

The Balancer of The Universe

A Drama of the Race Conflict in Four Acts by B. Harrison Peyton

CHARACTERS

Mauricio Crispin, a dancer from the Argentine, age 25 years.
La Corusca, Senora Crispin, his Argentine mother, age 42.
Agnes, their American guest and dancing pupil, age 22.
Mrs. Vincent Widener, a woman journalist, age 35.
Period: Present. Place: Providencia, a city on the Pacific coast.

(Continued from Last Week.)

ACT IV.

SCENE II.

"The Strength of the Eternal Laws."
Corusca: Valgame Dios! Mauricio, muchacho mio, really one would take you to be the victim of a loathsome melancholy that had fallen upon you like a vampire and drained the flow of spirits down to the bottom-most dregs of despair! In the name of youth and jocundity, I say, begone with blue devils of despondency!
Crispin: Madre! Ah, madre! I don't know whether you'd call her a vampire or some delusive spirit of darkness and the earthly air! Madre! I only know 'twas as though, bearing the guise of an angel, possessing all the ravishments of a siren, she captivated me with enchanting promises of milk and honey love, and the moment I trusted myself to her mercy, night flailed the breath out of me with enfolding pinions, and left me daed and broken by the blows!
Corusca: Heaven save us! Mauricio! Mauricio! you speak so like a soul in delirium! Oh! surely it can't be against Senorita Agnes, muchacho querido, you utter such words of bitter anguish!

Crispin: Senorita Agnes? Madre, the senorita's gone to her room.
Corusca: I've a telegram for her; that's what Andrew wanted me for.
Crispin: I suppose from—from her father?

Corusca: Yes; it's so dreadful to think what may be its import. But, Mauricio, if not against Senorita Agnes, against whom were you declaring so wild a grievance?
Crispin: 'Twas rather of Dame Fortune I was complaining, madre.
Corusca: And why do you complain of fortune, Mauricio?
Crispin: You know, madre, she hasn't been dealing overkindly with me of late. I've been thinking of Shadow City, the panic and poor Anthony.
Corusca: What! are you still brooding over that? Hijo querido, you mustn't!
Crispin: Ah! madre, the ways of Providence to its ends are so devious, so hard, so incalculable! Why does death so often despoil us of the innocent and leave the guilty?
Corusca: Death's a righteous power exercised of heaven, Mauricio; the Most High Master's wisdom and justice are infinite, but we've only a mortal understanding of them.
Crispin: Yes, madre; but I remember once reading a poem of which the substance was:
Not to the swift nor to the strong
The battles of the right belong;
For he who strikes for freedom wears
The armor of the captive's prayers,
And nature proffers to his cause
The strength of her eternal laws.

While he whose arm essays to bind,
And herd with common brutes, his kind,
Strives ev'rmore at fearful odds
With nature and the jealous gods,
And dares that dread recoil which late,
Or soon, their right shall vindicate!
(END SCENE II.)

ACT IV.

SCENE III.

Poor Dear Little Godfrey.
Corusca: Of course, Mauricio querido, there's truly a retributive justice; but it's the Lord's own, and He makes time itself avenger of the wrongs we suffer.
Crispin: But why was Anthony killed? Why should Whiteside have escaped—at the avenging hour—of panic?
Corusca: Mauricio, were you in Whiteside's place, would you prefer the peaceful ministry of death, or to live to suffer the terrors of remorse, as 'twere, with your eyes ever turned inward on the condemning blackness of your own soul? With the accusation of stupendous murder continuously resounding in the beat of your guilty heart? Mauricio, to live in the torment of fancying that God alone knows how many fellow-mortals are pointing the finger of reprobation at you, marking you the infamous Negro-hater who made them motherless, or fatherless, or brought untimely death upon a sister or brother, a son or a daughter, a husband or a wife? And more terrible than all, to live with your every footstep seeming to creep out at you wherever you go, that 'twas your bloody hand which all but crushed out the innocent life of

your own dear child? Oh, Mauricio! to live—to live—with—!
Agnes: Gracious heavens! Senora Crispin!
Corusca: Oh, senorita, I've been awaiting you. Here's a telegram for you, and if our worst fears have come to pass, I pray you—
Agnes: Thank you, senora. I'll endeavor to bear up bravely.
Corusca: Just as though she be stricken stoneblind! Look, Mauricio!
Crispin: Madre, her little brother, Godfrey died this morning, fancying he saw her and me dancing la Malaguena! Go, madre, speak to her!

Corusca: Querida nina, oh! but I know what a severe blow this is to you! My heart bleeds in sympathy with yours, but, my sore-smitten innocent, we'll remember the angel of commiseration's ever watching over us wretched humans.
Crispin: Try to comfort her, madre, do! Why not take her to your study where she can have for a while the quiet and seclusion which becomes her grief?
Corusca: Yes, come with me, O you poor, poor storm-bowed heart! I'll tell you of my two friends who each lost a dearly beloved relative in the great panic. One's a young mother who was bereaved of a young daughter; the other a girl of tender years whose elder brother, the idol of her worship, was brought to her mangled and coffined. Oh! with what wonderful fortitude and faith in God they bore their grief! And when our Anthony was killed, I too—
Crispin: "Plucked from the memory the rooted sorrow!" Great Lord who delivered Daniel! it's that—or may I never draw breath again!
(END SCENE III.)

ACT IV.

SCENE IV.

"God Within the Shadow."
Crispin: Ah, madre! Did she swoon? Can I serve her, madre, in any way?
Corusca: No, Mauricio; she's like one stunned just now, and has shed scarcely a single tear. Oh! we feel so utterly powerless before the stroke of death! Does the telegram say anything about the funeral, Mauricio?
Crispin: No; but listen, madre. (Reading the telegram aloud):
Miss Agnes Gorland,
La Corusca Dancing Academy,
Providencia, Cal.
Dear Agnes: Our Godfrey passed away shortly after eleven this morning. Had vision at the last; fancied he saw you and Mauricio Crispin performing la Malaguena. When this reaches you, shall have already plucked from memory rooted sorrow. Remember promise made in letter. Don't worry chum. Mrs. Widener will be kind to you. Goodby, goodby!
Your Father.

Corusca: "Plucked from the memory the rooted sorrow!" What perfectly grand resolution! It isn't likely the poor dear could arrive home in time for the funeral; yet it's so good she may remain a while longer, at least until she has partly recovered her strength. It's such an overwhelming blow!
Crispin: Madre, did she prefer to be left alone?
Corusca: She threw herself prostrate on the couch; only once did she speak, Mauricio; that was when she begged me to come and tell you that panned on the inside of your cloak there's a letter for you, and 'twill explain what poor dear little Godfrey's death has meant to her father. Ah! it's the one she received this afternoon from Senor Gorland! She wishes you to read it.

Crispin: "Will pluck from the memory the rooted sorrow!" Yes, the letter mentioned in the telegram. It's pre-precisely as I thought! (Tapping letter); But, madre, you wish to hear this?
Corusca: Mauricio, I somehow think Senorita Agnes intended I should, and used it as a pretext to keep me from longer obtruding on her grief.
Crispin: At any rate, you must inevitably come to know everything sooner or later. I'll read you the letter.
My Beloved Daughter:
There has occurred a change for the worse. I fear the doctors have begun to despair of saving our Baby Sunbeam for us. Agnes dear, you must come home to him without further delay, by the earliest fast train. 'Twill be very likely simply a race with that swift-winged angel that carries us mortals beyond this life. Come Agnes, come!
What was it that drove me to have a fling at that Nigger, Bell, that evening? Yet the Nigger struck me—Agnes, me! That cursed Nigger—you saw him strike me, Agnes! And now God Almighty! there are lines from Shakespeare for ever blazing and thundering in my wretched head! "Canst thou not minister to a mind

plucked from the memory the rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet, oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"
Oh! Agnes, daughter! as I write, I have before me the revolver I used to carry with me nearly always for—you know what, Agnes. Well, chum dear, just let our little Godfrey be taken from us, and I promise you, with a shot from that very revolver, I'll "pluck from the memory the rooted sorrow! raze out the written troubles of the brain!" and follow our Baby Sunbeam into eternity! I'll do it Agnes! do it as sure as I am
Your heart-broken,
Father.

Corusca: Terry Whiteside, Mauricio! Congressman Whiteside—that letter!
Crispin: Yes, madre; Whiteside wrote it, but now he—
Corusca: And the Sen-Senorita Agnes, she's his daughter. O Virgin Mother! that girl's—his daughter!
Crispin: But, madre, Senorita Agnes has told me he, Terry Whiteside recently went insane; moreover, it's almost certain that by this time he has killed himself!
Corusca: Killed himself!
Crispin: Yes; committed his last murder, simple suicide, blown out his own brains in an insane frenzy of remorse!

Corusca: Sowed death and has reaped its harvest? O justice, you are the governing pivot, the poiser, the balancer of the universe! But, no, Mauricio, surely not so soon?
Crispin: Taking the telegram in connection with the letter, what other conclusion is possible? They whom the gods make mad rush on destruction! Ah! madre, madre! but I know you must pity the senorita now more than ever!
Corusca: Pity her? Of course, pity her; but, Mauricio, she—that girl has obtained admission here as our guest and pupil under a false name—and—
Crispin: Your pardon, madre; but Agnes is part of her real name, and Gorland was her mother's maiden name.
Corusca: Nevertheless, Senorita Agnes has grossly deceived us, Mauricio, she, the daughter of that abominable devil incarnate, has wormed her way into our confidence, secured our sympathies, actually so endeared herself to me that—I must concede it—I've quite begun to regard her as being very nearly my own daughter! Oh! saints of heaven protect us! And a Whiteside! Mauricio, a Whiteside!
Crispin: But understand, madre, 'twas all for the sake of the little boy, in order to be able to render El Torero v la Malaguena for the crippled child, that she came here to learn the dance and to procure a partner from among our pupils.
Corusca: How long have you known who she was, Mauricio?
Crispin: She told me only this evening, but not until I'd driven her to it.
Corusca: Mauricio, isn't it fortunate that she's to leave here so shortly?
Crispin: No, madre; that's what pains me! Whiteside and her dear little brother are now gone; assuredly, I shan't let her go away forever.
Corusca: What, muchacho querido mio! the senorita's a Whiteside, yet you really don't wish her to leave? Can it be you've no thought of our Anthony, foully murdered and slandered in his grave?
Crispin: For my sake, buena madre, if not for hers, won't you continue to be as kind, tender, consoling to her as you've ever been?
Corusca: Oh, I've for sometime suspected you love her, Mauricio! How

completely she's bewitched you!
Crispin: Only a moment ago, madre, you admitted you've come to feel that she's very much the same to you as a daughter. Now, madre, I do love her, boundlessly; and some day she—ere very long—simply shall become my wife. She has admitted this evening that she loves me in return.
Corusca: But, Mauricio, no! Only consider! She, the blood, the daughter of—! Oh, heavens! what's the good of opposing a man in love?
Crispin: Just think, she'll then be a Senora Crispin, like you; and, madre, you'll really be at least her mother-in-law.
(END SCENE IV.)
(To be Continued.)

TAFT SAYS NEGRO MIGRATION TO NORTH PROVES EFFECTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST INJUSTICE

(Continued From Page One.)
lence are strong factors in community action.
But, deplorable as lynching is, it should not blind us to the improvement in conditions of the Negro population in the south that go steadily on, and that each 10 years' statistics demonstrate. The migration to the north and the general horror aroused over lynchings, expressed in the last anti-lynching conventions, by northerners and southerners alike, are likely to affect public opinion in the south on this subject and make a slow change for the better. It may be conceded that recurring instances are not very encouraging. The north is not without blemish in this regard and needs a stimulus to greater respect for law and orderly procedure than it now has.

Migration Proves Defense.

Meantime, the savings bank accounts of the Negroes, the acreage of their holdings, the graduates of their vocational schools and the improvement of the Negro country communities, steadily increase. A probable dearth of labor in the north and the increasing economic value of the Negroes to the south will stimulate migration as a defense against injustice and make it more effective. The developments of the next quarter of a century through these automatic and unpromoted agencies are likely to show as great progress for the Negro race as the last.—Washington Post.

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