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Jocelin's Penance

"Well, well, when the bowl is broke one may not readily pick up the spilled meal. Woman's curiosity will ever prove her undoing, as it did long ago for the seven wives of the bluebearded one. Past is past. But hark ye now, puppet, an' heed my warning. Two nights ago I drew the magic circle; called Uriel, Gabriel, Raphael and Michael, to guard its quarters (for I'd writ thy name therein, an' wished thee well), that no evil influence should fall upon thee; but spite o' my charms, Uriel's blue flame paled, and the black shadow crept o'er the border. Outside my hut a ban-dog howled, and Paddock, my chitty toad, crept closer 'neath my gown. Then, by the pentagon, an' by the magic words, I summoned Asmodeus, my familiar; and that sweet fiend and I did converse heavily on thee till cock-crow. Heed, heed, Rohese, heed—

"Beware ye of a black, black robe,
Beware ye of a curled pate.
By all the power of dark Hecate,
Return ye home ere 'tis too late.

"Twice hath my black grimalkin mewed,
Twice wilt thou be assailed.
Death and shame shall hover o'er,
With tears thy cheek be paled.

Heed ye—now the witch's word,
Heed thee now this warning—
'Ware of the robe and tonsured head,
Beware this very morning."

Half chanting the doggerel the witch of Ely passed from the room, and vanished; as quickly and silently as a drop of dew in the sunshine. Rohese sprang from her bed, and rushed to Mary's door. The girl was soon roused and the two sat side by side on the little tirewoman's couch wrapped in its covers, and talking excitedly of the queer incident, their teeth chattering with the autumn chill. Mary was first to recover herself, and exercising loving tyranny, sent Rohese back to bed while she dressed, and after bustling about kindling a fire in the brazier, assisted her lady to robe.

As Rohese breakfasted, a message came from the Abbot—"Stay thou fast within the Gate chamber, keeping it close locked." Rohese pouted, for she wished much to speak with the Abbot regarding the warning of Dame Bernice. But, mindful of her late disobedience, and its consequences, through the day she and Mary busied themselves over their 'broidery frames or the maid listened while the lady read aloud from the "Lives of the Saints," bound in quaint wooden covers 'bossed with silver. Toward evening they had the excitement of watching the royal visitors depart, and, hidden behind the curtain, saw the Queen's horse-litter move off, followed by the Prince and his two friends on horseback, who nodded but a surly farewell to the Abbot, hospitably standing in the doorway to see his guests depart. The Advocates and their friends withdrew; the gates were shut and locked. The troop of soldiers, hitherto disguised as servitors, departed to their quarters. Just before vespers Rohese sent Mistress Mary with a message to Abbot Samson, desiring an audience, and when she had returned with his permission, Rohese arrayed herself for the interview, murmuring half to herself, as Mary combed her amber locks and bound them with fillets of gold: "At least one part of the witch's warning cannot come true; and she herself said, 'past is past'. No need to'ware a black robe now." But the witch erred not; had Rohese gone in the morning to the Abbot's parlor she would not have had the meeting which proved the undoing of both herself and Jocelin.

CHAPTER XVI.

Vespers over and the tapers lit, Rohese descended to the Abbot's parlor, where she sat waiting his return from the chapel. She was a little pale, for the past excitement told upon her. Besides, the witch's "Ware the black robe" kept sounding in her ears. So her state of mind was very disturbing, and her most disquieting thoughts were of Jocelin. She was beginning to believe that the handsome monk felt more warmly toward her than was compatible with his vows; and while her girlish vanity was flattered, she was annoyed; for though she was interested in Jocelin (with a far different feeling from the tender regard in which she held the memory of Henry of Leicester), she was repelled at the thought that a monk loved her.

How does a woman know a man loves her? The day of realistic novels has forever banished from romances the fallacy that she, palpitating with surprised modesty, knows it for the first time when told. Nay, should the good old fashion of wooing change, and man, never uttering the dulcet speech of courtship, simply say, "Marry me," the eternal feminine would continue blushing consciously when the mate-to-be came near ,and would go to the altar without one love-word, needing no passionate phrases to tell what she had long since found out by instinct.

As Rohese sat leaning her head against the purple of the Abbot's chair, the object of her cogitation passed the doorway, glancing neither to right or left. He looked so wan and despairing that all her woman's heart went out to him, and she murmured his name almost unconsciously. Surely he could not have heard it! Rohese shrank back into the chair, chiding herself for giving way to impulse, but if the eyes of Love are blind, his ear is never closed to the Beloved's voice; and Jocelin, already past the door, stopped, paused and turning, walked straight into the room and up to her. "I felt something draw me hither," he said simply.

"Nay, sir monk, thy fasting hath sent vapors into thy head," Rohese said, lightly, trying to gain time, and entrenching herself behind coquetry, as foolish little fish hide among the reeds of a pond; their gold and silver but showing the brighter against the dark background. Jocelin was in no mood for trifling.

"Lady Rohese," he demanded, "hast thought of me since coming hither?"

"There are many monks here, brother, and as one black gown is like another, is it not likely that sight of them would bring thee to mind? "Yea" (petulantly), "in my dreams I have seen whole processions of thee, by Our Lady! clambering up a rock way; with wan faces and eyes that burn into my very soul."

"And so thou dost think of me? Ah, methinks thy dreaming is but an echo of the sweet fantasies which beset my sleep. Listen, Rohese, I, too, in dreams have trod with blood-stained feet a pathway thick strewn with briars and stones; but far, far up on the heights a tress of gold hair gleamed, and an angel face smiled down on me. 'Twas thou, Rohese, 'twas thou who stood there, with alabaster hands outstretched to welcome me. Thy voice's sweetest music breathed my all unworthy name, and straight I gained to where thou stood'st, and weary, bleeding laid me at thy feet Then thou didst bend compassionately over me; and thy gleaming tresses shut us from the world Ah, blood of saints, beloved! Then sounded a strain of music faintly, clear as trills the thrush in the dewy hush of the morning. It died away, slowly, slowly, whilst all the while thy golden hair wrapped us round, and I awoke with echoings lingering in my heart. Ah, what an ecstasy it brought! An ecstasy that was such exquisite pain that I knelt on my pallaisse in the dark and cold to pray that melody would never again ravish me. Is't not true love which brings such dreams?"

Jocelin breathed fast as one who had run far, and Rohese trembled at the passion throbbing in his words. Something stirred within her, new and strange, which she had never known before. What warm rush and tingle of delight was this which swept over her, at sound of this man's compelling voice? What sweet, soft languor stealing through every vein, as he clasped her hand and bent his appealing face so near that the breath from his beautiful parted lips trembled on her cheek like a caress? What witchery lay there in that all-conquering glance, which seemed drawing her very soul through her eyes to mingle with his?

"Rohese, Rohese," he cried, "lovest thou me?" But the maid still had will enough to try to draw away from him; averting her flushed face, with a frightened "No, no, no!" But Jocelin did not loose his hold on her struggling hands, but turned them upward and kissed each pink palm, once, twice, with long, soft kisses warm as sunshine. They thrilled her through and through, like a draught of some rare elixir.

"Thine eyes are filled with tears, Rohese, yet thou say'st 'No, no.' What lieth within thine eyes behind those tears? Then darest not look me in the face? Say no again, sweet scarlet lips, for those glorious eyes declare thee darling traitors!" he murmured, rapturously, triumphantly. His warm breath stirred the ringlets on her brow; his hot lips lay upon its cool whiteness like a flame.

"Thy lips, thy lips, sweet witch!" he cried, hoarsely. "'Twere crime to force their virgin rose; yet by the twelve Evangels, they tempt me sorely! Thy lips, thou regent of my soul!" As a serpent holds a fluttering bird within its potent gaze, he held the frightened maid. His bright eyes wooing, wooing, seemed impelling her to yield. Just then a bell rang, clearly, softly, far within the palace; it seemed to break the spell. Rohese arose, pushing him from her with all her strength.

"Nay, nay," she cried, with a look of terror, "a monk, a monk: bethink thee, Jocelin, what hath a monk to do with love?" Jocelin paled, though he did not answer her, but stretched his arms to her pleadingly, tenderly, and advanced as if to fold her in their embrace. While she paused undecided, half inclined to fly, yet, glancing at him with veiled eyes which shone like stars, the corridor outside resounded with a firm and heavy tread, and the deep tones of Abbot Samson sounded through the parlor:

"Let Jocelin await me in my bedchamber, Brother Walter; I'll to my ward within here, and then to rest. The hour grows late, and there is much to e bwritten, so apprise him straightway. Good-night, Our Lady's benison on thee."

Jocelin and Rohese started guiltily apart. She pointed to a side door, and he slowly withdrew with ardent, backward glances, and Rohese, her hands pressed upon her breast, went to the window and stood looking into the night with eyes which saw not, and bosom which rose and fell tumultuously. Yet when she turned to salute the Abbot, and he commented on her flushed cheeks, she answered composedly, "Thy parlor is o'erwarm, Father, and in sooth, my head aches drearily. But thou hast other matters, as I heard thee tell Brother Walter; I'll set my mouthings by till morning. It was but of a visit from Dame Bernice I came to speak."

"Thou art thoughtful like thy mother, girl, and I'll accept thy gentle little sacrifice, and hear thee on the morrow;" and with a blessing and a kiss upon her forehead, Samson dismissed her, and Rohese, guiltily thinking that he must feel the other kiss which so lately rested there, flew upward to the Gate chamber, where Mistress Mary sat demurely by a taper, sewing a long white seam, as though she, too, had not just raced thither from the corridor outside the parlor, where she had, with palpitating delight, spied upon the monk's love-making. But Rohese, in her own confusion, noticed nothing, and anxious to be alone, bade the girl haste to bring her nightrail and make her ready for bed. For a wonder, Mary made no comment on this early retiring, though she smiled knowingly to herself.

Rohese abed, the tirewoman withdrew and quiet and darkness reigned, save for the faint glow cast athwart the gate chamber by the coals glowing in their brazier.

CHAPTER XVII.

Entering the Abbot's chamber, Jocelin found that he had exchanged his richly jeweled dress for a white serge robe such as novices wear, and reclined on his couch, with eyes filled with unutterable weariness, fixed upon space, as if trying to fix the future. Beset by many other cares, this attempt of the prince to seize the dower and person of Rohese disquieted him much.

Though he had come into the high estate of Abbot inexperienced in governing, and little learned in the custom of courts had been set to preside over one, he had within him which, antagonistic to disorder and disobedience, overruled both. His early military training and studious anchoretic life had strengthened every mental fibre, and he was one who by obeying had learned to rule; who by self-restraint had learned to govern others. While within his stern true heart he had a "Courage to quell the proudest; an honest pity to encourage the humblest." Within the Abbey, there had been debts and disorders to fight; without rebellious subjects and wily Advocates who must be ruled with an iron but velvet-gloved hand. The incoming of the one hundred and fifty monks from Normandy infusing new life into the Abbey had greatly helped in its upbuilding, and in less than two years every bond had been paid. Bailiffs, sockmen and townsfolk raised their allotted portion of the Abbey's revenues; the repsilver came pouring in again in a small but steady stream; and woe betide the false, remiss or unjust subject, for the new Abbot, though generally slow to anger, was terrible in rage, and many a discomfited vassal murmured, "He rages like a wolf"; until Samson, with grim humor, adopted the saying and adding the motto "Saevit ut lupus" to his arms, had it inscribed in letters of gold upon his standards.

The Abbot had gained another concession from the sulky Prince; and when Jocelin, began writing at his dictation, his first task was a letter to Ranulf de Glanville, Justiciary in Chief, enclosing a mandate signed by John's unwilling hands, banishing the Jews from St. Edmundsbury, and pronoucing sentence of excommunication on all who should harbor them. The next letter was to my Lord of Clare, denying an unjust claim of fees for bearing the banner of St. Edmund in war; which Bigot had set forth while attending on the Abbot.

"Write, son Jocelin, 'Earl Roger Bigot asserts himself duly seized, and by such seizing holds this office from the time we fought the Flemmings (Ehue, 'tis a weary while since then); also Thomas de Midham sayeth the right is his; so my Lord, when thou hast made out one with the other that the right is truly thine, come then and claim the fee, which shall be paid thee from the time of King Edmund's charter.'" So on and on the Abbot dictated, and the secretary wrote, far into the night. Letters to Pope's Legates and King's Viscounts, ending with a lengthy epistle to the Archbishop of Canterbury on certain weighty matters of Church and State. These duly sealed and laid in a sandal-wood cabinet, the Abbot closed his eyes and pressed his hand to his brow, as if the print of the miter was there, sighing wearily, as at his "Satis," Jocelin arose to set away the writing materials.

"Thou sighest, Dominie," said the secretary.

"Yea, is it a wonder? My son, thou and thy brethren share our plenty and prosperity; but little thinking of the giant task it was to bring things so; or the cares concerning the management of our house and family, and all the other business which harrows my troubled mind. Those three sleek leopards just gone are plotting usurpation, if I mistake not, and I travail sore for the safety of my ward, whose fair person hath awakend in them the lust of the body, whilst her dower hath kindled that more dangerous lust, the lust of gold. If it were so I could be present at court, I could hold them somewhat in check, but God wot what they'll now be hatching once my back is turned. Alas, my child, man never knows when he is blest, or realizes his happiness ere it is flown. Were I a monk again, with but five marcs in my pouch, I'd to the schools, or as keeper of the books, live at peace far happier than I am as Abbot and Lord."

"Who can believe such thing, my Lord!" exclaimed Jocelin, but the Abbot smiled sadly, turning on his pillow, like one weary of the world, and as Jocelin extinguished the tapers and withdrew, he blessed him and gently bade him "Good-night."

"A good night!" Jocelin repeated to himself, as he went out into the dark. "Ah, Mary mother, will there ever be good nights for me again? By my troth, I hope there is naught writ amiss in those letters; for I had but one word singing in mine ears the while I wrote— 'Rohese, Rohese,' and the feel of a soft, warm hand resting in mine own; until I cracked my Lord's gold pen-staff by my tight holding. God's love! 'Twas Paradise! A man might easily risk all earth and heaven to rest his lips upon the dewy scarlet of her mouth! Christe Eleison! 'Tis a bitter thing to be such as I; shackled to the stake of mine accursed vows, and burned by Love's flames. Danger threatens my heart's anointed love, and I perforce, a coward, shaveling monk, must stand aside ignorant, unskilled and weak of arm, unable to life even one sword, one single sword in her defence. It is not right! Am I not a man, with all a man's hopes, desires and capabilities? God is unjust, that men should live maimed, incapacitated things! Ah, Mary, intercede for me! I blaspheme! Impious monk! Wouldst thou, like Job, curse God and die. Yet God made not monks—'twas some devil's work. Christ and the Evangels walked free into the world, and Peter, when 'twas needed, drew a sword. I will not thus be buried like some mummied Pharaoh in his tomb. On the morrow I'll to the Abbot and sue for release from this monkly servitude. Then I'll get me to my uncle in Normandy (my father used to call it when he sighed—"Sweet, sweet Normandy). There I'll prove myself a man, and with my sword and monkly lore, carve a fortune out of fate and then—and then I'll return for my Rohese!"

Wandering through the maze of corridors leading from the Abbot's room, Jocelin all unwittingly turned into the narrow hallway which led to the Gate chamber. Pondering on his fortunes, building castles in the air, all tenanted solely by Rohese and himself, Jocelin opened the door which Mary had forgotten to bar, and was astonished to find himself within the Gate chamber. His first impulse was to leave at once, but an irresistible charm hovered around the place where Rohese spent her waking hours. It held him to the spot. The tapestry, stirred by some furtive draught, rustled softly on the moonlit wall, until it seemed imbued with life, and the white-clad figure of Helen of Troy 'broidered on the fabric seemed leaning toward the Paris at her feet, as if she would embrace him. "I must be gone," the monk murmured, yet stayed. Ah, "Sometimes we are devils to ourselves, when we tempt the frailty of our powers, presuming on their changeful potency."

A subtle perfume hung about Rohese's carved oak chair. Jocelin knelt by its side, and buried his face in its cushions. "Rohese, Rohese," the very murmur of the dear name as it fell from his lips, filled him with an exquisite pleasure that was half pain. As he knelt there, he thought of her lying on her bed; all her glittering hair spread out—Ah, sweet, like a golden net to catch men's souls in, whilst thou slumberest. Dear tyrant, have mercy; for thou hast my soul already fast. Oh, blossom of my heart!" the young monk cried brokenly, tears of love and longing stealing down his cheek, as he arose to tear himself from such a sweetly dangerous place.

(To be Continued.)

AN OPEN LETTER

From a Well Known Methodist Clergyman of Interest to All Who Are Sick

One of the best known ministers in the Hamilton conference is the Rev. Chas. E. Stafford, of Elora, Ont., who freely admits that he owes his present good health to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Mr. Stafford writes as follows: "Some years ago I was severely afflicted for a period of nearly four months. The leading physician in the town in which I was then stationed diagnosed my case as one of complete nervous prostration, brought on by overwork and which superinduced intercostal neuralgia and muscular rheumatism, from which I suffered the most excruciating pain night and day for weeks. So weak and helpless did I become that my attendants had to handle me like an infant, raising me up and laying me down with the greatest care, so intense were my sufferings. Acting on the advice of my doctor, and taking his medicine, I did not seem to improve. One afternoon, while suffering great pain, the editor of the paper published in the town, and who was a member of the church of which I was then pastor, urged me to try Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I was sceptical as to the medicinal qualities of all proprietary medicines, but on the strong recommendation of the editor, who had great faith in the medicine, I decided to try them. To my great surprise and supreme delight, I soon found that the Pills were giving me relief, and after I had taken seven boxes I was fully restored to health. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, under God, having made me a new man. Ever since I have been better and stronger physically than I had been for a number of years.

Three years ago, after an active ministry of forty-six years, I asked the Hamilton conference of the Methodist Church to grant me superannuation relation, which it did, but for more than two years I have been supplying a charge which necessitates a drive of twenty miles every Sabbath. To-day I am strong and hearty, without an ache or pain, and for my present physical condition I am indebted to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and can most heartily recommend them to the afflicted."

Coal as a Charm.

In bygone England coal played a prominent part in popular superstition, but it was a very special kind of coal. It was found (or at any rate firmly believed to be found) under the root of the plantain on one day of the year—midsummer eve. And to its finder it brought not only immunity from "plague, carbuncle and burning," but also in the case of a maiden dreams of her future husband. A versatile charm and, with plantains so prolific, not rare. These "coal" were probably really old, discolored roots, but none of the faithful believers in them would have admitted that.—London Globe.

GILLETTS LYE EATS DIRT

Things You Ought To Know

Spain yearly spends $41,000,000 on tobacco.

Chile has 250,000 acres devoted to vineyards.

California has a population exceeding 3,000,000.

New Zealand yearly devotes about 240,000 acres to wheat growing.

Honolulu is metering water supply.

New Zealand has a sugar shortage.

India is developing many new electrical plants.

Republic of Panama exposition is to be opened Nov. 3.

Most of the tea raised in Burmah is picked and eaten as a condiment.

A 20,000-acre rice field is planned for the Sacramento valley in California next year.

Holland annually produces about 20,000,000 pounds of flax fiber and 500,000 bushels of seed.

There are more ducks in China than in all the rest of the world.

The Young Woman's Christian Association has a world membership of 650,000.

St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome took so long to build that 13 Popes reigned during the course of its construction.

The best seller in the German trenches is said to be Charles Dickens, translated, the second best Dumas, and then Turgenief and Tolstoy.

Mons—is 38 miles south-south west of Brussels and is the capital of Hainault, with 29,000 inhabitants. It is situated on a hill above the Trouille and originated in a fortress built there by Julius Caesar. It was held by Prince Louis of Orange against the Spaniards for nearly four months in 1572; captured by Louis XIV. in 1691, it was restored to Spain in 1697 and again occupied by the French in 1701. After the battle of Malplaquet in 1709 it was captured by Prince Eugene. Mons is the centre of the chief coal mining district of Belgium, known as Le Borinage, the inhabitants being called "Borains." There is a school of mines and a late Gothic cathedral.

Shetland Islands—The most northerly British possession in Europe, lies to the northeast of the Orkneys and number over 100, with a combined area of 551 square miles. The surface of the islands is irregular, often rising into hills of considerable elevation, and their scenery is for the most part bleak and dreary. The cost is much indented and very precipitous, and it is said that no spot in Shetland is more than three miles from the sea, so that the report of the discovery in the islands of a German submarine base is not unlikely to be true. Only twenty-seven of the islands of the group are inhabited, and in some cases only then by lighthouse attendants and shepherds. The total population amounted, in 1901, to 28,166 persons of whom 15,753 were women. Agriculture is primitive and the soil poor, but barley, oats, potatoes and turnips are grown. The chief manufacture of the Shetland Islands is that of knitted goods, much fine work being turned out by the women, who also do the farm work, the men are occupied in fishing, which is the mainstay of the inhabitants.

A Startling Hat.

A lady's hat which would no doubt create as great a sensation to-day as it did at the time of its first appearance in 1352 was that worn by Blanche de Bourbon, queen of Castile, wife of Peter the Cruel. It cost £35 and was made in Paris. The hat itself was composed of ce chypre and relieved with great pearls, garnets and enamel work. Children, carved in the whitest of ivory, were depicted picking acorns of pearls from the oak and scattering them to the swine below. Birds were singing in the trees and at the foot were bees stealing honey from the flowering springing up from the verdure.—London Mail.

Kipling's Nightingale.

Rudyard Kipling was once telling a guest about a nightingale that frequented its gardens. He said: "I know all the popular illusions about the nightingale, but the truth is, he's a blackguard with a gift of music in his throat that he can't control—a noisy, swashbuckling blackguard of the garden. He comes here at night, and he proceeds to abuse all his enemies for all he's worth. It's feathered profanity in a disguise of harmony, and he gets so worked up over it that he finally ends in an inarticulate gurgle."

TORONTO FAT STOCK SHOW

The premium lists of the Toronto Fat Stock Show, to be held at the Union Stock Yards, Toronto, in December are just out, and carry many new classes, among which are special prizes by the T. Eaton Co., Armour & Co., Wm. Davies Co., Walker House and Queen's Hotel. The secretary, Mr. C. F. Topping, of the Union Stock Yards, Toronto, would be glad to give premium list or any information on application.