

# THE PAINTER OF PARMA; — OR — THE MAGIC OF A MASTERPIECE.

CHAPTER IX.  
(Continued.)

It had been, for several years, the custom of the duke to give select parties, or receptions, to a very few of the closest and most intimate friends of his fair ward and himself. They occurred once in two weeks, and were, as a rule, enjoyable. The duke could here unbend himself from the dignity of his high estate, and lay aside the cares of a jealous and critical government. He had once thought of inviting Juan Zanon to one or more of these social gatherings; but, before doing so, he had spoken with Stefano and with Count Denaro on the subject. So we can well understand why the thought had not been carried into execution.

With regard to the Count Giuseppe Denaro we will say the duke had consulted him on the subject of the invitation to the artist, not because he had any great respect for his judgment, or, for himself personally, but simply because he had been admitted as a friend and companion—aye, and as a suitor of the Princess Isabel.

And now—did the duke regard the count as the one man fitted to be his dear ward's husband? Certainly he did not. But Isabel was already a woman, and more than a twelvemonth beyond what was generally considered the proper marriageable age, and it was to be expected that the time would long come when her heart would find its mate. When her guardian thought of this he cast about him for the man worthy to be her mate for life.

He was surprised at the result. Of a full score of young nobles of Parma whom he brought before his mind's eye for examination, not one approached his standard. The few who were fitted by rank and wealth to mate with her were either dissipated or of unfavorable dispositions.

Suffice it to say, in the end the Count Giuseppe had come nearer to the mark than any other; and, above and beyond that, he loved the gentle maiden with all his heart. Even he had been at times seen under the influence of much wine; but when he had asked the duke—had implored—that he might be permitted to win the love of the beautiful princess if he could, and when the subject of his habits of life had been alluded to, he pledged himself by a solemn oath, that never, never again, would he suffer wine to become his master.

Giuseppe Denaro was of an ancient family, and wealthy, and by right of inheritance he occupied a position in the front rank of the councillors of the realm. So, on the whole, Antonio could fix upon no one to whom he would more willingly give his beautiful cousin and ward, and he had given his promise to the count. If he could win the lady's heart he should have her hand.

On the evening in question—the evening on which the marquis had held his interview with old Madelon, and, later, with his brother—a gay and seemingly happy party was assembled in one of the large drawing-rooms of the ducal palace—not in the largest, but in a cosy, comfortable luxurious apartment, well fitted and furnished for social enjoyment.

As we enter neither the duke nor his brother had arrived. Count Denaro was there and had assumed the direction of affairs until the master should put in an appearance. Several others, perhaps a dozen in all, male and female, were present; and of them we find our two youthful friends, Henri Vavallia and Paulo Alavado, the pair of them evidently finding their fill of happiness in basking in the bright light of the Princess Isabel's electric smiles. And they had cause for happiness, for the princess liked them. They were intelligent and gentlemanly, and when she compared them with Count Denaro it was greatly to the disparagement of the latter. In no other respect than that of wealth was he their equal.

And in another way had they won upon her regard and liking. They were admirers of the painter, Juan Zanon, and could not say too much in his praise. In his account of his unpleasant passage with the Marquis Stefano, Zanon had incidentally mentioned the names of these youths, and had told her how deeply he was indebted to them for their kind offices on that occasion. As the matter was fresh in her mind, only a few hours having elapsed since her dear lover had told to her the story, it was very natural that she should, on the present occasion, ask them to give their version of the scene.

And they did it, sitting close by her side and apart from the others, they were free to speak without reserve. Henri Vavallia was the chief spokesman though his companion was permitted to do his part. The account, as given by them, presented the painter in a far more noble and magnanimous character than his own recital had done. In fact, they pictured him not only as a moral hero, brave and generous, but as a very paladin, whose arm was invincible.

"If he were of the patrician class," said Henri, with kindling eye, "he would take rank at the very head of our aristocracy. He is one of the noblest men I ever met."

The princess thanked him with a look—a look which, though he knew its full significance, yet gave him joy unutterable. She had just promised them that they should visit the artist's studio at some future time when she was to be present, and she was to introduce them, when the duke was announced.

salutations with Henri and Paulo, and was about to turn to another part of the room when Isabel spoke:

"Dear guardian! Something is giving you trouble. Shall I take my lute and sing to you?"

"No, no, my blessed child. It is nothing. I have been thinking. Let us hope I may think more brightly by-and-by. Don't let me interrupt your conversation." And with this he turned and went over to where Count Denaro sat alone in the recess of one of the great windows.

The princess watched him closely and thoughtfully, wondering what could have occurred to make him so sad and gloomsome—watched him until she had seen him speak with the count and then she resumed her seat.

"What can have happened?" said Henri feelingly. "I never saw him look quite so upset."

"He has evidently heard something unpleasant," suggested Paulo. "At all events I judged so, not only from his looks, but from the manner in which he spoke. You know how quick and deep are his sympathies."

"Yes," responded Henri; "his heart is as tender as a woman's, and, if he had heard of the death or great misfortune of a dear friend he would suffer as for his own self."

The words had scarcely fallen from the youth's lips when the page at the door announced: "The Marquis of Stefano."

The name fell upon Isabel's ears with a shock. Why it should be so she could not tell; but so it was. It sent a shudder through her frame, and a pain through her heart. Was it something he had done that had caused the gloom of the duke? As the thought occurred to her she turned her eyes in his direction, and found his gaze fixed upon herself with an intentness that startled her. The count, who stood by his side, was also looking at her.

"Ah, Duke!" exclaimed Stefano, approaching his brother. "It appears our informant was right—he is beyond recovery."

"What is that?" asked Count Denaro eagerly.

"An accident to a friend of our good duke. We do not know yet how it happened. We are only informed that he can not recover."

"For mercy's sake, who is it?" cried a young lady who sat near to where they were standing. She spoke eagerly, with more of curiosity than sympathy.

"Probably a stranger to you, dear lady," answered Stefano, with a curious smile on his swart visage. "It was a painter called Zanon."

Isabel's heart had almost ceased its throbbing at the first word of an accident, and now as that name fell upon her ear, the truth of it all appearing to have the duke's avowment, things swam before her, the light faded away, and with a deep soul-sent groan of bitter agony she sank back and would have fallen to the floor had not Henri and Paulo caught her and upheld her.

"My Lord Duke! Countess Rizzi! Help! help! The princess has fainted!"

The duke himself was the first to reach her. He took her in his strong arms as he would have taken an infant, and started to bear her from the room, but two of the elder ladies interfered and begged that she might be given up to them. It was only a swoon, and they knew just what to do. After a moment's hesitation, Antonio gave her up, but said he should quickly follow.

"Oh!" he groaned, turning to his brother, who at that moment came up, "it was cruel, cruel! Only her great sympathy made her faint."

"Wait, wait," returned Stefano, with a look of malignant triumph. "As soon as her senses return you ask her. Don't wait for her to reflect and reason on it, but strike while the truth is on the surface. Will you do that?"

"Yes! and you shall find how deeply you have wronged her."

"If I do find that, all I have to say is, no one living will be more thankful than shall I."

Immediately afterward the duke followed the women who had borne his ward away.

Well, young gentleman," said the marquis, meeting the gaze of Henri Vavallia and Paulo Alavado fixed upon him with an expression of unmistakable horror. "What have you to say about it? You appear to be deeply interested."

They had stood close by, and had overheard every word which had been spoken by the duke and his brother, and they had caught the tones also. They had marked the deep pain and regret of Antonio, and the malevolence and triumph of Stefano, and it had struck them both at the same instant that the whole thing had been a cruel trick upon the princess to expose her affection for Zanon. They remembered the scene on the river's bank, and that helped them to an understanding of the present business.

"Perhaps you were admirers of the painter?" added the marquis contemptuously, when he found that they did not answer him.

"I, for one, admired him very much," said Henri, with a stern, proud look into the eye of the man he addressed.

"So did I," added Paulo. "And I deem him worthy the admiration and respect of all true men."

"Do you mean to insinuate that I am not a true man?" demanded the marquis, angrily.

"Marquis," replied the youth, with a calm, manly look on his handsome face, "remember that we are beneath your brother's roof—his guests. You can not pick a quarrel with us."

And with this the pair of them turned away, and shortly afterward left the palace. Stefano glared after

them, really too mad, too full of wrath, to speak. Something told him that they saw through the deception that had been practiced, and he only wondered if they suspected more.

Meantime the princess had been conveyed to another apartment, and laid upon a large sofa, where proper restorative treatment soon brought her back to consciousness. She looked up and met the anxious, loving gaze of her guardian, but before she could speak he made a sign enjoining her to silence.

As soon as the duke saw that she had fully recovered, he thanked those who had been helpful, and asked them to retire. There was a little hesitation on the part of one of the ladies, who was probably moved more by curiosity than sympathy, but her companion took her by the arm and soon led her away. When himself and his ward had been left alone together the duke closed the door and turned the key in the lock. Then he came back and sat down by the side of the sofa, on which the princess still reclined.

"Oh, dear Duke!" she cried, reaching forth her hand and grasping his wrist. "What was it, Stefano said? Tell me—tell me—what has befallen—Zanon?"

"Dear child," returned Antonio kindly, but with an earnest, searching look into the pale, wan face, "if the painting of the picture should be stopped, would it give you great disappointment?"

"Oh, guardian! what do you mean? What has happened? Speak! Tell me! You are torturing me with suspense."

"Isabel," he said, tenderly, yet with a great pain shadowed on his face, at the same time taking her hand, "what was this man to you? Tell me." His voice quivered, and he experienced a sense of shame as he thought of the intentional deceit his language was meant to convey—his speaking of the man in the past tense.

And the blow struck home. "What was this man to you?" rang in her ears and sank to her heart.

"Oh, he is dead! dead! dead! My love! my hero! Yes, I loved him! I loved him! He was all the world to me! My all of life, of love, and of joy!"

Then with a sharp, wild cry, she started to her feet and caught her guardian by the arm, glaring at him with a fierce, flaming fire in her eyes.

"Oh, Stefano has killed him! Stefano has killed him! Is it not so?"

"Isabel! What in the name of wonder are you thinking of? Stefano kill him! How could such a ridiculous fancy enter your mind?"

"Oh, not so ridiculous as you think!" she retorted, growing stronger under the influence of her wrathful feelings toward the marquis. "Did you know that he attacked Zanon yesterday and drew his sword against him, and that Henri Vavallia and Paulo Alavado helped Count Denaro to drag him away?"

"Isabel! What are you telling me? Who told you that story?"

"Himself, Juan Zanon. And this evening Henri and Paulo told it again, and they painted the wickedness of the deed blacker than did he. Oh, Stefano hated him with a deadly hatred. But I care not now. Only tell me, did he, Stefano, do it?"

"Isabel, my child, oh, pardon me! Zanon is not dead. He is not even hurt. It was a plot to discover if you loved the plebeian painter. Oh, my soul! my soul! How shall I get over this? What can I say? What can I do?"

He would have spoken further, but the princess, as soon as she could comprehend the situation, had given utterance to a burst of thankfulness and sank back upon the sofa, seeming, for the moment, about to faint again. But she did not utterly sink, though she was terribly shaken.

As for the duke, his condition of mind was by no means a happy one. What to do, what to say, he scarcely knew. Should he wait until the princess had become stronger? He arose from his seat and took a turn across the room. He came back, paused a few seconds, and then crossed to and fro again, and this he repeated thrice. Then he resumed his seat and took the girl's hand. He had a duty to perform, and he would perform it, let the cost be what it might. Yet his heart was not in the work. The events of his childhood, and even those of his youth and early manhood, deserved to make him tender and lenient toward those below him in rank, with a disposition to take men for what they were worth rather than for the accident of their birth. He could not forget that the enemies of his house—of his father and his mother—had been all, every one of them, of the patrician order, while those who had proved friends, staunch and true, had been plebeian almost to a man. It had been the people against a class. Aye, and at the present moment he knew that the people of Parma were his friends. They loved and blessed him. Had there been as large a proportion of the plebeian class false to him at heart as he knew there was of the nobles, he would have felt his scepter insecure.

Again, he had come to love the handsome, pure-minded painter. Take them man against man, and Zanon stood to Count Denaro as Hyperion to a satyr! As a husband for Isabel de Varona, had he been but noble, he had never known the man to whom he would rather give her than to Juan Zanon. But that could not be.

"Isabel," he said, with a rich moisture in his eye and a sympathetic quiver in his voice, at the same time taking one of her hands in a warm, paternal grasp, "I must say to you a few words before we separate. I have only myself to blame for what has happened. I should have thought of many things that I suffered to escape me. I ought to have remembered Zanon's beauty, his grand character, his surpassing intellect, and, above all else, his magnetic presence."

"Then, too, I should have remembered your orphaned childhood, your great capacity for love, your yearning for friendship, and the years you have passed with no heart, all your own save only mine, and I, with my cares of

state, have left you well-nigh to yourself. Ah! I should have thought of this when I sent you to Zanon's studio—into his companionship.

"But, Isabel, you must be brave. You must remember the rank you hold, the character you bear. In one sense you are my representative—the representative of our ducal house. Were you to unite yourself with a plebeian the result would be a shock to our whole social system. And you could not marry here. Our laws would prevent it. You would be obliged to flee, and I need not tell you what a calamity that would be. Isabel, you will give it up. If there must be a sacrifice I believe you are equal to it. I would bear it if I could, but that may not be. The ordeal must be your own—the victory yours—and, in the time to come, the reward will be yours."

He paused here, but the girl made no response. She sat with folded hands, her head bowed, her bosom heaving, and ever and anon a sigh—a moan of anguish—burst from her lips. By-and-by the duke spoke again:

"Isabel, what more can I say? I can only once more implore you to tear this love from your heart—"

As those words fell upon her ears a convulsive shudder shook her from head to foot, and a cry of sharpest agony burst from her lips.

"Oh, my lord! my father—for I know you love me well—you ask me to kill myself! I can not! Oh, I can not! When you can tear from your heart the love and reverence you feel for the ill-fated, martyr mother who gave you life and being—when you can tear out that and cast it from you, forever a thing forgotten—then—then can I tear from my heart the love I feel for Juan Zanon! Hush! Blame not him! Shall I tell you how I came to know he loved me? He bade me that I should tell you that he could not finish the picture. I was to tell you that you were to send me no more to sit, for he could not—he would not—work on it more."

Duke, it was then, when he had told me to come to him no more, that I knew how I loved him! In that hour—at that moment—I knew that my heart had gone out to him, to be his forevermore! You can imagine the rest. I saw he loved me, and I made him speak. I was patrician, he plebeian. I took the lead, and our love was told. Oh, my love! my life!

"But let us say no more now. Let me think. It has all come upon me so suddenly that I can not speak coherently. Will you let me have time? Not time in which to give up my love; but to think how I may regulate my life and save it. You will spare me for the present. I know."

She could not have asked of him another favor which he would have granted so readily.

(To be Continued.)

## EARLY RAILROAD IN CUBA.

One Line was in Operation Between Havana and Guines in 1838.

It is so much the custom to regard the Spanish people as utterly unenterprising and behind the times in everything, that probably few would credit the assertion that Cuba possessed a railway before most of our main lines were opened. Yet a line was made in 1836-38 between Havana and Guines, a distance of about forty-five miles.

It was partly constructed by convict labour, placed at the disposal of the builders by Don Miguel Tacon, Captain-General from 1834, to 1838, but labourers from the United States were also employed. Funds were raised in London by bonds issued by the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Junta of Cuba, a body whose resources could be applied in any way for the improvement of the island.

During 1837 the first sixteen and one-half miles were opened for traffic, worked by English engines, with English drivers and English coal. It was completed in 1838, running about due south from Havana for nearly half its length, and then turning eastward almost at a right angle, through a rich and populous country full of sugar and tobacco plantations to Guines. From near the bend it was extended later on to Batabano, a port on the southern coast of Cuba.

By 1840 the railway was said to be paying no less than 15 per cent. A map of Cuba, dated 1841, shows fully 200 miles of other lines, either making or projected, most of which were executed, though possibly not speedily. All this took place a good many years before a single line of railway existed in Spain itself, where the Madrid and Aranjuez line, opened in 1851, was the first.

The coaches, also, were built in London by Jeffrey of Gray's Inn road, and were of a kind specially suited to a hot country. They could be used entirely open from end to end or with glass windows for the wet season. Venetian blinds with springs were provided, as well as an additional canopy over the roof to keep off the sun.

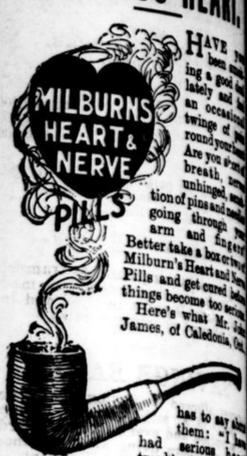
The Cuban coaches, were, of course, small and light—in fact, they only held eighteen persons each. Being painted a rich amber, with crimson lines, they must have been rather handsome, and are described as being, from their mode of construction, the strongest ever built for passenger traffic. Strength was not a great point of the railway carriages of those days, so little experience being available as to the nature of the stresses and strains incidental to everyday working.

## INSINUATING CREDULITY.

Do you say this is a canvas-back duck, madam?

I did. Do you doubt my word? No, madam. I wouldn't have doubted your word had you said it was a leather-back duck.

## TOBACCO HEART.



HAVE you been suffering from a good deal of nervousness lately and an occasional twinge of heart trouble? Are you short of breath, nervous, and going through your arm and legs? Better take a box of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills and get cured. These things become too serious. Here's what Mr. James, of California, has to say about them: "I had serious heart trouble for four years and then seemed to stop beating. I commenced again with unnatural rapidity. This unhealthy action of my heart caused shortness of breath, weakness and debility. I tried many medicines and spent a great deal of money but could not get any help."

Last November, however, I read of a man, afflicted like myself, being cured by Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills. I went to Roper's drug store and bought a box. When I had finished taking it I was a much better. I bought another box and this completed the cure. My heart has not bothered me since, and I strongly recommend all sufferers from heart and nerve trouble, caused by excessive use of tobacco, to give Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills a fair and faithful trial. Price 50c. a box or 3 boxes for \$1.50. Druggists, T. Milburn & Co., Toronto, Ont.

LAXA-LIVER PILLS cure Constipation, Biliousness and Dyspepsia. Price 25c.

## BRITAIN'S TOMMY ATKINS.

Recent Deeds Show That he is not Degenerating.

We frequently hear it said that the British soldier is degenerating, and no longer capable of bravery, endurance and dash. But the London correspondent of Harper's Weekly tells the story of one of the many recent deeds of prowess which give the lie to the pessimists, home and foreign. It is in connection with the cutting off of the attachment of twelve men during the recent campaign on the borders of India of which we all read in the newspapers at the time, but without the small details that connect the death of the twelve common soldiers with an and thoughtful a piece of heroic conduct in the glowing annals of British history.

The officer who is authority for this statement was in command of the party despatched next morning to find them. On reaching the place where the men had made their last stand he found thirteen dead bodies. All their rifles were, of course, carried off by the Afriidi. Here comes the point of the story. When the last cartridge had been fired, the men removed the breech bolts of their rifles and threw them as far as they could, so that the weapons which they knew would be used against their countrymen, might be rendered useless. Every one of those thirteen bolts was recovered by the young officer in command of the search party.

The last thought of these men before they laid down their lives was not for themselves, but for their countrymen and comrades. It is good to belong to the race capable of such things. The British soldier has at least not forgotten how to die.

## CAN'T ENJOY LIFE?

Because of nervousness, dyspepsia, heart trouble, etc. Lots of people who have to sit and look on while their vigorous friends have all the enjoyment of a strong and robust body. Dr. Ward's Blood and Nerve Pills will bring back health, strength, snap, vim and energy to even the weakest and weariest of suffering human beings.

A BAD INVESTMENT MADE GOOD. I have half a gross of empty bottles upon my shelves. Everything my neighbors and friends would tell me to try I would straight away to the drug store and buy. I was in a terrible condition from dyspepsia and liver troubles and was getting worse all the time. I was so short of energy that I was about giving up. I had been highly recommended to try Dr. Ward's Blood and Nerve Pills, which I had begun using them at once, when, to my surprise, I felt better in a very short time, and continued them for about two weeks more, which cured me entirely. I have since had the best sign of dyspepsia or liver troubles, and have also gained several pounds in weight.

Signed, ANNIE E. GAUNTLET, King Street, Berlin, Ont.

Dr. Ward's Blood and Nerve Pills are sold at 50 cents per box, 3 boxes for \$1.50. Druggists, or mailed on receipt of price to The Dr. Ward Co., 71 Victoria St., Toronto. Book of information free.

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AS OUR Citizens commencing to take interest in their local sale of LA MOWERS has far exceeded our expectations and we have been obliged to order again you are desirous of ring one come at as we have only a few more in stock.

Another shipment Binder Whips Binding Gloves just arrived. Our stock of other Belting is somewhat extra.

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