympathy is felt with the women workers who went to the herring fishing at Scrabster and Stromness. The catch has been so small at both places that the women have had no chance of earning even in some cases what may be regarded as starvation wages.

The body of William Howell, a fireman, belonging to the Shettleston district, has been found at the bottom of the shaft of the Broombridge pit, Dennyloanhead, in a frightfully mangled condition, and it is supposed that Howell must have thrown himself down the shaft.

AGONIZING PAINS.

Endured by Those Who Suffer From Sciatica—A Victim Tells How to Obtain Relief.

Probably no trouble that afflicts mankind causes more intense agony than sciatica. Frequently the victim is utterly helpless, the least movement causing the most agonizing pains. Those who are suffering from this malady the following statement from Mr. John Hayes, of Hayesville, York Co., N. B., will point the road to relief and cure. Mr. Hayes says:—"For upward of twenty years I have suffered from weakness and pain in the back. Some four years ago my trouble was intensified by Sciatica settling in my right leg. What I suffered seems almost beyond description. I employed three doctors but all to no purpose: I had to give up work entirely and almost despaired of life. This continued for two years—years filled with misery. At this time I was advised to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and after using six boxes both the sciatica and the weakness in the back which had troubled me so long, were gone. I was again a well man and feeling fifteen years younger than before I began the pills. Nearly two years has passed since I discontinued the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and in that time no symptom of the trouble has shown itself. Under God I thank Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for what they have done for me."

Mr. Hayes voluntarily testified to the truth of the above statement before Edward Whosead, Esq., J. P., and his statements are further vouched for by Rev. J. N. Barnes, of Stanley, N.B.

"HUMAN ALLIGATORS."

According to the mail news from the west coast of Africa, a "human alligator" society infests the banks of the Kittam Boom River. Fishermen and boatmen have been enticed from their canoes, by the members of the society, who, after murdering them and stealing their belongings, feasted on their bodies. One man who was enticed onto the river bank, when fallen on by the "human alligators," killed one of his assailants and wounded two others, but was eventually himself killed and eaten, excepting one of his legs, which was found in the river and identified by some marks upon it. So common were the outrages becoming in the district that the attention of the authorities was being drawn to the matter.

INOCULATED BY BEE-STINGS.

According to the results of an inquiry among the bee-keepers of Germany, human beings may acquire immunity from the effects of bee-stings simply by being stung a sufficient number of times. In some cases 30 stings suffice to impart the desirable immunity; in other cases as many as 100 stings must be endured before the victim ceases to suffer serious inconvenience from the attack of bees. Occasionally a person is found who is naturally immune to the effects of bee-stings, while others are not able to acquire immunity by any amount of heroic experience.

WORK AND WAGES.

Housekeeper—Lookee here! You are charging me two dollars for that whitewashing job, and yet it isn't six months since you did the same job for half that.

Colored Artist—Yes'm, but you know cheap wo'k is po' wo'k; an' I did dat job so bad de las' time dat it done took me twice as long ter do it dis time.