

THE WANDERING JEW.

BY REGINE M. B.

CHAPTER LXVI.

DEATH.

The pentonine opening, by which was introduced the combat of Morok with the black panther, was so unmeaning, that the majority of the audience paid no attention to it, reserving all their interests for the scene in which the lion-tamer was to make his appearance.

Placed directly opposite the box in which Faringhea, Djalma and Rose-Pompon had just taken their seats, Lady Morinval soon perceived the arrival of these two personages, and particularly the eccentric coquetries of Rose-Pompon. Immediately, the young marchioness, leaning over toward Mdlle. de Cardoville, who was absorbed in memories ineffable, said to her, laughing: 'My dear, the most amusing part of the performance is not upon the stage. Look just opposite.'

'Just opposite?' repeated Adrienne, mechanically; and, turning toward Lady Morinval with an air of surprise, she glanced in the direction pointed out.

She looked—what did she see?—Djalma seated by the side of a young woman, who was offering to his sense of smell the perfume of her bouquet. Amazed, struck almost literally to the heart, as by an electric shock, swift, sharp and painful, Adrienne became deadly pale. From instinct she shut her eyes for a second, in order not to see—as men try to ward off the dagger, which, having once dealt the blow, threatens to strike again. Then suddenly, to this feeling of grief succeeded a reflection, terrible both to her love and to her wounded pride.

'Djalma is present with this woman, though he must have received my letter,' she said to herself—'wherein he was informed of the happiness that awaited him.'

At the idea of so cruel an insult, a blush of shame and indignation displaced Adrienne's paleness, who, overwhelmed by this sad reality, said to herself: "Rodin did not deceive me."

We abandon all idea of picturing the lightning-like rapidity of certain emotions which in a moment may torture—may kill you in the space of a minute. Thus Adrienne was precipitated from the most radiant happiness to the lowest depths of an abyss of the most heart-rending grief, in less than a second; for a second had hardly elapsed before she replied to Lady Morinval: 'What is there, then, so curious, opposite to us, my dear Julia?'

This evasive question gave Adrienne time to recover her self-possession. Fortunately, thanks to the thick folds of hair which almost entirely concealed her cheeks, the rapid and sudden changes from pallor to blush escaped the notice of Lady Morinval, who gaily replied: "What, my dear, do you not perceive those East Indians who have just entered the box immediately opposite to ours? There, just before us!"

'Yes, I see them; but what then?' replied Adrienne, in a firm tone.

'And don't you observe anything remarkable?' said the marchioness.

'Don't be too hard, ladies,' laughingly interposed the marquis; 'we ought to allow the poor foreigners some little indulgence. They are ignorant of our manners and customs; were it not for that, they would never appear in the face of all Paris in such dubious company.'

'Indeed,' said Adrienne, with a bitter smile, 'their simplicity is touching; we must pity them.'

'And, unfortunately, the girl is charming, spite of her low dress and bare arms,' said the marchioness; 'she cannot be more than sixteen or seventeen at most. Look at her, my dear Adrienne; what a pity!'

'It is one of your charitable days, my dear Julia,' answered Adrienne; 'we are to pity the Indians, to pity this creature, and—pray, whom else are we to pity?'

'We will not pity that handsome Indian, in his red-and-gold turban,' said the marquis laughing, 'for, if this goes on, the girl with the cherry colored ribbons will be giving him a kiss. See how she leans toward her sultan.'

'They are very amusing,' said the marchioness, sharing the hilarity of her husband, and looking at Rose-Pompon through her glass; then she resumed, in about a minute, addressing herself to Adrienne: "I am quite certain of one thing. Notwithstanding her giddy airs, that girl is very fond of her Indian. I just saw a look that expresses a great deal."

'Why so much penetration, my dear Julia?' said Adrienne, mildly; 'what interest have we to read the heart of that girl?'

'Why, if she loves her sultan, she is quite in the right,' said the marquis, looking through his opera-glass in turn; 'for, in my life, I never saw a more handsome fellow than that Indian. I can

only catch his side-face, but the profile is pure and fine as an antique cameo. Do you not think so?' added the marquis leaning toward Adrienne. 'Of course, it is only as a matter of art, that I permit myself to ask you the question.'

'As a work of art,' answered Adrienne, 'it is certainly very fine.'

'But see?' said the marchioness; 'how impertinent the little creature is! She is actually staring at us.'

'Well!' said the marquis; 'and she is actually laying her hand quite unceremoniously on her sultan's shoulder, to make him share, no doubt, in her admiration of you ladies.'

In fact, Djalma, until now occupied with the contemplation of the scene which reminded him of his country, had remained insensible to the enticements of Rose-Pompon, and had not yet perceived Adrienne.

'Well now!' said Rose-Pompon, bustling herself about in front of the box, and continuing to stare at Mdlle. de Cardoville, for it was she, and not the marchioness, who now drew her attention; 'that is something quite out of the common way—a pretty woman with red hair; but such a sweet red, it must be owned. Look, Prince Charming!'

And so saying, she tapped Djalma lightly on the shoulder; he started at these words, turned round, and for the first time perceived Mdlle. de Cardoville.

Though he had been almost prepared for this meeting, the prince was so violently affected by it, that he was about involuntarily to rise, in a state of the utmost confusion; but he felt the iron hand of Faringhea laid heavily on his shoulder, and heard him whisper in Hindostanee: 'Courage! and by tomorrow she will be at your feet.'

As Djalma still struggled to rise, the half-caste added, to restrain him: 'Just now, she grew pale and red with jealousy. No weakness, or all is lost!'

'So! there you are again, talking your dreadful gibberish,' said Rose-Pompon, turning round toward Faringhea. First of all, it is not polite; and then the language is so odd, that one might suppose you were cracking nuts.'

'I spoke of you to my master,' said the half-caste; 'he is preparing a surprise for you.'

'A surprise? oh! that is different. Only make haste—do you hear, Prince Charming!' added she looking tenderly at Djalma.

'My heart is breaking,' said Djalma, in a hollow voice to Faringhea, still using the language of India.

'But tomorrow it will bound with joy and love,' answered the half-caste. 'It is only by disdain that you can conquer a proud woman. Tomorrow, I tell you, she will be trembling, confused, supplicating at your feet!'

'Tomorrow, she will hate me like death!' replied the prince, mournfully.

'Yes, were she now to see you weak and cowardly. It is now too late to draw back; look full at her, take the nosegay from this girl, and raise it to your lips. Instantly, you will see yonder woman, proud as she is, grow pale and red, as just now. Then will you believe me?'

Reduced by despair to make almost any attempt, and fascinated, in spite of himself, by the diabolical hints of Faringhea, Djalma looked for a second full at Mdlle. de Cardoville; then, with a trembling hand he took the bouquet from Rose-Pompon, and, again looking at Adrienne, pressed it to his lips.

Upon this insolent bravado, Mdlle. de Cardoville could not restrain so sudden and visible a pang, that the prince was struck by it.

'She is yours,' said the half-caste to him. 'Did you see, my lord, how she trembled with jealousy? Only have courage! and she is yours. She will soon prefer you to that handsome young man behind her—for it is he whom she has hitherto fancied herself in love with.'

As if the half-caste had guessed the movement of rage and hatred which this revelation would excite in the heart of the prince, he hastily added, 'Calmness and disdain! Is it not his turn now to hate you?'

The prince restrained himself, and drew his hand across his forehead, which glowed with anger.

'There now! what are you telling him that vexes him so?' said Rose Pompon to Faringhea, with pouting lip. Then, addressing Djalma, she continued: 'Come, Prince Charming, as they say in the fairy tale, give me back my flowers.'

It is hardly necessary to say that Adrienne's letter had not been delivered to the prince, and that he had not gone to pass the day in the country with Marshal Simon. During the three days in which Montbron had not seen Djalma, Faringhea had persuaded him, that, by affecting another passion, he would bring Mdlle. de Cardoville to terms. Adrienne, before the prince recognized her tell her strength failing her and was on the point of quitting the theatre, but when she saw herself recognized by Djalma, she found a sort of barbarous pleasure in assisting at the agony and

death of her pure love by remaining. It was with a sardonic smile that she said to the young marchioness, after the prince had kissed Rose-Pompon's bouquet, 'This revolting exhibition of savage manners is at least in accordance with the rest of the performance.'

'Certainly,' said the marchioness; 'and my dear uncle will have lost, perhaps, the most amusing part.'

'Montbron?' said Adrienne, hastily, with hardly repressed bitterness; 'yes, he will regret not having seen all. I am impatient for his arrival. Is it not to him that I am indebted for this charming evening?'

Perhaps Madame de Morinval would have remarked the expression of bitter irony, that Adrienne could not altogether dissemble, if suddenly a hoarse and prolonged roar had not attracted her attention, as well as that of the rest of the audience, who had hitherto been quite indifferent to the scenes intended for an introduction to the appearance of Morok. Every eye was now turned instinctively towards the cavern, situated to the left of the stage, just below Mdlle. de Cardoville's box; a thrill of curiosity ran through the house. A second roar, deeper and more sonorous and apparently expressive of more irritation than the first, now rose from the cave, the mouth of which was half-hidden by artificial brambles, made so as to be easily put on one side. At this sound, the Englishman stood up in his little box.

At these ferocious howlings, Djalma also had started, notwithstanding the frenzy of love, hate, and jealousy, to which he was a prey. The sight of this forest, and the roarings of the panther, filled him with deep emotion, for they recalled the remembrance of his country, and of those great hunts which, like war, have their own terrible excitement. Djalma's blood boiled in his veins. His eyes sparkled with a wild ardor. Leaning a little forward, with both hands pressed on the front of the box, his whole body trembled with a convulsive shudder. The audience, the theater, Adrienne herself, no longer existed for him; he was in a forest of his own lands, tracking the tiger.

Then there mingled with his beauty so intrepid and ferocious an expression, that Rose-Pompon looked at him with a sort of terror and passionate admiration. For the first time in her life, perhaps, her pretty blue eyes, generally so gay and mischievous, expressed a serious emotion. She could not explain what she felt; but her heart seemed tightened, and beat violently, as though some calamity were at hand.

Yielding to a movement of involuntary fear,

she seized Djalma by the arm, and said to him: 'Do not stare so into that cavern; you frighten me.'

Djalma did not hear what she said.

'Here he is! here he is!' murmured the crowd, almost with one voice, as Morok appeared at the back of the stage.

Dr. used as we have described, Morok now carried in addition a bow and a long quiver full of arrows. He slowly descended the line of painted rocks which came sloping down toward the center of the stage. From time to time he stopped as if to listen, and appeared to advance with caution. Looking from one side to the other, his eyes involuntarily encountered the large, green eyes of the Englishman, whose box was close to the cavern. Instantly the lion-tamer's countenance was contracted in so frightful a manner that Lady Morinval, who was examining him closely with the aid of a powerful glass, said hastily to Adrienne: 'My dear, the man is afraid. Some misfortune will happen.'

'How can accidents happen,' said Adrienne, with a sardonic smile, 'in the midst of this brilliant crowd, so well dressed and full of animation! Misfortunes here, this evening! why, dear Julia, you do not think it. It is in darkness and solitude that misfortunes come—never in the midst of a joyous crowd, and in all this blaze of light.'

'Good gracious, Adrienne! take care!' cried the marchioness, unable to repress an exclamation of alarm, and seizing her arm, as if to draw her closer 'do you not see it?' And, with a trembling hand she pointed to the cavern's mouth. Adrienne hastily bent forward, and looked in the direction. 'Take care, do not lean so forward!' exclaimed Lady Morinval.

Your terrors are nonsensical, my dear,' said the marquis to his wife. 'The panther is securely chained; and even were it to break its chain (which is impossible), we are here beyond its reach.'

A long murmur of trembling curiosity here ran through the house, and every eye was intently fixed on the cavern. From amongst the artificial brambles, which she abruptly pushed aside with her broad chest, the black panther suddenly appeared. Twice she stretched forth her flat head, illumed by yellow, flaming eyes; then, half-opening her blood-red jaws, she uttered another roar, and exhibited two rows of formidable fangs. A double iron chain, and a collar also of iron-painted black, blended with the darkness of the cavern. The illusion was complete, and the terrible animal seemed to be at liberty in her den.

To be Continued.

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