

# THE PAINTER OF PARMA;

— OR, —

## THE MAGIC OF A MASTERPIECE.

(Continued.)

"Oh!" he said to himself, as he moved away from the office of the council, "if the painter shall be safely out of the way before Antonio finds opportunity to hold private confab with him all may be well. By heavens, I would kill him with my own hands if I could. Why have I not done it—I have been blind. I have been a fool. But wait. We shall see."

He found the baron at home, and was admitted to his presence, but scarcely had he mentioned his business before he made the discovery that here, too, he was unwelcome. "Signor Marquis," his lordship answered sharply, "if you are seeking information on that subject I must refer you to your brother the duke."

"But, my noble lord, you will tell me if the order has been issued."

"Marquis, you have no right to ask me such a question. Yet, I will tell you this. The warrant for Zanon's execution has been signed by myself. For further information I must refer you to the duke."

"Baron, I trust you have not suffered the duke to—"

"Stop! I beg you will say no more. If you would please me, you will go." And the baron as he said this, pointed to the door.

Defeated at every turn, the marquis wended his way toward the room of the club, cursing bitterly as he went. He must find a place where he could procure wine; and drink it in peace, and at the same time think.

But we may remark here, his thinking amounted to nothing. He cogitated and he plotted, but he was forced in the end to acknowledge himself powerless to accomplish his purpose. If blind fortune did not help him, then he was powerless. In short he was in that most wretched and suffering condition of spirit to which the man of evil passion can be reduced—possessed by impotent rage.

While the Marquis Steffano, feeling himself baffled at every turn—for he surely felt so—while he sat alone in the room of the club, swallowing cup after cup of the wine and cursing his fate, the painter Zanon paced to and fro in his really comfortable prison cell. From the broad arched window he could look upon the river and see the path on the bank where he had often walked. Would he ever walk there again? He was thus reflecting when his attention was attracted by the sound of a footfall in the corridor without, and a moment later he heard the bar removed from his door and a key turned in the lock. Next the door was opened, the duke entered the cell, and the way then closed behind him. He was alone.

There were two comfortable chairs in the place, one of which, the easiest, the prisoner handed out, at the same time bowing with grave politeness. Once the visitor made a motion as though he would put out his hand for friendly embrace, but he did not do it. Yet his look was friendly and sympathetic. He asked after the prisoner's health, and hoped he was pleased with the quarters which had been given him.

"I am pleased, my lord; and I am certainly grateful; and I am more grateful, because I believe I am indebted to your kind offices for them."

The duke nodded, but made no further admission. He paused for a time thoughtfully; and at length said:

"Signor Zanon, you remember the request you made on the occasion of my former visit. I may inform you that your wishes have been complied with. Though you did not distinctly ask me to put off the execution of the sentence of the court against you, I have done it. The warrant is in my hands; and I may hold it, at least for several days—perhaps for weeks."

The painter's handsome face glowed with joy and gratitude. He had not yet seated himself. He took two or three rapid turns to and fro across the cell, after which he drew a chair near to his visitor and sat in it.

"My lord," he said, with deep and powerful feeling in look and tone, "I will not attempt to express my thankfulness for the favor you have conferred. I can only hope that in the end you will find yourself richly repaid. I will now tell you why I would have asked the boon which you have granted without the asking. Am I mistaken in supposing that you could, if you would, allow me to have my easel, my canvas and my materials for painting here in this place?"

The duke, though some such thought had once or twice occurred to him, was startled when the proposition had been thus plainly made. He did not reply at once. At length he said:

"Do you mean, signor, that you wish to paint here?"

"My lord," Zanon answered, with a wondrous light in his lustrous eyes; the light of inspiration; "I ask to live until I have finished the picture I have commenced—my St. Cecilia. It shall be yours when it is done—my gift to you for your kindness, and in token of the love I bear toward you."

The duke was deeply moved. After a little thought, and with marked hesitation, he said:

"But Zanon—the model! Of course, you must be aware that you can not—"

"Hush! I know what you would say. If I required the features of the Princess Isabel for my model, be sure I have them in my heart. But I do not. I have a face of my own—a face that has come to me as from heaven. It is the face of the princess; and yet unlike. It is as beautiful as

hers; yet its beauty is different. The glory of the divine maternity is in it. Oh! let me paint it! I feel that I shall do the subject ample justice."

Antonio was stirred to the uttermost depths of his art-loving heart. He sat for a time in silence, gazing into the painter's inspired face. Then he started up and took a turn across the cell. Finally he resumed his seat and spoke.

"Signor Zanon, can you paint here in this cell? Will the light be good?"

"It could not be better, my lord; only, I should require two or three curtains of light, fine fabric, of different shades of color, and large enough to cover the window; they should be so arranged that they can be rolled up at the bottom, so that I may have my full light, if I desire, high up."

"It shall be arranged, signor; it shall be done forthwith. If you will tell me how I shall get them, and what I shall get, I will myself superintend the work of taking them from your studio, and nothing else shall be disturbed. Ah! And that reminds me, Signor Maracini has given me your rapier. I will hold it in keeping. You shall tell me about it some other time. For the present I must look to this other matter, as I have another engagement for this forenoon. Have you the keys of your rooms with you?"

"Yes, only my rapier and pocket knife were taken from me. You will see that I have my knife. I shall want it."

"You shall have that, or mine. You shall have all you can possibly want." Zanon selected the keys which would be required, and with them he gave to the duke directions full and explicit.

Not a long time had elapsed after the duke had gone when the keeper of the prison made his appearance, asking for directions with regard to the curtains wanted for the window. The prisoner explained what he required, and the keeper promised that the work should be done at once, and he was cheerful about it. The thought of having a great painting done for the duke, it might be said, under his own eye and supervision really pleased him.

Before the day had passed our hero's prison cell had been transformed into a proper studio, and he felt his chains no longer. His easel had been set up; the canvas was on it; his own stand for colors had been brought, together with all the pigments he had on hand. In short, nothing was wanting for the consummation of the grand purpose he had in view.

What should come of it? He did not know; he could not guess. Yet, a still, small voice, with a music in it of a bygone time, whispered "Hope."

### CHAPTER XVII.

On the morning of the day following the transformation of the prison cell the duke made an early call upon the painter. Arrangements had been made with the keeper for the procuring of everything that should be required, but Antonio had not been able to resist the desire to know if there was anything more he could do. This was his ostensible reason for the morning visit. Had he confessed the true reason, however, it would probably have appeared that he wished to satisfy himself that the painter was really at work—that his St. Cecilia was to be a substantial, beautiful fact.

"Signor," he said, when he had closely scanned the various preparations which he had already made for proceeding with the work, "I have no wish—no thought—to hurry you. I would not have you, on any account, lose patience. Yet I wish you would tell me, as nearly as you can, how long a time you will require in which to complete the picture?"

"Has the chief justice asked you that?"

"No," replied the ruler quickly. "No one has spoken to me on the subject at all; but they may do so—either the baron or some one or more of his colleagues, and I would like to be able to answer intelligently."

"My lord, let us call it—say three weeks. I shall probably have it complete in two; but we may as well be on the safe side."

"You are right, signor. We had best take time enough. I shall call it three weeks."

"And now, Duke," said Zanon, looking his patron squarely in the face and speaking with full, deep meaning, "I have a bargain to make with you, or, I had better say, I demand of you a promise—a promise that you shall not presume to break. You shall not look upon my painting, after I have commenced work upon it, until the last touch is given; until I pronounce it finished! Will you give me that promise?"

The duke hesitated. It was a promise that he did not like to give. He had anticipated a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in watching the work grow toward perfection. Would the painter ask him almost anything but that?

"My lord," pronounced the prisoner, with a look and tone not for one moment to be mistaken, "you must make your choice. You may have the St. Cecilia, perfect as I can create it, on my terms; or, you may sign my death warrant forthwith."

"Zanon! You are not serious!"

"Hush! It is useless to argue or to dispute. Do I look like a man who would trifle?"

There was a solemnity, a pathos, a depth of power and feeling in the

voice of the painter that impressed his hearer as he felt he had never been impressed before. He knew, at least, that he must consent or give up his picture. The last he could not do.

"My lord," added Zanon, while the duke was struggling up from the great disappointment—he spoke with touching gentleness and humility, "I have a reason—a reason deep and dear to me—for making this demand. It is no mere caprice, no whim; it is a purpose of mine, which I can not explain; but I tell you this: In the end, when your eyes shall have seen the finished picture, if you do not forgive me for the course I have taken I will bid you hold me in memory as a false and recreant friend—a traitor!"

"Enough!" said Antonio. And in the depth of his emotion he put forth his hand, and gave the painter a warm embrace. "You have my promise. From this time I will not look upon the picture again until it is finished. I may look at it now?"

"Yes." And the artist went to the canvas and lifted off the curtain that had covered it.

The duke gained a favorable position and looked upon it long and earnestly. Its possibilities of surpassing beauty and excellence were already apparent, and already was there a startling beauty springing into life in the face.

"It is Isabel's face!" the gazer whispered in a sort of ecstasy of wonder and delight.

"Wait until it is finished and then tell me if you know it," Zanon replied in a like whispered tone.

"Oh, you will not alter it; you will not paint another face?"

"My dear duke, I will follow my inspiration. You have my promise that you shall be content in the end."

"I must be satisfied. But you will preserve the dear face if you can."

"You shall be satisfied. Be sure of that."

For a little time longer the duke gazed upon the picture, and then turned slowly and thoughtfully, toward the door. With his hand on the latch, he stopped, and looked back.

"Signor Zanon, I repose in you the fullest confidence. I shall leave you to your work; and, since I am not to see the picture, I shall not come again until the two weeks are at an end. Should it be complete before, you will send me word?"

"I will, my lord."

"Then—for the present I leave Heaven proper and keep you!" And with this Antonio opened the door, which had been left unlocked during his stop, and passed out from the painter's presence.

An hour later Zanon was at work. The prison was forgotten; the dead count and the living marquis—everything for the time was banished from his memory, save the work beneath his hand and the inspiration that gave him guidance.

He worked slowly and with exceeding care. Every touch of the magic brush brought the face of the saint nearer to life—nearer to perfection. Occasionally a touch would be put on that he must blot out or change, but not many. He saw the end and wrought surely toward it.

So the hours passed; the days. The keeper himself—Maracini—waited upon him, diligently and kindly, supplying him with everything he required, even anticipating his wants when he could.

A week—six days—had passed, when, one evening, the keeper said, as he was about to carry the supper tray to the corridor, where a servant was in waiting to receive it:

"Signor Zanon, you will miss me tomorrow. I am called away unexpectedly, and imperatively, but my lieutenant will do all you want. You already know him."

"Yes," replied the painter. "I shall get along very well with him; but I shall miss you. I trust you may be prospered, and that good fortune may attend you. You have been very good to me, Signor Maracini, and if my life is spared long enough, or, if I can gain time from this other work, I will paint for you something that you will prize in the coming time and that your children may prize after you."

"Signor!" cried the keeper, in an ecstasy of delight. "You shall certainly have the time. The duke shall give it. Ah! I can not tell you how happy you have made me." And his glowing face did not belie his words.

The morrow came, and the keeper's assistant brought in the breakfast to our painter. He was a middle-aged man, with a kindly face, though evidently of a quick, hot temper, when aroused. His name was Cola Pandolfo. He bade the prisoner a cheery "Good-morning!" as he entered, but made no conversation further than to inquire if anything more was wanted.

Later, however, when he returned to take away the tray, he asked permission—or, rather asked if he might ask permission—to look at the painting on the easel.

Zanon uncovered it without hesitation, at the same time remarking, with a smile—a smile that always warmed the lieutenant's heart:

"If so slight a thing as that can give you pleasure, I should be a niggard, indeed, to refuse it."

The assistant was a lover of good pictures, and possessed a correct judgment. He gazed long and earnestly. At length he said, with a deep drawn breath as he moved back with his eyes still fixed upon the picture, seeming to take in all its parts:

"Perhaps my judgment is at fault. Very likely it is. But, let others say what they will, I will say, if any Italian masters—or any one of them—ever painted a picture more worthy the name of master-piece than is this now before me, I have not seen it!"

"Your praise is pleasing to me, signor, for I know you possess true taste and feeling. I only hope you may think as well of it when it is finished."

"No fear of that, Signor Zanon." He paused a moment and glanced again at the painting. Presently he added:

"May I ask you a question?"

"Certainly."

"What I would ask is this: Are you intending that this face shall represent the features of Princess Isabel di Varona?"

"Why do you ask?" returned the artist, with marked interest.

"Because," replied the other, "I heard it said, not long since, that you were to paint for the duke a Saint Cecilia which should be at the same time a portrait of the princess; and because, further, I can trace in this a striking resemblance to the beautiful lady I have named."

"Still," suggested Zanon, smiling, "you would not call it a correct likeness?"

"No, I should not."

"Well, my friend, I tell you frankly I do not mean it to be a portrait of the princess, though she sat to me in the beginning and the outline of the face were drawn from her model; yet even before she had made her last visit to me I had resolved to make a change. I can truthfully say what of likeness there may be, at the present time, in this face to the face of the Princess Isabel is purely accidental. I am painting from another memory entirely. At some future time you may know the secret, but not now."

To be Continued.

### CHINESE JUSTICE.

#### An Unfortunate Widow Has a Taste of Law in the Flowery Kingdom.

Mr. James Murray, writes from Chung-King, West China: "Having had occasion to buy a small landed estate on the hills near Chung-King, I found a widow lady, named Hsao, who owned property suitable, and who agreed to sell at the price of 140 taels. The silver was thereupon paid over to her and a deed of transfer given, which was duly registered at the Chinese Yamen and British consulate. A neighboring landed proprietor, hearing that an Englishman had bought land adjoining his, tried to raise the people against the foreign purchaser, and actually had the boundary stones thrown down. Knowing the instigator of this disturbance, I mentioned his name to our energetic British Consul, Mr. G. Linton, who promptly had an intimation sent to him through the Chinese Magistrate, saying that if any disturbance occurred with regard to this transaction, he would be held personally and pecuniarily responsible. This message had immediately the desired effect, and the people were peaceful, but only that the irate Chinese proprietor might turn his vengeance on the unfortunate Mrs. Hsao, who had sold the land. A claim was made that a few feet of the land sold belonged to the adjoining estate, which, if true, could not be valued at more than 10 taels; but 150 taels were demanded and paid. Then a neighboring temple, taking courage from the success of this claim, demanded 50 taels for the sale having adversely affected its interests, and this sum also was paid, but as the 'Tuan Kia' or local militia acted as intermediaries in this transaction, the silver struck to their hands, never reaching the priests. Then the Chinese Magistrate levied twenty taels on the unfortunate widow for having settled the dispute. The British Consul obtained a despatch from the Tootai saying the land had all been fairly bought and that every foot of it was mine without the expenditure of another cent, but the case of the poor widow Hsao was far otherwise. She had received 140 taels as the price of the land, and had expended 220 taels to satisfy the clamorous neighbors, leaving a net loss of 70 taels and her land on the transaction."

### CUNNING SPIDERS.

#### Live in the Flower of the Pitcher Plant Because of Its Dangers.

Mr. R. I. Pocock, the English naturalist, tells an interesting story of the spiders which dwell in the flower of the pitcher-plant of India and Australia. This flower is an insect-trap. Around its upper edge it is brilliantly colored and sweet with honey. Lower down the walls are waxy, and so smooth that no insect can gain a hold upon them. The bottom of the pitcher is filled with a liquid, containing several acids, which possesses the power of digesting organic matter. The luckless insects which fall into this liquid are gradually absorbed by the plant. But while most insects carefully avoid this death-trap, a particular species of spider chooses it as a dwelling-place. By spinning a little web like a carpet over a part of the waxy interior of the pitcher, it is enabled to stay there in safety. These spiders have apparently chosen their singular home just because of its dangers. In such a place they are protected against their enemies. If alarmed, the spider drops into the liquid at the bottom of the plant and remains there until its enemy has disappeared, escaping afterward, probably by means of a silken cable which it had spun as it fell. A short submergence in the digestive fluid is not injurious to the spider.

### ENGLAND'S ARMY AS IT MIGHT BE.

If the Prussian conscription were applied in India, England, would have 2,500,000 regular soldiers actually in barracks, with 800,000 recruits, coming up every year.

### ELEVEN LARGE CITIES.

There are 11 cities in the world with a population of over 1,000,000. They are London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Peking, Vienna, Tokio, Canton and St. Petersburg.

## VIGOROUS OLD AGE.

MR. WM. ELLIOTT TELLS HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

He Has Been Subject to Fainting Spells and Cramps—Was Gradually Growing Weaker and Weaker.

From the Echo, Plattsville, Ont.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have attained a most enviable reputation in this community. Probably no other medicine has had such a large and increasing sale here. The reason is that this medicine cures. Old and young alike are benefited by its use. Recently we printed an account of a remarkable cure of a well known lady of this place through the agency of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and since publishing that we have heard of another similar case. Mr. Wm. Elliott, a farmer living near Bright, is a well known figure there. Although an old man he almost daily walks to the village, a distance of nearly a mile, for his mail. Many years ago he came from Scotland to the farm on which he now lives and cleared it of forest. In conversation with him, he related to an Echo reporter the following: "I am 78 years of age and strong and healthy for an old man. Mine has been a vigorous constitution and up till six years ago I hardly knew what it was to have a day's illness. But then my health began to fail. I became subject to cramps in the stomach. I was treated by doctors, but received no benefit. I gradually grew weaker and as I was past the three score and ten, I thought my time had come. Next I took fainting fits and often I would have to be carried back to the house entirely helpless. The doctors said my trouble was general weakness due to old age and advised me to carry some stimulant with me to use when I felt a faintness coming on, but this I refused to do. I had read in the papers of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and thought they would be specially adapted to my case. I tried one box but they did not seem to help me. In fact I thought I felt worse. I decided to continue them, however, and after taking four boxes there was a marked improvement. My strength returned and I was no longer troubled with fainting spells. In six months time with this treatment I gained fifteen pounds, taking in all eight boxes of the Pills. To-day I am a well man and I owe my complete recovery to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills."

These pills cure not by purging the system as do ordinary medicines, but by enriching the blood and strengthening the nerves. They cure rheumatism, sciatica, locomotor ataxia, paralysis, heart troubles, erysipelas and all forms of weakness. Ladies will find them an unrivalled medicine for all ailments peculiar to the sex; restoring health and vigor, and bringing a rosy glow to pale and sallow cheeks. There is no other medicine "just as good." See that the full name, Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People is on every package you buy. If your dealer does not have them, they will be sent post paid at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., or Schenectady, New York.

### ODD INFORMATION.

#### Divers Short Snatches of Knowledge About Curious Things.

No fewer than 1,173 persons have been buried in Westminster Abbey.

The thickness of the hair varies from the 250th to the 600th part of an inch.

During the Jordan's course of 120 miles it has 27 falls and descends 3,000 feet.

Tea is very cheap in China; in one province of the empire good tea is sold at 1-4d a pound.

Bank of England notes are numbered backward—from 10,900, hence the figures 00,001.

The deepest coal mine in the world is the Lambert, in Belgium; you can descend 3,490 feet.

A hive of 5,000 bees should produce 50 pounds of honey every year, and multiply tenfold in five years.

Italy produces annually 70,000,000 gallons of olive oil, the market value of which is \$24,000,000.

It is estimated that there are 62,050,000 horses in the world, 185,150,000 cattle, and 435,500,000 sheep.

The longest span of telegraph wire in the world is in India, over the River Kistna. It is over 6,000 ft. in length.

Cyclists should wear shoes with soles of average thickness. Thin soled shoes cause numbness of the feet, and should not be worn, especially on long rides.

In a home for sandwichmen, in London there are said to be several university graduates and medical men, and a Scotchman who ran through £50,000 in three years.

Egypt is the only country in the world where there are more men than women. The male sex in the dominions of the Khedive exceeds the female in numbers by 160,000.

### CURIOUS WORK FOR MEN.

Among the Riffian pirates of Morocco the women do all the agricultural and other hard work, while the men, when, at home, do the cooking and mend the clothes, including the women's.

### A MUSICAL INVENTION.

In order to facilitate the production of higher notes on a cornet the ordinary mouthpiece is inclosed in a spring controlled sleeve, which is pressed in by the lips on the high notes, to form a smaller opening in the rubber mouth ring.

A Retort—What kind of a cook are you? he asked of the maid he loved so true. Before I tell, said she, what kind of a hired man are you?