

# Old Age and Death

By Jacques Casanova

MEMOIRS OF JACQUES  
CASANOVA de SEINGALT 1725-  
1798 SPANISH PASSIONS, Volume  
6e--OLD AGE AND DEATH

THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA DE  
SEINGALT

THE RARE UNABRIDGED LONDON EDITION OF  
1894 TRANSLATED BY ARTHUR MACHEN TO  
WHICH HAS BEEN ADDED THE CHAPTERS  
DISCOVERED BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

# OLD AGE AND DEATH OF CASANOVA

## APPENDIX AND SUPPLEMENT

Whether the author died before the work was complete, whether the concluding volumes were destroyed by himself or his literary executors, or whether the MS. fell into bad hands, seems a matter of uncertainty, and the materials available towards a continuation of the Memoirs are extremely fragmentary. We know, however, that Casanova at last succeeded in obtaining his pardon from the authorities of the Republic, and he returned to Venice, where he exercised the honourable office of secret agent of the State Inquisitors--in plain language, he became a spy. It seems that the Knight of the Golden Spur made a rather indifferent "agent;" not surely, as a French writer suggests, because the dirty work was too dirty for his fingers, but probably because he was getting old and stupid and out-of-date, and failed to keep in touch with new forms of turpitude. He left Venice again and paid a visit to Vienna, saw beloved Paris once more, and there

met Count Wallenstein, or Waldstein. The conversation turned on magic and the occult sciences, in, which Casanova was an adept, as the reader of the Memoirs will remember, and the count took a fancy to the charlatan. In short Casanova became librarian at the count's Castle of Dux, near Teplitz, and there he spent the fourteen remaining years of his life.

As the Prince de Ligne (from whose Memoirs we learn these particulars) remarks, Casanova's life had been a stormy and adventurous one, and it might have been expected that he would have found his patron's library a pleasant refuge after so many toils and travels. But the man carried rough weather and storm in his own heart, and found daily opportunities of mortification and resentment. The coffee was ill made, the macaroni not cooked in the true Italian style, the dogs had bayed during the night, he had been made to dine at a small table, the parish priest had tried to convert him, the soup had been served too hot on purpose to annoy him, he had not been

introduced to a distinguished guest, the count had lent a book without telling him, a groom had not taken off his hat; such were his complaints. The fact is Casanova felt his dependent position and his utter poverty, and was all the more determined to stand to his dignity as a man who had talked with all the crowned heads of Europe, and had fought a duel with the Polish general. And he had another reason for finding life bitter--he had lived beyond his time. Louis XV. was dead, and Louis XVI. had been guillotined; the Revolution had come; and Casanova, his dress, and his manners, appeared as odd and antique as some "blood of the Regency" would appear to us of these days. Sixty years before, Marcel, the famous dancing-master, had taught young Casanova how to enter a room with a lowly and ceremonious bow; and still, though the eighteenth century is drawing to a close, old Casanova enters the rooms of Dux with the same stately bow, but now everyone laughs. Old Casanova treads the grave measures of the minuet; they applauded his dancing once, but now everyone laughs. Young Casanova was always

dressed in the height of the fashion; but the age of powder, wigs, velvets, and silks has departed, and old Casanova's attempts at elegance ("Strass" diamonds have replaced the genuine stones with him) are likewise greeted with laughter. No wonder the old adventurer denounces the whole house of Jacobins and canaille; the world, he feels, is permanently out of joint for him; everything is cross, and everyone is in a conspiracy to drive the iron into his soul.

At last these persecutions, real or imaginary, drive him away from Dux; he considers his genius bids him go, and, as before, he obeys. Casanova has but little pleasure or profit out of this his last journey; he has to dance attendance in ante-chambers; no one will give him any office, whether as tutor, librarian, or chamberlain. In one quarter only is he well received--namely, by the famous Duke of Weimar; but in a few days he becomes madly jealous of the duke's more famous proteges, Goethe and Wieland, and goes off declaiming against them and

German literature generally--with which literature he was wholly unacquainted. From Weimar to Berlin; where there are Jews to whom he has introductions. Casanova thinks them ignorant, superstitious, and knavish; but they lend him money, and he gives bills on Count Wallenstein, which are paid. In six weeks the wanderer returns to Dux, and is welcomed with open arms; his journeys are over at last.

But not his troubles. A week after his return there are strawberries at dessert; everyone is served before himself, and when the plate comes round to him it is empty. Worse still: his portrait is missing from his room, and is discovered 'salement placarde a la porte des lieux d'aisance'!

Five more years of life remained to him. They were passed in such petty mortifications as we have narrated, in grieving over his 'afreuse vieillesse', and in laments over the conquest of his native land Venice, once so splendid



and powerful. His appetite began to fail, and with it failed his last source of pleasure, so death came to him somewhat as a release. He received the sacraments with devotion, exclaimed,--

"Grand Dieu, et vous tous temoins de ma mort, j'ai vecu en philosophe, et je meurs en Chretien," and so died.

It was a quiet ending to a wonderfully brilliant and entirely useless career. It has been suggested that if the age in which Casanova lived had been less corrupt, he himself might have used his all but universal talents to some advantage, but to our mind Casanova would always have remained Casanova. He came of a family of adventurers, and the reader of his Memoirs will remark how he continually ruined his prospects by his ineradicable love for disreputable company. His "Bohemianism" was in his blood, and in his old age he regrets--not his past follies, but his inability to commit folly any longer. Now and again we are inclined to

pronounce Casanova to be an amiable man; and if to his generosity and good nature he had added some elementary knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong, he might certainly have laid some claim to the character. The Prince de Ligne draws the following portrait of him under the name of Aventuros:

"He would be a handsome man if he were not ugly; he is tall and strongly built, but his dark complexion and his glittering eyes give him a fierce expression. He is easier to annoy than amuse; he laughs little but makes others laugh by the peculiar turn he gives to his conversation. He knows everything except those matters on the knowledge of which he chiefly prides himself, namely, dancing, the French language, good taste, and knowledge of the world. Everything about him is comic, except his codices; and all his writings are philosophical, saving those which treat of philosophy. He is a perfect well of knowledge, but he quotes Homer and Horace ad nauseam."

SUPPLEMENT TO THE MEMOIRS OF JACQUES CASANOVA DE SEINGALT Containing an Outline of Casanova's career from the year 1774, when his own Memoirs abruptly end, until his death in 1798

# PART THE FIRST VENICE 1774-1782

## I CASANOVA'S RETURN TO VENICE

Thus Casanova ended his Memoirs, concluding his narrative with his sojourn at Trieste, in January 1774, where he had remained, except for a few excursions, since the 15th November 1772. He was forty-nine years of age. Since his unfortunate experiences in England, the loss of his fortune and the failure of his efforts to obtain congenial and remunerative employment in Germany or Russia, he had come to concentrate his efforts on a return to his native city.

Of his faithful friends, the nobles Bragadin, Barbaro and Dandolo, the first had died in 1767, having gone into debt "that I might have enough," sending Casanova, from his

death-bed, a last gift of a thousand crowns. Barbaro who had died also, in 1771, left Casanova a life-income of six sequins a month. The survivor, Dandolo, was poor, but until his death, he also gave Casanova a monthly provision of six sequins. However, Casanova was not without influential friends who might not only obtain a pardon from the State Inquisitors but also assist him to employment; and, in fact, it was through such influence as that wielded by the Avogador Zaguri and the Procurator Morosini, that Casanova received his pardon, and later, a position as "Confidant," or Secret Agent, to the Inquisitors at Venice.

Casanova re-entered Venice the 14th September 1774 and, presenting himself, on the 18th, to Marc-Antoine Businello, Secretary of the Tribunal of the Inquisitors of State, was advised that mercy had been accorded him by reason of his refutation of the History of the Venetian Government by Amelot de la Houssaie which he had written during his forty-two day imprisonment at

Barcelona in 1768. The three Inquisitors, Francesco Grimani, Francesco Sagredo and Paolo Bembo, invited him to dinner to hear his story of his escape from The Leads.

In 1772, Bandiera, the Republic's resident at Ancona, drew this portrait of Casanova:

"One sees everywhere this unhappy rebel against the justice of the August Council, presenting himself boldly, his head carried high, and well equipped. He is received in many houses and announces his intention of going to Trieste and, from there, of returning to Germany. He is a man of forty years or more," [in reality, forty-seven] "of high stature and excellent appearance, vigorous, of a very brown color, the eye bright, the wig short and chestnut-brown. He is said to be haughty and disdainful; he speaks at length, with spirit and erudition." [Letter of information to the Very Illustrious Giovanni Zon, Secretary of the August Council of Ten at Venice. 2

October 1772.]

Returning to Venice after an absence of eighteen years, Casanova renewed his acquaintance with many old friends, among whom were:

The Christine of the Memoirs. Charles, who married Christine, the marriage being arranged by Casanova while in Venice in 1747, was of financial assistance to Casanova, who "found him a true friend." Charles died "a few months before my last departure from Venice," in 1783.

Mlle. X---- C---- V----, really Giustina de Wynne, widow of the Count Rosenberg, Austrian Ambassador at Venice. "Fifteen years afterwards, I saw her again and she was a widow, happy enough, apparently, and enjoying a great reputation on account of her rank, wit and social qualities, but our connection was never renewed."

Callimena, who was kind to him "for love's sake alone" at

Sorrento in 1770.

Marcoline, the girl he took away from his younger brother, the Abby Casanova, at Geneva in 1763.

Father Balbi, the companion of his flight from The Leads.

Doctor Gozzi, his former teacher at Padua, now become Arch-Priest of St.George of the Valley, and his sister Betting. "When I went to pay him a visit . . . she breathed her last in my arms, in 1776, twenty-four hours after my arrival. I will speak of her death in due time."

Angela Toselli, his first passion. In 1758 this girl married the advocate Francesco Barnaba Rizzotti, and in the following year she gave birth to a daughter, Maria Rizzotti (later married to a M. Kaiser) who lived at Vienna and whose letters to Casanova were preserved at Dux.

C---- C----, the young girl whose love affair with



Casanova became involved with that of the nun M---- M--  
-- Casanova found her in Venice "a widow and poorly  
off."

The dancing girl Binetti, who assisted Casanova in his  
flight from Stuttgart in 1760, whom he met again in  
London in 1763, and who was the cause of his duel with  
Count Branicki at Warsaw in 1766. She danced  
frequently at Venice between 1769 and 1780.

The good and indulgent Mme. Manzoni, "of whom I shall  
have to speak very often."

The patricians Andrea Memmo and his brother Bernardo  
who, with P. Zaguri were personages of considerable  
standing in the Republic and who remained his constant  
friends. Andrea Memmo was the cause of the  
embarrassment in which Mlle. X---- C---- V---- found  
herself in Paris and which Casanova vainly endeavored to  
remove by applications of his astonishing specific, the