

ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.



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IN the old fairy tales of the trials of the beautiful princesses we are always told that at their birth some fairy was inadvertently omitted when the guests were bidden to the christening, and that, arriving after all the others had bestowed their gifts of beauty, wit, wealth, etc., she would nullify all hopes of a happy, successful life either by withholding a desired quality or by predicting some dire misfortune, generally to be a fatal mistake in the choosing of a lover; and then all the beneficent fairies exerted their skill to avert the evil consequences, not always with entire success. There is perhaps some hidden meaning and warning in these old tales, a shrewd insight into the mistakes lovers make in the most eventful period of their lives; for even the queen of the fairies fell in love with an ass's head,

and endowed it with beauty and wit; and to this day Puck or Cupid certainly contrives to throw a glamour over the loved one, and causes a blindness of perception, if not of sight, in the one who loves. At such times—and Dr. Johnson, observing this, suggested that marriages should be arranged by uninterested third parties—reason is dethroned, judgment takes wing, and the poor princesses rush blindly and madly on their fate, and our gifted Angelica was one of the most unfortunate of princesses in this respect.

Jean Joseph Kauffman was originally from Vorarlberg, in Tyrol, and belonged to that class of wandering artists who, traveling from place to place, are ready to do any thing in the way of painting by which to gain a living. His talents were of the most mediocre order, and there is no work of any



“MOTHER AND CHILD.”—[FROM A PAINTING BY ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.]

merit of his extant, or at least any thing that can be authentically attributed to his brush. In the course of his wanderings he came to Coire, the chief town in the Grisons, there met Cléophe Lutz, fell in love with her, and they married; and at Coire, in 1741, was born to him a daughter, whom the happy parents named Maria Anna Angelica. After a residence of some years in Coire, Kauffman again resumed his vagabondage, now, however, accompanied by his wife and daughter. Though a poor artist in both senses, he cherished the profoundest veneration for art, and taught Angelica to regard

artists as the peers of kings, and excited her love and admiration for painters by wonderful tales of the lives of the great masters; he early instructed her, so far as he was able, in drawing and pastel painting, and the pupil soon excelling the master, she, when only a child of nine, used to aid him in the decorations of the Swiss churches, as he rested for a time in his journeys in the different villages.

The Bishop of Como, hearing of Kauffman in his capacity of church decorator, required his services for a church in his diocese, and thither the family went in 1752. Angelica

was now eleven, and for the last year had essayed her skill in taking pastel portraits. The bishop, hearing of the talent of the young artist, himself sat to her. Her success was so marked, and his praises of her genius so unstinted, that she did not lack for sitters among the many strangers visiting Como. While here Angelica pursued her studies, and, besides her painting, began music, for by nature she was endowed with an exquisite voice and correct ear, and her parents always tried to give her the very best instruction their means permitted; and that she was a good student and profited by her opportunities is evident from the praises of her acquirements in later years by competent critics, and her education was of a higher order than was ordinarily in those days deemed essential for a woman.

Work failing Kauffman after two years living in Como, the family again started on their travels, generally performed on foot, and this time they turned toward Italy, and settled at Milan, where he found sufficient work as an assistant to other more successful artists. It was a good move for Angelica, for here for the first time she was in an artistic atmosphere, and surrounded by works of art worthy of study and imitation, not living among those who regarded her own childish efforts as works of wondrous skill. Then, too, she was able to study under competent masters, and paid so much attention to music, made such progress, and developed so much talent that it was often mooted among her friends whether she had not better prosecute her studies with reference to making "the stage" her profession. In Milan the family remained for years, and Angelica, under the most favorable circumstances, grew to womanhood. An advantageous offer was tendered to her to make her *début* in opera at Milan, and she was tempted to accept it, and not without great hesitation finally wisely decided that she was not fitted for such a life, and determined to devote her energies to perfecting herself as an artist. She copied some pictures belonging to Robert of Modena, then Governor of Milan, with such spirit and delicacy that he was charmed, declared himself her patron, and she soon became a favorite artist with the court; but the death of his wife making her father desirous of leaving Milan, he accepted an offer from the Bishop of Constance to undertake the decoration of a church at Schwarzenberg, and Angelica for that church painted in fresco the Twelve Apostles, the first original work she had attempted.

In 1761 the father and daughter began a journey through Italy, living successively at Florence, Parma, Rome, Bologna, Naples, Venice. While in Florence Angelica began to try her skill at etching, her earliest work

in that line bearing date 1762; in 1763 she etched two pictures, evidently of the Neapolitan school—one the portrait of an artist, pencil in hand, the other a student reading a book. In 1764 the two went to Rome, and there remained over a year, Angelica diligently studying perspective. Here she formed the friendship of Winckelmann and Raphael Mengs. She painted Winckelmann's portrait, and was indebted to him for much good counsel. In a letter written to his friend Franck in 1764, he says:

"I have just been painted by a stranger, a young person of rare merit. She is very eminent in portraits in oil. Mine is a half-length, and she has also made an etching of it as a present to me. She speaks Italian as well as German, and expresses herself with the same facility in French and English, on which account she paints all the English who visit Rome. She sings with a taste which ranks her among our greatest virtuose. Her name is Angelica Kauffman."

Near the close of the year 1765 Angelica removed from Rome to Bologna, and while there executed what is acknowledged to be her finest etching—the picture of a young girl arranging her hair, with her face averted from the spectator. She spent one or two months in Naples painting portraits, which were her specialty, and early in 1766 journeyed to Venice, where she was feted both as artist and woman, and was highly esteemed by the English visitors on account of her skill in flattering portraits and yet preserving the likeness, the English, as a rule, caring more for portrait-painting than other artistic works. Lady Wentworth, who had for many years lived in Venice, and was about to return home, persuaded the father and daughter to go with her, promising Angelica great success as a portrait-painter in England. The trio arrived in London in June, 1766, and a brilliant and successful career seemed opening before Angelica. She was then in her prime, and without positive regular beauty of feature, was yet extremely attractive. Her graceful figure, expressive face, charming manners, exquisitely trained voice, added to her skill as an artist both in painting and music—for her fame had preceded her—all contributed to her success. She soon became "the rage" in the London fashionable world, and every where one heard of "the beautiful, accomplished Miss Kauffman;" the aristocracy extended to her their patronage, and her musical talents gained her the entrée into many a drawing-room from which, had she been famous only as an artist, she would have been rigorously excluded. She soon became intimate with Sir Joshua Reynolds, then the authority in England on art matters, and there is no doubt that he aided her with instruction and criticism, for there was a marked difference in her manner of handling the brush in the pictures painted by her during her stay in England and those of previous years.

The year after her arrival she was chosen by the Duchess of Brunswick, sister of George III., to paint her portrait, and so pleased was the duchess with the picture that she presented the artist at court, and recommended her to the king in such flattering terms that he requested Angelica to paint for him the queen and his son. Now that she had received the approbation of royalty, Angelica was overrun with commissions at her own prices, and her hopes of fame and fortune were in a fair way to be realized. Nor were lovers wanting: Fuseli was one of her suitors, and if popular report can be relied on, Sir Joshua himself not only once, but several times, sought to gain her hand and heart, and for love of her never married. There are frequent notes of visits to "Miss Angelica" in his diary, "appointments with Miss Angelica;" once he speaks of her as "Miss Angel," and adds the cabalistic word "Fiori:" as one biographer suggests, must not this have been intended to remind him that he had proffered or was to proffer some gallant attention? He twice painted her likeness, and he sat to her twice himself. Of her portrait of him at Saltram, the poet of the *Advertiser* fulsomely wrote:

"When the likeness she hath done of thee,
O Reynolds, with astonishment we see,
Forced to submit, with all our pride, we own
Such strength, such harmony, excelled by none,
And thou outrivaled by thyself alone."

Nollekens declares her to be a sad coquette. Another writer asserts that she was very sentimental. "At one time she professed to be enamored of Nathaniel Dance, then to her next sitter would disclose that she was dying of love for Sir Joshua." Of her superabundance of sentiment one of her letters is an exemplification, for, once writing to a friend, she says:

"You ask me why Como is ever in my thoughts. It was at Como that, in my happy youth, I tasted the first real enjoyment of life. I thought myself in the midst of the luxuries of fairy-land. I saw the urchin, too, young Love, in the act of letting fly an arrow pointed at my breast; but I, a maiden fancy-free, avoided the shaft; it fell harmless."

And much more in the same strain. If it be remembered that at the time she speaks of she was a mere child, leaving Como before she was quite thirteen, it will be seen that her fancy rather than memory drew this picture. The gift the unbidden christening guest denied Angelica was undoubtedly judgment, and that inestimable dower, common-sense; for now when every body and every circumstance conspired to render her career one of unalloyed prosperity, by her own lack of judgment she marred her entire life.

About this time—in the latter part of the year 1767—there suddenly appeared in London society a young man calling himself Count de Horn, claiming alliance with the



"THE TOILET."—[AN ETCHING BY ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.]

noble families of Sweden; and his birth and rank being passports, he was soon made welcome every where among the fashionable set then ruling society. He especially selected Angelica as the recipient of his attentions, and being young, handsome, and fluent of speech, she, though no longer a young girl to be dazzled by honeyed compliments, lent a too willing ear to his flatteries and profligations. He confided to her that he was the victim of some vaguely hinted at persecution at home, that his love for her, though ardent, must not be openly spoken of, and implored her to consent to a secret marriage. The romance of the affair appealed strongly to Angelica's sentimental nature, and in an evil hour she yielded, and secretly, without witnesses, was married to her beloved count. Within a few days a rumor, starting no one could trace from whom, arose that Count de Horn was an impostor—a courier who had assumed the title of a nobleman. The tale spread with rapidity, and, alas for Angelica! was found to be true. In despair she avowed her folly, the pseudo-count fled, and through the power and influence of friends at court the marriage was declared annulled, February 10, 1768.

Such is the tale as usually told; but there are different versions. A woman so conspicuous as Angelica Kauffman, both by reason of her talents and exceptional success in her profession, could not have so romantic an adventure without its exciting wide-spread interest, and finding many listeners to any and every rumor which professed to explain the mystery of the unfortunate marriage.

Then there seemed no sufficient reason why an intriguer should have singled her out as his victim. She was not beautiful enough, though undeniably attractive and charming, to make him by her charms lose his head; not young, for she was twenty-seven; not rich enough to make her modest competence a prize worth risking exposure for, as Count de Horn certainly did. There was some hidden motive for his pursuit of her. Besides, he was in no way punished for his fraud upon her, and disappeared as suddenly and mysteriously as he had appeared upon the scene—vanished into the obscurity from which he had emerged. Then, was the mere fact of his marrying under an assumed name sufficient ground for annulling the contract? If so, why then have recourse to courtly interference? Was there not some special reason why such powerful influence was brought to bear in her favor to free her from a tie she had voluntarily entered into? All these and many other questions of a like nature were earnestly discussed; hints, suspicions, guesses, were rife; and at last it was generally agreed that she had been the victim of some deceit that was never intended to have been carried so far, and that there were reasons not to be made public why she had been so favored in having with so little publicity the marriage dissolved.

The question still remained, Who was her persecutor? Evidently some angry lover, and except in the *dénouement*, the *Lady of Lyons* would seem to have been founded on Angelica's love experience, though Count de Horn was no Claude. A writer in the *Westminster Review* undertakes to make the author of Angelica's misfortune a certain mysterious Lord E——, who, years before, meeting Angelica when a young girl on one of her many journeys with her father, tried, after the manner of those licentious times, to gain her love, but was repulsed. Years afterward, when he again met her in London, a woman fascinating and courted, he renewed his offers, and was a second time rejected, this time with undisguised scorn. Smarting under this second repulse, he arranged the plot with the false count, with what result we have seen. This seems like an effort to quiet conjecture, for no trace of the mysterious Lord E—— among her acquaintances can be found; though, giving a different name—Lord Shelton—Wailly has taken the same idea in his novel, *Angelica Kauffman*. Such a tale could not escape the keen eye of the romance writer; but Wailly's account must not be deemed any more historically correct or accurate in facts than were the historical novels of the prolific L. Muhlbach. There is a judicious blending of truth and fiction in Wailly's novel, making it hard to distinguish the kernel from the chaff; but Angelica is scarcely drawn with as flattering a pen as one could wish.

The French, who in their biographical notices aim at exactness, and always try to write with and from authority, give substantially the general account, but with a different hero. They state it was an English painter of eminent position who thus meanly sought to revenge himself on Angelica for a rejected love; the name they generally omit; but one writer, bolder than the rest, explicitly asserts the painter to be none other than Sir Joshua Reynolds.

If this is the fact, it would account for the extreme interest and influence he exerted to free her from a marriage (which was not intended to be the result of the trick, had not her precipitancy and romantic nature outrun expectation) so repugnant; and yet, on the other hand, if she knew Sir Joshua to be the author of her trouble, would she still have desired and relied on his friendship, as she certainly did during the rest of her stay in England? Unable to solve the enigma, it being one where the actors having prudently refrained from explaining it, the only data for the public being such crumbs of evidence as will inevitably fall and be gathered up by the curiosity-monger, but having presented both versions of the tale, the reader is left to choose the one most pleasing to his fancy. All writers of Angelica's life agree in there being some secret about the sudden appearance, marriage, and disappearance of the so-called count, which was never cleared up, and never, evidently, intended to be, as those to whom it was known died and made no sign; so, as in the Byron scandal, there is ample room for conjecture. If Reynolds were indeed her secret enemy, he afterward did all in his power to further her claims to recognition and power, and perhaps it would be more charitable to let the unknown Lord E—— suffer from such a slur on his manhood than the great painter.

Angelica's friends showed no lack of sympathy for her, and she turned with feverish eagerness to her art, and worked unceasingly. At the close of the same year, 1768, the Royal Academy was started, and she was chosen one of the original thirty-six members—a great honor at that time—and her paintings occupied prominent positions at the exhibition. At this time she painted her best picture, the portrait of the Duchess of Richmond, and the famous one of the celebrated Duchess of Devonshire and the Duchess of Duncannon seated in a park, side by side, holding caressingly each other by the hand. Her portraits were always flattered; it was asserted she never could paint an ugly person, and her poses of her sitters were apt to be affected. She attached great importance to the flow of the drapery—so much so that Sir Joshua once said to her, "Your sitters could walk without disarranging their draperies!"—a compliment of which she was very proud.



"BLINDMAN'S-BUFF."—[FROM A PAINTING BY ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.]

She now became ambitious to excel as a historical painter, but she never produced any really meritorious work. In 1770 she exhibited "Vortigern and Rowena," "Hector upbraiding Paris," "Cleopatra at Marc Antony's Tomb;" but in all she undertook her mannerisms were evident. Her touch was delicate, her coloring dainty, resembling pastel. There is no vigor either in the conception or execution of her paintings. As an eminent French critic says of her, "Elle affadit tout ce qu'elle touche." By the English she was differently estimated, at least then, for when the plan was broached of decorating the bare walls of St. Paul's, among the painters selected, viz., Sir Joshua, West, Bray, and Cipriani, Angelica was also chosen. The scheme took shape, the subjects were discussed, and not only did the dean consent, but gave his hearty approbation, when the Bishop of London, who had been applied to for his assent, answered the dean in the following curt note:

"My good Lord,—I have already been informed that such an affair is in contemplation, but while I live and have the power, I will never suffer the doors of the metropolitan church to be opened to the introduction of popery."

Sir Joshua Reynolds, as the head of the

Academy, to become a member of which was deemed a privilege, incurred the enmity of artists whose pictures had been rejected; and Hone, in 1775, smarting under some fancied wrong, exhibited a picture called "The Pictorial Conjurer displaying the whole Art of Optical Deception." Sir Joshua, as an old man, is, with a child beside him, and armed with a conjurer's wand, performing incantations, and has conjured up a number of spirits who are floating about him. These spirits were likenesses of Sir Joshua's admirers, and one was a faithful portrait of Angelica. Comment was made on this fact; and Hone, finding public opinion against him, denied the likeness, and wrote to Angelica declaring that nothing could be farther from his intention than to ridicule her.

In the course of years Angelica realized a handsome fortune. Her paintings and etchings always found eager buyers; and her unfortunate marriage being apparently forgotten, though in reality it was still the theme of gossip, and by her the mortification was always keenly felt, she lived in England, feted and courted, until the year 1781; then, her father's health failing, they decided to return to Italy. But before she left England she consented to marry An-

tonio Zucchi, a Venetian by birth, an old friend of her father's, who had long lived in London. The prospect of losing her father and being alone in the world was one she could not face, and the quiet affection of Zucchi, which had surrounded her for many years, had become necessary to her, and, unostentatiously and with but few guests bidden, they were married near the end of the year, and started for Italy. They stopped at Schwarzenfeld, where her father had relatives, and there he died the following season, and the married pair then went to Venice, where Angelica painted her large work, "Leonardo dying in the Arms of Francis." After a short stay in Venice, the Zucchis proceeded to Rome, and here, though she no longer found Winckelmann and Mengs, her old friends, their absence was supplied by the hosts of new admirers who flocked around her.

Raphael Mengs—who wrote of her, "As an artist she is the pride of the female sex in all times and all nations; nothing is wanting, composition, coloring, fancy, all are here"—had died some two years before, and she sorely missed his appreciation and regard. Among the new friends were Goethe, Herder, Klopstock, Gessner, who were frequent visitors at her studio, and all of whom write of her in flattering terms. Her charming manners and graceful coquetries still exerted their old accustomed glamour over all who came in contact with her. Goethe, in one of his letters, writes, "The good Angelica has a remarkable and, for a woman, really unheard of talent." In his book on Winckelmann he says of her: "The light and pleasing in form and color, in design and execution, distinguish the numerous works of our artist. No living painter excels her in dignity or in the delicate taste with which she handles the pencil." Other art critics have judged her less favorably, the most notable one being Fuseli, though perhaps some allowance should be made for his being a rejected lover as well as a captious critic. In his notes to Pilkington, under the title of Zucchi, the only instance where she is not spoken of in biographical sketches by her maiden name, he writes:

"The writer of this article, who was honored by the friendship of Angelica, and cherishes her memory, has no wish to contradict those who make success the standard of genius, and as their heroine equaled the greatest names in the first, suppose she was on a level with them in powers. Angelica pleased, and deserved to please, the age in which she lived and the race for which she wrought. The Germans, with as much patriotism at least as judgment, have styled her 'the paintress of minds'; nor can this be wondered at from a nation who in Mengs flatter themselves to possess an artist equal to Raffaello.... Her heroes are all the man to whom she thought she could have submitted, though him perhaps she never found, and to his fancied manner of acting and feeling she, of course, submitted the passions of the subject. Her heroines are herself, and, while suavity of counte-

nance and alluring graces shall be able to divert the general eye from the sterner demands of character and expression, can never fail to please."

Later critics side with Fuseli that the charm of Angelica's works was due to the personal feeling excited by the artist rather than to any real merit in her productions. Yet while she lived her name was a passport to success, and as late as 1794 the English publishers sought permission to add weight to the merits of their annuals by calling them by her name, and having illustrations from her fertile pencil. One, bound by Roger Payne, entitled *Angelica's Ladies' Library*, illustrated by her and Bunbury, and dedicated to her Majesty, printed for "Mrs. Harlow, bookseller to her Majesty," is in the writer's possession. Angelica's illustrations are, the frontispiece, "Marmontel's Shepherdess of the Alps," "Gualtherius and Griselda." The pictures are better than the reading matter; certainly the women of that day fared badly in the mental food prepared exclusively for them. Among the articles are "Moore's Fables for the Female Sex," and various letters of advice to wives and daughters. Among the latter is one from Lady Pennington to her daughter, where the following books are the ones she is desired to read: "Tillotson's, Hadley's, Sherlock's, Clarke's, Seed's sermons; Locke; *Mason on Self-Knowledge*; Young's *Night Thoughts*; Seneca's *Morals*; Cicero's works; Collier's Antoninus, Epictetus, Leonidas; Pope's *Essay on Man*; Rapin's *History*; Hook's *Roman History*; Potter's *Antiquities*; *The Spectator*; *The Guardian*; Thompson's *Seasons*; Pope's *Translations*," etc.; and then follows: "Novels and romances never give yourself the trouble to read. Many of them contain some few good morals; they are not worth picking out of the rubbish intermixed. It is like searching for a few small diamonds among mountains of dirt and trash, which when found are too inconsiderable to answer the pains of coming at them; therefore I advise you never to meddle with this tribe of scribblers." What girl of sixteen nowadays would care for such a list and such advice, and would either read the one or follow the other?

After fourteen years of quiet happiness Antonio Zucchi died, and soon after Angelica lost the greater part of her fortune; but she wrote to a friend who offered assistance, "Poverty does not daunt me, but this solitude kills me." She resolutely set to work again, but her health and spirits suffered from her isolation; sympathy and approbation were necessary to her; and though she had friends, she suffered keenly from loneliness. There was no one to whom she was first in affection, and she had all her life been the object of devoted affection, first to her father, then to her husband. She sought change of scene, and visited



“THE SKETCHER.”—[FROM A PAINTING BY ANGELICA KAUFFMAN.]

Florence, Venice, etc., but with no good effect upon her health, and again returned to her beloved Rome, where she lived in retirement. When, at the end of the century, the French entered Rome, General Lespinasse sent her word she should be exempted from the necessity of furnishing lodging and rations for the soldiery. She thanked him, and asked to be allowed, in token of her appreciation of his kindness, to paint his portrait. This was one of the last of her finished works. She was soon after seized with a lingering disease; and a prey to weakness, pain, and loneliness, she, after a few years of languishing, died, November, 1807. She shared the inevitable lot: “Some days must be dark and dreary;” and with her trouble and sorrow came in age, when there is less strength to stand up against adversity.

The members of the “Academy of St. Luke’s” took charge of the funeral ceremonies. The artists and connoisseurs in Rome followed her coffin, and she was buried in S. Andrea delle Fratte; and in order to render her fitting homage, behind her coffin were borne, as was the custom of honoring the great masters, her last two works.

Many skillful engravers, among them Bartolozzi, Daw, Bettelini, have engraved her compositions, which are to be found all over Europe, from Ireland to Russia, where, in the “Hermitage” collection, are some of the best specimens. In the Louvre is a painting of “A Mother and Child,” only recently engraved. At Florence, in the same gallery with the portraits of Madame Le Brun and Maria Tintoretto, is Angelica’s likeness painted by herself, an engraving from which heads this article. She makes herself less regularly beautiful than do Reynolds and Gresse in their portraits, and she is probably truer to nature, for she was German by descent, and in consequence her features lacked the sharp, clear outline of the English type of beauty.

Among her jottings in note-books, of which she was fond, was found the following wise resolve, which is worthy of being remembered:

“One day when I found difficulty in portraying the head of Jehovah, as I felt it should be to be correct, I said to myself, ‘I will never again try to express supernatural things by the aid of human inspiration only; I will wait for them until I find myself in heaven, if indeed I am able to continue there my painting.’”