

GARRICK'S PUPIL

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Garrick's Pupil by Augustin Filon & J. V. Prichard

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AUGUSTIN FILON & J. V. PRICHARD

**GARRICK'S
PUPIL**

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GARRICK'S PUPIL

By AUGUSTIN FILON

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Translated by

J. V. PRICHARD

Illustrated

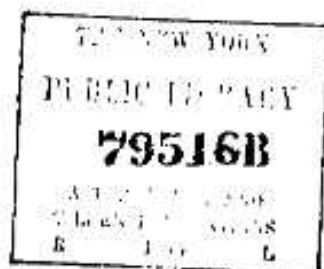


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GARRICK'S PUPIL.

CHAPTER I.

PAINTER AND MODEL.

JUST as the third hour of the afternoon had sounded from the belfry of Saint Martin's-in-the-Fields, a hackney coach drew up before the most pretentious mansion upon the west side of Leicester Fields; and while the coachman hastened to agitate the heavy door-knocker, a young woman, almost a child, sprang out upon the pavement without waiting to have the shaky steps unfolded and lowered for her convenience. Her dust-colored mantle, disarranged by her rapid movements, revealed a rich costume beneath; while the dazzled passer-by might have caught a glimpse, amidst the whiteness of the elevated skirts, of a tiny pair of red satin slippers and two slender, exquisitely moulded ankles finely clad in silken hose with embroidered clocks.

The girl turned and assisted a more aged woman, leaning upon a crutch-headed cane, to descend. This lady wore the big straw bonnet and gray gown of the Quaker persuasion, — a rigidly simple costume, which occasionally is becoming to extreme youth, but rarely enhances maturer charms.

It was one of those glorious days of the English springtide when life seems endurable even

to the hapless, grateful even to the invalid. A bland breeze rustled the branches of the grand old trees which in double rows framed the open square. Several children were at play upon the spacious grass-plot, which was intersected by diagonal paths of yellow sand. The square was silent, and slept in the voluptuous warmth of the perfect afternoon; but from the north side came the bustle and confusion that resembled the turmoil of some festival. It was the continuous din of the two tides of life which here meet and cross each other, the one surging from Covent Garden and Chancery Lane, the other from Piccadilly and St. James's. Pedestrians and horsemen, coaches and sedan chairs, went to make up a glittering, varied hodgepodge, amidst which flower-girls and newsboys fought their way, together with the venders of "hot buns." Gentlemen saluted with exaggerated gesture, pressing their cocked hats to their breasts and affectedly inclining their heads towards their right shoulder; while the ladies fluttered their fans and nodded the edifices of flowers and feathers which served in lieu of a head-dress. The intoxicating odor of iris powder, of benzoin, bergamot, and patchouli floated upon the air. The beggars leaning against the railing of the square and the Irish chairmen indolently smoking their pipes, for whom life is but a spectacle, watched the passage of others' happiness. A bright, genial sun polished the flanks of the plaster horse in the centre of the square, upon which rode a prince of the House of Hanover. It shone upon the head of the gilded cock which served as sign to Hogarth's old shop, flamed upon the windows of Newton's sham observatory, glistened upon the roofs, played



along the line of coaches, set tiny mirrors upon the harnesses of the horses, glittered in the diamonds in the women's ears, and on the swords that clattered against the men's legs, set a spangle here or a spark there, and bathed all things in a blaze of light and joy.

Meanwhile a lackey in a livery embroidered in silver had opened the door to the two women.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds?"

The lackey hesitated, but at the moment Ralph, the painter's confidential man, appeared upon the steps.

"Miss Woodville?" he inquired in his turn.

"Yes," replied the girl.

"Be good enough to follow me, Miss Woodville"; adding with a smile, "You are prompt."

"It is the custom of the theatre. Lean upon my arm, aunt."

At this moment Miss Woodville was saluted with a "good-morning" uttered by so strange, so guttural, so piercing a voice that she involuntarily started.

"Don't be alarmed," said Ralph; "it is the bird."

"What bird?"

"Sir Joshua's parrot. He was in the courtyard, but had to be removed to the dining-room because he fought with the eagle."

"An eagle! a parrot! Pray what are they doing here?"

"They pose. Miss Woodville must have noticed them in more than one of Sir Joshua's pictures. Oh, we all take our turns in sitting as models to him. Yesterday I was a shepherd; the day before, a sea-god."

The good man drew himself up at the