THE WANDERING JEW.

BY EUGENE SUE.

CHAPTER LXIV

Then a strange thing happened. A faint light spread itself gradually through an adjoining apartment, and Djalma now perceived, for the first time, the existence of a little round window, in the wall of the room in which he was. On the side of the prince, this opening was protected by a slight but strong railing, which hardly intercepted the view. On the other side a thick piece of plate-glass was fixed at a distance of two or three inches from the railing in question. The room, which Djalma saw through this window, and through which the faint light was now gradually spreading, was richly furnished. Between two windows, hung with crimson silk curtains, stood a kind of wardrobe, with a looking-glass front; opposite the fireplace, in which glowed the burning coals, was a long, wide divan, furnished with cushions.

In another second a woman entered this apartment. Her face and figure were invisible, being wrapped in a long, hooded mantle, of peculiar form, and a dark color. The sight of the mantle made Djalma start. To the pleasure he at first felt succeeded a feverish anxiety, like the growing fumes of intoxication. There was that strange buzzing in his ears which we experience when we plunge into deep waters. It was in a kind of delirium that Djalma looked on at what was passing in the next room. The woman who had just appeared, entered with caution, almost with fear. Drawing aside one of the window curtains, she glanced through the closed blinds into the street. Then she returned slowly to the fire-place, where she stood for a moment pensive, still carefully enveloped in her mantle. Completely yielding to the influence of the vapor, which deprived him of his presence of mind—forgetting Faringhea, and all the circumstances that had accompanied his arrival at this house—Djalma concentrated all the powers of his attention on the spectacle before him, at which he seemed to be present as in a dream.

Suddenly Djalma saw the woman leave the fire-place and advance towards the looking-glass. Turning her face towards it, she allowed the mantle to glide down to her feet. Djalma was thunderstruck. He saw the face of Adrienne de Cardoville. Yes, Adrienne, as he had seen her the night before, attired as during her interview with the Princess de Saint-Dizier—the light green dress, the rose-colored ribbons, the white bead ornaments. A network of white beads concealed her back-hair, and harmonized admirably with the shining gold of her ringlets. Finally, as far as the Hindoo could judge through the railing and the thick glass, and in the faint light, it was the figure of Adrienne, with her marble shoulders and swan-like neck, so proud and so graceful. In a word, he could not, he did not doubt that it was Adrienne de Cardoville. Djalma was bathed in a burning dew, his dizzy excitement increased, and, with blood-shot eye and heaving bosom, he remained motionless, gazing almost without the power of thought. The young lady, with her back still turned towards Djalma, arranged her hair with graceful art, took off the network which formed her head-dress, placed it on the chimney-piece, and began to unfasten her gown; then, withdrawing from the looking-glass, she disappeared for an instant from Djalma's view.

"She is expecting Agricola Baudoin, her lover," said a voice, which seemed to proceed from the wall of the dark room in which Djalma was.

Notwithstanding his bewilderment, these terrible words, "She is expecting Agricola Baudoin, her lover," passed like a flame of fire through the brain and heart of the prince. A cloud of blood came over his eyes, he uttered a hollow groan, which the thickness of the glass prevented from being heard in the next room, and broke his nails in attempting to tear down the iron railing before the window.

Having reached this paroxysm of delirious rage, Djalma saw the uncertain light grow still fainter, as if it had been discreetly obscured, and, through the vapory shadow that hung before him, he perceived the young lady returning, clad in a long white dressing-gown, and with her golden curls floating over her naked arms and shoulders. She advanced cautiously in the direction of a door which was hid from Djalma's view. At this moment, one of the doors of the apartment in which the prince was concealed, was gently opened by an invisible hand. Djalma noticed it by the click of the lock, and by the current of fresh air which streamed upon his face, for he could see nothing. The door, left open for Djalma, like that in the next room to which the young lady had drawn near, led to a sort of antechamber communicating with the stairs, which some one now rapidly ascended, and, stopping short, knocked twice at the outer door.

"Here comes Agricola Baudoin. Look and listen!" said the same voice that the prince had already heard.

Mad, intoxicated, but with the fixed idea and reckless determination of a madman or a drunkard, Djalma drew the dagger which Faringhea had left in his possession, and stood in motionless expectation. Hardly were the two knocks heard before the young lady quitted the apartment from which streamed a faint ray of light, ran to the door of the staircase, so that some faint glimmer reached the place where Djalma stood watching, his dagger in his hand. He saw the young lady pass across the antechamber, and approach the door of the staircase, where she said in a whisper: "Who is there?"

"It is I—Agricola Baudoin," answered, from without, a manly voice.

What followed was as rapid as lightning, and must be conceived rather than described. Hardly had the young lady drawn the bolt of the door, hardly had Agricola Baudoin stepped across the threshold, than Djalma, with the bound of a tiger, stabbed as it were at once, so rapid were the strokes, both the young lady, who fell dead on the floor, and Agricola, who sank, dangerously wounded, by the side of the unfortunate victim. This scene of murder, rapid as thought, took place in the midst of a half obscurity. Suddenly the faint light from the chamber was completely extinguished, and a second after, Djalma felt his arm seized in the darkness by an iron grasp, and the voice of Faringhea whispered: "You are avenged. Come; we can secure our retreat." Inert, stupified at what he had done, Djalma offered no resistence, and let himself be dragged by the half-caste into the inner apartments, from which there was another way out.

* * * * *

When Roden had exclaimed, in his admiration of the generative power of thought, that the word NECKLACE had been the germ of the infernal project he then contemplated, it was that chance had brought to the mind the remembrance of the too famous affair of the diamond necklace in which a woman, thanks to her resemblance to Queen Marie Antoinette, being dressed like that princess, and, favored by the uncertainty of a twilight, had played so skilfully the part of her unfortunate sovereign, as to make the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, though familiar with the court, the complete dupe of the illusion. Having once determined on his execrable design, Rodin had sent Jacques Dumoulin to Sainte-Colombe, without telling him the real object of his mission, to ask this experienced woman to procure a fine young girl, tall, and with red hair. Once found, a costume exactly resembling that worn by Adrienne, and of which the Princess de Saint-Dizier gave the description to Rodin, (though herself ignorant of this new plot), was to complete the deception. The rest is known, or may be guessed. The unfortunate girl, who acted as Adrienne's double, believed she was only aiding in a jest. As for Agricola, he had received a letter, in which he was invited to a meeting that might be of the greatest importance to Mdlle. de Cardoville.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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Omaha, Nebraska, August 18th, 1899.

JOHN W. McDONALD,
Sheriff of Douglas County, Nebraska.
W. A. SAUNDERS, Attorney.
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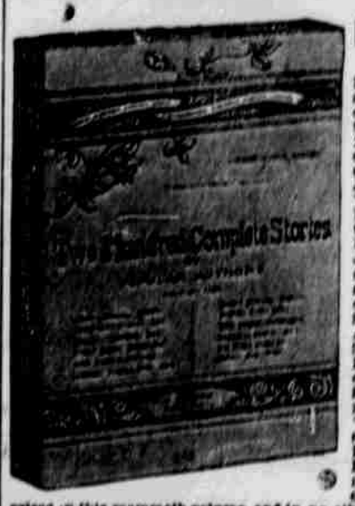

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