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THE FOUNTAIN OF TEARS.

BY ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY

If you travel o'er desert and mountain,
Far into the country of sorrow,
To-day, and to-night, and to-morrow,
And may be for months and for years,
You shall come, with a heart that is burst-

Very peaceful the place is, and solely
For piteous lamenting and sighing
And those who come living or dying
Alike from their hope and their fears;
Full of cyprus-like shadows the place is,
And statues that cover their faces;
But out of the gloom springs the holy
And beautiful Fountain of Tears.

And it flows, and it flows with a motion
So gentle and lovely and listless,
And murmurs a tune so restless
To him who hath suffered and weeps,
You shall surely, without a word spoken,
Kneel down there and know you're heart-
broken
And yield to the long-curbed emotion,
That day by the Fountain of Tears.

THE AMULET.

CHAPTER XI.

FOOD AT LAST—DEATH OF JULIO.

(CONTINUED.)

A horrible conviction forced itself upon Geronimo's mind. Julio had sought in drink the courage necessary to accomplish the work which fate exacted of him. He had thus drowned his senses, and had come now to slay his victim without mercy.

The thought for the moment roused his fears; but he remembered that he had just offered to God his life in expiation of his sins. He retired to the other side of the cellar, knelt by the side of the grave, and with a smile upon his lips and his eyes lifted to heaven, he calmly awaited the fatal blow.

He heard Julio trying to insert the key in the lock as if his hand were unsteady. He noticed that there was no anger in his tone of voice; on the contrary, the cries which escaped him were rather those of alarm and distress; but before he had time for reflection the door opened.

Julio put down the lamp as if his strength had entirely failed him, and fell upon the ground, exclaiming in a supplicating voice:

"O signor, help! help! I am poisoned! A burning fire consumes me! Take pity on me! For the love of God, deliver me from this torture!"

"Poisoned!" exclaimed Geronimo, hastening to Julio. "What has happened to you? The mark of death is on your face!"

"Simon Turchi gave me last night poisoned wine, in order to destroy the witness who could prove your death by his hand. He paid Buffero to assassinate you. He wishes to marry Mary Van de Werve, and he desires to remove any cause of fear that his happiness may be disturbed. Ah! the poison consumes me!"

"Tell me Julio, what I can do for your relief."

Saying this, he knelt by Julio, and threw open his doublet to give him air: "Thanks, thanks, O my God! here is bread!" exclaimed Geronimo, almost wild with joy, and snatching with feverish haste the small loaf which Julio had concealed, and which he had entirely forgotten since his fatal stupor.

The young man, absorbed in satisfying his devouring hunger, no longer heeded Julio's complaints, but having soon appeased its cravings, he took his hands saying:

"I bless you, Julio, and may the omnipotent God reward you in heaven. Tell me what I can do to save you. Set me at liberty, and I will fly for physician and priest. The keys—quick, the keys!"

"Alas!" said Julio, in a hopeless voice, "my cruel murderer took from me the keys of the door. We are shut up in the building. But I cannot die thus, consumed by poison, without confession, without hope of pardon for my soul! Go up-stairs, signor, call aloud, brake open the door, wrest the iron bars from the windows. Collect all your strength, take pity on me and help me!"

Geronimo seized the keys, and, lighted by the lamp, he hastily traversed the subterranean passage, and mounted the staircase.

The gray dawn was appearing in the east, but to the eyes of the young man so long accustomed to utter darkness it

was almost as bright as noonday.

Convinced that Julio's condition demanded immediate aid, Geronimo hastily tried all the keys in the exterior door, pulled all the bolts, endeavoured to wrench the door from the hinges, and worked with so much energy that at last he fell from weakness.

Taking a short rest, he arose, threw up the windows, shook the iron bars, ran up stairs and called aloud for help. But all his efforts were useless—the pavilion was too far removed from any habitation to permit him to indulge the hope that his voice, weak as it was, could be heard.

In running through the building—almost maddened by despair—to seek an outlet, he entered the kitchen, where he perceived a vessel full of water. The sight filled him with joy. Perhaps water, taken in large quantities, might deaden the effects of the poison and save Julio's life. At any rate, he had no other remedy, and as it was his only hope, he grasped at it as if it were an inspiration from heaven.

Filling a pitcher, he ran with it to the cellar, and radiant with joy, approached Julio, who had barely strength to ask in a feeble voice:

"Is the priest coming? Will the doctor be here? Ah! it is too late!"

"Drink," said Geronimo, holding the pitcher to his lips; "the water will cool the inflammation and refresh you."

Julio took the water.

"Thank you, signor; it is useless, the water does me no good."

"Take more, I beg you, Julio,—as much as you can."

Julio obeyed mechanically and nearly emptied the pitcher. His respiration became very labored, and the sweat ran in big drops from his brow.

"Do you feel better, Julio?" asked the young man.

"A little better; the heat is not so burning."

"There is still hope," exclaimed Geronimo, joyfully. "Take courage Julio; have confidence in the mercy of God. When all human aid fails us, then God gives his omnipotent assistance."

"But, said Julio, "my heart beats so feebly, my limbs are numbened. Signor, I am dying. The poison is killing me."

"Die? Julio! You have delivered me from death, and shall I be powerless to save you? What shall I do? O my God what can I try?"

"Think no more of it, signor," said the dying man. "I feel that there is no hope. Alas. I was partly the cause of your bitter sufferings: I pushed you into the chair; I intended to kill you, the deliver of my blind mother. Take pity on me. Let not your just malediction follow my poor soul into eternity. Pardon me, signor, pardon."

"Speak not thus, Julio. But for you, that yawning grave would now cover my corpse. Shall I refuse pardon to you who spared my life? No; I will pray for you, I will give alms for the repose of your soul. Have confidence in the goodness of God."

"Confidence?" said Julio, in a dying voice. "I shudder to think of the judgment which awaits me. In this, my death agony, I see with frightful clearness. I dare not hope in God's mercy. I have done nothing to merit it. A dark veil is before my eyes."

The death-rattle was in his throat!

Geronimo passed his arm around his neck and raised his head, and seeing Julio's eyes fixed upon him, he said, tenderly and fervently.

"Julio listen to me. You say you dare not hope in the mercy of God. Have you forgotten that Jesus Christ shed his blood to redeem fallen man? Do you not know that there is joy before the angels when a sinner, by sincere repentance, escapes the eternal enemy of man and enters triumphant into heaven. You repent, do you not. You sincerely repent."

Julio bowed affirmatively.

"Ah!" exclaimed Geronimo, "if I cannot save your body from death, at least let me keep your soul from eternal torments. Oh! if I could thus repay the debt of gratitude I owe you! Julio were God to prolong your life, would you renounce evil and return courageously and sincerely to the path of duty and virtue? You say yes? You implore God's mercy, do you not? You have

confidence in the inexhaustible treasure of his goodness? Then Julio, raise your dying eyes to heaven, direct your last thoughts to Him who is the source of all mercy, and with full confidence let your soul wing its flight to the supreme tribunal. Already from the highest heaven God absolves the repentant sinner!"

A triumphant hope illumined the countenance of Julio as he endeavored to raise his eyes to heaven.

"Saved—his soul is saved!" exclaimed Geronimo, transported with pious joy.

A slight convulsion passed over the limbs of Julio, his muscles became paralyzed, his head fell heavily on Geronimo's shoulder, and drawing his last breath he murmured almost unintelligibly:

"Mercy! O my God!"

"He is dead!" said Geronimo. "May the soul receive my fraternal embrace in its passage to eternity! May this mark of reconciliation weigh in the balance of eternal justice!"

He bent over the dead, but as it contact with the corpse had deprived him of his little remaining strength, he fell as it were lifeless. Not a limb moved, his arms dropped motionless his eyes closed it seemed that his soul had also taken its flight to heaven to accompany the soul of Julio before God's judgement-seat.

CHAPTER XII

IS IT HIS GHOST?—THE GUILTY EXPOSED.

It was scarcely eight o'clock in the morning when Signor Deodati was on his way to the residence of Mr. Van de Werve.

The old merchant was walking very slowly, with his eyes cast down. From time to time he shook his head, as if disturbed by painful thoughts. His countenance expressed dissatisfaction rather than sorrow; indeed, it might even be said to indicate angry and bitter feelings.

The servant who opened the door ushered him into a parlor and went to call his master. Deodati threw himself into a chair, covered his face with his hands; and was so absorbed in thought that he was not aware of Mr. Van de Werve's entrance.

"Good morning, signor," said the Flemish notie, saluting him. "Your early visit encourages me to hope that you have news of our poor Geronimo."

"Bad news, Mr. Van de Werve, bad news," said the old man, with tearful eyes. "Sit down near me, for I have not power to raise my voice."

"I notice, signor that you are very pale. Are you ill?"

"My emotion has its origin in something worse than illness. Day before yesterday Signor Turchi asserted in your presence that Geronimo had lost a considerable sum at play and that he had fled the country to escape my just indignation. Great as was my confidence in Turchi, I could not credit the truth of this revelation. I determined to seek in my nephew's accounts the marks of ingratitude, or rather the proofs of his innocence. I passed a portion of the night in calculating over and over again; for the invariable result was so frightful that my mind and heart refused to accept the evidence of my senses. The sum lost in gambling by my nephew is incredible."

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Van de Werve "then the Signor Turchi was not mistaken in his suspicions?"

"Ten thousand crowns," said Deodati sighing.

"Ten thousand crowns," replied Mr. Van de Werve. "Impossible. That is a fortune of itself."

"And yet it is true. There is a deficit of ten thousand crowns in the money vault of the house, and there are exactly ten thousand crowns unaccounted for on the books. Not a line, not a mark refers in any manner to the employment or destination of this sum. Evidently it must have been used otherwise than in the business transactions of the house, and as Geronimo himself told the Signor Turchi that he had lost a considerable sum at play, I am forced in spite of myself to admit the painful truth. Ten thousand crowns. Can neither virtue nor fidelity be found upon earth? A child whom I treated as my own son, whom I loved with blind affection, and over whose welfare I would have watch-

ed as long as I lived. And this is the return for all my love. Ah, signor, this ingratitude is like a dagger in my heart.

Mr. Van de Werve gazed abstractedly as if in deep thought. Then he said seriously:

"You are truly unhappy, signor, and I commiserate your sorrow. How can it be possible? All is deceit and perfidy. Geronimo seemed the soul of virtue and loyalty; he lived with so much economy and conducted himself so honorably, that to those who knew him not he might have appeared either a poor man or a precocious miser. And this tranquil, modest, prudent young man loses at the gaming table ten thousand crowns, the property of his benefactor. His laudable course of conduct was but a base hypocrisy."

"And nevertheless," murmured the old Deodati, "my unfortunate nephew had a pure and loving heart. Might not his blindness have been the effect of one solitary momentary error? Perhaps so. Man sometimes meets fatal temptations which attract him irresistibly, but to which he yields only once in his life."

"Why then did he fly, and thus acknowledge his guilt? No, signor, no excuse can palliate such misdeeds. I burn with indignation at the thought that such signal favors have met with such cold and base ingratitude. The idea of affliction restrains me from speaking of the outrage done my daughter. Fortunately, the reputation and social position of my family is such as to screen it from the consequences of such an act. But, signor, I hope you agree with me that there can no longer be a question of an alliance between my daughter and your nephew. He may return and obtain your pardon, but that will not change my determination. From this day forward the Signor Geronimo is as a stranger whom we have never known."

Deodati regarded the irritated nobleman with tearful eyes, and seemed to deprecate the inflexible decree.

Mr. Van de Werve took his hand, and said in a calmer tone:

"Be reasonable, signor, and do not let yourself be blinded by affection. What a dishonor to my name, were I to permit a man with so tarnished a reputation to enter my family. Could I confide the happiness of my good and noble child to one who was not withdrawn from a culpable love of play by life-long benefits? Could I accept as my son a man whom I could not esteem, whom on the contrary I would despise for his ingratitude to you? Acknowledge with me that such a union is impossible, and let us talk no more of it. Be still my friend, however, as long as you remain at Antwerp."

The merchant shook his head, and after a few moments silence, he replied:

"Alas, I ought to admit that there is no hope of realizing this honorable alliance. What happiness Geronimo has staked on the cast of a die. I thank you Mr. Van de Werve for your proffered friendship, but I shall not remain at Antwerp. To-day I shall beg Simon Turchi to settle up the affairs of the house in this city. Now that I have no one in the world to care for, none for whom to work and amass money, I shall retire from commerce. I have ordered the "Il Salvatore," to be provisioned, and I shall set sail by the first favorable wind."

"You are right, signor. By returning to your own beautiful country, you will the sooner forget this misfortune."

"God knows when I will revisit my country," replied the old man.

"Are you not going to Italy?" demanded Mr. Van de Werve.

"No, sir; but to England."

"In search of your nephew. Signor Turchi led us to suppose that he had sought refuge in that island. I admire your unbounded love for a man so little deserving of it; but signor you require rest. Follow my advice; go to Italy, and do not shorten your life by the sorrows which may await you in England."

"The advice is no doubt good," replied Deodati; "but I cannot follow it. However guilty he may be, Geronimo is the only son of my deceased brother, whom I promised on his death bed to watch over his child as if he were my own. Were I to abandon Geronimo entirely, he might be pushed by want and misery into the path of vice, perhaps of infamy. I will fulfil my duty to the last. If I love him less than formerly, at least I will save him from utter ruin."

(TO BE CONTINUED)