

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUE

CHAPTER LXVI. (CONTINUED.)

DEATH.

"Ladies," said the Marquis, suddenly, "look at those Indians. Their emotion makes them superb!"

"In fact, the sight of the panther had raised the wild ardor of Djalma to its utmost pitch. His eyes sparkled in their pearly orbits like two black diamonds; his upper lip was curled convulsively with an expression of animal ferocity, as if he were in a violent paroxysm of rage.

Faringhea, now leaning on the front of the box, was also greatly excited, by reason of a strange coincidence. "That black panther of so rare a breed," thought he, "which I see here at Paris, upon a stage, must be the very one that the Malay—the Thug who had tattooed Djalma at Java during his sleep—took quite young from his den, and sold to a European captain. Bowance's power is everywhere!" added the Thug, in his sanguinary superstition.

"Do you not think," resumed the marquis, addressing Adrienne, "that those Indians are really splendid in their present attitude?"

"Perhaps they may have seen such a hunt in their own country," said Adrienne, as if she would recall and brave the most cruel remembrances.

"Adrienne," said the marchioness, suddenly, in an agitated voice, "the lion-tamer has now come nearer—is not his countenance fearful to look at? I tell you he is afraid."

"In truth," observed the marquis, this time very seriously, "he is dreadfully pale, and seems to grow worse every minute, the nearer he approaches this side. It is said that, were he to lose his presence of mind for a single moment, he would run the greatest danger."

"O! it would be horrible!" cried the marchioness, addressing Adrienne, "if he were wounded—there—under our eyes!"

"Every wound does not kill," replied her friend, with an accent of such cold indifference, that the marchioness looked at her with surprise, and said to her: "My dear girl, what you say there is cruel!"

"It is the air of the place that acts on me," answered Adrienne, with an icy smile.

"Look! look! the lion-tamer is about to shoot his arrow at the panther," said the marquis, suddenly. "No doubt, he will next perform the hand to hand grapple."

Morok was at this moment in front of the stage, but he had yet to traverse its entire breadth to reach the cavern's mouth. He stopped an instant, adjusted an arrow to the string, knelt down behind a mass of rock, took deliberate aim—and then the arrow hissed across the stage, and was lost in the depths of the cavern, into which the panther had retired, after showing for a moment her threatening head to the audience. Hardly had the arrow disappeared, than Death, purposely irritated by Goliath (who was invisible) sent forth a bowl of rage, as if she had been really wounded. Morok's actions became so expressive, he evinced so naturally his joy at having hit the wild beast, that a tempest of applause burst from every quarter of the house. Then, throwing away his bow, he drew a dagger from his girdle, took it between his teeth, and began to crawl forward on hands and knees, as though he meant to surprise the wounded panther in his den. To render the illusion perfect, Death, again excited by Goliath, who struck him with an iron bar, sent forth frightful howlings from the depths of the cavern.

The gloomy aspect of the forest, only half-lighted with a reddish glare, was so effective—the howlings of the panther were so furious—the gestures, attitude and countenance of Morok were so expressive of terror, that the audience, attentive and trembling, now maintained a profound silence. Every one held his breath, and a kind of shudder came over the spectators, as though they expected some horrible event. What gave such a fearful air of truth to the pantomime of Morok, was that, as he approached the cavern step by step, he approached also the Englishman's box. In spite of himself, the lion-tamer, fascinated by terror, could not take his eyes from the large green eyes of this man, and it seemed as if every one of the abrupt movements which he made in crawling along, was produced by a species of magnetic attraction, caused by the fixed gaze of the fatal wagerer. Therefore, the nearer Morok approached, the more ghastly and livid he became. At sight of this pantomime, which was no longer acting, but the real expression of fear, the deep and tremblingsilence which had reigned in the theatre was once more interrupted by exclamations, with which were mingled the roar-

ings of the panther, and the distant growls of the lion and tiger.

The Englishman leaned almost out of his box, with a frightful sardonic smile on his lip, and with his large eyes still fixed, panted for breath. The perspiration ran down his bald red forehead, as if he had really expended an incredible amount of magnetic power in attracting Morok, whom he now saw close to the cavern entrance. The moment was decisive. Crouching down with his dagger in his hand, following with eye and gesture Death's every movement, who, roaring furiously, and opening wide her enormous jaws, seemed determined to guard the entrance of her den, Morok waited for the moment to rush upon her. There is such fascination in danger, that Adrienne shared, in spite of herself, the feeling of painful curiosity, mixed with terror, that thrilled through all the spectators. Leaning forward like the marchioness, and gazing upon this scene of fearful interest, the lady still held mechanically in her hand the Indian bouquet, preserved since the morning. Suddenly, Morok raised a wild shout, as he rushed toward Death, who answered this exclamation by a dreadful roar, and threw herself upon her master with so much fury, that Adrienne, in alarm, believing the man lost, drew herself back, and covered her face with her hands. Her flowers slipped from her grasp, and, falling upon the stage, rolled into the cavern in which Morok was struggling with the panther.

Quick as lightning, supple and agile as a tiger, yielding to the intoxication of his love, and to the wild ardor excited in him by the roaring of the panther, Djalma sprang at one bound upon the stage, drew his dagger, and rushed into the cavern to recover Adrienne's nosegay. At that instant, Morok, being wounded, uttered a dreadful cry for help; the panther, rendered still more furious at sight of Djalma, made the most desperate efforts to break her chain. Unable to succeed in doing so, she rose upon her hind legs, in order to seize Djalma, then within reach of her sharp claws. It was only by bending down his head, throwing himself on his knees, and twice plunging his dagger into her belly with the rapidity of lightning, that Djalma escaped certain death. The panther gave a howl, and fell with her whole weight upon the prince. For a second, during which lasted her terrible agony, nothing was seen but a confused and convulsive mass of black limbs, and white garments stained with blood—and then Djalma rose, pale, bleeding, for he was wounded—and standing erect, his eyes flashing with savage pride, his foot on the body of the panther, he held in his hand Adrienne's bouquet, and cast toward her a glance which told the intensity of his love. Then only did Adrienne feel her strength fail her—for only superhuman courage had enabled her to watch all the terrible incidents to the struggle.

CHAPTER LXVII. THE LUNCHEON.

The morning after the doomed traveller, descending the heights of Montmarre, had entered the walls of Paris, great activity reigned in St. Dixier House. Though it was hardly noon, the Princess de St. Dixier, without being exactly in full dress (she had too much taste for that), was yet arrayed with more care than usual. Her light hair, instead of being merely banded, was arranged in two bunches of curls, which suited very well with her full and florid cheeks. Her cap was trimmed with bright rose-colored ribbon, and whoever had seen the lady in her tight-fitting dress of grey watered silk would have easily guessed that Mrs. Grivois, her tire woman, must have required the assistance and the efforts of another of the princess's women to achieve so remarkable a reduction in the ample figure of their mistress.

The princess was giving her final orders with regard to some preparations that were going on in a vast parlor. In the midst of this room was a large round table, covered with crimson velvet, and near it stood several chairs, amongst which, in the place of honor, was an arm-chair of gilded wood. In one corner, not far from the chimney, in which burned an excellent fire, was a buffet. On it were the divers materials for a most dainty and exquisite collation.

After glancing with an air of satisfaction at this preparations for the collation, the lady said to Mrs. Grivois, as she pointed to the gilded arm-chair, which seemed destined for the president of the meeting: "Is there a cushion under the table, for his Eminence to rest his feet on? He always complains of cold."

"Yes, your highness," said Mrs. Grivois, when she had looked under the table; "the cushion is there."

"Let also a pewter bottle be filled with boiling water, in case his Eminence should not find the cushion enough to keep his feet warm."

"Yes, my lady."

"And put some more wood on the fire."

"But, my lady, it is already a very furnace. And if his Eminence is always too cold, my lord the Bishop of Halfagen is always too hot. He perspires dreadfully."

The princess shrugged her shoulders, and said to Mrs. Grivois: "Is not his Eminence Cardinal Malinieri the superior of his Lordship the Bishop of Halfagen?"

"Yes, your highness."

"Then, according to the rules of the hierarchy, it is for his Lordship to suffer from the heat, rather than his Eminence from the cold. Therefore, do as I tell you and put more wood on the fire. Nothing is more natural; his Eminence being an Italian, and his Lordship coming from the North of Belgium, they are accustomed to different temperatures."

"Just as your highness pleases," said Mrs. Grivois, as she placed two enormous logs on the fire, "but in such a heat as there is here his Lordship might really be suffocated."

"I also find it too warm; but does not our holy religion teach us lessons of self-sacrifice and mortification?" said the princess with a touching expression of devotion.

At the moment she finished inspecting the preparations, the sound of coaches was heard in the courtyard, apprising her of the arrival of the persons she had been expecting.

The company soon assembled in the great saloon. The cardinal instantly crept close to the fire, whilst the bishop, beginning to sweat and blow, cast longing glances at the iced chocolate and coffee, which were to aid him in sustaining the oppressive heat of the artificial dog-day. Father d'Aigrigny, approaching the princess, said to her in a low voice: "Will you give orders for the admittance of Abbe Gabriel de Rennepont, when he arrives?"

"Is that young priest then here?" asked the princess, with extreme surprise.

"Since the day before yesterday. We had him sent for to Paris, by his superiors. You shall know all. As for Father Rodin, let Mrs. Grivois admit him, as the other day, by the little door of the back stairs."

"He will come today?"

"He has very important matters to communicate. He desired that both the cardinal and the bishop should be present for they have been informed of everything at Rome by the Superior General, in their quality of associates."

The princess rang the bell, gave the necessary orders, and, returning towards the cardinal, said to him, in a tone of the most earnest solicitude: "Does your Eminence begin to feel a little warmer? Would your Eminence like a bottle of hot water to your feet? Shall we make a larger fire for your Eminence?"

At this proposition, the Belgian Bishop, who was wiping the perspiration from his forehead, heaving a despairing sigh.

"A thousand thanks, princess," answered the cardinal to her, in very good French, but with an intolerable Italian accent; "I am really overcome with so much kindness."

"Will not your Lordship take some refreshment?" said the princess to the bishop, as she turned towards the sideboard.

"With your permission, madame, I will take a little iced coffee," said the prelate, making a prudent circuit to approach the dishes without passing before the fire.

"And will not your Eminence try one of these little oyster-patties? They are quite hot," said the princess.

"I know them already, princess," said the cardinal, with the air and look of an epicure; "they are delicious, and I cannot resist the temptation."

"What wine shall I have the honor to offer your Eminence?" resumed the princess, graciously.

"A little claret, if you please, madame;" and as Father d'Aigrigny prepared to fill the cardinal's glass, the princess disputed with him that pleasure.

"Your Eminence will doubtless approve what I have done," said Father d'Aigrigny to the cardinal, whilst the latter was gravely despatching the oyster-patties, "in not summoning for today the Bishop of Mogador, the Archbishop of Nanterre, and our holy Mother Perpetue, the lady-superior of St. Marie Convent, the interview we are about to have with his Reverence Father Rodin and Abbe Gabriel being altogether private and confidential."

"Our good father was perfectly right," said the cardinal, "for, though the possible consequences of this Rennepont affair may interest the whole church, there are some things that are as well kept secret."

"Then I must seize this opportunity to thank your Eminence for having deigned to make an exception in favor of a very obscure and humble servant of the church," said the princess to the cardinal, with a very deep and respectful curtsy.

"It is only just and right, madame," replied the cardinal, bowing, as he replaced his empty glass upon the table; "we know how much the church is indebted to you for the salutary direction you give to the religious institutions of which you are the patroness."

"With regard to that, your Eminence may be assured that I always refuse assistance to any poor person who cannot produce a certificate from the confessional."

To be Continued.

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