A WOMAN'S LOVE

OR, A BROTHER'S PROMISE

CHAPTER XIV.

The shadows of the Monte sent long lines across the valley, weaving with their slim brethren of the palms a mesh-work that caught and seemed to bind the feet of the myriad searchers for dead and wounded who went slowly up and down the hollows, emerging here from the green of an orange grove with a drear burden for burial, disappearing there into a farmhouse with a sagging stretcher. Beyond the valley, the eastern end of Palm City sloped to the shore, darkening with a thousand mysteries of tender dim coloring. And then again, beyond the City, lay the broad carpet of the ocean, rich with ineffable depths of all tints from gold and glorious blue to mauve and royallest purple. High above the water hung the sky, magnificent in its unflecked purity, wonderful as the blue of the Virgin's kirtle—nay, it was the very raiment of the divine Mary.

This was the background that filled the frame of Hector's tent door. To complete the picture making it inevitable, her head clear against the serene azure, Maddalena stood, a figure at once splendid and pathetic.

The mad fierce words had been a blow in the face: all expected, they had smitten brutally. And then, as responsive blood hurries in surprise to every pinpoint of the stricken cheek, their full meaning hastened aggressively into every cranny of her being. The pain of the strange intelligence stung, and summoned tears to tremble. Hector saw them and had the momentary fear that she was about to break down. But dignity, pride, love, and that pugnacity which harbors in even the most peaceful nature, joined hands and set a girdle of strength about her. With an unconscious toss of the head, she shook the drops from her lashes, and looked on Asunta with undimmed gaze.

The men were dumb at the malicious vulgarity of the attack. Sudden, gross, offensive, it stunned them, too, into blank amazement. Their eyes turned first to the victim, and in suspense they waited for Maddalena to move. They had been powerless to prevent the attack' while the Queen was there they were equally powerless to retaliate. Only Alasdair, who knew no word of what was passing, understood from attitude and gesture that ill events were toward: he moved from his sentinel post by the doorway, so that at hint of eye he might come between the Queen and the enraged Asunta.

It was Hector, then. What did Asunta know? What part had Asunta in his life? Why did Asunta cry out against her thus? For love of Palmetto, for love of him? From question and doubt to doubt and question she swung for an eternity. And how to deal with this mad woman who, having spoken a thousand daggers, looked a deadlier thousand? What to say—she could meet her gaze calmly—but O! what to say?

Her eyes took an impulse. She looked to Hector. It was the unspoken appeal for help, for protection. She read both in his eyes—in the love he put in her hands was a shield invulnerable. Now she was strong, she was armed at all points.

"Dona Asunta. I am unused to scenes of violence. You forget what is due to me, you forget what is due to yourself. I am at a loss to understand this extremity of passion. But at least I understand that you accuse me——"

"Of being his lover—yes!" And a quivering hand marked Hector.

"If by that you mean that I—that I love Senor Grant—it is my happiness to love him, as it is my unhappiness. And if so I choose to do, how have you gained the right to ask why, how?"

"Because I love Palmetto."

"Better than you love me?"

"Perhaps— yes, better than I love you."

"Is that the only reason?"

"No. He insulted me with his love—his love—the adventurer who comes whence no one knows. You must not be deceived."

"Strange. I was his guarantee. He bore my commission. You received him as my representative."

"Until he showed his true character."

"How did he show it?"

"By besieging me, pestering me with his professions of love; and now he has got you in his toils."

Maddalena smiled on Hector.

"You hear Dona Asunta, senor. I shall not ask you to reply to her."

He thanked her with a look that drew the bonds of trust and confidence the closer.

"Ah! but let me reply," cried Bravo. "I have no mercy for this lady who conspires to draw your Majesty into her net of revenge."

"Don Augustin! Don Augustin!" pleaded Hector.

"Give me leave, your Majesty," went on Bravo, unheeding, "to tell the truth of this sordid affair."

For a moment Maddalena hesitated but little by little her resentment against Asunta had been swelling, resentment against the woman who had compelled her to tear aside the veil that his her darling young secret, her darling young joy, her rare sweet sorrow.

Why should she spare her who did not spare? And if Bravo knew the truth——

She nodded; and in swift phrases Don Augustin recounted all that Hector had told him of his stay at Friganeta, omitting nothing, extenuating nothing. Maddalena kept her eyes fixed on Asunta, and strove to read confirmation or denial in the waves of emotion that chased each other over her countenance.

"It's all a lie! it's all a lie!"

"Her position near your Majesty's person gave her opportunities for spying which she did not neglect. She watched you, she watched Senor Grant. Revenge on him she would have, revenge on you also, if it were possible. There was no need to seek revenge: Fate had anticipated her—alas!"

"It's all a lie!" came again hoarsely from Asunta.

Maddalena heaved a sigh of oppression. Her endurance was nearly exhausted. She felt her heart sinking within her, the blood flowing feebly along her veins, her eyes growing blind. This unseemly brawl, in which she felt her inmost soul laid bare and torn by coarse fingers, was degrading to her and her love, and she rebelled bitterly against the weakness it bred in her. It must end, it must end.

"Let Don Miguel be summoned," she said. "Don Augustin, see to it!"

"Your Majesty does not know yet that Don Miguel is a prisoner," said Bravo.

"A prisoner? Heaven save him! To Stampa?"

"No your Majesty. He is a prisoner in his own tent—a prisoner of Palmetto. What the daughter said; the father has repeated." And briefly he recounted events.

"O! this is monstrous! Let him be brought forthwith!"

She stood still for a moment or two after Bravo left the tent, and then her strength and valorous willpower seemed to leave her.. She looked on the scowling Asunta, who cast furtive glances at the open door as if to make a dash for her liberty, but Alasdair barred the way. She looked at the great Highlandman, but he had all his wits in the one eye that fixed Asunta. Then, as if she had delayed too long, yet feared her own eagerness, she turned to Hector, and with a little cry that held all love, all pity, all sorrow, she ran to where he lay, and taking his hand pressed it to the warm solicitude of her breast. His eyes answered to the full the unpremediated caress. Neither had thought for Asunta, to whose raging soul every movement, every whisper, was wormwood and gall

"Fate takes even our one hour from us," she whispered.

"Fate cannot," he answered.

"And you—wounded—for me."

"I am glad."

"Ah!" The sigh was not now of oppression; it was charged with excess of delight.

"If I were not wounded, would you be here?"

"You might have been killed."

"I had your crucifix——"

"I prayed for you."

"And your rose."

"My heart went with both."

"So I was safe,"

"O! Hector, Hector, I love you!"

"Maddalena!"

"Better to-night than last night—better far."

"Is that possible?"

"Everything is possible to the woman who loves."

For a little space eyes made close speech, lest even the faintest echo might reach thieving ears. And then each longed for sound of the other's voice.

"Hector, I am sorry for her."

"For Asunta?"

"She loves you."

"She hates us both."

"She may well hate me who stole you."

"Stole me? I gave myself to you long ago."

"I think I, too, must have loved you from long ago. I seem to have loved you always."

"You were my dream when I was a boy."

"And then not to know until yesterday."

"Your eyes used to come between me and my books when I was at school."

"O! but I was a little girl! How could they, then?"

"No, I cannot think of you as a little girl: you were always the Queen. Just as you will never grow old: you will be the Queen always—the same, as you are now!"

"Always the same to you, my heart."

"Maddalena! you love me too well I am not worthy."

"You are worthy. You who have bled for me, who have risked life for me!"

"Not worthy though I risk life again to-morrow, and every morrow until the end!"

"It is I that am not worthy, for I can give nothing but my love."

"And that—that makes me a king who am content to be your meanest slave!"

Hector! My King!"

"My Queen! Maddalena!"

"I love my own name now, since I have heard it from your lips!"

"A Queen's, and you the only Queen worthy of it, Maddalena!"

His eyes closed as if he were drunken with the very melody of her name. His hand was still pressed hard to her breast, and through the frail texture of her robe he could feel the happy pulsations of her heart—her heart that could thus forget in its moment of joy the sharp sword-points that sought to pierce it. Her hands covered his in, and held it with tenderness of comfort that only swimming warmth of her eyes could equal. From the ineffable lambent depths the peace of love gleamed up, as a pearl might gleam through shining waters the winds never stir nor the tides trouble. The touch of her eased every ache, and feeling her look upon him was all cordials and elixirs; and when he exchanged the happiness of shut eyes for that of open, his gaze came to rest on the delighsomeness of her mouth, where little quivering ripples ran about the curves and spread and spread until the ever-new wonder of her smile broke upon him.

"Your Majesty!"

At Bravo's voice she turned and found Don Miguel at her feet, his head bowed abjectly, and so remaining.

"I have acquainted Don Miguel with your commands, madame, and I have, perhaps injudiciously, further acquainted him with what has passed to-night between your Majesty and Dona Asunta"

"I have sent for you, sir, that you may hear my will—— I do not wish to listen to any explanations, any excuses. If you see aught in my conduct to sensure or to grieve over, aught of prejudice to Palmetto, aught unworthy of your Queen—come to me and come at once. Do not speak behind my back, sir; and do not believe without proof. Though I am a woman I am strong enough not to flinch from the criticism or the censure of a friend; but I resent thoughtless interference, and I will not brook secret discussion of my acts.

"I trust I am wise in believing that when you repeated your daughter's insinuations you were actuated by the best motives: I am at least content to believe that. I demand now an apology, not only for the utterance of the calumny, but for the suspicion itself You will also apologize to Senor Grant."

Don Miguel, still kneeling, looked up. The sight of his Queen, a child almost in years yet full of true dignity; the vision of her unprotected youth and beauty; the words she had spoken, so just, so direct, so simple; all these moved him as no royal anger could—all doubt of her and all petty annoyance fell from him, and he saw that she was indeed, even in her outward seeming, above reproach. She looked truth and innocence, as she was truth and innocence. There was no stop for thought: he seized her hand and kissed it, while his eyes brimmed with tears of contrition that would not be stayed.

"Madame—madame—I am the basest—O! madame, do you forgive, do you forgive?" The words were choked in him.

Glad to end a scene so painful to her, to Don Miguel, to Hector, Maddalena bowed her head.

"I forgive you!"

Again and again the old man kissed her hands.

"Rise, sir."

He obeyed.

"It is impossible for me to retain Dona Asunta near my person. I cannot have about me one who neither loves me nor serves me faithfully. I desire you to receive her at my hands. Let me never see her again."

"Madame! madame!" was all the weeping man could stammer.

"Don Augustin, you will inform General Ramiros of my will that Don Miguel's sword be returned to him. It is also my will that those who know of this incident shall not speak of it, now or ever."

Bravo bowed.

"Don Miguel, you are suffering keenly. At another time you will make amends to Senor Grant. Dona Asunta awaits you. Adios!"

All but Alasdair averted their eyes as humbled father and still haughty daughter passed from the tent. As Asunta, silent and scornful, swept under the great Highlander's keen eye, his hand closed involuntarily on the haft of his dirk. The impulse was on him to strike to her black heart, but the steel was for another breast. His fingers unclosed reluctantly.

(To be Continued.)

GERMAN SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

In this country the term "Sunday-school" has a definite meaning, and is exclusively used to denote a place of religious teaching. In Germany, however, the race for commercial supremacy has led to the establishment of the Sunday-schools at which mechanics are given practical instruction in their trades. There is, for example, a school for masons, at which the students, many of them mechanics who work during the week and spend several hours on Sunday morning in learning the higher branches of their craft. Similarly there are Sunday-schools for tailors, ironmongers and followers of other trades—even barbers and blacksmiths.

THE JAPANESE SOLDIER

LITTLE MEN THAY FIGHT FOR THE MIKADO.

Can Go Long Distances and Carry Heavy Loads Without Fatigue.

Kimi go yo wa chiyoni
Vachiyo o ni sazare
Ishi no iwaoto narete
Kokeno musubumade.
—Japanese War Song.

The Japanese "Booby," as the British Tommy Atkins calls the little fighting man of the Mikado, is a great singer after his fashion. Whether he is tugging at the trail ropes of a 3.2-inch Hotchkiss on a rocky slippery, frozen mountain path or hiking along thirty miles a day with fifty pounds of weight on him, he relieves the monotony of the business with a burst of song, and his favorite ballad is the one quoted above, of which a free translation is as follows:

Our gracious sovereign
Shall reign a thousand years
Until the little pebble
Grows into a mighty rock
Covered with ancient moss.

Bobby is the most cheerful and willing marcher that ever carried a knapsack and a gun. Away back in the dim past there must have been a Good Roads Association in Japan which did its work well. With good roads everywhere it is only natural that the Japanese should have taken to pedestrianism. Generation after generation of long distance walkers in Japan have evolved the Japanese soldier of the twentieth century, who astounds the European experts by his marching.

If you have ever carried a ten pound rifle, a twenty pound knapsack and a cartridge belt full of ammunition, haversack and canteen, aggregating a total of fifty pounds, on a long march, you know what it is—and if you have not had the experience words cannot give a proper idea of it to you.

THE FIRST FIVE MILES.

are comparatively easy. The next five are hard, the next distressing, and then it becomes torture, but not to Bobby. His pedestrian ancestors have bequeathed him a pair of superb legs with muscles like steel and the most marvellous wind. Infantry companies travel stretches of five miles at the double quick just for fun.

In all campaigns of European and American armies it has been impossible to make the infantry soldier carry his knapsack when it tires him on a forced march. The line of march of European troops is always strewn with knapsacks discarded by exhausted infantry soldiers.

Such is not the case with the Japanese army. Bobby never throws his knapsack away. No matter how fast he has to travel, nor how far, it stays on his back until he goes into camp.

Bobby has no little contempt for his brother the cavalryman. He knows that after a month or two of campaigning he will be able to outmarch the cavalryman and leave him far behind. The cavalry may clatter bravely forward for the first few weeks, but that is all. Then the horses begin to go lame, get sore backs and break down.

The Japanese Bobby laughs at the troubles of the cavalryman, for he knows no troubles of any kind himself. Even his feet do not give him any serious trouble. If his shoes become painful or wear out, he puts on a pair of straw sandals and then he is comfortable and able to march even better than before.

COMMISSARY CARTS

with several weeks supply of rations accompany each batalion. These carts are drawn by ponies, but there are a number of coolies with every cart and if the horses break down the coolies are able to pull the carts quite as well. The coolie is the man behind the man behind the gun in the Japanese army, and always insures a good dinner when camp is reached.

Shelter tents are carried by the men for emergency purposes, but are seldom used, as the commissary carts are generally at hand with the large tents, each of which houses some twenty men. The diet of the Japanese soldier is a simple one, consisting largely of rice, beans, dried fish and salt vegetable pickles, washed down with tea and libitum.

It is surprising how cheerful the Japanese Bobby keeps under the monotonous conditions of campaigning. He is, in common with all Japanese people, the possessor of a wonderful inborn philosophy, a certain quality of mind which enables him not only to meet any crisis with calmness and power, but to endure with patient resignation, and even cheerfulness, those long periods of watching and waiting in camps and fortified places that are the most trying experiences of a soldier in warfare.

To while away the time Bobby has a variety of sports and pastimes. Of the more strenuous forms of sport he is most given to fencing and wrestling.

THE FENCING PRACTICE.

in the Japanese army is done with bamboo staves, which are wielded with both hands. The combatants wear wadded armor and masks for protection. The system of attack and defence is elaborate and much training is required to attain pro-proficiency. European experts declare that the Japanese fencer is the most formidable adversary in the world.

Wrestling is a favorite sport and one in which all soldiers exhibit wonderful skill. Wrestling matches between the champions of different regiments are the great sporting events of the year in the Japanese army.

The most popular pastime of the soldier in the field is playing "hanna-awase," a Japanese game of cards not unlike whist. The cards are forty-eight in number. It is more complicated than whist and more difficult to master.

The game of "go," of Japanese dominoes, is also dear to the heart of the Japanese Bobby. Go is played on a board ruled off into a hundred little squares. Small black and white stones, cut into little disks, are used to fill the squares. The rules of the game appear quite complicated to the foreigner. "Shoji," or Japanese chess, also is a popular game.

The Japanese camps impress the foreigner as being very clean and orderly. There is a marked absence of the drunkenness and boisterous conduct so common in the camps of European armies. Yet the Japanese Bobby is fond of his sake. The discipline is so strict that Bobby does not dare to indulge his taste for sake except on rare occasions.

In the evening, when circumstances permit and the weather is pleasant, the men gather around the campfire and sing the quaint monotonous Japanese folksongs. Perhaps some man in the company has a samisen, if so the instrument is brought forth, and to its twanging accompaniment they chant the old songs, which tell of the deeds of heroes of old Japan and of the beauties of nature.

As there is no profanity in the Japanese language, the Japanese soldier is not profane, in which respect he differs from almost every other soldier in the world.

The war cry of the Japanese soldier when he charges the enemy is "Nihon banjai," which means "Japan forever."

TWO YEARS ALONE.

A Young Wife's Experience on the Isle of Demons.

Off the coast of Newfoundland lies a small island known as the Isle of Demons, which holds within its rocky shores a romance as thrilling and a tragedy as real as any told in fiction. About 1540 Marguerite de Roberval, niece of the French viceroy, fell in love with a young cavalier and promised him her heart and hand. Her uncle, the viceroy, considered the youth unworthy of his niece's proud position, and angered by her refusal to give up her lover, he passed a sentence of exile upon both of them. A vessel carried the couple to the Isle of Demons, leaving them there alone, with an old nurse who had attended the lady Marguerite from her childhood, and who wished to share her exile.

At first the banishment did not seem so dreadful a thing; the young man's strength stood between his wife and suffering, and for two years all went well. A child was born, and the parents began to plan for the establishment of a colony which thrive in this island home. Then came trouble, swift and terrible.

Disease smote the little family, and the young wife and mother saw her husband, child and faithful nurse all sicken and die. With her own hands she dug their graves and buried all that was dear to her; then began a life alone, a life in which the mere question of existence became a problem hard indeed for a frail woman to solve. By means of the gun that had been her husband's, she kept herself provided with food and with skins for her clothing.

For two years she lived a Robinson Crusoe life, this gently nurtured, highly bred girl. Once a boat filled with Indians came near the shore, but the painted faces and fierce aspect of the savages frightened her, so that she hid instead of hailing them. She spent weeks of labor in making a crude canoe, but her hands were unskilled, and when she launched her craft it would only tip over.

At last she was rescued by some fishermen who ventured on the island, half-frightened at first by what they thought was an evil apparition.

Marguerite was sent to France, but her uncle discovered her whereabouts and continued to persecute her. She finally found a refuge in a small French village, where she hid until the viceroy's death. After that she came into the world once more and lived to a good old age.

POTATO ALCOHOL.

The use of potato alcohol to furnish light, heat, and motive power has been developed rapidly and to a very high degree in Germany. Germany produces about 55,000,000 tons of potatoes a year, and uses for human food, stock food, and starch only about 35,000,000 tons. The remainder is converted into alcohol, and used as a power generator for both land and water motors, and for cooking, heating, and lighting. The alcohol vapor is burned like gas in chandeliers and street lamps, and gives a very bright light. In districts distant from mines it is cheaper than coal.