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LOVE DARES ALL

Tat-tat-tat sounded in a dreary monotone from the drums, and slowly, in single file, the miserable prisoners came into view. Ragged, dirty, unkempt, footsore, panting from the blazing August sky, they were truly a pitiable sight. Yet they held up their heads defiantly and smiled derisively at the insulting epithets and grimaces which the lower classes heaped upon them, especially in the vicinity of any officer's residence. The better classes of the Havanese showed their sympathy in striking contrast to the jeers and jibes of the baser sort.

The year was 1851, directly after the capture of Crittenden, Lopez's brave lieutenant, in his ill-starred expedition to Cuba. He and his Spartan remnant were these forlorn prisoners.

When they reached the Calle de la Lamparilla, one of the narrow streets of the city, the guards suddenly halted the column and reverently bared their heads. A funeral procession was approaching from the opposite direction, and the line was pushed close toward the houses jutting on the narrow footway, scarcely worthy the name of pavement.

A youth among the foremost prisoners, who, evidently, had not the fortitude of his elder companions, judged by his bowed head and deep dejection, now looked up with a wan smile of recognition as a pair of dark eyes brimming with tears gazed through a latticed window at the pitiful sight. "Amalia!" he whispered. "Roberto! Is it indeed you? Oh, how terrible! I did not dream you were with them."

"Dearest cousin, save me!" he replied in Spanish as fluent as her own. "We are all condemned to be shot in two days, perhaps sooner. I am too young to die."

"Would that I could, but, alas! I am powerless as a lamb among wolves!" "Amalia, don't say that! You have friends among the Spaniards. For the love of my mother—"

"Forward, march!" rang on the air, and the weary column passed on to the dungeons of Morro Castle. That night the Senorita Amalia de Valdez was a dream of loveliness as she reclined listlessly among the cushions on a lounge in her handsome salon. She was considered to be the beauty of beauties in the capital famed for the grace and loveliness of its women.

Young Captain Antonio de Ramon, who presently entered, was so enraptured with her appearance that only the presence of the inevitable duenna restrained him from throwing himself at her feet in reality, as well as in the formal salutation with which Spanish gentlemen greet all ladies.

But she looked preoccupied, sad, despondent, and replied absently to his greeting. He seated himself near her, while the duenna, her gentle aunt Maria, retired to a distant corner. "Tell me, my soul," said he, "why are you so melancholy?"

"Ah, yes! I know your tender heart aches for the poor prisoners you have seen to-day. Poor fellows! There is a terrible fate. But tell me, what is it you wish to ask me? Can there be a wish of yours I would not gratify at the risk of my life, if need be? I have your precious note safe here, and he pointed to his heart. "You have but to command and I will obey."

"Aunt mia," said Amalia, turning to her aunt, "I have mislaid my pearl bracelet upstairs. Will you kindly look for it?" The duenna vanished as if she had expected the request. Amalia turned to him at once and said: "You have often sworn that you love me to distraction; is it not so Antonio?"

What happiness it was for him to hear from her lips the diminutive "ito" added to his name, which, in itself, is a caress in words. "My life, with all my heart and soul!" he exclaimed. But she drew back. "No, I give myself only to him who proves his love."

"What can I do for you, beloved? What can I do for you will for life? Dispose of me as you will for life. It is life I ask. Sit here, beside me, dearest, and I will tell you."

She then related the scene of the morning, the discovery that Roberto, who had passed the previous winter in Havana with his family, was now among the prisoners. "He is the son of my favorite aunt—so young, barely sixteen. He came here to perfect himself in Spanish, and I inspired him with my own enthusiasm for the Cuban cause. He has resigned, alas! to die, unless you will turn him over to me. Should he save him for my sake. Should he perish, I can never know another happy moment."

"Antonio grew pale as he listened. "Amalia, you cannot break my heart. Ask me anything else." "Antonio! I love you," she sobbed. "For you I would give up home, relatives, country, for this one favor. Save that poor child, and I swear to be your wife in another month. You come your wife in another month. You have said that if I would marry you, you would resign your hateful commission in the army and seek a home in Mexico. I will follow you there and to the end of the earth."

"You have won," he said after a pause. "For you I will dare anything. They are to be shot the day after tomorrow. I have but a short time, and now must leave you, dearest. If I fail,

you will forgive me, will you not? or I will not survive my disgrace."

Roberto lay on a pallet beside two comrades, who, in the midst of their own misery, tried to cheer and fortify the boy, exhorting him to meet manfully a doom which they felt was even more terrible for him than for them.

He had been one of the most enthusiastic volunteers; had fought well, but now the near prospect of death seemed to make a coward of him. A soldier entered the cell at this moment and roughly bade him rise and follow to the captain's room. Roberto rose tremblingly.

"Courage, my boy," said a middle-aged man, "perhaps it is good news for you. If not, beware lest he wring from you a word about Lopez's plans." "Never fear," he replied, making an effort to control his agitation. "I hate to die—here he gulped down a sob—" "this way, but I'll not be a traitor."

The guard interrupted further speech by pushing him into the corridor with his musket. "Here is the prisoner, captain." "Very well; you may retire, sergeant." Antonio looked the door after him, and in a low tone briefly related to Roberto the plan he had formulated for the latter's escape.

"Each prisoner will receive three shots. By dint of extensive bribery, and the co-operation of a surgeon, a secret friend of the Cuban cause, I have arranged that three blank cartridges shall be fired at you. You must be careful to simulate death as much as possible until the word 'Amalia' is whispered in your ear. Then you may breathe freely and open your eyes, for you will be temporarily safe."

"Further details will then have been arranged and will be communicated to you. The least indiscretion on your part, the least bungling on that of those I have employed, though only two are in the secret, will ruin me as well as seal your fate."

Roberto thanked him fervently, and promised him implicit obedience. "You must not return to your comrades." "Poor fellows!" muttered Roberto. "The light of hope is shining in your eyes, and might betray you. Look as downcast as when you entered, if possible. Come in, sergeant," he said, and, as he entered the door, added, "conduct this prisoner to a solitary cell. He must have no communication with the other filibusters."

They passed out, and Antonio, groaning deeply, murmured: "Oh, my love, what a sacrifice!"

The courtyard of the castle was thronged with soldiers as the unfortunate band was marched to their death place just as day was breaking over the beautiful bay. Surrounded by hostile soldiers, they still maintained a defiant air, even when the glittering line of bayonets faced them, and they knew all hope was over.

"Kneel, filibusters!" The command was not obeyed, the men proudly refused. A struggle ensued, in which some were forced to their knees; perhaps all might have been had not the officer in charge, with a touch of humanity, begun giving the orders.

At the word "Fire!" so deadly was the volley that few survived it, and they but a few moments. Roberto, happily, had no need to simulate death. The shock and strain of the suspense had caused him to faint, and the surgeon, who hastened to his side, gave a deep sigh of relief as he perceived Roberto's rigid unconsciousness.

"Carry this body, and this, and this"—pointing to several—"to the hospital." "If they are not dead now, they will soon be under his knife," laughed one of his assistants. When Roberto revived, he found himself in a carefully darkened room. With joy he heard the word "Amalia" in a friendly voice. In a day or two, according to Antonio's previously concerted arrangements, he was smuggled, in the disguise of a waterman, to an English ship in the harbor and concealed in the hold all night.

The next day he thanked his devoted cousin as he inhaled with a glad sense of freedom the fresh breeze of the sea. He never returned to Cuba. The gay capital of Cuba was quite electrified a month later to learn of the resignation from the army of Captain Antonio, and his marriage immediately after, in spite of opposition on the part of her family, to the beautiful Senorita Amalia de Valdez.

HEALTHIEST LIGHT.

Electricity is Said to be Far Less Harmless Than Gas or Oil. When electric light comes into general use it is likely that at least 40,000 fewer people will die every year in the United Kingdom. This seems a large number, but it is really only a lowering of the death rates by one per thousand. One of the causes of the winter death rate being so high is the unhealthiness of gas, lamps and candles.

A single gas jet consumes as much air as four or five people, and, as it also gives off a lot of sulphurous fumes and poisonous carbonic acid, it is easy to understand why we feel sleepy in a gas-lit room. The sleepiness is really a symptom of partial poisoning. But oil lamps and candles are quite as bad, seriously injuring the lungs and bronchitis, and consuming no oxygen, and does not cast a particle of impurity into the air. Besides, it more or less has some of the same good effects on the body. So that it is well worth the extra expense, which is saved in doctors' bills and medicine.

An attempt is to be made to secure jobs in the new Irish Councils for so-called political prisoners.

HOUSEHOLD.

A CHAPTER ON EGGS.

Eggs represent a type of perfect food; they are nourishing, palatable, cheap at this season of the year when we want them most, and agreeable to almost every one. They should be very fresh for table use, and if properly cooked can be eaten every day with pleasure as well as impunity.

The simplest way to cook an egg is to boil it. But there is a right and a wrong way to do even as simple a thing as this. Usually, the egg is plunged into boiling water and left there three minutes for a "soft-boiled" and from eight to ten minutes for a "hard-boiled" egg. In the first place, the white of the egg is cooked unevenly, that next the yolk often not being coagulated, while the yolk is in a state of nature, having been merely warmed a little.

The hard-boiled egg is literally hard, and the white especially is indigestible. To boil eggs soft, try this plan: Lay them in a saucepan and rather more than cover them with boiling water. Let them stand where the water will keep just below the boiling point for ten minutes. Then, when broken, the white will be found to be jelly-like, and the yolk, though not hard, will be cooked. They will be much like boiled custard, and will have quite a different flavor to the palate.

Eggs that are wanted hard should be boiled slowly for twenty minutes. The yolk will then be mealy, and it will be perfectly digestible, so much so that physicians frequently order boiled eggs of this kind for their patients.

Baked eggs make a nice breakfast dish. Butter a pie-plate and break in to it as many eggs as you wish. Pepper and salt each yolk, and lay a bit of butter in it. Set in the oven till the whites are firm, which will take about fifteen minutes.

Poached eggs and dropped eggs are one and the same in the cook's vocabulary. Put as many muffin rings into the pan as you have eggs to cook and pour in a quart of boiling water, adding a teaspoonful of salt. Set the pan where the water will boil gently and break an egg in each ring. Cook till the whites set, pour off the water, take out the muffin rings and lift the eggs to a hot platter with the aid of your pancake turner. Serve on squares of buttered toast.

Eggs are scrambled by breaking them into hot butter, and as soon as they begin to set, stirring them all together with a knife. Just as soon as the whites seem done, the eggs are done and should go to the table, via a hot dish, instanter.

Another way of making a scramble is to beat five eggs with a generous tablespoonful of melted butter, a small teaspoonful of salt, and half a cup of sweet milk, with a dust of white pepper. Cook in the double boiler, stirring constantly until a creamy mass is formed, when it is done and should go to the table immediately.

A Baked Omelet.—Beat seven eggs well. Then heat a pint of milk to the boiling point, put into it a tablespoonful of butter and a scant teaspoonful of flour rubbed smooth in a little cold milk. Pour into the dish containing the eggs and stir fast and hard till well mixed. Pour into a buttered earthen dish and bake in a very hot oven. It will puff up light and high and must go straight from oven to table, or it will fall "flat as a pancake."

NOTES.

A lady who undertook to grow the passion flower, Passiflora incarnata, in the house had very good success with it, her first failures, due to lack of sufficient heat. She found it apparently half, if not wholly, hardy—that is, it stood frosts without giving up the ghost, and when, after snow came, she put it in the cellar, the stems were still green and she has hopes of being able to keep it over. She says, in Vick's Magazine:

The Japan pink is a biennial that is fine for cutting for bouquets. A paper of seed of "double mixed" gave fifty plants only two of which were similar. They differ in size and color and shape growing a great variety. The seeds germinate quickly in the house, and as they are hardy will endure more cold than most seedlings. They must be hardened before transplanting by leaving them in the open air both day and night.

The late Empress of Austria was very fond of flowers, and at her Villa Achilleon on the island of Corfu had a huge field of roses, comprising 25,000 bushes, of all kinds and colors. A trellised walk covered with climbing roses, and the flower-laden branches fell and interlaced overhead and the met in perfumed showers almost to the ground. The rose garden is so planned that it has the least possible appearance of design.

As instance of the rapid growth of the rubber tree, Ficus elastica, a lady writes to a floral magazine that from a slip cut in 1894, she had four years later a tree ten feet high, with 141 leaves and a stem six and a quarter inches in circumference. This is one of

the most stately of our ornamental plants, ranking next to the palms.

TOMATOES.

Stewed Tomatoes.—Pour boiling water over the tomatoes and then remove the skins. Chop them fine and put them in a double boiler without the addition of water. Season with salt, pepper, butter, onion, a little sugar, if you like, one tablespoonful of crackers or toasted bread and stew one hour.

Stuffed and Baked Egg Plant.—Cut egg plants in half, lengthwise, and parboil them in salted water. Scoop out most of the interior and mash it up. Season with eggs, onion, salt, pepper, butter, two teaspoonfuls of bread crumbs and either chopped chicken or grated ham and chopped breakfast bacon. Mix well together. Fill the hulls with this dressing. Sprinkle the top with bread crumbs and a little clarified butter. Lay them in a buttered tin and bake fifteen minutes. If you have mushrooms at hand they are also nice to add.

Fried Egg Plant.—Parboil egg plants in boiling salted water with one tablespoonful of vinegar or lemon. Cook until tender. Peel, mash and drain. To every pint of egg plant add one cup of cracker dust, two beaten eggs, butter, pepper and salt to taste. Moisten with milk, form into small cakes and fry brown in hot fat.

Fried Egg Plant, No. 2.—Cut egg plant in slices one-third inch thick, paring each piece. Lay it in salt and water over night. The next morning take from the water, drain and wipe. Then butter the slices of egg plant, dip in beaten egg and cracker dust and fry light brown in hot butter. Season with salt and pepper.

SKILL IN CARVING.

Before commencing to carve see that the meat is placed on the dish as it should be and that all strings and skewers are removed before it is brought to the table. Make sure that your knife is sharp and has a good edge before commencing, for it is rather awkward for a woman to use the steel at the table. Turkey, chicken, goose and duck should be placed on the dish with their heads to the left. Small birds, such as grouse or partridges, should be placed across the dish with their heads farthest from you.

A leg of mutton or veal should be carved with the thickest part toward the back of the dish, a shoulder of mutton or a sirloin roast or a rib roast should have the backbone at the right of the dish.

The sirloin steak should have the tenderloin next to the carver, a fillet of beef should have the thickest end at the right side of the dish, and a saddle of mutton should be placed with the tail end to the left of the carver. The positions mentioned should be carefully observed if one expects to do good work in this line.

To carve a leg of mutton or lamb place the fork firmly in the top, turn it in toward you and cut thin, even slices through to the bone; then slip the knife under and cut them away from the bone. Roasts of beef should be carved in very thin slices across the grain.

A GREAT TURKISH WEDDING.

A Turkish wedding has just occurred at Constantinople. The bridegroom was Djaird Bey and the bride was the granddaughter of Kaptan Pasha, Minister of Marine, and the only Turk who successfully and constantly bullies the Sultan. This grand-father is enormously wealthy, and Meob Hannon, the bride, is his favorite, so the wedding was a very gorgeous affair.

Of course Djaird Bey never saw his bride's face until after the wedding, but reports say that it is worth seeing. The girl is a radiant beauty, which is natural enough, for her mother, Hamide Hannon is the Turkish belle of Constantinople and a power in the kingdom. The idea of the bowstring and sack for rebellious wives doesn't apply to Hamide. She has buried one husband and divorced three, and has merely started upon her career. Her daughter is said to have inherited her temper as well as her beauty, so the outlook for Djaird Bey is stormy.

The bride's trousseau was of a magnificence beside which the achievements of our Canadian brides would look like samples. There were thirty-three tea gowns, not to speak of visiting gowns, carriage gowns, state gowns, provided in like profusion, and the jewels would make even a queen of opera bouffe pale with envy.

The marriage ceremony took place at the palace of the grandfather, and an elaborate luncheon followed it. Then steam launches took the bridal party over to the Bey's home, on the Asiatic shore. A rigidly closed state carriage met the boats, and into it the closely muffled bride was bundled, with her mother, who, must have been a great comfort to her daughter. The bridegroom rode ahead on a prancing white steed. When the house was reached the bridegroom led the bride to the state chamber, where he lifted her veil, and, for the first time, saw her face. Then he escaped, and went out and threw pennies to the beggars. The bride mounted a throne, on a raised dais, and was exhibited for three hours. Throngs of guests came in and looked her over, while they ate jam and sherbet, drank coffee, and smoked cigarettes. The trousseau was laid out for their edification, too.

Evidently a Turkish wedding is a sociable, unconventional affair, a great improvement upon conservative western customs, for every one, friend and foe alike, is free to attend the function and see the show. The downtrodden Turk has some compensations, after all.