

[WRITTEN FOR THE EXAMINER.]

The Rescue.

A TALE OF THE TURF IN 1889.

"Mother, don't cry for it may be Father has been detained to-night, You know he ever faithfully Comes home on such a night; You say he has thus far been true, And what he promises he'll do."

"Yes, child, he always has been kind, And it is wrong for me to fear; But there is something on my mind Which troubles me my dear; Did you not notice that, last night, He seemed as if all was not right."

"Yes, mother, what you say is true, He did not take me on his knee, Or sister, as he used to do; Ere we sat down to tea; But, then, perhaps he never thought, And blame him I don't think we ought."

"If this was all I would not care; But then I noticed more than that, He did not smile or come to share Our evening laugh and chat; And this he never failed to do: My child, I noticed more than you."

"And after you had gone to sleep I asked him why he looked so sad, 'Tis what he answered makes me weep, He said that I was mad; And when I cried he talked so strange, I can't account for such a change."

"Last night he was an hour late, And now to-night he will be more, For it is very nearly eight; He never stayed before: Children, don't cry, I cannot bear Your tears, they fill me with despair."

The mother by the window stands Watching the road with tearful eyes; The sister clasps the brother's hands, Tears with tears sympathize: The clock strikes eight, and soon the light, Speeding away, gives place to night.

The table spread with loving care Remains just as two hours ago, And only one is wanting there: To change this scene of woe Into a sunny paradise, Replete with love and glad surprise.

And now the anxious mother hears A sound of foot-falls in the lane; All quickly brush away the tears And joy dispels their pain; 'Tis he the children cry, and all Run forth to meet him in the hall.

No frown or look of pain to-night Repels their tender anxious gaze, But each receives the welcome bright, Denied two painful days; The marks of tears they cannot hide, Then lovingly he 'gins to chide.

"Why weep dear wife, and children too, Because for once I was downcast? How could you doubt me ever true After the happy past? When love so long remains a stay It cannot wither in a day."

"'Twas love for you that made me keep The secret locked within my breast; All night I could not think to sleep, My mind was sore, distressed; But now dear wife the cloud is past, I pray that it may be the last."

"Never again will I refuse To share my cares and fears with you, Or, by withholding, so abuse A heart so warm and true; Dear ones we're free from all disgrace— The horse I jockeyed lost the race."

J. B. D. Southport, P. E. I., May 15th, 1889.

THE FAIR GOD.

BOOK SEVEN.

CHAPTER I.

(Continued.)

The words touched him, and he replied, in a low voice, "You have a good heart, O Tula—a good heart and true. Your words were what I repeat every hour in the day. You were seeing what I see all the time—"

"The battle!" she said, shuddering. "Yes, I wish it could be avoided; its conditions are such that against the advantage of arms I can only oppose the advantage of numbers; so that the dearest of all things will be the cheapest. I must take no account of lives. I have seen the streets run with blood already, and now—Enough! I must do what the gods decree. Yet the slaughter shall not be as heretofore, on one side alone."

"She looked at him inquiringly. "You know the custom of our people to take prisoners rather than kill in battle. As against the Tulascan and tribes, that was well enough; but new conditions require new laws, and my order now is, save nothing but the arms and armor of the strangers. Life for life as against Malinche! And I could conquer him, but—"

"He stopped, and their glances met—his full of fire, hers sad and thoughtful. "Ah, Tula! your woman's soul prompts you already of whom I would speak—the king."

"Spare me," she said, covering her face with her hands. "I am his child; I love him yet."

"So I know," he replied; "and I would not have you do else. The love is proof of fitness to be loved. Nature cannot be silenced. He is not as near to me as to you; yet I feel the impulse that moves you, though in a less degree. In memory he is a part of my youth. For that matter, who does not love him? He has charmed the strangers; even the guards at his chamber door have been known to weep at sight of his sorrow. And the heroes who so lately died before his prison gates, did they not love him? And those who will die to-morrow and the next day, what else may be said of them? In arms here, see the children of the valley. What seek they? In their eyes he is Anahuac. And yet—"

He paused again; her hands had fallen; her cheeks glistened with tears. "If I may not speak plainly now, I may not ever. Strengthen yourself to hear me, pitifully. To begin, you know that I have been using the king's power without his permission—that, I say, you know, and have forgiven, because the usurpation was not of choice but necessity, and to save the empire; but you will hear now, for the first time probably, that I could have been king in fact."

Her gaze became intent, and she listened breathlessly. "Three times," he continued, "three times have the caciques, for themselves and the army, offered me the crown. The last time they were accompanied by the electors, and depositions from all the great cities."

"And you refused," she said, confidently. "Yes, I will not deny the offer was tempting—that for the truth. I thought of it often; and such times came revenge, and told me I had been wronged, and ambition, whispering of glory, and, with ready subtlety, mak-

ing acceptance appear a duty. But, Tula, you prevailed; your love was dearer to me than the crown. For you sake I refused the overture. You never said so—there was no need of the saying—yet I knew you could never be queen while your father lived."

"Not often has a woman heard such a story of love, or been given such proofs of devotion; her face mantled, and she dropped her gaze, saying: "Better to be loved than to be queen. If not here, O 'tzin, look for reward in the Sun Surely, the gods take note of such things!"

"Your approval is my full reward," he replied. "But hear me further. What I have said was easy to say; that which I go to now is hard, and requires all my will; for the utterance may forfeit not merely the blessing just given me, but your love—more precious as I have shown, than the crown. You were in the palace the day the king appeared and bade the people home. The strangers were in my hand at the time. O, a glad time,—so long had we toiled, so many had died! Then he came, and snatched away our triumph. I have not forgiven, I never can never forget the disappointment. In all the labor of the preparation since I have seen the scene, sometimes as a threat, sometimes as a warning, always a recurring dream whose dreaming leaves me less resolved in the course I am running. Continually I find myself saying to myself, 'The work is all in vain; what has been will be again; while he lives you cannot win.' O, Tula, such influence was bad enough of itself. Hear now how the gods came in to direct me. Last night I was at the altar of Huitzil, praying, when the *teotliti* appeared and said, 'Tain Guatamo, pray for your country.' 'For the country and king,' I answered. He laid his hand upon my shoulder, 'If you seek the will of the god with intent to do what he imposes, hear then: The king is the shield of the strangers; they are safe while he lives; and if he lives, Anahuac dies. Let him who leads choose between them. So the god says. Consider! He was gone before I could answer. Since that I have been like one moving in a cloud, seeing nothing clearly, and the duty least of all: When I should be strongest, I am weakest. My spirit faints under the load. If the king lives, the empire dies; if it is to die, why the battle and its sacrifices? This night have I in which to choose; to-morrow, Malinche and action; Help me, O Tula, help me to do right! Love of country, of king, and of me—you have them all. Speak."

And she answered him: "I may not doubt that you love me; you have told me so many times, but never as to-night. I thank you, O 'tzin! Your duties are heavy. I do not wonder that you bend under them. I might say they are yours by gifts of the gods, and not to be divided with another, not even with me; but I will give you love for love, and as I hope to share your fortunes, I will share your trials. I am a woman, without judgment, by which to answer you; from my heart I will answer."

"From your heart be it, O Tula." "Has the king heard the things of which you have spoken?" "I cannot say."

"Does he know you were offered the crown?" "No; the offer was treason."

"Ah, poor king, proud father! The love of the people, that of which you were proudest, is lost. What wretchedness awaits you!" She bowed her head, and there was a silence broken only by her sobs. The grief spent itself, then said earnestly: "I know him. He, too, is a lover of Anahuac. More than once he has exposed himself to death for her. Such loves age not, nor do they die except with the hearts they animate. They was a time—but now—no matter, I will try. Let him who leads choose; was not that the decree, good 'tzin?"

"Yes," he replied. "Must the choice be made to-night?" "I may delay until to-morrow."

"To-morrow; what time?" "Malinche will pass the causeway in [the cool of the morning; by noon he will have joined his people in the old palace; the decision must then be made."

"Can you set me down at the gate before he passes in?" The 'tzin started. "Of the old palace?" he asked. "I wish to see the king."

"For what?" "To tell him the things you have told me to-night."

"All?" "Yes." His face clouded with dissatisfaction. "Yes," she continued calmly, "that, as become a king, he may choose which shall live—himself or Anahuac."

(To be continued.)

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