A WOMAN'S LOVE

OR, A BROTHER'S PROMISE

CHAPTER XVI.

Even at that late season of the year—it was December, though not advanced beyond a few days—the garden at Caldera was rich in color and profuse in greenery. And the weather was so fair and warm, there were such balmy breaths from the sea and soft airs from the hills, such sweet mornings of sunshine and such mellow afternoons, that the little household of the Queen spent but short indoors. The Queen herself loved the open after the tedious years of mephitic Bloomsbury (where as Todman says, "there is more 'bury' than 'bloom' "); she loved to gaze at the rugged outline of the hills, to watch the tides of tinted shadow that flowed over them as the sun swung up and then down; she loved to drink in the mere sense of freedom that lives in a wide prospect, and to feel the cool, pure breath of her own land.

Near the foot of the garden was an arbour of Glorie de Dijon roses, and there Maddalena passed most of her waking hours, the fairest rose of her pleasaunce. At a tiny table she transacted much State business with Don Augustin; received messengers with lists of dead and wounded, or of the siege of Palm City; gave a ready ear to this or that petitioner who believed that the Queen could set all things right; or signed documents signifying to Don A. that her Majesty desired to do such and such, to Senor B. that her Majesty commanded him to do as he had been bid on pain of her displeasure.

To every one that saw thus throned among the roses the same thought came—that the Queen was very beautiful; that she was young, that she was indeed a Queen, but alas! that she looked so sad. Not that she did not smile on her people, for she was happy in seeing them; but over the smile flitted a shadow of sorrow indefinable that made the smile strangely sweeter, and in her voice was a subtle tone that found in every heart a responsive chord, and made the hearer wonder if it was in such wise the angels sang when Paradise was lost. "Ah!" said they, "she will be no longer sad when the Hispaniolan is driven out of Palmetto—she will sing and dance with the best of us then." Only Don Augustin knew that whatever good hap came to the Isle of Palms this silver thread of sorrow would string Maddalena's jewels for ever.

The change in her did not escape the observant eye of the Orange King as he came down the path escorted by Don Augustin, radiant with delight. To Bravo the return of Thomas Smith seemed an augury that the happy end was near.

Maddalena rose with outstretched hands.

"Mr. Smith! You have taken us by surprise!"

"Better I than Stampa, your Majesty," he laughed. "The fact is I couldn't stay away any longer. I want to see for myself if my orange monopoly is to hold good."

"Ah! you put it in that way. Well—you shall see, you shall see. But come: I am just going to breakfast under the roses. You must join me."

"I have already breakfasted, madame."

"At eight o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Off bacon and eggs?"

"Yes."

"What a Briton!" she laughed. "But if you have come from Espoleto—have you?"

"From Espoleto, madame."

"Then you are ready for luncheon. Come, sit down, sir. You will join us, Don Augustin."

"You are cut off from the world here, madame, so I daresay I am the first to bring you a certain piece of news—good news. The Free State have thrashed Hispaniola."

"That is indeed good news. When? How?"

"When? Twelve days ago. And how? By blowing them out of the water. But there is better news to come." A merry twinkle lurked in the corner of the Orange King's eye, as he paused and helped himself to olives. "What do you think, madame, of the Free States' combined navies crossing the ocean to bombard the principal ports of Hispaniola?"

"Is it possible?" cried Maddalena, while Don Augustin, startled afresh out of his precisian calm, stared at Mr. Smith with a hundred eyes and a gaping mouth.

"Does it not make your prospects brighter, madame?"

"It will certainly lower Hispaniola's prestige."

"More than that, madame, more than that." And again Mr. Smith paused with that twinkle.

"Tell me, tell me," cried Maddalena.

"Well, as far as their knowledge goes, the commanders of the Free States fleet regard Palmetto as Hispaniolan territory. On their way to blockade, bombard, pulverize Sarralona, Terez, Almeduna, Pamparivos, they will naturally call at Palm City and demand its surrender."

Don Augustin's face clouded. He saw the fair island slip from Maddalena's hands into those of taskmasters as harsh as Hispaniola. Some such thought flashed into the Queen's mind, too, but her eyes were on the Orange King's face, and she saw nothing there but unconcern and amusement.

"Palm City," went on Mr. Smith, "will surrender. It cannot resist attack by twelve battleships and gunboats and torpedo destroyers."

"But if we could take it first," cried Bravo.

"It would be at too great expense my friend," said Mr. Smith drily. "There is a much cheaper way than that."

"And that is?"

"I am here this morning to lay my plan before your Majesty. May I explain it in my own way?"

"Surely, sir, surely."

"The moment my agent at Rio cabled to me that the fleet had set out, I started for Palmetto. I calculate that the ships will be off Palm City on the morning of the day after to-morrow, or perhaps in the evening. Perhaps they will come in at night with lights out, and make my friend Stampa rub his eyes when he wakes in the morning. Anyway, and whatever the intentions of the Free States admiral, I want you to allow me to intercept him before he sights Palmetto."

"Yes, yes," cried Maddalena, all impatience.

"I want you, madame, to entrust me with a letter for him, in which you explain your position. Ask for his co-operation, and promise payment for his assistance—rather the assistance of his governments. Good. He will accept or he will reject. If he rejects, he will win—temporarily: for Europe will not allow the Free States of South America to depart from their adherence to the Monroe doctrine, and if the worst comes to the worst Palmetto is still Hispaniola's, and the struggle goes on from where it now stands. If he accepts, you will have to pay a million, perhaps two. And you can leave that to me."

Maddalena rose to her feet, carried out of herself by the suggested speedy end of the fight, her face flushed and her hands pressed together.

"O! if it might only be! if it might only be!"

"It may well be, madame, if you write the letter I spoke of—and—" he paused and laughed—"make it a nice one."

She turned swiftly and looked at him, Bravo aghast and a little more than half inclined to pose mightily on dignity. But the good humor and good faith so clearly marked on the Orange King's face disarmed her and made her forget the cool audacity of the proposal.

"Sir," she said, "I will do it. You are a deus ex machina."

"My Latin is rusty, madame," he laughed, "but—dea in flores seems to meet the case."

"You are a courtier as well as a genius, sir."

"If the admiral agrees to your proposal, madame, in four days there won't be a Hispaniolan soldier on the island."

"There are eight thousand here now," grumbled Bravo. "How do you propose to get rid of them? Dump them in the sea?"

"Send them back to Hispaniola," said Smith shortly.

"In balloons? There are no ships."

"There will be ships when they are wanted," came the answer, still more shortly.

"I see you have your plan, Mr. Smith," said Maddalena, with a frown at Don Augustin. "You will tell me?"

Smith waved a hand of resignation to the inevitable.

"A plan? A very little one. Like the Free States, I also have a fleet. Twelve steamers of mine are now three days north of Palmetto. They are ostensibly bound for the West Coast of Africa for cargo. They were under-coaled at Liverpool. They put into Palm City for supplies. I'm no man of business if they reach the West Coast this trip. I rather think they will touch at Hispaniolan ports and land more valuable cargo than rubber. Hispaniola will pay—and I'll see that I get my money, too. And now, madame, you will want a little time to write your letter. Do you permit me to leave you? I should like to see Grant, if Don Augustin will direct me where to find him."

As he uttered Hector's name, Mr. Thomas Smith gave one swift side glance at Maddalena, and satisfied his suspicion.

"I should like to help you, Mr. Smith. I do not know what to say."

"Madame, I cannot help you in this. Write as your heart dictates. I should make it too businesslike, and the admiral would scent—diplomacy. Write as your heart dictates, madame: sincerity and candor will win. No, no, I cannot help—I have no heart."

(O, Mr. Smith! O, Mr. Thomas Smith! Rank, flat, ineffective, ostentatious lying.)

"I will try my best, sir," said Maddalena simply, and she bowed his leave to the Orange King.

He turned away, and then he turned back.

"A moment, madame. I must beg your pardon, as I must beg hers. Just before I left Liverpool, a friend of yours called at my office and demanded—there is no other word for it—demanded a passage to Palmetto. She would not be denied. She would see you. She is waiting now in your reception room."

"She! I know no she. Who is it?"

"Miss Judith Frere— Adios, madame."

"Don Augustin! Accompany Mr. Smith. And see that Miss Frere is sent to me at once."

Judith Frere! Poor Judith Frere! What madcap freak is this that has entered your head? What has driven you to Palmetto, to sit in her Majesty's reception-room twining your fingers and going over and over again sad little set speeches, while your heart beats in your shrunken breast such a piteous rhythm, and your breath comes and goes with such a painful, dry crackle, and with such accusing iteration there sounds in your ears the cry you have heard nothing else beside these many days—the cry of "You sold her, you sold her?" What has driven you here—nay, what has drawn you?

You remember that day in Aberdeen when Hector Grant told you of the hapless young Queen. You remember that evening when he took you into her presence, and you feasted your starved eyes on her young beauty, and you drank the new wine of her hopeful heart, and you saw in her the self your dreams of long ago had made of you. You remember how first you loved her, and then how you envied her. And then, alas! you remember—and it brings a hot flush to your wasted cheeks—how poverty pinched and the devil drove, and you attempted to sell her secret—the secret of her who in all innocence, and a little perhaps out of her unconsciously growing love for Hector, received you and confided her dear hopes to you.

Yes, you tried to sell her, and you failed. You tried to betray, and you were betrayed. If your bargain had been successfully carried out, would you be in Palmetto this sunny December morning, desirous of one thing—confession: confession without a single thought of forgiveness—to see her and tell her all—yes, that in itself will be forgiveness enough, punishment enough; for to gaze into her truthful eyes and see reproach look out at you—that will be forgiveness. Only you shall never see reproach in Maddalena's eyes. You think you shall, but you shall not. That is because you do not know all the fineness and tenderheartedness and the rare womanly understanding of the Queen. She will not even offer you forgiveness; for to offer forgiveness implies that there has been a fault—and knowing by instinct how you have suffered, she will not seek to break the bruised reed. Yet be strong, Judith Frere, for her very kindness will cut deeper than a thousand reproaches.

"Her Majesty desires Miss Judith Frere's presence."

Like a ghost in a dream she follows the tall servant. Like a ghost in a dream she walks down the garden path and sees the Queen stand under the arch of roses. A mist clouds her sight: she stumbles and falls. The servant stoops to assist her, but Maddalena runs lightly along the path, and has the poor woman in her arms, and is lifting her gently, before the man is well into the middle of his amaze.

"You may go. I will attend to this lady myself."

He hears, but lingers.

"You may go."

Her look is sufficient order.

Judith Frere is set down in a low chair, and a glass of wine is held to her lips. She is slow of recovery, but at last she opens her eyes. And then the sad little set speeches are cast to the winds, all forgotten, and from the heart of her remorse there wells up an unpremeditated babble of confession, contrition, abasement, that Maddalena is powerless to stop, and that is ten times more eloquent because of its very incoherence, its utter abandonment. From a word here and a word there Maddalena pieces together the pitiful whole, and sees how this woman's independence, "a poor possession, but her all," went down before the combined forces of poverty and temptation. There is one emotion only stirring in her breast—not anger or reproach or contempt, but pity, the pity that understands weakness and gives strength and comfort. It shines from her eyes and her face and her whole being, and saying nothing (for words are poor things after all) she says more to the tortured woman than a thousand speeches could.

But the silence must be broken. One cannot always hold fevered hands and pat them and smooth them consolingly.

"Poor Miss Frere!"

"O! madame. O! your Majesty."

"You are very weak after your long long journey."

"But you forgive me? Say that you forgive me."

"Now, now, there is nothing to forgive. And I don't understand a word you say. Long ago in London I made you promise to visit me in Palmetto. You have come; you are my very welcome guest."

"O, I cannot stay—I cannot stay."

"O, but you shall stay. Remember that I am the Queen here, and my word is law. You are my guest unless you prefer to be my prisoner, and I am going to take care of you until you are quite well again. It will be time enough then to speak of going. Come now, take my arm."

"But, madame——"

"My word is law here—take my arm!"

In a little while Maddalena returned to her arbor, and sat down with pen and paper to write her letter to the Admiral of the Free States fleet. For an hour or more she labored, tearing up draft after draft, and stopping every now and then to lean her chin on her hand and gather her thoughts afresh. She had promised Mr. Smith that she would try, and she was trying: but somehow the words would not come right. And although she knew the importance of getting it done, she could not bind her thoughts down; in spite of her will they wandered from the garden, from her people, from this task, to a tent in the lines before Palm City, to Hector. And as thought gave place to vision sorrow lifted from her face, and in every feature her soul lived and moved in sunshine. The fear and dread of to-morrow and to-morrow and all the to-morrows was thrust away, and the almost insupportable, thronging joys of to-day remained to whisper the impossible, and make it true for one moment into which eternities were crushed. There is something of mother-love in woman's purest passion. Perhaps it was this side that was uppermost in Maddalena as she saw Hector with his arm in a sling, and that prompted her, in her ecstasy of vision, to stretch out her hand and open her lips in inaudible speech.

She let her head fall on the table. The vision was gone: reality remained—reality, great and powerful and hard, but not too hard for the spirit that moved Maddalena.

She seized her pen and wrote furiously and with a full heart. Words she did not consider or choose: it was her very thought she set down. And with something higher than mere pride, something stronger than mere power, she signed her name—"Maddalena, the Queen."

When the Orange King returned, and the missive was put into his hand, he made no excuse for reading it. He did not smile as he finished, but, with something of reverence in his air, he folded the paper ere he placed it in his letter-case, and turned to her with a look which told Don Augustin that the Orange King had found a teacher in Maddalena. But he laughed when he spoke.

"My monopoly is as sure, madame, as that Palmetto is yours."

"Then——"

"This"—he tapped his pocket—"carries the day. All the rest is detail. I fix my trust in instinct."

That evening Mr. Thomas Smith put out from Espoleto in the Governor of Lagos, and circling the western end of Palmetto struck south to intercept the admiral of the Free States. Elaborate calculations had been made to settle the fleet's course, and Mr. Smith reckoned on falling in with the vanguard cruiser about mid-afternoon of the next day. But when night fell there rose out of the southern waters, just on the horizon, four new stars, and then four more, and four more, and four more, until from the bridge of the Governor of Lagos the Orange King counted close on seventy white mast-head lights, big and little, with one great solitary red light about the middle of the column. For this red star, with all his own lamps carefully darkened, the Orange King steered. To avoid the vanguard he made first a sweep outward and westward, and then lay still in the trough of the Atlantic until the red light was judged to be distant but a mile or so. Then it was full speed ahead into the darkness of the night.

(To be Continued).

ELECTRIC WARFARE.

The Many Uses to Which Electricity is Now Put.

An interesting instance of the rapid extension of the use of electricity is furnished by its use in warfare. A few years ago electric light was introduced to add to the comfort of the garrisons and to provide better illumination of the works. Electric fans have been put in to make the living quarters more comfortable in hot weather, and electric motors have been adopted for training the guns, a class of work for which they are particularly well adapted. Searchlights have been installed, enabling a fortification to sweep the sea at night.

The various posts of the fortress are connected together by telephone, so that the commandant is in touch at all times with the entire garrison, and can instantly transmit orders to any point. The fortifications along the coast are linked by telephone and telegraph, so that, on the appearance of the enemy at any point, all the fortifications would be informed of it.

Submarine-mines are controlled electrically; and even the guns may be fired by this means by an officer at some distant point. By means of wireless telegraphy a fortification can be kept in touch with the scouting vessels, and would be informed of the approach of the enemy long before he is visible from the coast. Electricity lights the range-finder stations; and electric-clock circuits furnish accurate time to all parts of the fortifications.

"I don't know whether she has shaken him or promised to marry him." "Why?" "He has stopped buying extravagant presents for her."

INTELLIGENCE OF FISHES

WISDOM OF THE LOWER SEA ANIMALS.

Interesting Examples — Feeding Captive Fish—Migrate Like Birds.

In the New Yark Aquarium the other day, L. B. Spencer, one of the best known of the attendants, was discussing the remarkable intelligence exhibited by fish.

"The more I know about fishes," said Mr. Spencer, "and the longer I study them, the more respect I have for them. They know a great deal more than you'd have any idea they do.

"I made this remark to a friend of mine not long ago and he said: "Oh, no! You mean, don't you, that the more you know about human nature the more respect you have for fishes?"

"But what I mean was that there is a remarkable amount of intelligence in fishes, even in the lowest orders of sea life, in sea-anemones and corals, for example—you see specimens of them in the balanced aquaria over there. It is the same intelligence only differing in degree, as we find in higher animals, each order of life having that degree adapted to its special needs.

"Now look at these sea-anemones. They are taken from the ocean, no matter where, placed in the aquarium and fed by hand—in other words, artificially. In a state of captivity they must rely for their food upon man, who passes down to them a bit of clam or oyster on the point of a stick. When the food is first offered to them in this unusual way the anemones show fear, for in their natural habitat they are not accustomed to dead objects; to them this combination of stick and dead clam is truly alarming. But they soon get used to it. After a little the touch of the stick upon the tenacles does not make them withdraw and close up the flower-like mouth. That touch now means food and the anemone reaches out eagerly toward it."

FEEDING OF FISHES.

"The movements and actions of the lower orders of life are mainly a matter of food Animals take great risks at the promptings of hunger. So will men, for that matter, as I know from my experience in the civil war.

In regard to their feeding, we observe many interesting things about fishes Take the salmon family, for example. They generally are fed with live killies. When some of those are thrown into the tank the salmon at once dart after them. The first move the killie makes for safety is to swim up to the top of the tank, where he hugs the back wall as close as he can. Presently Mr. Salmon spies him there and makes ready for a drive. But before he reaches the wall he stops, and you can imagine him saying to himself: 'I've run into that wall before and hurt my snout, and you can bet your life I'm not going to do it again.'

"On the side the killies show a good deal of sense. They will jump out of harm's way on top of the wire strainer at the back of the tank and stay there, half a dozen of them, tail to snout, as close as they can get, with never a flop for perhaps half an hour.

MIGRATORY FISH.

Mr. De. Nyse, who looks after the salt water fish in the aquarium, says there is a striking analogy between the movements of fish in the ocean and those of birds on land.

"Migratory fish," he says, "come north in the spring in great shoals. After arriving here they pair off and scatter about in bays, creeks and estuaries, where they stay during the breeding season. When the fall approaches they assemble again and move southward in large shoals, just as they came. When migrating, birds usually fly high, coming lower when it blows hard. In calm weather migrating fish swim near the surface, but when it is rough and stormy they swim deeper."

BE CHEERFUL.

Keep to the broad highways of hope and cheerfulness. Expect to succeed. Think success, and you will succeed. Keep out of the back alleys of gloom and pessimism. Join the procession of the cheerful, the willing, and the hopeful. Be sanguine. Know the pleasures of living. Enjoy the sunshine of hope. Keep away from the scavengers and ragpickers who infest the back alleys of life. Your pessimist is your scavenger your ragpicker. He may be a necessary evil, but too much of him is fatal. He never gave the world a smile. He never contributed to the good cheer of any human being. He never lifted the gloom from any distressed soul. He is the worm which in the evolution of life, is continually dragging backward towards the past, resisting the progress of development which must go on with or without him. Beware of the encroachments of the carping, pessimistic spirit. It is a hardy plant. It takes root easily in the mind, and, like the thistle, when once it gains a foothold it is well-nigh impossible to uproot it; but it cannot live in an atmosphere of sunshine and cheerfulness. Therefore, keep to the highways. Keep out of the back alleys.

ORIGINAL
ILLEGIBLE