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THE PAST—THE PRESENT—FOR THE FUTURE.

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THE SACRIFICE.

(CONCLUDED.)

Selim gazed after this wild and singular being, with feelings it would be difficult to define. The conviction that Solyman scorned that species of honor which bound him to Amurath, stung him to the soul. "He knows me not," he bitterly cried—but the recollection of Zerah, and the dangers which surrounded her, soon banished every other recollection. The sun was just beginning to curl the mist that hung upon the mountain's brow—that sun which was to have gilded their nuptial vows. The fear, that Amurath might discover the secret of her birth, deepened to maddening certainty, as he thought of the almost illimitable power, which Amurath exercised over the sordid minions who surrounded his throne. He could not admit the belief that a knowledge of so important a fact was confined to the bosom of an individual. He resolved to seek the dwelling of Ibrahim, warn him of some impending calamity, urge him immediately to leave the kingdom and flee with his daughter to some distant asylum, till the apprehended danger was past.

Ibrahim beheld with astonishment the clouded brow and troubled mien of Selim. The pride of the father rose high in his heart, for his beautiful Zerah was the fairest flower of oriental climes, and he deemed her a gift richer than all the gems of the East. To Selim's impassioned representations of imminent peril which awaited them, and earnest entreaties for their immediate departure, he lent a doubting ear. He was one of the most powerful grandees of the kingdom, and he felt that he possessed sufficient power in himself to guard against external ills, and with the proud consciousness of integrity, he declared himself superior to all fear. Selim was prepared for this resistance, and he marked with anguish the suspicions which had entered the breast of Ibrahim. He dared not avow the secret which oppressed him. He could not prove by the necessary credentials the almost incredible tale, and he feared that ambition which held lordly sway over Ibrahim's minor passions, would lead him to sacrifice the innocence and beauty he had fostered, while unconscious of her imperial origin. Ibrahim summoned his daughter and commanding her to fathom the mystery of her lover's conduct, or withdraw the pledge he had given, left the apartment.

Selim had not till this moment experienced the overwhelming embarrassment of his situation. He stood pale and disordered in the presence of her, whom he was to have claimed that day as a triumphant bridegroom. The pride which sustained him before his fellow man, was now annihilated by a stronger emotion. He did not speak, but knelt in the prostration of agony at her feet, and buried his face in the folds of her robe. And surely if aught in woman's form could justify the adoration of the heart, this daughter of a kingly line might vindicate the worship she inspired. With eyes of celestial glory, a brow on which the regularity of nature was enthroned, a cheek on which the rich hue of the pomegranate was mellowed into the softness of virgin bloom, and tresses that wreathed in dark redundancy, as they fell, a native veil around her, she moved amidst the maidens of that eastern land, fair and transcendent as the moon, when attended by her starry handmaids, she treads the halls of ether. The temple was worthy the divinity it enshrined. Thus clothed with the light of material, and spiritual loveliness, she seemed born to feel and create a passion, refined from the grossness of mortality. Unlike the

proud Ibrahim, she doubted not the faith of breast were relieved from some oppressive feeble light of his cell darkened and dispened. Conscious of the return of night, he sank into the peaced sanctuary of his heart, and no tyrant's power could penetrate its guarded recesses. Turning to the astonished guards, he signed them to advance. Accustomed to obey the prince Selim, they involuntarily followed his command, and though the marched on either side, with naked blades precluding the possibility of escape, he had more the air of a sovereign with his attendant vassals, than a victim to be arraigned before the throne. With a dauntless mien and unfaltering steps he entered the presence of Amurath. He knew the doom that awaited him; but as the bark, which is about to be swallowed by the ocean wave, is borne up over the stormy billows, rising with the rising tempest, his spirit elevated itself above the perils which threatened to overwhelm him. He stood in immovable silence, while the guards related the scene we have described, and met with an unquailing eye the withering glance of the Sultan.

The wrath of Amurath was at first too deep for words. In spite of his denunciations he had felt till this moment, a confidence in the fidelity of Selim, which he deemed it impossible to abandon. The conviction of his perfidy brought with it the most exquisite pangs. Selim was the only being whom he had really loved and trusted, and a tear actually gathered in his cold and haughty eye, as one by one he gathered up the proofs of his favorite's treachery. Selim marked that unwonted sign of human tenderness, and his pride melted at the sight. He saw once more the trusting friend, the lavish beaufator, and casting down his sword at the foot of the throne, he exclaimed, "Commander of the faithful! take back thy gifts; take even the life which Allah has given; but leave me yet the consciousness of my integrity. I am no traitor, though stained with the blood of thy subject. I am guiltless of treason, and with my expiring breath, I will proclaim my innocence." "Prove then thy innocence," cried Amurath; "I swear by the sword and buckler of the Prophet, if thou wilt reveal the name of the supposed offspring of sovereignty and place her in our power, I freely pardon thy past offences, restore thee to thy former honors, and give thee even this day thy plighted bride."

Selim folded his hands resolutely over his breast. "Her name is buried here and shall perish with me. No commands shall force, no tortures compel me to reveal it; I offer thee my life; thou mayest devote it to bondage or death; but thou hast not, canst not, have control over my free spirit's will." "Away then to the darkest dungeon; away till the traitor's death is prepared for thee. My slighted mercy shall turn to vengeance now. The hour of relenting is past. Thy fate shall tell to after ages, the ingratitude of favorites, and the justice of kings."

Selim bent his head in token of submission. Amurath ordered him to be shackled in his presence, that the scene of his former grandeur might be also that of his present degradation. Then after a fresh ebullition of his ungoverned rage, he commanded the guards to bear him to his cell. A damp and noisome dungeon, feebly lighted by the rays which struggled through the grated walls, was now the abode of the late magnificent Selim; sad proof of the evanescent nature of earthly glory. But there is a moral brightness, transcending the noonday's beams, which can throw the radiance of heaven over the darkest hour of human suffering. He, who is willing to sacrifice his existence for another, is supported by the spirit of martyrdom, and that spirit will bear him up, as with an angel's wings, over the gloomy valley of death. That exaltation of feeling, however, which attends the performance of a magnanimous deed, and which sustains the sufferer in the moment of physical agony, gradually subsided, as he recalled the appalling circumstances which accompanied the sacrifice of life. To lay down his life for Zerah, and leave behind him an unblemished name, a memory which the brave might honor, and the true-hearted mourn, would have seemed a trifling effort for a love like his. But to go down to the grave in ignominy and shame; to be branded with the name of traitor, that withering deathless curse, while even she for whom he died might learn to scorn his memory, and place another idol on the shrine, where once his image dwelt; the thought was maddening. He lifted up his shackled hands and prayed that Allah would send down the waters of oblivion, and obliterate the remembrance of the wretch whom he had created. He poured out the bitterness of his soul into the all-hearing ear of God, till in the stillness of awe, the troubled billow of his heart too could find rest. At last, he entered the cell. "All gracious Allah! I

Selim felt that the tortures which his supposed perfidy inflicted, were keener than those which the cruelty of Amurath could invent. Must then the sacrifice be vain? while he deemed himself the instrument of her salvation, must she believe that his perfidious hand was stabbing with deliberate cruelty