

**THE PRIMA
DONNA. VOL. II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649679058

The Prima Donna. Vol. II by Sarah Williams ("Sadie")

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

SARAH WILLIAMS ("SADIE")

**THE PRIMA
DONNA. VOL. II**

THE PRIMA DONNA

BY

SARAH WILLIAMS

("SADIE")

VOL. II.

LONDON
W. SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO.
PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1884

256 . e . 1077-

CONTENTS.

VOL II.

	PAGE
XVII. PARALYSIS,	168
XVIII. A WEB OF DIVERS COLOURS,	178
XIX. "A MONTH OF SUNDAYS,"	190
XX. PLOTS,	199
XXI. A RAINBOW,	212
XXII. DR. HEINE'S PARTY,	221
XXIII. THÉRÈSE WITH VARIATIONS,	237
XXIV. THÉRÈSE'S DIVERSION,	248
XXV. TED'S DEPARTURE,	260
XXVI. A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE,	271
XXVII. "SO LONELY,"	281
XXVIII. A PUPIL,	289
XXIX. DANGER,	299
XXX. "DE PROFUNDIS,"	308
XXXI. BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS,	317
XXXII. BOADICÆA,	328
XXXIII. REST,	338



CHAPTER XVII.

PARALYSIS.

LUIGIA had gone to the Bycster Musical Festival, to take the principal soprano part in Mendelssohn's "St. Paul," Dr. Heine having graciously conceded that she sang oratorio music better than he expected.

Signor Gondio was in Germany, whither he had returned immediately after Luigia's début.

Ted had written to say that he might be expected home in a few months; that his official employers had been satisfied, up to testimonial point, and that he had amassed a whole portfolio of sketches for his proposed work on the African flora; also, that he hoped to exhibit at next year's Academy a painting representing "Night among the Reeds of the Zambési."

Sir William Mabington was in Belgium, on some business connected with the fortifications of Antwerp.

The doctor was, as usual, at his consulting rooms in town, and Huldah sat in the little Hendon parlour, reading one of her cousin Evan's rare letters, which ended with: "Our squire, Mr. Morgan Griffiths, has just re-

turned from Canada. I think, if I had known his destination before he went, I should have made bold to ask him to inquire for our uncle Griffith; it was to Canada he emigrated, and we have not heard from him for forty years."

Huldah smiled to herself, and said, "Ah, my mountain cousin, you are rather like those old country folks who will ask any stray Londoner if he has met their aunt's cousin, Mary Jones. Our uncle died, I believe, and left one son—so my father heard. I can tell you so much, and no more."

Here she was interrupted by a messenger from town, bringing word from the doctor that she was to come to him.

Wondering a little that he had sent only a verbal message, with no word of explanation, she went, and found him lying flat, on an old-fashioned sofa in his study.

He greeted her with one of those smiles that are too bright, and said, "How soon can you move here from Hendon?"

"Move? how do you mean, Alick dear?"

"Only, that Mahomet will never be able to get to the mountain again, so the mountain must come to him."

"Mahomet,—you? immovable?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Paralysis."

"Oh, Alick! not that?" She clasped her hands, the nervous, expressive hands, which were to Huldah what sobs and cries are to most women. "Not that, Alick?" she repeated, imploringly, as though she were pleading with him for himself.

"Even so, wife; see." He pointed with his left hand to

where his right lay helpless, with such a terrible withered look, that for a moment, in the surprise, she shrank from the sight; then, in a passion of remorse and tenderness, took the poor distorted fingers in hers, and covered them with kisses. He answered her with, "I *wanted* you," in a tone of pathetic satisfaction—pathetic, as telling how he had lain waiting, in desolate longing, for the one alone who could comfort him.

"Can we not do something?—when was this?" said Huldah.

"This morning, soon after I got here. There was a letter from the solicitors of the 'Pure Chemicals Society,' announcing the final settlement of the company's affairs, and that I should be called upon for no more payments. With a sudden sense of relief I fell back in my chair, and was puzzled at first to find that I could not rise again."

"Did you send for some one?"

"Yes, Anderson; this is in his line; he came pretty soon."

"What did he say?" said Huldah breathlessly, as one who waited for a verdict of life or death.

"Confirmed my own opinion; it is not dangerous, only hopeless. I may live for twenty years,—a useless log, eating and sleeping, like any other mere animal."

The keen, ineradicable pride of the doctor quivered visibly as he said this. "If I could but have died! You would have been better even a widow; far better had we never married."

"Alick, hush, lest God hear you. Only live, dearest; were you blind, maimed, even foolish, I would still thank God for preserving to me the best gift He ever gave me. If you suffer, can I not help you? If you are weak, do you not want me? Is it not something for me to be in

the same world with you? Only do not talk of dying, Alick—my Alick!

“Foolish little wife. No, I cannot want to leave you; the little one would be sorry too; where is she?”

“At the Bycester Festival, you remember; she went yesterday.”

“I had utterly forgotten; surely the benumbing has not reached the brain yet. I did not think it would be so soon.”

“Now, dearest, that is a morbid fancy; what more natural than that to-day’s events should put yesterday’s out of your head? I will not have you watch yourself so cruelly, like a wild man awaiting an enemy’s death; besides, honestly, I have no fear for your brain, it is not of the kind that softens or grows thick; it is too restless for that.”

“Doctor Huldah,” he said, answering her in a tone of tender banter, more natural than any he had used hitherto; adding, “Do not tell the little one; this is her first oratorio, and such news would ruin it.”

Just then, Mr. Anderson returned to give Huldah his directions; she followed him from the room to ask, “Is there no hope?”

“None, I fear; it is better the right side than the left,—a little better.”

“But he has not complained at all,” said Huldah.

“Ah, you see, medical men get such a horror of complaining; they know the harm, as well as the unpleasantness, of continual self-dissection; but he tells me that he has had queer feelings in his hand and foot for some time.”

“If we had but known!” moaned Huldah, for the first time breaking down, with the thought that she might have been more watchful.

"I really do not think anything could have been done even then; and you must not be faint-hearted, dear lady; you will need courage to keep up patience. Trust me to do all that can be done. Shall I help you to remove the doctor upstairs?"

"Thank you, no. I have the assistant, and Simmonds, the man who opens the door. Alick says he will have the study for our room; it is large enough, and then he can be easily wheeled into the consulting room."

"He has thought of everything I see," said Mr. Anderson, approvingly; but, as he left the house, he muttered, "Poor Murray! I am afraid he will not be called for much in the consulting room; his practice had one great shake in the downfall of that company, and now this will knock it on the head altogether."

A similar thought flashed through Luigia's mind, after the first shock of the news which greeted her return; she put away the suggestion, reproaching herself for heartlessness, but it was verified.

When the doctor recovered, in a measure, he would be dressed and carried into the visitors' room, day after day, to wait, with the pitiful patience of hope deferred, for the patients who seldom came.

If they had but known, those fanciful ladies, who alighted sometimes, like rare birds,—if they had but known how truly the once busy physician now gave them "his best attention,"—how, as his once robust life flickered and faded in the confined air of the three rooms which seemed like his prison, he felt inclined to cry out at them, "Do you really know what suffering is?"—how "that fidgeting music" which came, indistinctly, on their irritable nerves from the top of the house, was in reality the chief support of the family!