

GONE LIKE A DREAM.

GONE like a dream, those rambles sweet,
Through silent unfrequented ways,
When my young heart with rapture beat
And screened itself in beauty's rays—
Nestling beneath her gentle wing,
Exulting in her endless spring.

Gone like a dream, those fairy tones,
Whose music used to charm my ear;
My spirit still their magic owns,
I seem to hear them lingering here—
Here in this dim retired nook,
Beside the golden gravelled brook.

Gone like a dream, that loving smile,
That gladdened all on which it fell,
I deemed it innocent to guile,
But to that hope have bade farewell;
That smile is winsome as of yore,
But falls, alas! on me no more!

Gone like a dream—all, all are gone,
And I must live upon the past—
When happier hours upon me shone,
I sometimes felt they could not last;
I should forget, but in my breast
Are thoughts that will not let me rest.

T. B. DOVETON.

THE

TWO WIVES OF THE KING.

*Translated for the Saturday Reader from the
French of Paul Féval.*

Continued from page 219.

"At the place where I drove in my crystal poignard," said he, without in the least departing from his slow and grave style, "there was nothing but a grove of palms. I assumed a beggar's dress, and drawing a large stone there, to serve me as a seat, in my watchings for the commander of the faithful. I waited a little more than a year. He came at last, with his black eunuchs, and at the moment when I was about to spring forth, one of those pierced my breast with his scymeter. When I returned again to that place, where I had said the sultan or myself should die, a whole year had passed; for a whole year I had been stretched upon a mattress incapable of moving. There were no longer any palm trees there, for they had broken up the ground to establish the foundations of a mosque, and I heard the people of Bagdad say, that the kaliph Salim had built that temple to Allah, for having protected his life. I searched a long time for the place where I had thrust my crystal poignard and I found it exactly in the middle of the space reserved for the great door. All around this mosque, which was in course of erection, were numerous stone-cutters, preparing the ornaments for the windows, galleries and minarets. The Prophet inspired me; I quitted my beggar's clothes and immediately set about learning to cut stone. During four long years I lived in that temple, which was constantly growing over my head. It became my dwelling—I knew it stone by stone. I had become a skilful artisan—the master of the works spoke of me to the kaliph. Mark on what occasion."

God knows, Messire Amaury had no desire to know on what occasion the kaliph Salim had wished to speak to Mahmoud; but as Mahmoud did not often speak, he pretended to agree with him.

"Over the spot where I had thrust my crystal poignard," he continued, "the chief door of the mosque had reached the desired height—then nothing further was wanted than to carve and fit the key-stone of the arch. Twenty times already that key-stone had been cut and ornamented at great cost, according to the Persian rules of art; but on each occasion some demon that haunted the church had split and rent it to pieces."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Montruel out of all patience, "thinkest thou, maitre Jean Cadore, that I have time to stand here, listening to thy sleepy tales?"

"I waited seven years to kill the kaliph Salim," replied Mahmoud-el-Reis, with the most perfect tranquillity, "and I have only been at Paris a week. If thou hast no desire to serve me precisely as I wish to be served, let us separate. I can wait still."

"Speak, then," said Montruel, with resignation.

"The demon who burst that stone," said Mahmoud, who would not abate a word of his narrative, "was me! I had learnt in the kingdom of Kathay how to manufacture that terrible dust which bursts at the approach of fire, and bursts through every obstacle by its prodigious powers of expansion; I employed my nights in boring the key-stone. I filled up the hole with that dust of sulphur and saltpetre; then on the eve of the day upon which the stone was to be keyed, I lighted a match and the stone was rent asunder. The sultan said to me, 'Mahmoud-el-Reis, thou who art so skilful, wilt thou charge thyself with cutting a key-stone and adjusting it? If thou shouldst succeed, I will give thee twenty thousand sequins; but if thou shouldst fail thou shalt die under the baton.'

"I will charge myself with cutting the key-stone, and I will adjust it," I replied, 'if the king of kings, a sight of whom dazzles like the light of ten suns, will accord one favour to his humble slave.' And as the kaliph made me a sign to speak I added, while prostrating myself at his knees, 'There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet! The grace that I ask of the commander of the faithful is that he will assist with his sublime presence at the placing of my key-stone, keeping himself at the exact spot that I shall indicate.'

"For what object?" demanded Salim.

"Because the presence of God's favourite, like the presence of God himself, shall drive away all evil spirits and thwart their curses."

"I was a whole year cutting and preparing the stone, which was larger than the cube of the chamber in which we now stand. When it was finished I passed the whole night preceding the day upon which it was to be placed, watching over it, scymeter in hand. The following day all the officers of the court, the virgins, the priests, the doctors and the kadis were to accompany the kaliph Salim at the ceremony. All the musical instruments that Bagdad contained formed a concert to celebrate the long-expected completion of the mosque—Salim was full of joy and said to me—

"What place hast thou assigned me, Mahmoud-el-Reis? for I must acquit me of my promise as thou hast done of thine."

"I pointed to the place where I had first thrust my crystal poignard in the earth, seven years previously, on my first arrival at the city of Bagdad. The kaliph placed himself on the spot, under a canopy of Cashmeres, borne up by sixteen slaves. At a signal from my hand the ropes tightened in their pulleys, the enormous stone left the ground and became poised in air. I was on the crown of the arch and had a sharp scymeter concealed under my clothing. When the stone arrived over the canopy of Cashmeres, I seized my scymeter and called loudly, three times before the stupefied crowd, upon the dreaded name of Mahommed, the lord of the mountain. Then my sharp steel severed the ropes and the great stone fell, crushing everybody that was under the Cashmere canopy. Dost thou now understand, messire Amaury," resumed the Syrian, changing his tone "why I have told thee this long story?"

"Not yet," replied Montruel.

"I have told it thee," continued Mahmoud, "because here in Paris, as in Bagdad, I feel myself too weak against a sovereign surrounded by his guards. And because to succeed before him, I require a longer arm than the poignard of my order; because I wish to have, without further delay, if thou canst bring Phillip Augustus here to me, under the portals of Notre Dame, at the day and hour that I shall indicate."

Montruel reflected a moment; this fashion of killing the king seemed to please him more than we can tell. He had a certain repugnance to opening the door of the king's chamber, which was confided to his care; but a stone falling from the scaffolding of Notre Dame; that re-

sembled an accident so much, that the easy conscience of messire Amaury found itself suddenly at ease. In his joy he extended his hand to Mahmoud-el-Reis, who kept his own crossed upon his breast.

"A good idea!" said he without noticing this proof of Mahmoud's disdain, "a good idea, mon compaignon! I cannot bring the king under the portals of Notre Dame at the precise day and date that thou shalt indicate; but I can tell thee before hand at what day and hour the king will pass under those portals. Does not that amount to the same thing?"

"That will do as well," replied Mahmoud.

"Ah, well, then, since this business is arranged," said Montruel, with vivacity, "we come now to the promise thou hast made me; thou knowest not what I suffer, mon compaignon—thou knowest not the madness that consumes me. It is now eight days since I have seen her who is my passion, my happiness, my desire, my hope—my whole being—since I live in her and for her."

"It is eight days since I saw her, and I have counted the hours and the minutes of the hours of all these days! Thou hast lately told me—I remember it well, mon compaignon, that thou also wert suffering from the absence of some one—that thou wast a body without soul—ever since thy departure from the pure one. Ah! well! I adore that woman as thou adorest Dilah! thy well-beloved!"

Mahmoud-el-Reis frowned.

"Christian," murmured he, "never pronounce the name of Dilah; and, above all, never compare her to that woman!"

Montruel turned pale, and his lips trembled; for of all outrages that is the most cruel which is addressed to the object we love. He, however, made an effort to suppress the reply that came to his lips.

Mahmoud had crossed the work-shed, and was standing before his statue contemplating it with a respectful love. "I was the cause of that!" he murmured in a voice soft as melody. "Pardon me, Dilah, treasure of my life! It was me, imprudent fool that I was for giving them thy name. It was me who had no fear of profaning my heart by showing them thy image. Pardon me, Dilah! those who have heard thy name shall not repeat it anymore; and I swear to thee an oath, that they shall never possess thine image." These two last phrases died upon his lips.

Montruel did not hear them.

Mahmoud drew a curtain, and the image of Dilah disappeared suddenly behind that veil.

CHAPTER IX.

"Time passes," said Montruel, "am waiting."

"I am ready," replied Mahmoud. "Thou hast not told me how thou wouldst introduce me near the princess Ingeburge?" At the name of Ingeburge, pronounced for the first time, a rustling noise was heard behind the wall of the work-shed.

Mahmoud listened attentively, though taking care to preserve his calm; Montruel trembled and rushed hastily towards the window.

"Has anybody overheard us?" said he, full of fear.

"Look," said the Syrian

Montruel stretched himself as far as he could out of the opening, but could see nothing but a forest of unfinished clustered columns and stones, lying pell-mell, waiting to be placed in position.

"There was nobody," said he, drawing his body back again into the shed; by way of caution, however, he closed the shutters of the window.

"Is access so very difficult to the convent that contains queen Ingeburge?" said the Syrian.

"Nearly impossible."

"Even for thee, the favourite of Phillip Augustus?"

"Even for me."

"They tell me that there is an infirmary at the convent."

"It is true," replied Montruel, seizing that idea impetuously.

"But," added he, on further reflection, thou art not ill."

"I can become so."