

death, but Mahoney and his colleagues were discharged. Tyrants are as ungrateful as they are despotic. When they cease to have use for a man whom they bought for a consideration, they fling him aside contemptuously until occasion again arises to use him.

About ten o'clock Rejvasm left the shanty, apparently well pleased, as he grinned his broadest grin, and continued to grin, and wink and chuckle all the way home.

(To be continued.)

RACHEL AND AIXA;

OR,

The Hebrew and the Moorish Maidens.

AN INTERESTING HISTORICAL TALE.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Discovery.

Four hours after their departure, the five brothers re-entered the Alcazar, and deposited the body of Rachel on a divan in the oratory. Diego Lopez related the particulars of their expedition to the king with the concise simplicity of true courage.

Don Pedro thanked his foster-brothers and embraced them; they then retired, and the king remained alone with the corpse. There was something awful in this reunion of the lover with his mistress, wrapped in a winding-sheet.

"Is it thus then that I am doomed to see you again, Rachel?" murmured he; "you, who appeared to me, in the forest of Cardona, like a heavenly vision, radiant with beauty and health!" After some moments, he ventured hesitatingly to approach the recumbent body. How lovely she still is! he whispered. "Death has not yet dared to mar her beauty, but how maddening to reflect that her sweet and touching look will never more be fixed on me; that I shall never again hear the silvery tones of her melodious voice. A thousand times happy was he whom she loved—that happy man was myself; and I suffered her to depart. I sacrificed her to that haughty and enraged woman, who loves in Don Pedro only his diadem and sceptre. Like a foolish child, who breaks his toy, I allowed her to leave me, and thus chased away my own happiness."

He leant towards her in a transport of passion, and then drew back, as if afraid of his own delirium. "Whence comes the sudden dread that overpowers me?" said he, to himself, pressing his hand on his throbbing heart. "Is it then a profanation—a sacrilege—to believe that the soul yet lives in an icy covering? No! though Rachel be dead, she will hear me—she will know I love her—she will carry to the grave the avowal of my love!"

He then boldly leant forward, and his trembling lips lightly touched the cheek of the Jewess. Was it an illusion? Rachel's face was not cold! Don Pedro regarded her with a wild look. "Will Heaven perform a miracle?" cried he. "Should Rachel live, this world, which seemed a desert, would be radiated with a new light!" He seized the hands of the young girl—they became moist in his. Don Pedro fell on his knees; "Thanks, merciful Heaven, thanks!" said he. "I have found again my guardian angel; my life is not yet without hope—I can struggle—Rachel will support my courage—Rachel will calm my anxieties; I will repose with confidence on that devoted heart. Know then, Don Enrique, that if the man is beloved, the king will have strength to combat."

In the meantime Rachel sighed, as if an indescribable weight oppressed her bosom; her half-opened eyes cast vague looks around her. Don Pedro, transported with joy, watched this awakening with breathless emotion.

"It is a dream!" murmured she; "I no longer recognize my father's house. Oh! how long and painful my sleep has been!"

She half-raised herself on the divan, and by an effort passed her hand over her forehead. "But no," she continued, "I recollect myself—I was in the vault of my father's house like a corpse—I could neither cry, speak, nor see; but I heard—oh, the horrid words that I heard! Oh, if I yet had time to warn Don Pedro! But how to reach him?"

"Don Pedro is near you," said the king softly, showing himself.

"You here!—you alive!" cried the Jewess, overcome with emotion, and shaking off the torpor that yet benumbed her lips. "Heaven be praised! I never expected to see you again."

"Fear nothing on my account, Rachel, my enemies have not yet laid hold of me," said the king; "in this Alcazar I am safe."

"Ah, you think so!" said the Jewess. "But take care, sire, Oh, my dream! But was it only a dream? Smile not, Don Pedro; dreams are sometimes prophetic, and should not be despised."

She pressed her hands to her forehead as if to bring to her mind some confused and painful recollection.

"But how came I here?" demanded she, all at once.

"The report of your death was brought to me," he replied, "and I would not believe it; but, knowing that you were surrounded by traitors and fanatics capable of revenging themselves on me through you, and restless and suffering through your absence, I had you secretly carried off from your father's house."

"Ah! now I remember all," said Rachel, with a movement of terror. "The most disaffected of our brethren crowded the vault where I slept on a funeral bier. Strange to say,

though my eyelids were closed, and in spite of all my efforts, I could not raise them, yet I saw, as in a dream, all that passed around me. In the midst of the conspirators, and towering above them by their tall statures and haughty bearing, were two men, habited in bright armor; one was the renegade, Esau, the other that fresbooter, Captain Burdett, who so cruelly tortured your old nurse, Paloma."

"These men would not have dared to introduce themselves into this city, Rachel," interrupted Don Pedro. "Banish such ideas from your mind; they are caused by the recollection of the terrible scenes, at which, unfortunately, you were present as well as myself."

"Oh! how incredulous you are, Don Pedro," cried the Jewess; "how are the minutest details of that dream engraven on my memory! Beside me stood a woman who frequently placed her hand on my heart, as if to detect its pulsation. I seemed to feel it shrink and writhe under that hand. Then there was a noise of threatening voices and confused cries. Men spoke of vengeance, and your name was mingled in all their threatening discourse."

Rachel made a fresh effort of memory, to recall the details that escaped her. "I know not," said she, "how long my sleep lasted. The conspirators were to act on the morrow, and the morrow was Sunday."

"Then it is to-day the plot is to be carried out," said Don Pedro, smiling.

"To-day!" repeated Rachel. "Oh, you will undoubtedly think me very foolish and timid, but I beseech you, sire, to relinquish that tax you have levied on the Jews. Do not irritate them."

"But, without that money, my beautiful supplicant, it will be impossible for me any longer to oppose the enemy. All that would remain for me would be to break my sword, cast away my crown, and take to flight from the contempt and hootings of my soldiers. Would you love me then, Rachel, albeit I should have played the coward for and through you? No, you would despise me; and you would do right."

"But if the Jews betray you, Don Pedro, if they open the gates of their quarter to the dis-banded soldiers of the usurper?"

"It would be one quarter of the city lost to me," answered the king, undauntedly; "but it matters not so long as I can defend the Alcazar, that impregnable fortress, where the most faithful and the bravest of my adherents are collected. Ought I then to dishonor myself?"

"Oh, if you believe you are able to prolong your resistance until succours arrive, you do right in disregarding my prayer, Don Pedro," said the Jewess, sadly. "It is not Rachel who will ever advise you to a cowardly act. Believe me, your honor is dear to me. I cannot act, it is true, like those proud and haughty Christian women, who willingly sacrifice the lives of those they love to a puerile desire for fame, to the hazardous chances of a chivalrous exploit—I could never throw my glove into the arena that you might go and tear it from the claws of a furious lion. These are aristocratic amusements and enjoyments which the vulgar mind of a poor Jewess cannot comprehend. Conquered and a fugitive, I would not despise you; I would follow you as a faithful servant, and I would participate in your fatigues and perils. The daughter of Samuel Ben Livi has not been brought up with such high and haughty sentiments that she could ever place her pride above the welfare of her king. Despisio you, because you were wandering and proscribed? Ah, you little know my heart, Don Pedro; it is only then I should dare to love you, as I should then no longer see in you a king who must render an account of his whole existence to his subjects, and whom one dare not love but from afar, and with fear and trembling. It is then I could love you from the bottom of my soul, as a man who could receive comfort from my presence and my cares."

"Do you then really love me, Rachel?" exclaimed Don Pedro, in a transport of delight and affection; "your words soothe my lacerated heart like a rare and precious balsam. If I wish again to become a powerful king, it would be to secure to you a life of splendour and happiness. Noble girl! were you then destined to the constrained and monotonous existence of the women of your race?—destined to the alliance of some obscure trader who could have appreciated neither your marvellous beauty nor your angelic heart? In that proscribed life you speak of, I should yet find more happiness than in the midst of the hateful circle of my courtiers; it is, my Rachel, because I have never before been loved but for my state and title of king, that my heart is seared. I could always detect some interested motive, something sinister hidden under the gross flatteries, the base adulation with which they sought to betray me. Kings are envied slaves, whose chain is a crown. We must render an account to our inspectors of every pulsation of the heart, of every wish, of every thought. We cannot, without being considered criminal, escape for an hour from the affectionate espionage of those courtiers, who are at once our slaves and our judges."

"Poorking!" said the Jewess, affectionately regarding him.

"I have never had," continued Don Pedro, mournfully, "one hour of the calm and happy freedom that the humblest of my subjects enjoys on the straw pallet of his wretched hut, for no one troubles himself about his existence, or dreams of molesting him. No, I have always kept a mask on my face, and if ever I have

removed it to smile frankly on the woman whom I thought I could love, that woman, the instrument of party intrigue, has ever played on my credulity, and endeavored to obtain some new favor from the King of Castile. It was only after our rencontre, Rachel, in the forest of Cardona, that I felt myself actually beloved. I was a fugitive, I was pursued; but, instead of my heart being full of anguish—shall I avow it?—I was happy!"

"Alas! how could I hide from you that I loved you?" replied the Jewess, trembling. "Why are we not both free, wandering under the sun and green trees, like the gypsies of the fields? We should be happy in suffering together—I, in serving you; you, in defending me. We should owe our daily subsistence to our skill and courage. But heaven will not grant so much felicity to poor mortals; fate will compel us to separate, for the king will remain in his Alcazar, and the Jewess must return to the humble dwelling of her father."

"Never!" exclaimed Don Pedro, impetuously. "At that moment some one knocked at the door of the oratory. The king going himself to open it, Diego Lopez appeared on the threshold."

"Sire," said the latter, "Samuel Ben Levi desires to speak with you."

Rachel started at hearing the name of her father pronounced.

"He has brought with him," added Lopez, "four large chests, containing the marabolins that his brethren of the Jewry have hastened to furnish for the expenses of the siege."

"Let Master Samuel be made welcome," answered Don Pedro. "Let him and his chests enter the Alcazar."

Rachel uttered a piercing shriek, and sprang in advance of Diego Lopez.

"Do not let Samuel enter, I pray, sire," she cried, "for it will be the signal for your destruction, and probably for your death."

"What mean these mysterious words," asked the king, astonished.

The Jewess regarded him with a vacant stare—a thousand confused thoughts crossed her brain—her reason seemed to wander. At length a sudden light flashed across her mind.

"In what you call my dream, Don Pedro," said she, "there was mention made of chests and armed men—oh! now I remember—I can tell you all—but before I continue, promise me, sire, safety for my father first, then for Esau."

"That miserable spy who had the audacity to love you?" interrupted the king.

"Esau has sworn to me to attempt nothing against your life or crown, Don Pedro," replied Rachel, gravely.

"You have, then, seen him again?" said the king.

"And if he has broken his oath," continued the Jewess, without noticing the interruption, "it is because he wished to avenge me, for he must have believed that poison was administered to kill me, and that it came from the Alcazar."

"The renegade has formed a high opinion of me," said Don Pedro; "but it does not matter; both Samuel and Esau shall be sacred to me, not a hair of their heads shall be touched."

"Well, sire, then learn the whole plot," said the young girl. "The Jews have engaged to deliver to the followers of Calverley the gates of their quarter, when that woman, whom I have already mentioned, advised them to do better—to strike a decisive blow—in short, to get access themselves into the Alcazar."

"The proposition was a bold one," observed the king, feigning to smile; "but the execution would be somewhat difficult."

"She offered to facilitate their attempt," replied Rachel, quickly. "It was then decided, in conformity with her counsels, that under the pretext of bringing into the palace the sums necessary to defray the war tax, several chests, filled with armed men, were to be brought hither instead; they were to seize your person, sire, and deliver you, dead or alive, to Don Enrique."

"And who was that woman?" demanded the king, inflamed with uncontrolable indignation.

"That woman who rejoiced at my death," answered the Jewess, "and who coolly conspired to bring about your destruction—need I name her? You will surely guess the traitor by the act."

"Aixa!" said the king, sorrowfully; "it is she," and turning towards Diego, who had remained stationary at the door; "you have heard," said he, "and now know what is to be done."

"Old Samuel shall be introduced into the armory, into which I shall have these precious chests brought," replied the foster brother. "You can come when you choose and settle your accounts with your worthy treasurer."

"It is well; I will come," said Don Pedro; "but first inform the daughter of Mohamed that I await her here. We shall see, if, spite of my appellation of the Just, I can draw any trickery or lying avowal from that unworthy creature." Then taking the hand of Rachel he led her behind the tapestry that covered the door of the treasury, desiring her not to show herself until the moment he invoked her name as a witness against the Morisca.

Aixa was not long before she appeared, and Don Pedro received her with a calm and smiling countenance.

"I am as submissive to your orders as a slave," said the favorite, drily; "you sent for me; I have come immediately."

"It was not a command, but a request,"

replied the king; "I have committed wrongs against you which I would redress, not add new ones. I knew your fierce and indomitable spirit, your generous and devoted heart, and I ought not have given way to unjust anger against a loyal and faithful friend. Forgive me, Aixa, misfortune has soured me. It is when my best friends are failing me that I feel the want of those to lean on, who are incapable of abandoning me, and you are one of them, I believe?"

"Ah, you read my heart aright," said the favorite, with a strange smile.

Don Pedro was not deceived by this show of sincerity; he remarked that the Morisca had stealthily drawn near the open window, from which she could see Samuel, busily occupied, while awaiting the king's orders, in sending away the almos averaged archers, who were eyeing, curiously, the chests.

"Do you not admire the haste that the good Samuel has made in collecting the tax which I levied on his brethren?" asked Don Pedro.

"It is because your treasurer is also one of your most faithful friends."

"You still advise me then to have full confidence in him," said the king.

"Well, unless you mistrust yourself, I do not see how you can doubt the devotedness of a man, who, though he might have delivered the gates of the Jewry into the hands of Don Enrique, has preferred persuading his brethren to sacrifice their wealth, in order to promote your cause."

"Good actions affect you, Aixa, because you have a generous heart capable of comprehending them. Yet see how easily a woman may be duped in political affairs. This excellent Samuel, whom you have adorned with so much virtue, has, nevertheless, this night fulfilled your former prediction concerning him."

"What prediction?" demanded the favorite, with vague uneasiness.

"Have you already forgotten it, Aixa?" said Don Pedro; "your memory then is as light as your heart. This fanatic has committed an act common enough at present. He has sold his master."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Aixa, whose countenance assumed a livid hue.

"Impossible? That is almost giving me the lie," said Don Pedro, sternly; "yet," he added, "you must know the truth better than any one."

"How? What mean you, Don Pedro?"

"I am informed," answered the king, "that, indignant at the little attention I paid to your eloquence yesterday, you harangued the conspirators, and arranged the plot."

"It is an infamous falsehood!" said she, in a harsh and passionate voice.

"They also assure me that your proposition met with brilliant success," added Don Pedro.

"But you do not credit these calumnies, sire."

"Nay, why deny the truth?" answered the king. "You see I know all; must I repeat your own expressions? You exhibited talents at Samuel's that I did not know you possessed, and which I know not how sufficiently to appreciate."

"A truce to sarcasm!" exclaimed the furious Morisca, her eyes inflamed, her countenance distorted, and unconsciously tearing away the pearls which encircled her light blue bodice. "Where is the wretch who dares to accuse me? Let him come and maintain his statement before the woman he has so treacherously outraged!"

"You wish to see a witness of your high deeds, beautiful Aixa," said the king; "it is a desire I can satisfy." And advancing to the tapestry which he drew aside, he added, "Behold your accuser; contradict her if you can."

"Rachel!" exclaimed the favorite, thunder-struck at that apparition, and retreating alarmed before the immovable Jewess.

"Rachel, whose testimony you feared not, as you thought her dead," said he, in a serious tone; "Rachel, who has arisen from her funeral bed to save her king from the cruel snare you spread for him."

While he spoke the Morisca gradually recovered his assurance. "So you act the part of a dead person to hide that of a spy," replied she, with an insulting air. "Ah, you perfectly understand these matters. You will ultimately prostrate yourself at my feet, for you are not sure of your triumph. Now, you menace me and stand forth as my accuser, because you hope without difficulty to ruin me; but Don Pedro is not so blind as to condemn me without proof. Your accusation is a base falsehood."

"A falsehood," repeated Rachel, sadly, "I wish it were, madam. I wish that all which passed some hours since were but a dream. But you well know I speak truth. It is for you this time to bend, not before the poor Jewess, but before the King of Castile, with a face crimsoned with shame. If I laid myself at your feet the other day, it was neither from weakness nor shame, proud Aixa, but I thought you loved Don Pedro, and I would not become a stumbling-block between you and an obstacle to his welfare. I thought you respected the affectionate tie that united you to the king; and that jealousy once annihilated in your heart, you would continue to love, and loyally to serve your lord. You, on the contrary, rejoiced in breaking my heart devoted to Don Pedro. What you have done is horrible! You—a noble lady—a princess—have feigned to love, the better to blind, to deceive, and to betray him. Your smiles, your looks, your honeyed words, all were false, the only object was to deliver up your unarméd lover to his enemies. Are these the sentiments with which

the pride of your noble race inspires you?"

"Believe not that woman," interrupted the favorite, turning with a desperate air towards Don Pedro, "she accuses me because she hates me; and the reason she hates me is that she knows that I love you, and am jealous."

"You love the king!" exclaimed the Jewess, with a melancholy smile. "She who loves abandons not her lover in the day of trouble. She thinks not of exacting from him treatise shameful for his glory; a degrading abjuration is not made the price of her love. It is not your jealousy that I detest; jealous and sincere, I could respect you; jealous without love, I despise you. No; you do not love Don Pedro; you cannot, with your vindictive heart, love a man so firm and courageous, a sovereign who will not allow himself to be led blindly like a child."

"So, in your judgment, beautiful Jewess," said the Morisca, disdainfully, and burning with constrained fury, "I have no right to love Don Pedro, while you alone are worthy of him."

"I—I am nothing but a lowly creature of the crowd," replied Rachel, "a grain of sand lost in the dust; but if I love him whom you have betrayed, it is because he is just and generous, assisting the oppressed, inflexibly severe to the evil-doer, and powerful to punish perfidy and ingratitude; in short, because my heart turns towards him as the eye does to the light."

Aixa uttered a shout of insulting laughter, and exclaimed, "So you sent for me here, Don Pedro, to be witness of these affecting avowals of love! I conceive that you must be greatly flattered at having inspired the daughter of Samuel with such tender sentiments."

"The daughter of Mohamed has betrayed me, the daughter of Samuel has saved me," observed Don Pedro, coldly.

"But she is false; that Rachel deceives you," said the exasperated Aixa.

The young girl then, indignant at so much arrogance, advanced towards her, and said, "Who, then, proposed to the conspirators to surprise the king in this Alcazar? Who, then, with infernal art, removed every obstacle that might endanger the success of the project? No, nothing restrained you; neither the confidence nor the misfortunes of him you professed to love. Your heart was not moved for an instant; your lips heated not to utter those perfidious words. Of what crime has Don Pedro rendered himself guilty towards you? He loved you, and you calculated on that love, on the faith he placed in you, to ruin him. Heaven will judge between us, proud Aixa. Eight days since you saw me submissive at your feet; in your turn, submit, and avow your treachery."

"No!" exclaimed the Morisca. "That obedience is fitting enough for you—you, the obscure daughter of a Jew. I will no longer contend with you; I have already done you too much honor in deigning to defend myself against your accusations; women like me ought loudly to avow their wrongs and their vengeance. The Jewess has spoken truly, Don Pedro; in loving her, and disdaining my alliance, you inflicted a deadly insult on me, for which I desired to obtain revenge. If I wished for your pardon, I might tell you that, in inviting to the Alcazar the most dangerous of the conspirators, it was my intention to have betrayed them into your hands; but I prefer to tell you that I wished to see you— you, who are so proud and haughty—bound like a bandit at the feet of that Aixa whose love you have repulsed—whose reproaches and complaints you have disregarded and despised."

"Punishment shall quickly follow treason," said the king.

"Punishment!" cried Rachel; "oh, sire, you will have recourse to a nobler vengeance. Remember, you have loved Aixa; suffer not violent hands to be laid on her whom remembrance ought to protect. The other day you allowed me freely to leave the Alcazar; be generous; suffer the daughter of Mohamed to return free to Granada, I entreat you."

"I decline your intercession," said the Morisca, in a haughty tone, exasperated at seeing her rival so superior in heart to herself. "I know not how to debase myself by asking pardon like a cowardly slave who trembles before his master's lash. I brave death and preserve my hatred."

"You have too haughty a spirit, Aixa," said Don Pedro; "it is unfortunate that it is not better regulated. This sweet Jewess whom you disdain, is not indeed so proud and lofty in her bearing, she submits herself without murmur to the humiliations imposed on her race, yet is she nobler than you—she lies not, she betrays nobody, she does not sell her heart like worthless merchandises. You, who are a noble Moorish Princess, for whom, when you passed veiled through the streets, followed by your black slaves, every one made way, or bowed respectfully, yet from whom, had they really known you, they would have torn off the veil that covered a countenance of falsehood, animated by a hypocritical heart."

"It is cowardly to insult a woman," said Aixa, mad with rage.

"I only judge you according to your deserts, noble dame," answered he; "and now," he added, "follow me; for I have yet another traitor to confront."

"Whither do you lead me," demanded she, angrily.

"To your accomplice, Samuel," was the answer.

(To be continued.)

Say less than you think, rather than think one half what you say.