A WOMAN'S LOVE

OR, A BROTHER'S PROMISE

CHAPTER XVIII.

The long day was over and the night was come. Ceremonies and parades, presenting of arms and booming of cannon, pealing of bells and sounding of music, stately banquet and formal investiture were all passed with the sun. Of the loud day naught remained but the surging vivas of the people, who still filed past the gates of the palace, and made night day with wizardry of torches and colored lanters. Again and again they renewed the cry of "Maddalena! Maddalena!" and again and again, at the summons, the Queen appeared on a balcony over the gates; and, with that fine sense of the dramatic ineradicable from her sunny blood, cast to them red roses in handfuls—at once thanks from her heart for all they had borne and done, and promise that she was theirs while to her was life.

She was weary to the point of exhaustion: the long coronation ceremony was enough to break down the endurance of the strongest: but she was dowered with an unconquerable will that would not allow her to yield to mere physical weariness. She turned the repeated remonstrances of the assiduous Bravo with an answer that compelled silence and admiration.

"I shall not be outdone by my people, sir. Am I to be the only one to bear nothing?" forgetting that she had given all; that she was resolved to give all.

On the balcony she did not stand alone; for, always, after the summonses to her, came call on call for "Senor Grant!" Willingly, not only for his own sake, but a thousand times for hers, he would have evaded the ordeal, but Maddalena wisely affected to regard his reluctance as diffidence; and Bravo, hopeful that the incense of homage might help to deaden feeling against the hour of parting, insisted that Maddalena's wish should be obeyed. So Hector took his share of honor with the Queen, standing at her right hand, where she had placed him.

From the flash and change of the crowd, passing before him like the painted nothings of a dream, his eyes lifted ever and anon to rest upon the only realities—Maddalena at his side, and the ship of fire lay out in the bay—the Ibadan. It was not so much of the moment of parting that he thought, as of the morrow on the sea—the morrow when Maddalena would be far from him—and the next day, and the next, and the next. Nor was it on his own sorrow that he dwelt: it was on Maddalena's. He could bury himself from the world; could hide himself among the heather of the North; could dream of the days that were, and steep himself in a very luxury of woe, and so stumble aimlessly down to the dark stream of sleep that drowns all earthly care and grief. But she, with her burden heavy on her heart, must live on in public: moving with smiles among her people, compelling herself to dance when they piped and weep when they wept, to taste all their little joys and share all their sorrows, to give sympathy to those who most needed it—to be, in a word, a slave and a queen. Round in such a dear circle his thoughts ran, halting for a moment when some more than ordinarily hearty outburst of rejoicing called for acknowledgment, only to return with renewed sadness to the desperate round.

But at last the hour of eleven sounded from the campanile of San Bernardino. One last thunder of fireworks, one last salvo of cheering, and Maddalena withdrew from the balcony. Fresh guards were posted, and the Palace gates closed with a clang. Lights went out, and the happy people, like children with a new toy, talked themselves home with enthusiastic little stories of how their Queen had looked, and what their Queen had worn, and what their Queen had said.

At the back of the Palace, looking on to a garden of orange-bordered paths and rose-bright stretches, was a room that had been hastily prepared after the model of the boudoir in Bloomsbury. It was here, when good-nights were said to generls, counsellors, island nobles, blushing with their new honors, that Maddalena, Hector, Bravo and the Orange King met. To guard against all possibility of interruption Alasdair was stationed at the door.

The quiet of this secluded room was welcome after the turmoil of the day, and none wished to break the silence. But time was flying, and little as he wished to shorten their last hour, Bravo was compelled to speak, for it was clear that Maddalena's strength could not hold out much longer.

"Her Majesty wishes us," he said, "to join her in drinking 'Palmetto.' We four saw the beginning of the work; we four have to-day seen the end of it—perhaps I should say, the real beginning. Two of us remain to carry it in, her Majesty for many years—God grant it!—I, for a little while, shall help her; two of us go. But whether we go or stay, surely we shall love Palmetto. Let us then, drink 'Palmetto—Palmetto the Free'!"

Glasses were raised, and in silence the toast was drunk.

"It is a generous act, your Majesty," said the Orange King, "to accord us a private audience of farewell. But we must not presume on it: we see how fatigued you are. To-morrow, and for many days to come, there will be heavier demands on your strength. You must rest—you really must."

"Ah! you are always kind and thoughtful, Mr. Smith; but I must speak for a moment. I have been trying to find words to thank you for all——"

"Pray, pray, madame, spare me thanks."

"O! but I can give you nothing but thanks. I had thought of some honor, but I have none high enough for your merit. And you are best just yourself. What you have done for Palmetto cannot be paid with an order, or thanks, or money. But, believe me"—impulsively holding out both hands—"I shall never forget you; Palmetto shall never forget you—for when you allow me to tell my people the name of the man who gave them the means of seizing freedom, I shall never cease saying to them, 'Remember the name of Thomas Smith!'"

The Orange King smiled.

"It is not a very heroic name, madame."

"It is the name of an honest gentleman——"

At which he could do nothing but bow.

"And I shall remember it with affection as long as I live. You said once that kings had short memories, and I answered you that queens were different."

"Surely I could not have said so rude a thing."

"Ah! yes, you did— Don Augustin—you know."

Bravo handed her a leather portfolio embossed in silver, opening it with a silver key ere he gave it to her.

"Here, sir, is a proof that I do not forget. This is the charter——"

"O! madame——"

"The charter that was promised, giving you the monopoly——"

But the Orange King put his hands over his ears.

"Pray, pray, madame—not another word. I cannot take it, I cannot take it."

"But, sir——"

"I came into this basiness for the mere gamble of the thing. I foresaw a probability of Hispaniola being ousted. I resolved to make the probability a possibility. I put my money into the Palmetto rising as I would have put it into a coal-mine or a slate quarry. Then when I came here and saw the meaning that a successful result had for Palmetto, for its people, for—may I say?—you, my desire to make money out of you left me—and it has not come back."

"But this is a debt of honor."

"If your Majesty wishes to hurt me, insist that I take that charter. If you wish to do me the highest honor, and to give me the greatest pleasure you can, you will burn it—now."

When the Orange King spoke, it was always as the result of deliberation—brief deliberation, it may be—but the matter was settled once and for all; the very tones of his voice were final. Maddalena knew this, and knew, too that nothing pleased him like prompt accession to his wishes.

She drew the charter from its case, and moved towards the crackling wood fire.

"I do wish to do you the highest honor; I do wish to give you the greatest pleasure. See!"

And the parchment was dropped into the flames. For a moment or two she stood in silence, watching the flicker, and then she came back. There were tears in her eyes.

"I am blessed in my friends," she said in a broken voice.

The Orange King kissed her hand.

"Good-night."

"Good-bye, madame."

"No, no, I do not say good-bye. I shall see you soon again, I know. Good-night! God-speed!"

Don Augustin left the room with Mr. Smith, who whispered "Half an hour" as he passed Hector.

The door closed, shutting out the world, shutting them in—closed gently, making them the only two in the world, and the world this room. The sound, soft as it was, fell on their hearts like a clashing of gates, cutting them off for ever.

Hector looked on Maddalena—Maddalena looked on Hector. Neither found words: only from the eyes of each went one swift look of love and pain, and their eyes fell. Maddalena moved to a chair facing the fire, and sank into it, her back to Hector—sank into it with a weakness more touching than tears—and thus she sat for many minutes, motionless.

He, too, was numbed. For one moment he had the impulse to go quickly and take her in his arms with soothing words and the instinctive encouragements that rise to love's lips. But the impulse went down before the sight of her helplessness, and in its place came a certain reverent awe impossible to analyse, for it was at once and altogether love and wonder and sympathy and fear and surrender and effacement, and yet it was none of these by itself. It was an awe that rooted him to the spot where he stood suffering: as if one looked on one's dearest being put to the rack by clumsy fingers, and was ineffectual to move hand or foot.

But if his body was stone, his mind was quicksilver. How it sprang hither and thither, recalling this look of hers and that, that soft word and this; how she was yon night when she drew back the curtain in the White Hall; what she said when he took from her hand the crucifix (warm beside the warm rose on his breast); how she bowed her head to take the crown; her bravery as she faced Asunta in the tent—ah! Asunta, that devil!

Asunta—where was she? Since the night when she fled from Friganeta with di Borja, there had been no whisper of her. Yet more than once recently had he felt a repulsive stir of the nerves, a sort of feeling that she was somewhere near, such as certain men are known to experience when cats come nigh them. He had laughed at his own fears, somewhat half-heartedly it is true, calling them foolishness and the vapors of a heated brain; yet had he trusted to the message of the senses he had been wiser. He felt now a pricking of the skin, felt it ever so slightly, for his nerves were numbed with the imminent disaster of parting, and his thoughts went ranging far afield with Maddalena. Yet—had he but hearkened to it. For Asunta was near.

There was but the window between them—a pane of glass and a curtain. For days and days she had sought her revenge, but Fate wrought against her, and each day seemed to make vengeance more and more of a phantom. Di Borja desired the death of Hector; Asunta that of Maddalena. But di Borja's was the stronger nature, the stronger will; he had recognized once that he had ascendency, and he was not willing to forego one whit of advantage. He hoped to see Hispaniola recapture supremacy in Palmetto: that, to his mind, could only be achieved by the death of Hector. "Do not let me see you until that Englishman is dead," Stampa had said to him; and at Friganeta he had talked with Cassavellino, and heard nothing but praise of Hector: Senor Grant had done this, Senor Grant had done that, Senor Grant had recommended some marvellous thing—always Senor Grant: so, with the double aim of maintaining the dominance of Hispaniola and ensuring his own advancement, he set himself deliberately to the removal of Hector. "Maddalena is a mere puppet," said he; "smash the mainspring, the mechanism of revolution refases to act. Asunta shall be the hammer."

It was not easy, however, to get near enough to the mainspring for the decisive blow to be delivered. Di Borja could not himself keep regular watch, for his face was well known in Palm City, and so, too, was Asunta's. But, little by little, they came to learn Hector's movements, and what they did not know they deduced easily. Thus it came that on the coronation day they discovered he would be at the Palace until a late hour. Di Borja knew the Palace and its grounds thoroughly, and he had in his possession—he was chief of Stampa's intelligence staff, remember, and a privileged person—a key to the back entrance of the garden.

"I give you this key," he said to Asunta, "and you let yourself in. Take the path to the right. That will lead you to a railing beyond which you cannot go. When he leaves the Palace to-night he must pass this railing. He cannot escape you, he must not escape you. You will be in the dark and cannot be seen: he will be in the light. Let your hand be steady."

And now she was by the railing, waiting.

Hector thrust Asunta from his thoughts, and bent his eyes again on the weary figure of Maddalena. Slowly and without raising her head, she stretched out a hand as if beckoning him. He knelt and took it in his, kissing it again and again. Tenderly she drew him to her, and rested his head against her knee as she fondled his hair with an almost motherly touch. At last she spoke.

"So this is the end."

"Yes—the end."

"Only a few minutes more."

"Just a few minutes."

"Is this worth it all?" She raised her hand to the narrow gold circlet that was sign at once of her royalty and her wedding to Palmetto.

"Not a thousand crowns can weigh down love like ours; but there is your people, who have waited and bled for you."

"My duty is hard, my duty is hard. Why cannot I take your hand, and go out with into the night, and wander the world with you, and taste what love really is? O! Hector, if I only could!"

"But you were pledged to them from your birth. You would make me happy, you would be happy yourself. After all, we are only two. Your people are thousands."

"Hector—O, Hector, you love me?"

"Maddalena!"

"O! I know, I know. But I want your love now more than ever. Love me, Hector, love me always. Let your love be about me always—then I shall be strong to endure, strong to be the thing I am too weak in myself to be."

"You know I shall love you always."

"O! I am selfish. Here I ask for your love—and it is you that need loving—you who have nothing to fill the place I should fill."

"I shall have your love, Maddalena!"

"To the very gates of hell, Hector. O! it is cruel that it is you who have won me my kingdom—you, who, by winning it for me, cut yourself off from me, cut me off from you. Sometimes I hate Don Augustin for having found you, I hate Palmetto for being the cause of it all. I think it might have been better had I been kept in ignorance of my birth, if my destiny had been given to some other woman. For I am really weak, and I know I know I shall not be a true ruler—I am just a woman who loves a man a woman who needs love asks nothing more."

"Dearest, do not blaspheme against yourself. You are a Queen—every inch of you—you could not be other than yourself. You must go on, and my love will be always with you."

Hector, until this moment I have not known what love is. I came to you in the tent because you called me—yes, I loved you then, but not like this. I came to you wounded"—she drew him to her, and kissed the sling over his shoulder—"but not even then did I love you like this. I loved you to-day when you stood brave before them all with the crown but I did not love you like this. There was earthly passion in all that love, pride in being loved, more pride in loving you. Now—O! Hector, that you are going from me—see, my whole soul is bare before you—I am—no, I cannot find words—I am choking—choking!"

She rose, pressing her hands to her bosom. Up and down the room she paced excitedly for a moment or two, as if struggling to find expression for emotions that tore at the very centre of her being. She stopped and flung the curtains aside impetuously; then she undid the hasp, and opening the window, stepped out into the darkness for a moment.

(To be Continued.)

SOLDIERS' LIVES RUINED

WOMEN WHO HAVE BETRAYED WAR SECRETS.

Gen. Boulanger's Downfall—Secrets Won From British Officers.

In nearly every instance of treachery and corruption resulting in a public scandal during the last fifty years woman has played a prominent and ignoble part. The real instigator of the crime, she goes unpunished bringing to those connected with her ignominy, disgrace, exile, and some times death.

One of the most notorious of these women who for a time pulled the strings of history was the Baroness de Kaula, a German by birth, who caused the downfall of old General de Cissey, the Minister of War in Paris during the presidency of Marshal MacMahon. The General, infatuated with the Baroness, was in the habit of lunching with her at her house close to the Elysee every Thursday, after the meeting of the Cabinet Council. While they were at lunch her servants were taking shorthand notes of the Ministerial papers in the General's portfolio, which were then forwarded in cipher to Bismarck in Berlin, who thus knew every Friday morning all that had passed in the French Cabinet Council on Thursday.

This went on for two years, and might never have been discovered if the Baroness had not made the mistake of being too grasping. She succeeded in obtaining from the General, who could refuse her nothing,

VALUABLE ARMY CONTRACTS

for some of her friends; this led to searching inquiries on the part of disappointed candidates, and the whole business came out.

Another woman of German extraction, sister to one of the ladies-in-waiting to the Grand Duchess of Baden, brought ruin to many French staff officers. This was Mme. Limousin.

Married to a French magistrate of unsullied reputation, she took advantage of her position to organize the traffic in the Legion of Honor decorations, which scandal caused such an outcry on its discovery that President Grevy resigned the presidency in consequence.

Mme. de Limousin's was a record achievement; she effected the downfall of General Thibaudin; the Minister of War; of General the Count de Caffarel, his successor; of General the Marquis d'Andlau, and a number of staff officers who were involved in the same scandal.

Among the great men brought to naught by the evil influence of a woman, General Boulanger stands out prominently. At the climax of his career, when all Paris was at his feet and the future of France in the hollow of his hand, he threw everything away for a woman who was another man's wife. The Vicontesse de Bonnemian called him to her side on the night of his election as member of the Chamber of Deputies for Paris.

Had he obeyed the urgings of his partisans and marched upon the Elysee then and there, he might have been

RULER OF FRANCE,

but he listened instead to the voice of the siren, and threw his career to the winds.

In another instance four men betrayed their country and lost their lives through a woman's beauty and wiles. General Pavanoff and three colonels of the Russian Army were condemned to be shot for having sold the Russian plan of mobilisation to the Austrian Government.

It was owing to the fascinations of a beautiful woman, General Pavanoff's adopted daughter, that they were guilty of the treason which was punished with death.

The three colonels betrayed their country less for money than for the hope of finding favor in the eyes of this enchantress who had so infatuated them.

There is a prisoner in the gloomy fortress of Prezemiszl who owes his downfall to a lovely Russian princess. He is the Baron Pottier des Eschelles, once an officer of the Austrian Army and aide-de-camp to the Emperor Francis Joseph, now imprisoned as a traitor, and his treachery owes its discovery to the merest trifle.

One evening, after a reception in Vienna, the Princess Arenberg, sister of Count Koloman Hunyadi, found on a sofa a slip of paper with writing upon it. It contained two columns of memoranda. One was a list of military documents and secrets of the Austrian War Department, already supplied to the Russian Government; the other a list of those about to be divulged.

THE RUSSIAN PRINCESS

had been the last occupant of the sofa, and the writing on the document was found to be that of Baron Pottier des Eschelles, who had had free access to his Royal master's confidential papers, and had thus betrayed his trust.

The unhappy traitor was informed that his treachery had been discovered, and was confronted with the Emperor, who, it is said, struck him in the face with his clenched fist. He was court-martialled, and sentenced to forfeit his rank and title and to a long term of imprisonment in the fortress he now occupies.

With reference to the Dreyfus case, which blasted so many reputations, it is well known that women played a large part in its many intricacies. The names of Mlle. Pays and Mme. Boulainey in connection with Colonel Esterhazy are notorious examples of the power of the woman spy; and it was the infatuation of General de Boisdeffre for the wife of one of the officers concerned which brought about his present disgrace. The revelations in this case led to a remarkable result.

So grave was the scandal that the military authorities of Europe felt justified in issuing

A PEREMPTORY ORDER

directing the commanding officers of the armies of Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Russia, and Great Britain to state that if any officer under their command should have his name intimately associated with that of any woman, with the exception of his wife should he be married, it would not only debar him from staff employment and promotion, but might even lead to his being placed on the retired list.

It is said that in the Spanish-American War the Cuban women were most wonderfully clever spies, and, pretending hostility to the Americans, gained information of the greatest service from the Spanish Generals who knew that their enemies would benefit thereby.

During the late war in the Transvaal the eternal feminine contrived to have a finger in the pie. The discovery was made that our military ciphers and secret codes were being regularly communicated to the Boer leaders; the astute authorities suspected that women were responsible, and so it was. Mothers with beautiful and not too scrupulous daughters, who extended frequent hospitality to confiding staff officers, were suspected, and not without cause.

On the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, the Intelligence Department employed a woman to find out what offices were sufficiently susceptible to feminine influence to disclose any of the ciphers then in use. This was easily done, a certain amount of intimacy once having been established, and the victims' names were then sent to headquarters.

Many officers were sent down; some sent home, and others received a reprimand, wondering, no doubt how the authorities got their information.

To our credit as a nation, however, it must be said that it is quite the exception for any of our women-kind to play the part of betrayer.—Pearson's Weekly.

WHEN TREES GO TO SLEEP.

Trees and plants have their regular times for going to sleep. They need to rest from the work of growing and to repair and oil the machinery of life. Some plants do all their sleeping in the winter while the ground is frozen and the limbs are bare of leaves. In tropical countries where the snow never falls, and it is always growing weather, the trees repose during the rainy season or during the periods of drought. They always choose the most unfavorable working time for doing their sleep, just as man chooses the night, when he cannot see to work.

Jones—"Why do you call Mr. Wyzham, the undertaker, a wolf in sheep's clothing?" Smith—"He doesn't ever drive the boys out of his green-apple orchard."