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T E R E S A.

A Tale of Revolutionized Rome.

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Concluded.

With these words, which made Moreton's head swim—so easily are heart and head affected at his age—she advanced to a side door, which she opened; and in a small but most tastefully arranged boudoir, the Englishman discovered the beautiful *harpiste*, seated on a small sofa, her back turned towards them, while she intently played a most difficult passage from some music placed on a stand before her. Lord W.—gently placed one hand on the mother's arm, and restrained by his looks her intention of disturbing the musician. Both he and Moreton gazed on the unconscious girl for some minutes, in admiration of her sylphic form, her graceful attitude, and the profusion of dark hair which fell in long ringlets over her neck and shoulders. Though the strangers did not speak, they perhaps breathed their admiration too strongly. Moreton certainly heard an audible sigh; and, startled by the interruption, Teresa turned round, rose up abruptly, and nearly overturned her music-stand. Moreton darted forward to assist her efforts to get it right, but in so doing he threw down the harp, and when he was able to set it upright again, he saw Lord W.—holding the hand of the young beauty and answering a compliment and an apology—the first on his own account, the latter for the sake of his awkward secretary. Poor Moreton was overwhelmed with shame and anger at his own mishap, and the supercilious air of his employer. But while in the language of romance, he could almost have sworn Lord W.—his eyes (in the same) gazed the lovely being by his side. She was "exceeding beautiful," perfectly Italian; scarcely (Moreton thought) like anything human that he knew of; it was as though one of Raphael's intense imagination had magically started from his frame, imbued with more than a mortal perfection.

Whatever mortification Moreton felt, it was once turned to triumph with the bewitching smile which Teresa gave him. However her slight had appeared to the cold eye of the diplomatist, awkward in his fall or blundering as he recovered from it, she was nothing but gracefulness and agility in the accident, and a proud and confident air. A sensitive mind has a quickness of penetration, which a selfish one does not comprehend. The latter constantly commands modesty without presumption. It must be confessed their symptoms are sometimes very much alike.

Lord W.—was a true prophet; both he and Moreton were invited to supper—a slight repast, but prepared with excellent good taste, and neatly served. In the course of the evening two visitors dropped in, apparently by chance. The one was the *Abbate* a little mingled, middle-aged fellow, his dress and well powdered hair arranged with the greatest care altogether an admirable specimen of his class. He had travelled much, spoke French (which was an evening's conversation) was chiefly carried off with great fluency. He ran over the news and chit-chat of the day, and finally took leave an hour after supper to run off to the half-dozen houses of his friends, as the *monsieur* assured her other guests, to retail all the political lies and scandal of the city. The other visitor was an *avvocato* evidently *mi de la maison*. He had in fact, in the *city painter's* time, been the lady's *cavaliere route*; but her state of widowhood did not allow her publicly to admit the services of such a functionary. He was therefore introduced to the Englishman merely as a dear friend, who, being an admirable musician, instructed Teresa both the harp and guitar, her mother's narrow circumstances depriving her of the advantages of regular masters. After supper, Teresa sang. Her manner was modest, timid, even—but her style superb; masterly pride on the harp was followed by a cavatina, executed with the skill of a professor and the voice of an angel. Several duos with her master succeeded in every sense;

it was a rich musical treat. The conquest of poor Moreton was complete; he was fascinated—overwhelmed; he knew nothing of time or space; when the clock struck midnight, he was thunderstruck, "Is it possible?" exclaimed he.

When Lord W.—rose to take his leave Moreton would have willingly held him down, by the skirts, that was not possible; so they returned home to their hotels. But it must be observed that while Moreton had been wholly absorbed in admiration of the daughter; the mother had entered into some farther details relative to her son with Lord W.—; and that the *avvocato*, in order to make him quite master of the affair, had placed in his hands a *memoire* of the whole transaction, which his Lordship coolly put in his pocket, promising to give it his ample attention.

The Lord and Secretary arrived at their hotel. It would be hard for any one to tell from the manner of the first, either on that or any other occasion, whether he had or had not a secret on his mind. But now it seemed as if the latter had the weight of the whole world on his. He spoke not a word; but, seizing a taper, he was rushing off to his bed-room, when Lord W.—quietly begged off him to sit down. Lord W.—sank softly into an arm chair, fixed his eyes on Moreton, and spoke as follows:

"Now, my dear Moreton, you see we are thoroughly in for a serious affair—pray don't speak, or blush, or look fidgety—absolutely in for it. I wish and intend to be very candid with you on this occasion—no thanks, pray! I find it necessary to speak plain; but you are not required to say one word. You were surprised at my taking you to supper this evening uninvited—more so, perhaps, at our being asked afterwards. Never mind—I know what you would say—but I must tell you that it was all arranged beforehand. What the devil do you start for, and look so confounded silly! Excuse me, and keep yourself cool. Yes, all settled beforehand, by my worthy friend the *abbate* and the *avvocato*, though we all appeared to be strangers to each other. I went under pretence of buying pictures, but it is something more important I meant to procure.—Now I entrust you to make no fuss about what I am going to mention. I am over head and ears in love with Teresa. I have been so for some time, although you know nothing of me. The priest and the lawyer are deep in my confidence and my interest. You will not I hope and trust, be less zealous to serve me. You would ask me what you can do: I will tell you then. While I follow up my designs against the daughter's heart, you, my dear Moreton, must do your best to keep the chief obstacle out of my way—you must make love to the mother!"

At this climax my readers will of course expect that young Moreton bounded from his chair, burst into indignant exclamations, acted the hero, and all that. No such thing. He was as mute as a mouse, as cunning as a fox, as cool as a cucumber.

"Well, Moreton; why don't you say something?—Can't you answer me?" said Lord W.—

"Your lordship has asked me no question." "Well; then, let there be no question about it. I take it for granted that you agree to my proposal."

"Certainly, my lord; it is my duty to do your bidding."

"My dear friend, I am eternally obliged to you—you may depend on my gratitude!" exclaimed Lord W.—, springing from his chair, and grasping his companion's hand.

I may appear strange that love should have so instantaneously made Moreton a diplomatist, and Lord W.—a jape. The truth is, that the secretary was inspired with the true passion, his employer with the spurious! The first teaches man prudence, the latter throws them off their guard.

"Now, my good fellow," continued Lord W.—, squeezing Moreton's hand, and drawing the *memoire* from his pocket, "go to bed, think over how you can best set up to my wishes on this occasion, and pray read this long *improvisation*—I know the whole thing by

heart—and you will see how little anxious I am likely to be to push the prayer of the petition. Good night! good night!"

"What an unprincipled scoundrel!" muttered Moreton to himself, as he saw a few minutes later in his own room, that the *memoire* was put into the shape of a petition from the afflicted mother and sister to the Neapolitan General in command of the city, praying for the immediate release of young Antonio, their son and brother.

The petition was verbose—genuine sorrow generally is so—but it was to the following effect:—

"On the second invasion of the Roman territory, in 1796, the capital was garrisoned by a handful of French troops, stationed in the castle of St. Angelo. The tyranny which they exercised drove the citizens to despair. A tumult took place, in which the Republicans were brought down a severe punishment. The garison was informed; fresh contributions were levied; every citizen able to bear arms was drafted as conscripts and artists of all nations were obliged to serve in the communal guard. The father of Antonio and Teresa fell a victim to fatigue, and on his death his son, then only seventeen, was forced to supply his place. He was sent to join a corps at Civita Vecchia. He caught the malaria in that detestable station, and had nearly suffered his father's fate. But being permitted to return to Rome, he recovered his health; and being a good musician and excellent violin player, he was frequently ordered to assist with his instrument in playing republican airs at the national fetes.—The success of the allied Austrian and Russian armies in Lombardy paved the way for a counter-revolution. Rome was again liberated, the civic guard was disbanded, and the young conscript set free."

A little before this period Teresa returned to her family from the convent where she had been educated, and where she was on the point of taking the vows. Rome was revived from a foreign yoke: its gaieties were revived; and in the ensuing carnival all her sufferings were forgotten. The widow, desirous to indulge her daughter with the spectacle of a masked ball, conducted her under the protection of Antonio and the *avvocato* to the theatre, both the ladies being masked, and the whole party strictly confining themselves to their *loggia*. But in order to partake of some refreshments, the encumbrance of the masks was for a few minutes thrown aside; and although every precaution was taken, by placing Teresa far back and out of the public gaze, still she had the misfortune to be observed by a man in the adjoining box, who obstructed his half masked countenance over the partition.

He immediately addressed Teresa, and besought her to dance with him. Such a demand, which would have been a great impertinence, at any other season, was perhaps warranted by the licence of carnival manners. The proposal was civilly declined; but the intruder continued to persecute the ladies with compliments, in a foreign voice, bad Italian, and foreign accent. His domino thrown open for an instant, by accident or design, betrayed a ribbon and a star richly decorated, on his breast, which led to the confusion that he was a foreigner of rank. His bushy reddish beard and whiskers seemed to speak him from the North, and his spirits being evidently elevated from the effects of wine, gave force to the supposition.

No sooner had the party reached the corridor than the stranger joined them, and attempted to take Teresa's hand in his. Antonio's blood could mount no higher; he re-entred the insult in angry words. The stranger seized him by the collar. Antonio struck him to the floor. A loud scene of bustle ensued. Groups of masks separated the combatants. The frightened *avvocato*, and the discomfited foreigner were left alone with his indignity and revenge.

Antonio and his friend, the lawyer, were next morning arrested on a charge of having committed an outrageous assault on a Russian prince.

To this accusation the prisoners made the best defence they could. The *avvocato* was liberated, and hopes were held out by the *commissario* of pardon to Antonio, on his making a suitable submission.

On that very evening a packet was placed in Teresa's hands by a mysterious looking messenger. It contained a letter with a most passionate declaration of love, and entreating a meeting for that evening at sunset, in the Colonnade of St. Peter's. Besides this there was a case of superb oriental pearls worked into the necklace and earrings. Teresa, agitated and indignant, would have torn the latter in pieces, and dashed the ornaments on the ground. Her mother, more cautious, re-sealed the packet, and sent it back by the person who bore it.

The rejection of this first overture seemed decisive of poor Antonio's fate. He was not liberated. Successive letters, in the same strain of exaggerated rapture, followed daily, and Teresa, yielded to those odious solicitings was made the positive condition of her brother's freedom. In the meantime new charges were heaped on him, of having been guilty during the French occupation, of playing republican airs, and treasonable designs and practices. He was again kept in secret confinement; his health began to fail; and Teresa, to avoid the persecution of her detested admirer, was forced to keep entirely to the house. The name of her brother's accuser was entirely concealed, and repeated petitions to the Governor for trial or redress, were treated with total neglect; and the civil power protected in those critical times against interfering with the all-powerful military Government.

The petitioners pressed themselves to be in utter hopelessness of obtaining justice, unless the benevolence of Lord W.— might induce him to interpose his interference, the manner of which was left entirely to his own judgment, their only request being that it might be prompt in order to be efficacious.

A great deal of what passed in Moreton's mind, on reading this document and reflecting on Lord W.—'s proposal, may be imagined by the sensitive reader. The result was summed up in a resolution to defeat his machinations, and if possible to snatch the lovely Teresa from the hands of both the Russian Prince and the English noble, who, to his ardent view of the case, appeared equally unprincipled and ignoble.

Between a young man of twenty and a girl of seventeen a passion rapidly excited and fanned by stirring circumstances is not long in ripening—particularly in that amorous land, whose very atmosphere is love. In about a fortnight from the first meeting Moreton was the avowed and accepted suitor of Teresa. He saw her every day on a thousand various pretexts; he told her of Lord W.—'s designs, of the part he was himself expected to play, and the wily diplomatist was thoroughly deceived. He made many protestations, of his anxiety to obtain Antonio's release, told sundry falsehoods as to the steps he pretended to take for that purpose, followed up his assiduities to Teresa, bought several more of the widow's pictures, and reckoned with certainty on his obsequious secretary playing the game he had dictated to them.

One evening he obtained admission to the widow's house through a garden gate which lay conveniently open. He calculated on Moreton being in his own *legitimate* occupation of flitting with, and flattering the widow in the parlor, in order to leave the coast clear for his own preconcerted visit to the daughter in the *salon* above. He slipped softly up stairs, entered the chamber, heard the murmur of two voices in the boudoir, peeped gently in the half-closed door, saw Teresa half sitting, half reclining on the identical little sofa where he had first surprised her, and Moreton kneeling before her, pouring out whole rhapsodies of passion—while with one hand in his and the other laid on his shoulder, she listened with an intention quite equaling his ardor.

Lord W.—, also list'ned attentively for some minutes, then cautiously withdrew, and made his escape from the garden without being heard or perceived. Moreton continued to