

THE DOOM OF MAMELONS

LEGEND OF THE SACRIFICE, BY W. H. MURRAY.

CHAPTER III.—THE CHEST OF GOLD OPENED.

[Continued from 2nd page.] but shrink from this and his new-self as from a wicked thing. I may not help thee. What thou dost, do thou do to thyself. The dead have their own lives and loves and note not the living. Else none might be at peace or know comfort above the sky, and all souls would make wail for wrongs and woes done and borne under sun. So it is well that parting should be parting and what wails divide the dead from living be beyond penetration. For each woman's life is sole. Her skill is of it, a sweet secrecy and all her winnowing is self won. I do not fear. Thou wilt have the wailing wisdom of thy race. Thy eyes are such as men give life to look into. The passion in thy blood would purchase thrones. Thou hast the grace of form which maddens men. Thy voice is musical. Thy tones warm velvet to the skin. The first and perfect woman lives complete in thee.

No more. In the old land no one is left. The modern career catch all. New fashions and new faiths crowd. Only low blood is left and that soon goes to rot. The Queenly line and that of the gods made is ended. With thee the gods quit earth and the old red blood beats back and upward to the skies. Gold hast thou and broad acres Youth and health are thine. With his great strength thou art in the pure as strong, and from a primal form, get perfect children, that in this new world in the west a new race may arise, rich in old blood, born among the hills, strong with the strength of trees, whose souls shall be as mountains and whose laughter shall be as lakes, whose loveliness is lovelier because of the reflected mountains dimly seen in them.

Farewell. Love greatly. It is the only way that leadeth woman to her Heaven. The moderns have a saying in their Creed that "God is Love." In the beginning, He was Father. The old race that sprang from him said that and said no more. It was enough. Love then was human and we gloried in it. Not the pale love of barren nun, but love red as the rose, warm as the sun; the love of motherly women sweet mouthed, bread breast, voiced with cradle songs and soft melodies which made men love their homes. Love then and live on the old level. Be not ashamed to be full woman. Love strength. Bear children. Be mother of a mighty race born for this Western world. Multiply. Inherit. And send the old blood flowing from thy veins, a widening current, thrilling through the ages, that it be as red, as pure, as sunset as it was in the sunrise of the world.

Once more Farewell, Sweet daughter. These are last words, a voice from the sunset sweet and low as altar hymn wandering down the columned aisles of some old Temple. So you will say to thee. So live, so woo, so win that when thou comest through the portals of the west to that fair throne amid those other ones which stretch their statelyness across the endless plain of ended things, which wait for thee, that thou mayest be every woman of thy queenly line, thou shalt leave behind, at going, a new and noble race, from thee and him, in which the East and West, the sunrise and the sunset of the world shall like two equal glories, meet condensed and shine.

So fare thee well. Fear not Mamelons. For if thou faltest there thou shalt be free of fault and all the myriad millions of our blood shall, out of sunset and from the shining sands of Fate lift thee high and place thee on the last, the highest, and the whitest throne of our old line. So end it. One more sweet kiss sweet one. One more low look into his face. Grave, grave and he gazeth at me. Good, what a sea he has! Shall I find match for it on morrow when I stand amid the royal beyond sunset? Perhaps. Death you have good breeding for you have waited well. Come, now I will go on with thee. Yes, yes I see the way. "Thy plain. It has been hollowed by so many feet. I go by to earthly light and life. It may be I shall find a better. I'll know or morrow."

Here the scroll ended. Long the living sat pondering what the dead had said. She kissed the writing as if it were holy text. Then placed it in the chest and turning the golden key, said "Sweet mother, thou shalt live in me. Our race shall not die out. My love shall win him." Then went she to the great room where the Trapper sat by the red fire and said, "John Norton, thou art my guest, what may I do to please thee? Here thou must stay until my mind can order out my life and make the dubious road ahead plain. While underneath my roof I pray, command me. All this such grace dignify and sweet grace as she were queen and he some great lord or kinsman.

The Trapper stooped and lifted a huge log upon the fire which broke the lower brands. The chimney smoked and the large room brightened to the flame. Then facing her he said: "Guest I am and servant, both in one. I must be so awhile. Winter is on us. The fire feels snow. It patters and the flakes are falling in it. It is a sign that never lies. Hark, you can hear the knock of geese as they wedge southward. The winter will be long, but I must stay."

"And are you sorry you must stay?" replied the girl, "I will do what I may to make the days and nights pass swiftly."

exact than that of books; for so my mother often told me. She said, the wisest men who ever lived were those who, in deep woods and caves and on the shores of seas, saw, heard and pondered on the life and mysteries of nature, noting all things small and great, cause and effect, tracing out connections, which interlace the parts into one whole, so making one solid web of knowledge, covering all the grid of fact and substance, in the end. And once when you were in the mood and had been talking in the hall, drawn on and out by her, you told of crimes and places you had seen and strange things met in wandering, great mountains builded by some ancient race, long dead; of cities, under sunset, still standing solid, without men; of tall and shapely pillars writ with mystic characters on the far shore of the mid sea, whence sailed the old dead of my race, dying far away to western horizons, where to-day they live; of caverns in deep earth made glorious with crystals, stalactites, prisms, and shining ornaments, where, in old time, the gods of the under world were chambered; of trees that mingled bloom and fruitage the long year through, and flowers that never faded till the root died out, of creeping reptiles, snakes, and savage, poisonous things that struck to kill and of their antidotes, growing for men and beasts amid the very grasses where they secreted venom; of rivers wide and deep, boiling up through solid earth, full tided, which flowing widely on, dropped, suddenly, like a plummet to the centre of the world; of plains, fenced by the sky, far reaching as the level sea, so that the red sun rose and set in grasses of fire, which lit by lightning, blackened the stars with smoke and burned all the world; of oceans in the west, which, flowing with tidal floods, fell over mountains, plunging the seas of water sheer down, so that the rocky framework of the round earth shook; of winds that blew as out of chaos, revolving on a hollow axis, like a wheel buzzing, invisible, charged to the centre with electric force and fires which burst explosive, kindling the air like tinder; of ten thousand marvels and curious things which you had met, noted and pondered on, seeking to know the primal fact or force which underlaid them.—So that my mother said, that night, when we were in our chamber, she said to me, "The wisest man she ever met, wise with the wisdom of her ancient folk whose knowledge lived, oral and true, before the habit of book making came to rive the solid substance, heavy and rich, into thin veneers, to make vain show for fools to wonder at. Teach me! Who might thou not teach, thou seeing, alight man, type of my first fathers, who gifted with rare senses and with wit to question nature and to learn, mastered all wisdom, before books were."

"Aye," she returned, "The Trapper not displeased to hear her praise as rare what seemed to him so common, "These things I know in truth for I have wandered far, seen much and noted closely, and who knows but books have time to think. But girl, I am warned man and know naught of books."

"Books!" exclaimed the girl. "What are books but oral knowledge spread out in words which lack the fire of the life of utterance? But you shall know them. The winter days are short, the nights are long; our toil is simple; wood for the fire; food for the table; and a swift pass each day along the snow for exercise; or if the winds will keep some acres clean, our skates shall slip to the smitten ice, piercing it with trembling, till the shies cry out. All other hours for sleep and books. I read in seven tongues, one so old that none save I in all the world can read it, for it was left when I was a nut, who fed the Sacred Fire and kept God's altar warm. And I will read you all the wisdom of the world, and its rare laughter, which mother said, was the life essence of wisdom, the pungent foam and sparkle of it. So you shall know. And one old scroll there is rolled in foil of gold, sealed with the serpent seal, symbol of eternity, scribed with pictured knowledge, an heirloom of my race, whose key alone I have, written in rainbow colors when the world was young, the language of the gods, who first made signs for speech and put the speaking mouth upon a page. It was the first I learned. My mother taught me to stand at her knee,—for so the Law says it shall be done. A boy old with twice ten thousand years of age, that he who knows this scroll shall teach it under silence, to his or her first born, standing at knee, that the old knowledge of prime things and ways may not pass from the earth. He tells of, but on for ever while the earth endures. For on it is the record of the beginning, told by those who saw it; of the first man and how he came to be; of woman, first, and born and of what came next; a life of healing simples, antidotes, and death, and of rare oils, which search the bones and members of the mortal frame, and banish pain; and others yet, sweet to the nose and volatile, that make the face to shine, for fates to happy days, and being poured on woman make their skin softer than down, whiter than drifted snow, and so clean and clear that the rich blood pinks through it like a red rose centered in crystal. And on it, too, is written other and strange tales of will and wisdom. How one may have the seeing eye come to him. How to call up the wicked dead from under ground and summon from their heaven in the west where they live and love the blessed. How marriage came to man with woman. What part is his to act, and what part hers, that each may be a joy to other and she, thus honored, be as a sweet slip grafted on a vital trunk, full flowered in fullest growth and fruitful of what the old gods loved,—children, happy, fair and strong; all will I read thee, talking as we read, that we, with sharpened thought, may bite through to the vital gist, deep centered within the hard rind of words, and taste the living sweetness of true sense. So will we teach each other and grow wise equally. You, me, the knowledge of things and places you have seen. I, you, the knowledge written in books that I have read."

[To be Continued.]

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