

"will not readily forgive thee, Samuel!" said Esau.

"Take care, cunning and dissimulating man," added Zedekiah, "thou knowest how we punish traitors."

"Come, rise up," said Burdett, roughly, and he compelled the astonished treasurer to stand upright before his exasperated interrogators.

"Dead or alive, I will see Rachel again!" cried the renegade, impetuously. "Who knows but that I shall yet hear that voice, so sweet; that it ever made my heart vibrate. Once more to behold her charming features, and impress them indelibly on my heart, will be supreme happiness to me."

"Then you will not respect the repose of my daughter even in death?" said Samuel, gravely.

"Thy persistence is strange, and redoubles our suspicions," replied Zedekiah.

"Besides, if the caprice of the tyrant has caused her death," said the renegade, with savage exultation, "it is on the body of his victim that I will swear the destruction of Don Pedro; it is there that I will make oath to all your brethren, Zedekiah, to devote myself to this holy cause, and take vengeance on him who has caused the death of the most beautiful, the most beloved of the daughters of our tribe. Undoubtedly the life and honor of a Jewess is of small account to a King of Castile, but he shall pay the debt with his throne."

"Come then," replied the old Jew, "since you wish to pursue your projects of rebellion in presence of my beloved dead."

Esau had scarcely descended the first step of the stairs leading to the vault, than he perceived the bier on which Rachel was laid, enveloped in her shroud.

He staggered towards the piteous object, and regarded with painful and fearful eagerness that cold, pale face, immovable as marble, on which he vainly sought to detect a furtive movement, a fugitive indication of existence. "Rachel! Rachel!" cried he, in tones of despair, foolishly hoping that at this ardent invocation she would stand up alive and rend her winding-sheet.

But not a breath escaped from the cold lips of the Jewess. Her eyelids opened not. A fearful silence alone answered the appeal of the renegade.

"So much beauty, so much youth and sweetness, all annihilated by the cruelty of Don Pedro," remarked Zedekiah, sentimentally; "while Heaven might have granted many years of happiness to this poor child, if she had not fallen in the way of the tyrant; but see, my brethren, the result. Let us place ourselves at the four corners of the bier."

While the conspirators had been descending into the vault, the Morisca, ever mistrustful, had removed the winding-sheet of Rachel, and with a bold hand touched her forehead, eyes, and lips, but not a contraction, not a ruffle of breath, revealed to her rival a sign of existence. Once assured of Rachel being really dead, she raised her eyes, and seeing the fanatics that surrounded her, she experienced something like remorse at having engaged in the conspiracy.

In the meantime a number of Jews had assembled in the vault.

"Samuel," said Zedekiah, "inform our brethren why the King Don Pedro has ordered thee to convoke them to thy house."

The treasurer raised his head, which hung on his breast, and, making an effort to control his grief, he slowly said, "Don Pedro imposes on you a tax of one hundred thousand marabolins, in order to defray the expenses of defending Seville."

A low murmur followed this communication.

"And if we refuse?" demanded Zedekiah.

"You will all be banished," replied Samuel, "and your property will be confiscated."

There was now a perfect explosion of invectives and imprecations against the tyrant, who wanted to make those greedy leeches disgorge what they had so complaisantly fattened on.

"My daughter was to have been detained in the Alcazar as a hostage," continued Ben Levi; "but I would rather see her thus sleeping in her winding-sheet, than radiant and triumphant in the palace of Don Pedro."

"You have but one course to pursue," exclaimed Esau, who felt released from his promise to Rachel by her death. "Deliver to Don Enrique the gates of the Jewry, the guardianship of which is confided to you. I have a commission from him to offer you an exemption from taxes, for five years, if you render him this service, which may be the means of putting an end to the war. Here is one of the valiant captains of his army, the English knight, Sir Thomas Burdett, the friend of Sir Hugh de Calverley, who will be a guarantee for my truth."

"And I engage myself," added Sir Thomas, "to preserve your houses from pillage, in the first heat of the assault, for the simple gift of three thousand crowns. At that price I will mount guard with the most resolute adventurers of Calverley, and I will not suffer a single article to be touched."

"Do you accept these conditions?" demanded Zedekiah.

"Yes," answered all the Jews, "long live Don Enrique! Death to Don Pedro."

"But why does the favorite of the tyrant assist at our meeting?" demanded the suspicious Zedekiah. "Is it to deliver us up to the vengeance of the king, and render our resolution abortive?"

"It was I who advised Samuel to urge you to resistance," returned Aixa, proudly; "for,

like you, I thirst for vengeance. But it is only a trifling service that you render Don Enrique, in delivering to him one quarter of the city. It is a check to Don Pedro, certainly, but it will not be his ruin, his destruction. He may still defend the remainder of the city, particularly the Alcazar. You might do better were you a people of energy and boldness. You ask why I have come amongst you. I have come to propose to you a *coup-de-main* that would terminate the war, and for which Don Enrique would owe you far more than an exemption from taxes. But I forget myself—I speak to timid Jews, who have a dread of violence, and who know not how to comprehend me."

"We listen to you, madam," replied Esau, "and however dangerous your project may be, if it offers any chance of success—"

"You will find here," interrupted Burdett, "men whom timidity does not constrain."

"Even among those Jews you despise so much," added Zedekiah, ferociously.

"Speak, speak," said several voices.

"Well, the plan is this, to introduce yourselves into the Alcazar, and seize the King, Don Pedro himself," said Aixa. "This is the prey I design for you. This is the prize for which Don Enrique will never know how sufficiently to repay you. The lion once caged, Don Enrique will positively and for ever be the real King of Castile."

A murmur of astonishment ran through the band of conspirators.

"But where are the means for executing so bold an undertaking?" demanded Esau, who did not expect this strange proposition.

"The idea is good," said Burdett; "but if you do not assist as to execute it, beautiful Aixa, I do not clearly see how we shall effect it."

The Morisca imperceptibly shrugged her shoulders, and resumed, "Don Pedro desires you to send him chests filled with marabolins. These chests must be sent—he will not refuse them admission to the Alcazar."

"But how will that tend to your purpose?" said Zedekiah.

"Samuel shall accompany the chests, which will be carried in by the cross-bowmen of Diego Lopez. In the meanwhile, the cowards and tremblers may carry off their most valuable effects to the camp of Don Enrique."

"But the *coup-de-main*," said Esau, impatiently.

"What do you not understand?" said Tom Burdett, gaily. "This tawny-colored dame, my good Esau, would make a clever captain of white companions. Her stratagem is good, and very simple, as all good stratagems are; you, Esau, as well as myself, shall be one of the marabolins heaped in the coffers to be offered to Don Pedro, and we will choose, for the remainder of this false coin, the bravest youths that surround us. Here is the whole secret. Have I not guessed rightly, noble dame?"

"Yes, Sir Knight. A warrior comprehends me in half a word. Oh, I already laugh at the figure poor Pedro will cut at finding himself caught in the trap!"

"But should the king be on his guard, and instead of being surprised himself, surprise us?" observed Esau, looking mistrustfully at Aixa.

"I will be close to him at the last moment, to lull his suspicions and support your enterprise," said the favorite. "Besides, what interest have I in deceiving you?" she continued; "none of you have sought to injure me, but without me your design cannot be accomplished. Weigh your chance of success, and judge."

"Bah!" exclaimed Burdett; "nothing venture, nothing have. It is said that that palace contains innumerable rare and curious objects. I consent to shut myself up in one of those lucky chests."

"And I also," said Zedekiah.

"There remains then only two or three companions to be found," said Esau, looking at the Jews; but, among these men who had been so eager for violence and death, not one came forward to join the hardy adventurers. He had not time to repeat his words before the ranks were broken, and the conspirators prudently slunk away one after the other.

During this scene, Aixa had placed herself beside the bier of Rachel, whose discolored countenance she had not ceased to watch with jealous mistrust.

At this moment, Samuel thought he perceived the folds of the sheet that covered the bosom of the Jewess move; he felt his heart shrink with fear, and leading away the Morisca, who could no longer doubt the death of her rival, he ascended the steps of the vault, followed by Tom Burdett, Esau and Zedekiah.

At the top of the steps they encountered the watchman, standing like a vigilant sentinel, who said to them, "I am the nephew of old Deborah, who long since taught me to love the daughter of Samuel as a saintly creature; if there is a vacant place in your chests, I offer the service of my blood and arm against the tyrant who has caused the death of Rachel."

"Agreed, my boy," said Burdett, "and first I charge you to conduct this noble lady to the gates of the Jewry."

CHAPTER XIII.—A Counterplot.

When the Morisca returned to her elegant apartments at the Alcazar, after taking off her long robe and cowl, she seated herself on a pile of velvet cushions, embroidered with gold, and ordered her women to adorn her as in the days of festival and triumph in which she had appeared, glittering with beauty and pride, be-

fore the charmed eyes of the King of Castile and his courtiers. She assumed a serene and smiling countenance, but by the flashing of her eyes, and the palpitation of her bosom, it was easy to see that a storm was brewing in her mind.

"Sprinkle on yet more perfume," said she, impatiently to her women; "intermingle these jewels with my hair, that I may still appear handsome in his eyes," unconsciously crushing between her clenched fingers the necklace of costly pearls she held out to her maids.

"Handsome for him who has betrayed, and despises me," she muttered, while her eyes sparkled with unnatural brightness, and her cheek changed from its sallow tinge to a livid paleness, and with her sharp white teeth she bit her lips till they bled. "Disdained by him!" she continued. "Thus, in order the more securely to attain that elevation I desired, I have yielded myself to the senseless wishes of this Christian dog; I have dishonored myself in the opinion of all true believers; I have been cursed by the Moslems; I have been forbidden going to the Mosque to pray according to the rites of our faith, and I have assisted with face unveiled and a smile on my lips at the feasts of this infidel's court, surrounded by his knights and nobles, the conquerors of my race. God is great! May his Prophet, Mahomet, pardon me! I have suppressed all the sentiments of anger and hatred, with which this proud king inspired me, and behold! by an inexplicable fatality, the royal alliance of which I dreamt, those foolish thoughts of ambition which made me hope to increase the power of the Moors, all have crumbled in an instant, because the king admires the sparkling eyes of a Jew girl! But happily I shall have my revenge!"

Then taking a mirror of polished steel from the hands of a slave, she looked at herself with earnest attention. Gradually the muscles of her countenance, which had contracted with resentment and disdain, relaxed; a most gracious smile played round her vermilion mouth, and her half-closed eye bore an expression of indescribable languor. She had succeeded in effacing from her countenance all traces of the vexation and anger that dwelt in her heart, and she prepared to appear, in Don Pedro's eyes, handsomer than ever.

"Before announcing to him the death of this accursed girl," soliloquised she, "I must once more try my empire over him, to ascertain if I ought yet to reckon on the love he formerly swore to me, or if nothing is left for me but revenge. If he loves me yet, if the idea of Rachel has not driven me like a shadow from his heart, I will deliver up to him those Jews who are so conveniently entrapped in the snare which I spread for them. But if he continues cold and deaf to my words, if he turns his eyes away from me, if he press not my hand as before this unhappy war, woe to him! for these Jews, whom I have in my power, shall be according to my interests, my victims or my avengers."

Quitting her apartments, she descended calm and smiling into the oratory, where she found, as she expected, Don Pedro alone. He was sitting thoughtfully, with his head resting on his hands.

She approached him silently and passed her light fingers through his hair, and as he turned his head she kissed his forehead.

The king started, and an exclamation of joy and surprise escaped him, as if his reverie had become reality; but as soon as he recognised the Morisca, his features resumed their melancholy expression.

"Ah! is it you, Aixa?" he said, with a careless air, resuming his former position.

The daughter of Mohamed feigned not to observe the significant demeanour of Don Pedro, but kneeling on the cushion whereon he rested his feet, she placed her clasped hands on his knees, and fixing her black sparkling eyes on the king, regarded him for a while without speaking.

"You are unhappy, Pedro," at length she said.

"No, I am only thinking," replied the king.

"You wish still to hide your sorrows from me," she said; but I guess them; you are neither fallen nor discouraged, for you have reliance on your own firmness and indomitable courage; but you begin to despise mankind—you no longer believe their oaths—and you expect nothing from their gratitude."

"It is true, Aixa, I always wished to be just towards my subjects; and I cannot, without the utmost bitterness, witness the defection of those whom I believed devoted to my fortunes, and won to my service by my bounty and friendship."

"You would not have been surprised at the rebellion of the Moors, on whom your justice had weighed somewhat heavily; is it not so, Don Pedro?" said the Morisca; "but it is an unexpected blow for you to see those who blessed your name, and styled you the executor of justice, because you protected them against tyranny, surrendering daily to the usurper some of your choicest cities. It shows that the multitude are as ungrateful as courtiers; restless as the waves of the sea, my dear lord, they capriciously break their idols at the first wind that blows. I should not be surprised to see our friendly counsellors the Jews, who, but for the powerful hand that protects them, could not cross the streets of Seville unmolested, end by selling their king."

"Aixa, you eduminate them," said Don Pedro.

"They sold Christ the Saviour, my liege lord."

"So," said the king, bitterly, "treason within and treason without. To see this disaffection spread from city to city, and threaten to extend over all that remains of my dismembered kingdom—and to be alone to struggle against it—"

"You have powerful friends, Pedro; say but the word and we can retire to Granada, where Mohamed will not close the gates against us."

"Take heart, Aixa," returned the king, "my situation is not so desperate that I am reduced to flee to Granada and implore an asylum and protection from your father. And if even this humiliation were reserved for me, I could not expose a woman to the dangers of a flight across the country, filled as it is with marauders who form the forces of Don Enrique."

"I would not recoil from any peril, Pedro," said Aixa, "to accompany you, who eight days ago gave me an hour of triumph such as a woman never forgets."

"Eight days ago," repeated Don Pedro, raising his head, and striving to recollect.

"Yes," continued she, "it is eight days since you dismissed the Jewess from the Alcazar. You remember, don't you?" The forehead of the king wrinkled. "And what makes me happier still," she added, "she will never again enter here either as captive, slave or hostage."

The king allowed a gesture of impatience to escape him, and hastily rose from his seat.

Aixa stood upright as a statue before him, and seizing his arm, cried, "Hold Pedro, do you avow to me that you yet love this young girl?"

"Why interrogate me thus?" asked the king. "Am I here before a judge?"

"Don Pedro, my sovereign lord," replied the Morisca, with a sardonic and proud persistence, "I should not have perceived your coldness had I not loved you."

"Have I not told you a hundred times that I have not ceased to love you?" said Don Pedro in a low voice.

"Can I put any trust in your royal word?" replied the favourite. "You had scarcely allowed me to drive this Jewess from the palace, ere you sought in your mind by what ingenuity you might make her re-enter it. First, you lay a war-tax on the Jews. Since they would sell me if they dared," say you, "let me at least make them pay a ransom. You act wisely in taking away their wealth—that is, depriving them of their arms. It is lawful to undermine the power of these men who meditate your destruction; but did you not demand a hostage from them?"

"And who will answer for their faith and obedience? Do you, Aixa, counsel me to trust to their word?"

"No they are men without either faith or honour," she answered.

"You see, then, that I have acted prudently in exacting—"

"A hostage," interrupted the Morisca, in a sharp tone. "But it is because you must have a hostage in guarantee for the promises of these perfidious Jews, that you were wrong in demanding the daughter of Samuel Ben Levi."

"I do not understand you, Aixa."

"Do you think the old treasurer will deliver up his well-beloved Rachel?"

"I shall find means to compel him," answered Don Pedro.

"She will not come, I tell you, my dear lord," replied the favourite with a solemn expression of countenance.

"What! in spite of my orders?"

"Spite of your orders!" replied the Morisca, suffering a strange and threatening smile to wander over her face.

"Thanks to Heaven, there yet remains some faithful servants to obey my commands," said the king coldly.

"Before proceeding further, my lord, permit me to ask a single question," said the favourite. "You say you love me still; are you sincere, or do you say so only to spare me humiliation?"

"Did I not sufficiently prove it eight days ago?" answered Don Pedro, in a hollow voice.

"Well, if in the name of that love I supplicate you to relinquish this demand?" said Aixa.

"I will answer you that what you ask is impossible," returned the king.

"If I say to you," persisted Aixa, joining her hands, and speaking in a supplicating tone, "if you persist in this determination, I shall die of grief; for I shall regard the entrance of Rachel into the Alcazar as my condemnation."

"I will tell you, you are beside yourself," replied Don Pedro. "What you ask is impossible."

"Ah, it is you, my good lord, who ask impossibilities!" cried the Morisca, with a shout of savage laughter, that made the king shudder. "You are ignorant, then, of what has happened to-day in the house of your faithful treasurer?"

"What mean you?" demanded Don Pedro, seized with a vague dread.

"I mean," she replied, "that the cast-off Rachel, who loved you—for she did love you—is dead, and she died cursing your name." Saying which, she retired some steps towards the door of the oratory.

"Dead! dead!" repeated Don Pedro, in a hasty voice. Then springing forward to detain his tormentor; "deceive me not!" he cried, "speak not my heart thus; throw not venom on my grief!"

"Your grief," said Aixa, with spiteful bitterness, "is now my greatest joy. Yesterday I would have given my life for one of your

smiles; to-day I almost think I would give it for one of your tears." And, disengaging her arm violently from Don Pedro's grasp, she ascended, radiant and triumphant, to her apartments.

(To be continued.)

A SOMNAMBULIST.

Belshazzar Smith had a very bad and dangerous habit of walking in his sleep. His family feared that during some one of his somnambulatory saunterings he would charge out of the window and kill himself; so they persuaded him to sleep with his little brother William, and to tie one end of a rope around his body and the other end around the waist of little William. The very first night after this arrangement was made Belshazzar dreamed that a burglar was pursuing him with a dagger. So he crept over to William's slumbering form, jumped out on the floor and slid under the bed. He stayed there awhile fast asleep, and then his nightmare having changed, he emerged from the other side of the bed, and got under the covers in his old place. The rope, it will be observed, was beneath the bed, and it was pulled taut too. Early in the morning Belshazzar, about half awake, scrouged over against William. To his surprise the movement jerked William clear out of the bed. Belshazzar leaped out to ascertain the cause of the phenomenon, and at the same time his brother disappeared under the bed. Belshazzar, hardly yet awake, was scared, and he dived beneath his bedstead; as he did so he heard William skirmishing across the blankets above his head. Once more he rushed out, just in time to perceive William glide over the other side. Belshazzar just then became sufficiently conscious to feel the rope pull him. He comprehended the situation at once, and disengaged himself. And perhaps little William was not mad? He was in the hospital undergoing repairs for about three weeks, and when he came out had a strange desire to sleep alone. Belshazzar anchors himself now to an anvil.—Chicago InterOcean.

ANECDOTE OF MAZZINI.

As any anecdotes of the late Mazzini must possess some interest at the present moment, I may relate one which has appeared in the German papers.

The British minister at Turin, Sir James Hudson—so runs the story—begged Cavour on one occasion, to grant an audience to a friend of his, an English traveller. The request was granted, and on the following morning the Italian minister received his visitor. The Englishman unfolded a deeply-laid plan for the re-establishment of Italian unity. Cavour was taken aback at the political acumen and depth of thought displayed by the speaker, and mentioned his regret at not being better acquainted with the English language.

His visitor resumed the discourse in the purest Italian.

"Sir," said Cavour, "you discuss politics like Machiavelli, and speak Italian like Mazzini. Were you a countryman of my own, I would willingly resign my position as President of the Ministry in your favor. And now let me know what I can do for you."

"If you had a countryman like me," replied his visitor, "you would sentence him to death. But if you acknowledge the wisdom of my advice, carry it out and free Italy. For the present I am safe under the protection of Sir James Hudson."

Having said this, he handed Count Cavour his card, and withdrew. The ministers' astonishment at finding that he had been conversing with Mazzini may be imagined.

KEEP YOUR WORD.

When you promise to do a thing, be sure to keep your word, as well for the sake of truth as in justice to others. This very interesting story is told of a boy who was singularly faithful to his word.

He had borrowed a tool from a neighbor, promising to return it at night. Before evening he was sent away on an errand and did not return until late. Before he went he was told that his brother should see the tool returned. After he had come home and gone to bed, he inquired and found the tool had not been sent to its owner. He was much distressed to think his promise was not kept, but was persuaded to go to sleep and rise early and carry it home. By daylight he was up, but nowhere was the tool to be found. After a long and fruitless search he set off for his neighbor's in great distress, to acknowledge his fault. But how great was his surprise when he found the tool on his neighbor's doorstep! It then appeared, from the prints of little feet on the mud, that the lad had got up in his sleep and carried it home, and, when he awoke again and knew it not. Of course, the boy was prompt in his sleep and made a few awakes. He lived respected, loved by all his neighbors and was a very successful office of trust and profit. —Sir John and Lady Deacy, the assembly