THE PAINTER OF PARMA;

— OR, —

THE MAGIC OF A MASTERPIECE.

CHAPTER VIII.

A change had come over our good old duenna. She had been, previous to this last visit at the painter's studio, inclined to feel hurt at the slight put upon her, as she felt it to be, but a change had been wrought. She was now in sympathy with her dear young mistress, and, moreover, her feelings toward the painter himself had become softened and friendly. She had conversed with him, and he had listened to her, not only with respect, but gratefully. And that, perhaps, might not be all. Never before had she sat in Signor Zanoni's presence; never before had she looked squarely and searchingly into his eloquent, magnetic face. She had found something in it that had attracted her—something that had led her to trust and like him, and she felt in her heart that she would be his champion.

With this feeling she earnestly desired to keep herself out of the way of the Marquis Steffano. She knew that he would question her closely, and she knew too—though she did not to herself acknowledge it—that she was not fitted to cope with him. She was but an humble dependent, while he was a noble of Parma and own brother of the powerful duke. She was resolved that on the next morning she would take shelter, at as early an hour as possible, in the society of the princess and not leave her until they had made their visit to the studio.

That he would ask her before the morrow, she did not even dream. She knew his habits; and the spending of the evening hours at home was not one of them. Had she called to mind the fact that the duke had planned to hold one of his light, friendly receptions on that very evening she might have been more on her guard.

As it was, however, the marquis found her. At about the time when she usually began to think of her night's rest he stationed himself at a point in an upper corridor, which she must pass, and there, upon the stroke of the half-hour after nine, he met her. She saw him and sought to avoid him; but he was too quick for her.

"No, no, dear old friend! You must not think to give me the slip in that fashion! I have taken too much trouble to find you to suffer you to run away from me now. My dear, good old Madelon, of what are you afraid? If you will listen to me for just one little minute I will convince you that it is for your own interest that I wish to speak. I think you would wish to retain the good opinion of the duke."

"You know I would."

"Then prove it by being frank and truthful. Prove it by proving yourself a true friend to the Princess Isabel."

"Oh, Marquis! How can you say such a thing. As though I needed to prove my friendship for that dear child!"

"Madelon!" Answer me this!" He spoke in an abrupt, threatening tone, looking her in the eye as though he would look into her very soul. "Now, would you like to see the Princess Isabel di Varona elope—run away—with the low-born, poverty-stricken lazarone of a painter!"

"Steffano Farnese, he isn't a lazarone, and you know it!"

"Never mind that. Now would you like to see it?"

"You hinted at such a thing once before, and I answered you."

"Well, you can answer me again. And I tell you, Madelon, I am serious. Think the matter over. Picture it to yourself. Thus it would be: One day—and on a day not far distant, if you do not take care—the duke will ask you, 'Where is the princess?' and you can only answer, 'She is gone!'—aye—gone off with Signor Zanoni! Have you thought? How does it appear to you? Would you like for such a thing to come to pass?"

"I shall not answer you. It is too ridiculous. You are only trying to frighten me."

"Then answer me this." This time the marquis spoke in a low tone, but with a deeper and more diabolical threat, with a grip on her wrist and that same searching look into her shrinking, frightened eyes. "What were the painter and the princess doing this afternoon? You know very well he was not painting. Don't stop to frame a lie! I want the truth! I want you to tell me just what you know—no more, no less."

The poor old creature was beyond her depth. She could tell a falsehood on a small scale, but she knew not how to carry off a calm, placid deception. Moreover, she was fully persuaded that the marquis knew much, much more than he really did. She was in an agony of terror and alarm, and the longer she hesitated the more utterly demoralized she became.

"Are you going to answer me?"

"Marquis! you have no right to ask me about the private affairs of my mistress. I will tell the duke how you treat me."

"Do so, my dear old madam, and I will tell him that the painter was making love to your mistress under your very eyes.

"Then you will tell him an awful lie; for he wasn't doing any such thing."

"I swear he was!"

"And I swear he wasn't; there now!"

"How do you know that? Remember! You say you can swear. How can you do so if you do not know what they were doing?"

"I do know what they were doing, and nobody could have been more innocent of all harm!"

"Oho! Now I understand. The painter was telling to the lady the truly touching and pathetic story of his vagabond life!"

"There's where you are just wrong, Marquis Steffano!" retorted the duenna triumphantly. "It was the princess herself was telling the story! Ho, ho! You are not so wise as you thought you were."

"Mercy on us! Was the dear princess so long in telling the story of her own life?"

"No!" fairly shrieked the irritated old woman, feeling that her time of triumph had come. "It was your story, the story of your life, that she was telling! Now what do you think? Aha! You don't like it, eh?"

The effect of these few simple words upon the marquis had been wonderful. He seemed to collapse—to suddenly wilt, and droop, and quake. His limbs shook; his whole frame shook, and the terror in his face was startling. But it was only for a little time. He soon became strong again, and the terrified expression had left his dark visage, but in its place had come a look of vengeance—of dire and deadly hatred—that boded ill to somebody.

It had been upon his tongue to howl back upon the woman in hot anger and gross profanity, but he had restrained himself, for which he was thankful. He did more than that. Being determined if possible to gain the whole truth, he held his peace until he was able to speak calmly, and even pleasantly.

"Forgive me, Madelon," he said, with a smile, "if I startled you. But when you told me that the princess had been telling my story to a stranger—the story of my unhappy youth—it made me really angry. But that is past and gone. Now tell me, how came she to tell it? You owe me that, and I know you will not refuse me."

And thus, by dint of close and patient questioning, without again losing his temper, and a careful keeping out of sight of his ill feelings, he succeeded in drawing from her a true account of the whole affair. She was careful to take to herself her full share of responsibility.

In fact, she suffered it to appear that she had given to the painter a vast deal of information that she never gave at all. She had held her wits wonderfully at command for her. Up to this time she had contrived, without falsification to make it appear that she had been present at the whole interview; and she might have carried it out to the end with very little thought and circumspection. But an unfortunate moment for her was at hand.

"Dear old Madelon," the marquis said, with the deepest touch of feeling he could show, "I do not so much wonder that the princess should have forgotten herself. She is young and inexperienced, and apt to be thoughtless, especially where her sympathies are concerned; but you are older; and we have a right to look to you to uphold the honor and dignity of our name. I am surprised that you did not instantly, when Isabel first started to disclose the secrets of your noble master's family, make her a sign to stop. Did you not realize that it was not the proper thing to do? Alas! you can not have been thinking of the duty—the hearty loyalty—you owed the good duke.'"

But—Marquis! I wasn't there when she began. If I had of been it would not have happened. But—but," she cried, when she caught the sudden gleaming of Steffano's black eyes and the closing of his vengeful lips, "you mustn't blame the princess. She meant no harm. If Signor Zanoni asked her to tell him about it, how was she to refuse?"

"And how, if I may ask, happened you to join them at all?" He asked the question as mildly and pleasantly as it was in his power to do.

She had once lost her head, and she was now lost completely. She answered blindly, without thought, the simple truth:

"I went to tell her that it was time for us to go home."

"And you found her telling our story to the painter?"

"I told you once—yes."

"How far had she got when you came upon the scene?"

"She had just told about the coming of the old priest, Father Paul, and the wonderful story he had to tell of the princess and her little son. That's you."

"Oh, she was telling of my mother?"

"Of your mother and yourself, as it afterward turned out, but—"

"But she had not spoken of my coming home to Parma?"

"Bless you, no. She hadn't said a word about you. Your name hadn't been mentioned no more than as though there had never been such a person in existence. So you needn't borrow any trouble. I heard every word that was spoken about you—every word, and not a thing was said that you could have found fault with."

The marquis laughed—laughed as though something had greatly pleased him.

"Come, Madelon, you can't imagine how curious I am to know what the painter thought of me. Of course, he must have said something. Now be good to me and tell me what it was."

"He didn't say anything that you would care to hear; not a single thing."

"Oh, but he must have said something. Did he say I was handsome?"

"No, he did not."

"Did he say I was ugly?"

"Of course not."

"Did he speak of my age? Ah! did he speak of that, eh?"

"It was only a word, marquis."

"Aha! I know. He thought I looked too young to be the long-lost brother.

"You are wrong there, Signor. On the contrary he asked the princess if she had never thought that you looked older than you were."

"Did he say older than I am, or older than I claim to be?"

"They had reckoned your true age—the age of Giovanni's younger son—and he meant, older than that. Now I hope you are satisfied."

"Yes, good Madelon; and I am grateful, too. I suppose you saw, the moment your eyes fell on the canvas, that it had not been touched at that sitting? However, that wasn't the princess's fault."

"It wasn't anybody's fault. And," with a vindictive snapping of her eyes and an angry pursing of her lips, "I don't know as it was anybody's business."

"You are right. It was none of mine, at all events. Thanks once more, my dear Madelon. Good-night!"

"It's the most sensible word you have spoken, marquis, and I repeat it with all my heart. Good-night!" And with that spiteful speech the duenna turned upon her heel and strode away with all possible speed.

The marquis stood and watched her until she had disappeared, and still stood, gazing into the vacancy she had last filled. So for a time, and then he cast a quick glance around, to assure himself that he was alone.

"By heavens!" he exclaimed, with a fierce smiting together of his heavy hands, "it has gone further than I thought! What were they doing all that time alone together, and not a touch of a brush to his canvas? As I live, I believe she loves him! She has given her heart—and will give herself if she can. And he will grab the prize! He would be a fool if he did not. I'd wager my life that they have already talked of flight. Aye, but—"

At this point he caught his breath and started as though a ghost had suddenly arisen and confronted him.

"San Marco! he has my life, as Isabel knows it, laid bare. He knows all she could tell him. He knows too much. I have no time to waste. Shall I put a stop to her visits at the studio? And there must be no more conference between those two. Luckily, before they had come to my part in the story old Madelon was with them, and in her presence the man would be guarded, but when they next meet, without the duenna to overhear, what notes and data may they not rake up and compare? By heavens! I must open the eyes of the duke and set Guiseppe to thinking. If I can work upon him as I think I can I may bring down my two birds at a single shot!"

As the last words fell from his lips the great cathedral bell of the Assumption, in its deep and solemn tones, proclaimed the hour of ten. That was the duke's usual time for presenting himself at his social receptions, and Steffano wished if possible to see and speak with him before he should have left his private closet.

"Aye, I have it," he muttered, as he turned in the new direction. "Let me have his consent to the experiment, and if I do not open his eyes, then call me dunce."

He found the duke in the same small ante-room where we have seen the twain once before, in the act of putting away a lot of papers which he had been probably overlooking.

"Ah! how is this, Steffano? I have been making myself very easy and content in the assurance that you were entertaining my guests."

"My dear Antonio," returned the marquis, with an earnestness and soberness unusual to him, "I could not give myself to pleasure until I had seen you and put off a load from my mind that is worrying me."

"Steffano! what in the world can it be? Am I interested?"

"I am only interested for you, my brother. But I will not keep you in suspense. You have not forgotten what Count Denaro has said to you touching his troubles—his fears that our fair cousin, Princess Isabel, might become infatuated with the handsome painter?"

The duke regarded the speaker with a look of pained surprise.

"Brother, you do not mean that any scandal has arisen?"

"It is worse than scandal, sire; scandal can be frowned down and made harmless; but this of which I speak must be handled delicately, at least so far as the princess is concerned. God bless and save her!"

"Marquis, do you not see how I suffer? Out with it! What have you to tell me?"

The younger man bent his head for a few moments, as though in deepest thought. At length he looked up and said, with a show of heartfelt feeling;

"Antonio, I can swear to you, if you wish my oath, that the princess has given her love—the deep and passionate love of her heart—to the plebeian painter, Juan Z noni!"

The duke did not start; he gave no token of astonishment. His look was one of entire unbelief.

"Oh, Steffano! what freak is this? What manner of hallucination hath possessed you?"

The marquis was calm and unruffled. He faintly smiled as he answered:

"My dear Antonio, I fear it is yourself who is possessed; but I will awaken you if I can. Stop! Listen to me for a moment, and be candid. Will you call to mind the girl's peculiarities of disposition and self-education. You know how romantic she is, how prone to hero-worship. You have heard her rhapsodies on the heroes of the old crusades. Aye, she worships a hero wherever she can find him. And now turn to this painter. Mark you, my brother, I do not like the man; yet I am forced to admit that he is the handsomest of feature and of form, and one of the most intellectual of all the men I ever knew. And into this man's society the tender-hearted, impressionable girl is thrown, to sit with him for hours alone, under the influence of his witching look and his captivating speech."

"But," said the duke, struggling to throw off the fear that was coming upon him, "you know that Madelon is always with her."

"Bah! You are not serious, brother. You know perfectly well that the good old duenna is never allowed to sit with them—is not allowed in the same room."

Antonio was troubled. His love for his beautiful ward was like the love of a father for his own offspring. It was deep, tender and true—the chief source, in fact, of his domestic joy. He was not willing to believe that his darling—the fondly cherished and dearly loved child of the noble Farnese—could have given her heart to a plebeian; for he had told himself, in the outset that if she could do this thing it would mean a clinging, forever after, to the low-born lover in preference to her own devoted kindred.

"Steffano," he said, after a long and painful time of reflection, "I cannot believe it. I know you are sincere. I can see it in your face; but I can not believe."

"Dear brother, may I convince you?"

"How?"

"Never mind the how. If you will give me permission, I will this very evening convince you that I am right—that the painter is to her all in all."

"I will not have her imposed upon, nor harshly treated. Remember that."

"Dear brother, do you not know me well enough to know that I could not do that?"

"But, Steffano, what is it you mean? What course will you pursue?"

The marquis gave a few moments to thought, and then replied:

"Antonio, listen. I will speak the painter's name in her hearing. I will speak of him kindly and in a friendly spirit, and you shall mark the effect of the words upon her. If I do not convince you that her heart is given wholly and entirely to Zanoni I give you my word that I will never allude to the subject again—never. Surely you can have no objection to that."

"Is Count Denaro enlisted with you in this affair?"

"Heavens and earth! for what do you take me? I have never breathed it to him. He is as ignorant of the whole matter as you were half an hour ago."

The duke arose from his seat and took a turn across the room. In a far corner was a small cupboard, the door of which he opened, and took thence a bottle and two glasses, and set them on the table. In utter silence the wine was poured out; in silence drank. A little later he said, wearily:

"Be it so, brother. But remember your promise. Be kind and gentle."

To be Continued.

LIABILITY FOR SEA HORROR.

Captain of the William Brown, Lost in 1841, Convicted of Forcing Passengers Overboard.

Since the terrible fate that befell the passengers on board the French steamer La Bourgogne much speculation has arisen as to the liability of the French crew under the charges brought against them in connection with the sinking of the ship. It is well settled that the law in England and the United States is adverse to the crew.

The leading American case is that of the people against Holmes, which was tried in New York by lawyer David Paul Brown as prosecuting attorney. The story is an interesting one. The ship William Brown sank off Nova Scotia in March, 1841. The passengers and crew overloaded the boats. After drifting for several days a storm came up, making it evident that the overloaded boat which Holmes commanded would be swamped and all lost. Under these circumstances he gave order to lighten the boat. Twelve passengers were thrown overboard, and two sisters voluntarily jumped into the sea. The remainder of the crew were saved and brought to Philadelphia. Holmes was indicted and tried. In his defence the above circumstances were shown and additional evidence admitted that Holmes was one of the most active in saving the passengers and getting them into the boat; that at the risk of his life he had personally saved several. Nevertheless Holmes was convicted, and the United States court sustained the conviction, on the ground that the contract of the sailor bound him to use every means in his power, even to the sacrifice of his own life, to deliver each passenger at the port for which he shipped.

The point of jurisdiction was raised, when it was held that the flag converted the ship and her apparel, including the boats, into national territory. As to acts done in the waters of the high seas, it was further held that the contract controlled as to the sailors. The Court also held that as to the same acts done between passengers on the high seas a different rule prevailed; in the absence of international law as to them they owed no duty to one another; they were, from the moment of leaving the ship, remitted to their natural rights, and the law of self-preservation prevailed.

Much sympathy throughout the country was manifested for Holmes in this case from its purely doctrinal law, and its being a case of first impression, his sentence was commuted to imprisonment. After eighteen months he was released, but the principle that the sailor owed a duty to passengers, even to the sacrifice of his own life, was established.

HOW THEY ARE LIGHTED.

Paris has about 600,000 electric lights and London twice as many. More than half of Berlin's streets are now lighted with a gas glow-light, perfectly white and five times as powerful as the old flame, and the lamps are being placed rapidly in the other streets and the city, with a consumption of 10,000,000 cubic meters of gas, will have fivefold the light hereinbefore obtained from 17,000,000. The 10,000,000 oil lamps burned nightly in England cause 300 deaths annually, and 168 fires yearly in London alone.

LEMONS ARE USEFUL.

Some of Their Uses for Health and Toilet Purposes.

We know in a dull sort of way that lemons are useful, and if we didn't we might easily find this out by looking over the papers. But just how valuable they really are, few of us realize. They are of very great medicinal value and are better than patent medicines and nostrums put up in bottles and boxes for the benefit of the human family.

A teaspoonful of lemon juice in a small cup of black coffee will drive away an attack of bilious headache, but it is better to use them freely and so avoid the attack of headache. A slice of lemon rubbed on the temples and back of the neck is also good for headache. These facts help in beautifying one, for who can be beautiful and ailing at the same time? The days are past when the delicate women with "nerves" was the heroine of all the novels and the "clinging vine" supposed to be admired by all the men.

Lemons taken externally, or rather used, will aid in beautifying any one. There is nothing more valuable for the toilet table than a solution of lemon juice, a little rubbed on the hands, face and neck at night will not only whiten but soften the skin. A paste made of magnesia and lemon juice applied to the face and hands upon lying down for a fifteen minutes' rest, will bleach the skin beautifully.

For discolored or stained finger nails, a teaspoonful of lemon juice in a cup of warm soft water is invaluable; this is one of the very best manicure acids. It will loosen the cuticle from the finger nails as well as remove discolorations.

Lemon juice in water is an excellent tooth wash. This is about the only thing that will remove tartar. It will also sweeten the breath.

NEARLY DISCOURAGED.

The Experience of Mr. Ralph Giberson Who Suffered Greatly From General Debility.

From the Advertiser, Hartland, N.B.

Ralph Giberson, postmaster at Monquart, Carleton Co., N. B., is also known as a prosperous agriculturist and an enthusiast in his line. Now stalwart and rugged, weighing 250 pounds, he scarce would be recognized as the man who six months ago was the picture of one suffering the terrible symptoms of general debility. He was run down in health, suffered much from dizziness, almost blindness, general dullness and depression of spirits. He had a poor appetite and such food as he ate gave him great distress. He was incapacitated for the work that fell upon him and was well nigh utterly discouraged. The symptoms bordered on to those by which hypochondria is manifested. Through reading the Advertiser he learned of the particular benefit that several of his friends in this vicinity had received by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and by the hope held out by their testimonials he secured a supply and took them according to directions. The result was almost magical; immediately his symptoms began t obecome less disagreeable, and he steadily gained until now he is perfectly free from his old troubles. He gladly and freely gives this testimonial, that all who may read it may know the remedy if ever they are troubled with general debility.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure by going to the root of the disease. They renew and build up the blood, and strengthen the nerves, thus driving disease from the system. The genuine can only be had in boxes, the wrapper around which bears the full trade mark, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People."

SHE GOT OVER IT.

Several years ago I was serving a prominent charge in South Florida, and on a particularly blue Monday I was called on to attend the funeral of a rural parishioner, writes a correspondent. I felt sad. The scene was a pathetic one. The widow stood immediately by me, and near her two or three woe-begone-looking little children. We were at the grave, a rude, wild, unkept country "burying-ground." The mother of the grief-stricken wife stood near, supporting her daughter. A wild torrent of grief burst from the poor afflicted woman as the benediction was pronounced. Just then the mother spoke in an audible whisper these comforting words:

Hush, Sal! Oh, Sal, hush! Don't holler so, 'case you'll git over it. I've buried four men, and I've got over it every time. Hush, gal, hush!

PLAYING ADAM AND EVE.

Said an indignant mother to her little son; Why did you strike little Elsie you naughty boy?

Dick, indignant in his turn: What did she want to cheat for, then?

How did she cheat? asked mamma, more mildly.

Why, explained Dick, we were playing at Adam and Eve, and she had the apple to tempt me with, and she never tempted me, but went and ate it up herself.

POISON IN FOOD.

Decomposition in animal products often develops poisonous alkaloids, and cases of illness from eating canned goods are usually traced to this source. There is also an element of danger in salts that may be formed by the action of the contents of the can. Both these sources of danger have been reduced to a minimum by improved methods of canning, but it is idle to deny that they exist, and they demand reasonable precaution in purchasing and using canned goods.