

tobacco, a man with brown, hanging locks dressed in a long robe of dark green, fastened round the waist by a parti-colored sash, was kneeling upon a magnificent Turkey carpet, carefully feeding the golden bowl of a hookah; the long, flexible tube of this pipe, after rolling its folds upon the carpet, like a scarlet serpent with silver scales, rested between the slender fingers of Djalma, who was reclining negligently on a divan. The young prince was bare-headed; his jet-black hair, parted on the middle of his forehead, streamed waving about his face and neck of antique beauty—their warm transparent colors resembling amber or topaz. Leaning his elbow on a cushion, he supported his chin with the palm of his right hand. The flowing sleeve of his robe, falling back from his arm, which was round as that of a woman, revealed mysterious signs formerly tattooed there in India by a Thug's needle. The son of Radja-sing held in his left hand the amber mouthpiece of his pipe. His robe of magnificent cashmere, with a border of a thousand hues, reaching to his knee, was fastened about his slim and well-formed figure by the large folds of an orange-colored shawl. This robe was half withdrawn from one of the elegant legs of this Asiatic Antinous, clad in a kind of very close fitting gaiter of crimson velvet, embroidered with silver, and terminating in a small white morocco slipper, with a scarlet heel. At once mild and manly, the countenance of Djalma was expressive of that melancholy and contemplative calmness habitual to the Indian and the Arab, who possess the happy privilege of uniting, by a rare combination, the meditative indolence of the dreamer with the fiery energy of the man of action—now delicate, nervous, impressionable as women—now determined, ferocious, and sanguinary as bandits.

And this semi-feminine comparison, applicable to the moral nature of the Arab and the Indian, so long as they are not carried away by the ardor of battle and the excitement of carnage, is almost equally applicable to their physical constitution; for if, like women of good blood, they have small extremities, slender limbs, fine and supple forms, this delicate and often charming exterior always covers muscles of steel, full of an elasticity, and vigor truly masculine. Djalma's oblong eyes, like black diamonds set in bluish mother-of-pearl, wandered mechanically from the exotic flowers to the ceiling; from time to time he raised the amber mouthpiece of the hookah to his lips; then, after a slow respiration, half opening his teeth, he sent forth a little spiral line of smoke, freshly scented by the rose-water through which it had passed.

"Shall I put more tobacco in the hookah?" said the kneeling figure, turning towards Djalma, and revealing the marked and sinister features of Faringhea the Strangler.

The young prince remained dumb, either that, absorbed in his reverie, he did not even hear him. The Strangler became again silent; crouching cross-legged upon the carpet, with his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin upon his hands, he kept his eyes fixed on Djalma, and seemed to await the reply or the orders of him whose sire had been surnamed the Father of the Generous. How had Faringhea, the sanguinary worshipper of Bowanee, the Divinity of Murder, been brought to seek or to accept such humble functions? How came this man, possessed of no vulgar talents, whose passionate eloquence and ferocious energy had recruited many assassins for the service of the Good Work, to resign himself to so base a condition? Why, too, had this man, who, profiting by the young prince's blindness with regard to himself, might have so easily sacrificed him as an offering to Bowanee—why had he spared the life of Radja-sing's son? Why, in fine, did he expose himself to such frequent encounters with Rodin, whom he had only known under the most unfavorable auspices? The sequel of this story will answer all these questions. We can only say at present, that, after a long interview with Rodin, two nights before, the Thug had quitted him with downcast eyes and cautious hearing.

After having remained silent for some time, Djalma, following with his eye the cloud of whitish smoke that he had just sent forth into space, addressed Faringhea, without looking at him, and said to him in the language, as hyperbolic as concise, of orientals: "Time passes. The old man with the good heart does not come. But he come. His work is his word."

"His word is his word, my lord," repeated Faringhea, in an affirmative tone. "When he came to fetch you, three days ago, from the house whither those wretches, in furtherance of their wicked designs, had conveyed you in a deep sleep—after throwing me, your watchful and devoted servant, into a similar state—he said to you: 'The unknown friend, who sent for you to Cardoville Castle, bids me come to you, prince. Have confidence, and follow me. A worthy abode is prepared for you.'—And again, he said to you,

my lord: 'Consent not to leave the house, until my return. Your interest requires it. In three days you will see me again, and then be restored to perfect freedom.' You consented to those terms, my lord, and for three days you have not left the house."

"And I wait for the old man with impatience," said Djalma, "for this solitude is heavy with me. There must be so many things to admire in Paris. Above all—"

Djalma did not finish the sentence, but relapsed into a reverie. After some moments' silence, the son of Radja-sing said suddenly to Faringhea, in the tone of an impatient yet indolent sultan: "Speak to me!"

"Of what shall I speak, my lord?"

"Of what you will," said Djalma, with careless contempt, as he fixed on the ceiling his eyes, half veiled with languor. "One thought pursues me—I wish to be diverted from it. Speak to me."

Faringhea threw a piercing glance on the countenance of the young Indian, and saw that his cheeks were colored with a slight blush. "My lord," said the half-caste, "I can guess your thought."

Djalma shook his head, without looking at the Strangler. The latter resumed: "You are thinking of the women of Paris, my lord."

"Be silent, slave!" said Djalma, turning abruptly on the sofa, as if some painful wound had been touched to the quick. Faringhea obeyed.

After the lapse of some moments, Djalma broke forth again with impatience, throwing aside the tube of the hookah, and veiling both eyes with his hands: "Your words are better than silence. Cursed be my thoughts, and the spirit which calls up these phantoms!"

"Why should you fly these thoughts, my lord? You are nineteen years of age, and hitherto all your youth has been spent in war and captivity. Up to this time, you have remained as chaste as Gabriel, that young Christian priest, who accompanied us on our voyage."

Though Faringhea did not at all depart from his respectful deference for the prince, the latter felt that there was something of irony in the tone of the half-caste, as he pronounced the word "chaste."

Djalma said to him with a mixture of pride and severity: "I do not wish to pass for a barbarian, as they call us, with these civilized people; therefore I glory in my chastity."—"I do not understand, my lord."

"I may perhaps love some woman, pure as was my mother, when she married my father; and to ask for purity from a woman, a man must be chaste as she."

At this, Faringhea could not refrain from a sardonic smile.

"Why do you laugh, slave?" said the young prince, imperiously.

"Among civilized people, as you call them, my lord, the man who married in the flower of his innocence would be mortally wounded with ridicule."

"It is false, slave! He would only be ridiculous if he married one that was not pure as himself."

"Then, my lord, he would not only be wounded—he would be killed outright, for he would be doubly and unmercifully laughed at."

(Continued on page 5.)



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