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LEILA, OR THE SEIGE OF GRENADA.

We have pencilled the following passages from the last work of Bulwer, just published by Carey, Lea and Blanchard and by the Harpers. The leading fault of the work, which, as these extracts evince, has many beauties, is that the heroine is so little prominent in the story, whose other characters are sketched with great force and ability. The attention of the reader is diverted from the personage who, as she gives a name to the tale, should concentrate the chief interest, by the valiant Muza, the irresolute but well-intentioned Boabdil, the wily Almamen, and last, but not least, the queenly Isabel, with her politic royal consort, who successively draw our attention and sympathies. For the rest, the moral tone of the book is so much higher than that of some other works by the same author, that it is entitled to become a special favourite.—N. Y. Mir.

THE MONARCH AND THE DANCING GIRLS.

"My soul wants the bath of musick," said the king; these journeys into a pathless realm have wearied it, and the streams of sound supple and relax the travailed pilgrim."

He clapped his hands, and from one of the arcades a boy, hitherto invisible, started into sight; at a slight and scarce perceptible sign from the king the boy again vanished, and, in a few moments afterward, glancing through the fairy pillars and by the glittering waterfalls, came the small and twinkling feet of the maids of Arby. As, with their transparent tunicks and white arms, they gleamed, without an echo, through that cool and voluptuous chamber, they might well have seemed the peris of the eastern magic, summoned to beguile the sated leisure of the youthful Solomon. With them came a maiden of more exquisite beauty, though smaller stature than the rest, bearing the Moorish lute; and a faint and languid smile broke over the beautiful face of Boabdil as his eyes rested upon her graceful form and the dark yet glowing lustre of her oriental countenance. She alone approached the king, timidly kissed his hand, and then, joining her comrades, commenced the following song, to the air and very words of which the feet of the dancing-girls kept time, while, with the chorus, rang the silver bells of the musical instrument with each of the dancers carried.

Softly, oh, softly glide,
Gentle Music, thou silver tide,
Bearing, the lull'd air along,
This leaf from the Rose of Song!
To its port in his soul let it float,
The frail but the fragrant boat—
Bear it, soft Air, along!

With the burden of Sound we are laden,
Like the bells on the trees of Aden,
When they thrill with a tinkling tone
At the wind from the Holy throne.
Hark! as we move around,
We shake off the buds of Sound—
Thy presence, beloved, is Aden!

Sweet chime that I hear and wake:
I would, for my loved one's sake,
That I were a sound like thee,
To the depths of his heart to flee.
If my breath had its senses bless'd,
If my voice in his heart could rest,
What pleasure to die like thee!

The music ceased; the dancers remained motionless in their graceful postures, as if arrested into statues of alabaster; and the young songstress cast herself on a cushion at the feet of the monarch, and looked up fondly but silently, into his yet melancholy eyes.

THE LOVERS.

When Muza parted from Almamen, he bent his steps toward the hill that rises opposite the ascent crowned with the towers of the Alhambra, the sides and summit of which eminence were tenanted by the luxurious population of the city. He selected the more private and secluded paths; and, half way up the hill, arrived at last before a low wall of considerable extent, which girded the gardens of some wealthier inhabitant of the city. He looked long and anxiously round; all was solitary; nor was the stillness broken, save as an occasional breeze from the snowy heights of the Sierra Nevada rustled the fragrant leaves of the citron and pomegranate, or as the silver tinkling of waterfalls chimed melodiously within the gardens. The Moor's heart beat high; a moment more, and he had scaled the wall, and found himself upon a green-sward, variegated by the rich colours of many a sleeping flower, and shaded by groves and alleys of luxuriant foliage and golden fruits.

* The Mohammedans believe that musical bells hang on the trees of Paradise, and are put in motion by a wind from the throne of God.

It was not long before he stood beside a ho use that seemed of a construction anterior to the Moorish dynasty. It was built over low cloisters, formed by heavy and time-worn pillars, concealed, for the most part, by a profusion of roses and creeping shrubs; the lattices above the cloisters, opened upon large gilded balconies, the superaddition of Moriscan taste. In one only of the casements a lamp was visible; the rest of the mansion was dark, as if, save in that chamber, sleep kept watch over the inmates. It was to this window that the Moor stole, and, after a moment's pause, he murmured rather than sung, so low and whispered was his voice, the following simple verses, slightly varied from an old Arabian poet.

Light of my soul, arise, arise!
Thy sister lights are in the skies!
We want thine eyes,
Thy joyous eyes;
The night is morning for thine eyes!
The sacred verse is on my sword,
But on my heart thy name:
The words on each alike adored;
The truth of each the same.

The same!—alas! too well I feel
The heart is truer than the steel!
Light of my soul, upon me shine;
Night wakes her stars to envy mine.
Those eyes of thine,
Wild eyes of thine,
What stars are like those eyes of thine!

As he concluded the lattice softly opened, and a female form appeared on the balcony.

"Ah, Leila!" said the Moor, "I see thee, and I am blessed!"

"Hush!" answered Leila; "speak low nor tarry long; I fear that our interviews are suspected; and this," she added, in a trembling voice, "may, perhaps, be the last time we shall meet."

"Holy prophet!" exclaimed Muza, passionately, "what do I hear! Why this mystery? why cannot I learn thine origin, thy rank, thy parents? Think you, beautiful Leila, that Grenada holds a house lofty enough to disdain the alliance of Muza Ben Abl Gazan? and oh!" he added, sinking the haughty tones of his voice into accents of the softest tenderness, "if not too high to scorn me, what should war against our loves and our bridal? For worn equally on my heart were the flower of thy sweet self, whether the mountain-top or the valley gave birth to the odour and the bloom."

"Alas!" answered Leila, weeping, "the mystery thou complainest of is as dark to myself as thee. How often have I told thee that I know nothing of my birth or childish fortunes, save a dim memory of a more distant and burning clime, where, amid sands and wastes, springs the everlasting cedar, and the camel grazes on the stunted herbage withering in the fiery air? Then it seemed to me that I had a mother; fond eyes looked on me, and soft songs hushed me into sleep."

"Thy mother's soul has passed into mine," said the Moor, tenderly.

Leila continued: "Borne hither, I passed from childhood into youth within these walls. Slaves minister to my slightest wish; and those who have seen both state and poverty, which I have not, tell me that treasures and splendour that might glad a monarch are prodigalized around me: but of ties and kindred know I little. My father, a stern and silent man, visited me but rarely; sometimes months pass, and I see him not; but I feel he loves me; and, till I knew thee, Muza, my brightest hours were in listening to the footsteps and flying to the arms of that solitary friend."

"Know you not his name?"

"No, I, nor any one of the household, save, perhaps, Ximen, the chief of the slaves, an old and withered man, whose very eye chills me into fear and silence."

"Strange!" said the Moor, musingly; "yet why think you our love is discovered or can be thwarted?"

"Hush! Ximen sought me this day: 'Maiden,' said he, 'men's footsteps have been tracked within the gardens; if your sire know this, you will have looked your last upon Grenada. Learn,' he added, in a softer voice, as he saw me tremble, 'that permission were easier given to thee to wed the wild tiger than to mate with the loftiest noble of Morisca!' Beware!" He spoke and left me.

"Oh, Muza!" she continued, passionately wringing her hands, "my heart sinks within me, omen and doom rise dark before my sight!"

"By my father's head, these obstacles but fire my love; and I would scale to thy possession though every step in the ladder were the corpses of a hundred foes!"

Scarcely had the fiery and high-souled Moor uttered his boast, than, from some unseen hand amid the groves, a javelin whirred past him, and, as the air it raised came sharp upon his cheek, half buried its quivering shaft in the trunk of a tree behind him.

"Fly, fly, and save thyself! Oh heaven, protect him!" cried Leila, and she vanished within the chamber.

The Moor did not wait the result of a deadlier aim; he turned, yet, in the instinct of his fierce nature, not from, but against his foe; the drawn cimeter in his hand, the half-suppressed cry of wrath trembling on his lips, he sprang forward in the direction whence the javelin had sped. With eyes accustomed to the ambuscades of Moorish warfare, he searched eagerly, yet warily, through the dark and sighing foliage. No sign of life met his gaze; and at length, grimly and reluctantly, he retraced his steps and left the demense; but, just, as he had cleared the wall, a voice, low, but sharp and shrill, came from the gardens.

"Thou art spared," it said, "but, happily, for a more miserable doom!"

THE NOVICE.

It was in one of the cells of a convent renowned for the piety of its inmates, and the wholesome austerity of its laws, that a young novice sat alone. The narrow casement was placed so high in the cold gray wall as to forbid to the tenant of the cell the solace of sad or the distraction of pious thoughts, which a view of the world without might afford. Lovely, indeed, was the landscape that spread below; but it was barred from those youthful and melancholy eyes: for Nature might tempt to a thousand thoughts not of a tenour calculated to reconcile the heart to an eternal sacrifice of the sweet human ties. But a faint and partial gleam of sunshine broke through the aperture, and made yet more cheerless the dreary aspect and gloomy appearances of the cell. And the young novice seemed to carry on within herself that struggle of emotions without which there is no victory in the resolves of virtue: sometimes she wept bitterly, but with a low subdued sorrow, which spoke rather of despondency than passion; sometimes she raised her head from her breast, and smiled as she looked upward, or, as her eyes rested on the crucifix and the death's head that were placed on the rude table by the pallet on which she sat, they were emblematic of death here and life hereafter, which, perhaps, afforded to her the sources of a twofold consolation.

She was yet musing, when a slight tap at the door was heard, and the abbess of the convent appeared.

"Daughter," said she, "I have brought thee the comfort of a sacred visitor. The queen of Spain, whose pious tenderness is materially anxious for thy full contentment with thy lot, has sent hither a holy friar, whom she deems more soothing in his counsels than our brother Thomas, whose ardent zeal often terrifies those whom his honest spirit only desires to purify and guide. I will leave him with thee. May the saints bless his ministry!" So saying, the abbess retired from the threshold, making way for a form in the garb of a monk, with the hood drawn over the face. The monk bowed his head meekly, advanced into the cell, closed the door, and seated himself on a stool, which, save the table and the pallet, seemed the sole furniture of the dismal chamber.

"Daughter," said he, after a pause, "it is a rugged and a mournful lot, this renunciation of earth and all its fair destinies and soft affections, to one not wholly prepared and armed for the sacrifice. Confide in me, my child; I am no dire inquisitor, seeking to distort the words to thine own peril. I am no bitter and morose ascetic. Beneath these robes still beats a human heart that can sympathise with human sorrow. Confide in me without fear. Dost thou not dread the fate they would force upon thee? Dost thou not shrink back? Wouldst thou not be free?"

"No," said the poor novice; but the denial came faint and irresolute from her lips.

"Pause," said the friar, growing more earnest in his tone; "pause, there is yet time."

"Nay," said the novice, looking up with some surprise in her countenance, "nay, even were I so weak, escape now is impossible. What hand could unbar the gates of the convent?"

"Mine!" cried the monk, with impetuosity. "Yes, I have that power. In all Spain but one man can save thee, and I am he."