

**TITIAN. A
ROMANCE
OF VENICE; VOL. II**

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Titian. A romance of Venice; Vol. II by R. Shelton Mackenzie

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TITIAN.

A ROMANCE OF VENICE.

BY

R. SHELTON MACKENZIE, LL.D.

"Che non avea creduto che l'arte potesse giungere a tanto, e che solo
Tiziano era degno del nome di Pittore."

MICHAEL ANGIOLO.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TITIAN.

CHAPTER I.

SYMPTOMS OF A HEART-QUAKE.

Spirits are not finely touched,
But to fine issues.

SHAKSPEARE.

THERE is no truer aphorism than the oft-repeated one, that whom Fame loves, Woman loves also. And *this* is one of the best and brightest rewards of genius, however its triumphs be won, by arms or eloquence, by pen or pencil.

In such cases, the *abstraction* of renown, rather than the *person* who achieves it, becomes an object of interest to the heart—as the Indian

who bows the knee before some rudely sculptured image, pays the homage less to the senseless idol, than to the unknown Divinity whom it represents.

Much as has been said, harshly and tauntingly, of the "fitful fancies" of the sex, it is certain their love is less capriciously bestowed, and more enduringly, than ours. *They* are oftener won through the mind; *we*, through the eye. Personal beauty has the chief attraction for Man, while Woman makes intellectual worth the cherished eidolon of her heart. If, as the scandal of more than twenty centuries reports, the fair and eloquent Aspasia was enamoured of Socrates, even while Pericles was at her feet, it must have been his surpassing intellect and lofty fame that won her, in despite of his acknowledged want of personal attractions. Nay, there is no necessity for groping amid the gloom of antiquity for an illustration;—when the tempestuous passions of *la belle Hamilton* were concentrated on their latest object, Nelson, surely it was the glory of

the Hero which gained a conquest the Man might vainly have striven for? There are many instances where the celebrity of a man excites stirring interest in the mind of an imaginative woman—so that, long before she has ever seen him, her fancy beholds him in the glass of his renown—her day-dreams are peopled with the images of what he has written, or done, or said—praise, the world's frankincense, becomes valued as it is bestowed on him—and the fair idealist is prepared to meet him as one who is anything but a stranger, as one for whom she already feels an interest which the breath of Circumstance may fan into a warmer impulse.

And oh, however excited, how true as well as trusting is the love of Woman. Even when she discovers that the object of her passion when tested by reality, differs widely from the eidolon of her imagination, she does not—she cannot abandon him. Worthless as he may be in the eyes of all the world beside, he has some redeeming virtue in *her* eyes. He may be con-

temned by society, but his very isolation is a reason why he is not to be forsaken by her. The tempest may gather round his head—his household gods lie shattered on his hearth—the finger of scorn point at him—but there is *one* who never will forsake him whom she loves; who will lead back his steps to virtue, if she can; who will press closer to his side, with sympathy and counsel, when Adversity may strike him down; and who, whether there be sunshine or storm above his head, remains strong and single-minded in her devotedness to him. Exquisite is this enduring affection of the sex, and many, we fear, are the sad and silent martyrs whom it makes. Verily, their reward is from the “still, small voice” within, which tells them they have done their duty.

It speedily became generally known in Venice, that a rival had obtained signal triumphs over Giorgione, and, unspoiled by his successes, was enthusiastically devoting himself to the prosecution of his art. He appeared

so little in society—although the noblest were anxious to entertain one so singularly worthy—that he was far better known by reputation than person. But, this very retirement, which he appeared to prefer, sustained the interest originally excited by his sudden elevation to distinction, aided as it was by a thousand rumours of his circumstances and adventures before he had struggled from obscurity to fame. Even in the retired circle at Count Petigliano's, such rumours were received and speculated upon, and the fair ladies had many conjectures respecting Titian, which they uttered to each other while they indulged in the laborious idleness of embroidery, or bead-work, or such other feminine fancies as beguiled the tardy hours with a soft semblance of occupation.

Agrippa having mentioned Titian's name, one evening, Beatrice looked the inquiries which Amicia had no hesitation in playfully making. Then they learned, more distinctively than they had before heard, how much the young Painter had endured, how greatly he had