

THE EVENING TIMES, ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, MARCH 25, 1902.

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The Viper of Milan.

A ROMANCE OF LOMBARDY.

BY MARJORIE BOWEN.

(Continued.) CHAPTER TEN.

THE TURQUOISE GLOVES.

Della Scala is alive! The news flew like fire around Milan, causing even the indifferent to some interest. The rumors then were true? Della Scala was alive! In the market-places, in the streets, in the houses it was discussed—the name of Della Scala was on every lip. But in the Visconti palace it was not spoken. Silent, somber as ever, the castle frowned over its beautiful gardens, and only by the companies of horse that spurred out of its side gates to fortify still more strongly the nine cities once held by Della Scala and now the Viscontis, only by this could it be told how much the news meant to the man within.

Gianotto, walking softly through the corridors, paused and looked out into the garden. Della Scala is alive! he thought, and he watched, hidden by the curtain of purple silk.

Something had caught his keen eye, and he watched, hidden by the curtain of purple silk. A sea of flowers lay spread beneath him, while beyond a more formal part of the grounds, crowned with white terraces and set with cypress-trees, rose clear against the sapphire sky. To the right lay Isotta d'Este's prison, the western tower, a massive building of huge strength, encircled on three sides with a wall, and guarded by soldiers.

Gianotto's eyes glanced from the silver banner that hung above, lifeless in the summer air, to the soldiers at their posts below. Their was an entrance to the tower near to the palace, guarded, but little used, half-hidden by myrtle that had filled up the dried moat and climbed on the wall; and, as Gianotto still watched, the figure he had seen enter there, hooded and cloaked, passed out again hurriedly sped between the sentries, who rudely took no heed, and was soon set to sight along the winding paths.

The movement was quick, the figure gone almost as soon as noticed; a casual observer would have taken little heed, but Gianotto's eyes were trained, and he knew the figure for whose it was: Valentine Visconti.

"She must have bribed high," he thought. "High indeed! Why should she visit the prison of Isotta d'Este? He followed her figure across the garden with curious, suspicious thoughts. "She is daring," he mused, "and foolish, did she think no man's eyes could be on her, when Visconti has spies who are watching her every movement?"

He turned back into the corridor, twisting the ends of his scarlet robe between his fingers, and smiling to himself. The secretary was in a better humor than his master; that Mastino della Scala should live to vex Visconti, that he should have watched von Schumbourg, one of his dearest victims, back from underneath his very hand, pleased Gianotto, as did anything that annoyed Visconti, save when his master's rage was such that his secretary felt its working. The Duke he knew to be alone. The brief audience he accorded was long over. Visconti had no friends; they, who must, sought him in the morning in the audience room. For the rest, like the others of his tainted race, he lived alone.

He paused outside Visconti's door, and the secretary smoothed a smile from his face, and, tapping slightly, entered with a silent, cringing movement. The chamber was dark, although it was full noonday.

Visconti had no love for the sunlight, and even the narrow windows were obscured and shrouded in dark purple. The walls were paneled in carved wood, but, apart from the stiff chairs, the sole furniture of the apartment was a long low chest, set open, and showing silver goblets and curious bottles and glasses twisted into strange shapes, and colored. At the farther end were two doors close together, and between them sat Visconti, huddled up against the wall, gazing at the floor with strained, wide-open eyes.

Gianotto, entering softly, noticed in his hand a bracelet, fashioned as a snake, emerald green, of striking workmanship.

"A messenger from the Bologna embassy, my lord," he said, closing the door behind him, "has entreated me to ask thy attention to them."

Visconti looked up quickly, and put out of sight the bracelet with a snap of anger. "What, do the Bolognese trouble me?" he said fiercely.

"They only follow the example of the Pavians, my lord," returned the secretary smoothly. "They would have my mediation between the rival factions in their state."

"My mediation? Pavia asked it, as thou say'st, and so did Bergamo; yet do the Pavians, my lord, the Bolognese are foolish," said Visconti.

Gianotto shrugged his shoulders. "That need not trouble thee, my lord, Bologna is a wealthy town. Thy lordship will think of it."

The secretary's eyes were on the ground. Gian Galeazzo slipped his bracelet into his doublet and rose.

"Aye, I will think of it," he said, "but for the moment there are more precious things to do even than using the Bolognese against themselves."

Gianotto waited. The Duke paced to and fro a moment, then broke into the subject next his heart.

"Thinkest thou Della Scala will outwit me?" he said eagerly. "Thinkest thou that if he do reach Ferrara he will rouse the Este to action?"

"He had two good hours' start," returned Gianotto, "and the road to Ferrara offers many chances."

"And those men—who let them escape them? Do they still live?"

"Aye, my lord. They are valuable. It is enough that Alberic da Salluzzo has been lost to us."

"They shall yet hang for it," said Visconti.

With rapid steps he returned to his seat, flung himself into it, clutching the arms with vice-like grip.

"He cannot do anything, Gianotto," he said. "He cannot rouse the Este—against me! No; when Della Scala ruled nine cities, and his revenue was equalled only by the kings of France—I stripped him, I routed him. And now!" he smiled and his eyes widened, "he is a beggar. Perhaps it is not so ill that he lives to know it. It is a better revenge than any I could have devised. Della Scala a beggar, a hanger-on at the kingman's court, destitute of his ears with unwelcome prayers, sinking into contempt before the people who once owned him lord!"

Gianotto was silent. He could not imagine Mastino della Scala a beggar at any prince's court.

But Visconti, blinded and absorbed by hatred, continued unheeding:

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All Run Down

In the spring—that is the condition of thousands whose systems have not thrown off the impurities accumulated during the winter—blood humors that are now causing pimples, boils and other eruptions, loss of appetite, bilious troubles, dull headaches and weak, tired, languid feelings.

Hood's Sarsaparilla removes all these humors, cures all these troubles, renovates, strengthens and tones the whole system. This is the testimony of thousands annually.

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"Carrara also, the Duke of Padu, is too necessary to the Este. They cannot stand without him. Will he, thinkest thou, ever be won over to side with Mastino? No, Gianotto, I do not fear him. Let Della Scala live robbed of all—and with Count Conrad as an ally."

"Shall we then dismiss him, my lord?" ventured Gianotto smoothly; "he who is not worth fearing is not worth considering."

He seated himself at the low table as he spoke, his watchful eyes on Visconti, and drew some papers from the flat bag at his side.

The Duke returned no answer. In truth he heard not what was said, but leaned back in his chair and fell to thinking. The secretary, looking at his brooding face, shuddered a little at what his master's thoughts might be. He wondered alone with Visconti when he fell into count had concealed.

The silence grew oppressive, and Gianotto moved uneasily. He loved not to sit alone with Visconti when he felt into these musings.

"Ah," he said, breaking suddenly into a passion of declaim. "A God can do no more than say, 'I have succeeded—in all I have undertaken, I have succeeded!' And I can say as much. I have succeeded. I looked on life and took from it what I wanted; the fairest and the finest things that offered; and the price—others paid it. Truly, I have succeeded!"

Gianotto shrank back at Visconti's outburst, and made no answer.

But the Duke had forgotten him. He was but uttering his thoughts aloud.

"Five years ago," he said exultingly, "I rode outside the gates of Verona and challenged Della Scala to single combat. He sent his lackey out with a refusal, and in my heart I said: 'I will bring that man so low that life shall hold nothing so sweet to him as the thought of meeting me in single fight!' I have succeeded! Isotta d'Este looked past me and laughed, and I said, 'She shall live to feel her life within my hand!' In that also I have succeeded!"

"And three years ago, only three years ago, I stood within this very room, four lives between me and the throne of Milan—four lives, all craty—and two young. But I—I the youngest, took my fate and threw it into my hand. I said: 'It is for me to reign in Milan—I am the Duke.' In that I have succeeded!"

He named with distant eyes and parted lips, intoxicated with pride.

"This ambition is his madness," thought Gianotto; but he still was silent.

"In another thing," continued Visconti and his voice was changed, he breathed softly, and his eyes sparkled pleasantly.

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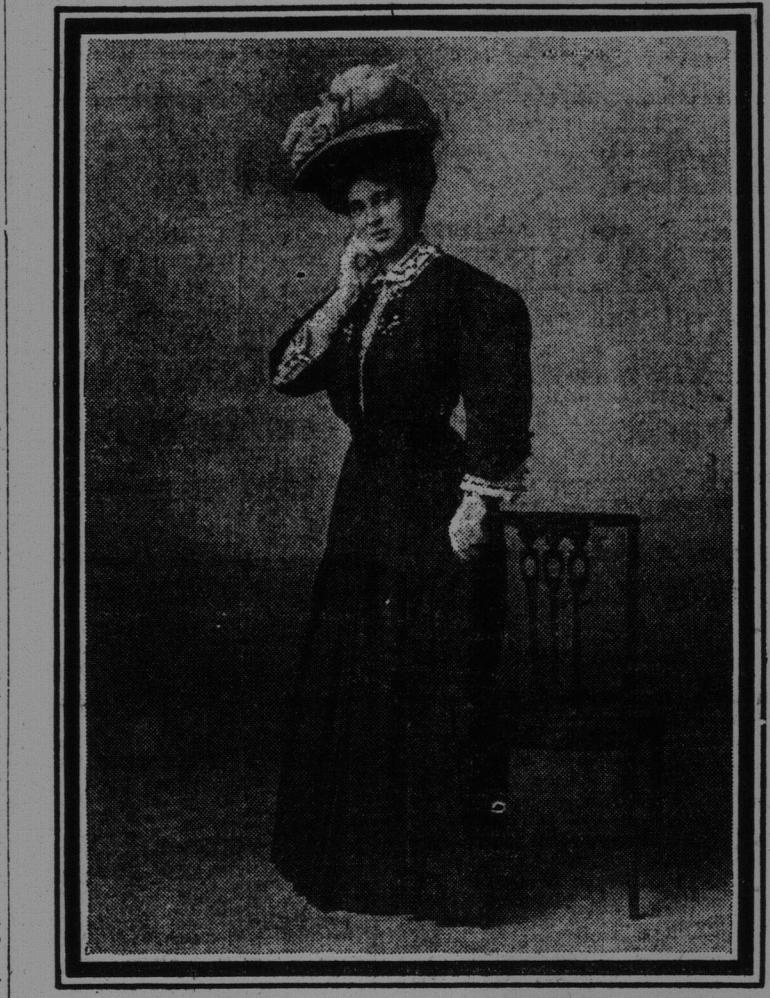
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Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers.



MODISH ETON SUIT IN SHELMA CLOTH.

Like the separate blouse, the death knell of the little eon jacket has been sounded so often that we have ceased to take any notice whatsoever of such pronouncements on the part of self-appointed fashion censors. Because of its universal becomingness and the comfort that its abbreviated shape affords once the warm weather has started there is no let-up or warning to its smart acceptance. Cut somewhat after a chasuble effect is the modish model pictured, the sleeve being attached to the coat lining and the shoulder line built well out so that the broad effect is noticeable at this point. There is a little undercracket effect that displays itself at the round neck and down the center front, this braided in black and gold, while the coat fronts are turned back in tiny revers just above the waistline and braided to match the coat. This same chic little effect is noticeable, too, on the cuff, while the pleated skirt is cut to walking length.

With a slight shrug of the shoulders Gianotto fell to writing.

When his pages were finished, he put them into his bag for the Duke to sign, and grumbled at his absence, stayed, but dared not follow. Presently he decided to take his own dismissal.

As he rose to go he remembered Valentine Visconti, lying through the garden after her secret visit, and he considered, if she could bribe him to silence heavily enough to make it worth his while to venture an encounter with her.

Visconti did not stint his sister for money, and she might pay well. Still, dare he let her know he spied? In that too he had succeeded! Aye, thou hast it all thine own way, Visconti, so far."

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All the best dealers have Stewart's. The Stewart Co., Limited, Toronto.

LONDON CABMEN PROTEST AGAINST MOTOR CABS

London, March 24.—Another modern improvement has called forth a protest from those who must inevitably suffer by its introduction. Several thousand London cabmen assembled today on the Thames embankment and marched to Hyde Park, followed by some 5,000 sympathizers, where they protested vigorously the ruling of the home secretary, permitting the introduction Saturday, at cheap and strictly regulated fares, of motor cabs. While the motor cabs are considered the beginning of the greatest revolution in street conveyance here since the hansom was evolved in 1834, through diminution in income or loss of employment.

On Saturday evening W. S. Harkins closed a successful engagement at the Academy of Music, Halifax, and left on the Oceanic with his company for a tour of the West Indies, opening in Hamilton, Bermuda.



The Growing Girl

is too often forced to overtax her strength in long hours of study. The prudent mother will give her Wilson's Invalids' Port

A safe preventive of anaemia, headaches, poor appetite, dizziness and feebleness. It gives pure, strong blood, sound sleep and a perfect digestion, bringing the young life eventually into the full bloom of womanly vigor. A wineglassful before each meal—that's all. Big bottle—\$1.

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